

First Lutheran NEWSLETTER



January
2026

Happy New Year!

The new year brings fresh starts, ideas, and dreams. It is a new beginning.

People often make New Year's Resolutions. For example, 'going to the gym more often'. And it does happen. Gym usage increases by a whopping 30% in January. (Google). But the long-term commitment or sustainability of this uptick in working out is weak at best. I always hesitate to make any changes in January – even when I feel the tiniest of urges. Instead, I focus on what existing habits I want to bring into the new year.

Much of our lives doesn't change year to year. Yes, we have milestones and sometimes life-changing events – but our basic lives don't change from December 31 to January 1. We still strive to meet our basic needs, wants, and desires. And God is still with each of us. God's laws and promises remain the same. The unbelievable love God has for us does not change. The fact that Jesus died on the cross for you and me does not change.

I am thankful for the things in my life that are steadfast: God, my husband, children, friends, food, medication, pets, and so much more. Even if I lost my husband, children, friends, food, medication, pets, and everything else, I would still have God. And God would still have me.



Office closed	Jan 1
Meet & Eat	Jan 9
FLY Christmas Party	Jan 10
Snow Dying (AOL)	Jan 15-16
Pasta Class	Jan 23
Faith Haven MTG	Feb 1
Weaving Class	Feb 7
Game Day	Feb 21
FLY to Andes	Feb 21
FLY Escape room	March 20
Danish Bread (AOL)	April 23

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30 Second Scripture Study

Psalm 19:1-4

¹ *The heavens proclaim the glory of God.*

The skies display his craftsmanship.

² *Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.*

³ *They speak without a sound or word;
their voice is never heard.*

⁴ *Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,
and their words to all the world.*

What stands out to you when you read these verses?

What did you learn about God by reading these scriptures?

What does God want you to understand?



Cont'd from page 1

So instead of focusing on changing my life, in 2026, I will focus on the most incredible gift EVER – Jesus. And I will let God change my life without my interference.

Serving Jesus alongside you,
Pastor Lynn

New stuff Alert!

1. **Acolytes!** Once again, our confirmands will be acolyting - starting January 11th. Some of our confirmands have not been raised in the church, so please support them each Sunday. Thank them, tell them they did a good job, or let them know they are appreciated. It will make a world of difference!
2. **Logo T-shirt Bar!** Lakes Lockerroom joins in the fundraiser fun with 'make it on the spot' Logo T-shirts. Dates to be determined.
3. **Plastic People Movie** - Stewardship Creation team is working with West Central Initiative to present a live showing of the award-winning documentary *Plastic People* at the Battle Lake School auditorium on Thursday, February 26th. Cedar Walters will be leading a discussion after the showing.

Plastic People investigates our addiction to plastic and the growing threat of microplastics to human health.

Over the past few months, I have had numbness, tingling, and pain in my legs – but nothing that stops me from my daily routine. However, an MRI found multiple issues with my lower back: severe spinal compression, slipped disks, and, of course, arthritis.

According to the spinal surgeon, my lower back is worn out, and I need surgery. So, I have a spinal fusion surgery scheduled for February 17th. I will be out of work for 6 weeks. Unfortunately, this puts me out for most of Lent. So I have asked to be on the cancellation wait list - so I can undergo the surgery sooner. I will keep you posted as I learn more.

I appreciate your understanding and patience! I also covet your healing prayers. Gratefully, Pastor Lynn

MERRY Christmas

The House That Saved My Life

Dear Friend,

For Lilly, hope began in a house she used to walk past as a little girl — a house she always felt drawn to, without knowing why. Years later, that very same house would become **the place that changed - and saved - her life.**

Before coming to Barbara's House, Lilly's days were filled with pain and struggle. "I was in and out of jail. I was lost in my addiction, feeling hopeless and worthless — but I was always holding on to a little bit of hope," she remembers. "I knew I wanted a change but didn't know where to go. After completing treatment, I walked through the doors of the house I'd always been drawn to as a child — **and knew I was home.** Barbara's House gave me structure, love, and the chance to find myself again."

Here, Lilly found a community of women who understood her journey — a sisterhood built on faith, accountability, and grace. "Barbara's House helped me rebuild my life and learn to love myself again. I'm going to school, I have my own car and apartment, and it feels incredible!"

Barbara's House, a program of Welcome House, offers women a faith-based, supportive home where they can heal from addiction and rebuild their lives through safe housing, peer and job support, and encouragement in faith and recovery.

Every woman who walks through our doors carries her own story of struggle and renewal — **and your gift helps make those stories possible.**

With gratitude and blessings,



Wendy Erlandson, Board Chair

To make a secure online donation:
welcomehouseff.org/donate

P.S. Because of you, women like Lilly are finding their way home - to healing, faith, and new beginnings.



UPCOMING EVENTS

We will have our Christmas themed lock in event for youth from **Friday, January 9th** starting at 6pm until **Saturday, January 10th** at 7am. Students in 5th and 6th grade are invited to attend until 11p on Friday. Students in 7th grade and up are welcome to stay the entire lock in.



Saturday, February 7th we will be hosting the YMCA as they conduct a Babysitting and Childcare Certification class from 8a-5p. This class is for students aged 10 and up. A minimum of 6 participants are needed to hold the class with a maximum of 10 students. If you are interested in registering for the class please email Missi by January 19th.



Saturday, February 21st we will be having a casual game day for anyone that is interested from 9a-3p. Bring your favorite card, dice or board game and a potluck item to share.



Saturday, February 21st we will take any students in 5th grade and up to Andes Towers Hill to go skiing or snowboarding. FLC will provide transportation, students should provide money for their own lift ticket. Lift tickets are \$25 for students 11yrs old or younger & \$30 for students 12yrs old & up. We will meet at church at 6p and arrive back at 12a. Please RSVP to Missi by 2/18.



Friday, March 20th we will be taking a group of students to Oak & Iron in Fergus Falls. We will do an escape room and have pizza. Meet at church at 5p and we will be back by 8:30p. Students in 5th grade and up are invited to attend with a max of 8 students for the escape room. RSVP to Missi by 3/16. Please provide \$25 for entry to escape room.





First Lutheran Church is partnering with Art of the Lakes to bring you some amazing event opportunities. All events are hosted by Art of the Lakes and held at First Lutheran Church. See below for all of the upcoming events.

For additional information on cost and registration please visit

artofthelakes.org

Thursday, January 15th & Friday, January 16th join Itajime Shibori in an Intro to Snow Dyeing class. This class is through Art of the Lakes but will be held at First Lutheran Church from 1p-3p. For additional information on fees and registration visit artofthelakes.org/classes



Friday, January 23rd Art of the Lakes will be holding a pasta making class located at First Lutheran Church from 4p-6:30p. Join Sandy Thimgan to learn how to make fettuccini, lasagna sheets, maybe a few shapes, if time allows.



Saturday, February 7th learn the basics of weaving with Tori Hanna from 9a-2p. Using a rigid heddle loom and leave with a beautiful table runner or wall hanging. Materials and looms provided. Ages 16+



Thursday, April 23rd join Kate Mudge in a Danish Braid baking class from 5p-7:30p. You'll learn how to make a classic Danish braid from start to finish. You'll mix and knead your own dough, learn how to incorporate butter for flakiness, create delicious fillings, and shape a stunning braid that looks impressive.

You'll choose your own filling from two delicious options: Lemon curd & raspberry OR Lemon cream cheese & blueberry. Each person will leave with a freshly baked Danish braid, warm from the oven, extra dough to take home so you can make another one the next day, and the confidence to recreate this "fancy-looking" yet totally achievable pastry anytime you like.





Holy Faith

Practicing gratitude is recognizing the gifts and resources we have been blessed with and acknowledging God's presence in the big and little things. Practicing gratitude has many spiritual, mental and physical benefits. We are actively practicing gratitude at First Lutheran. Every time you come by church fill out a gratitude leaf, star or what ever the season may be and stick it on the wall to share with others so that we can all see the many blessings and gifts that God has provided.

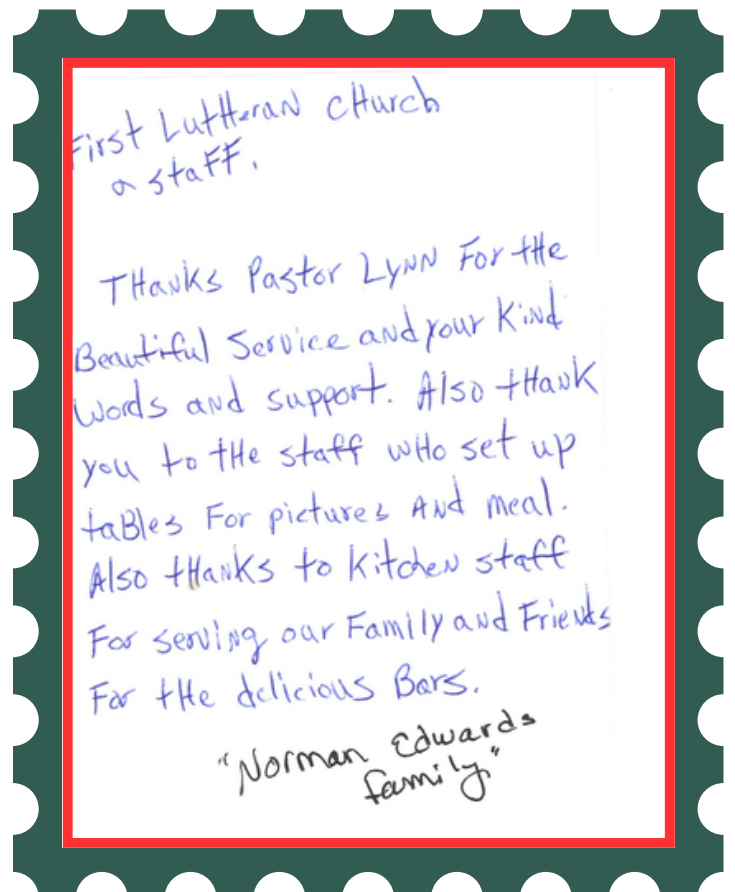
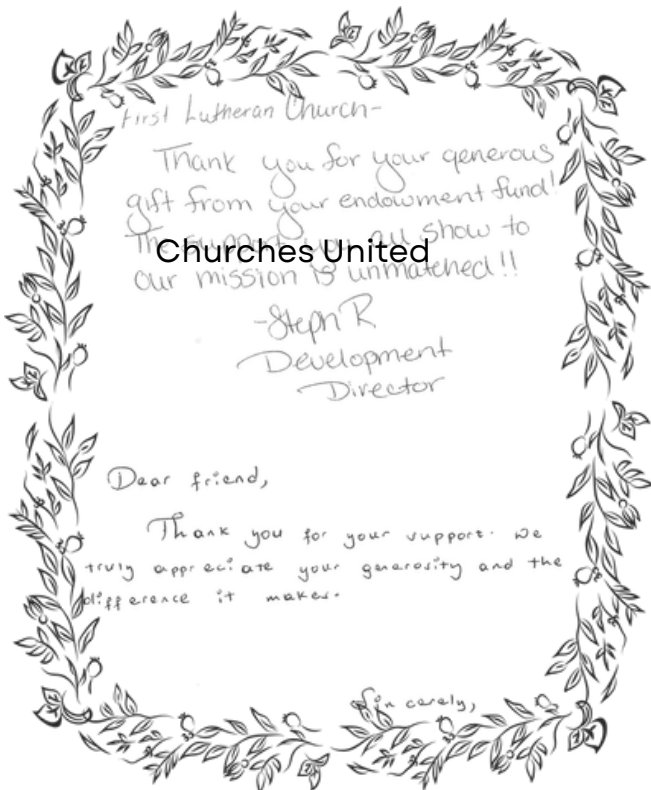
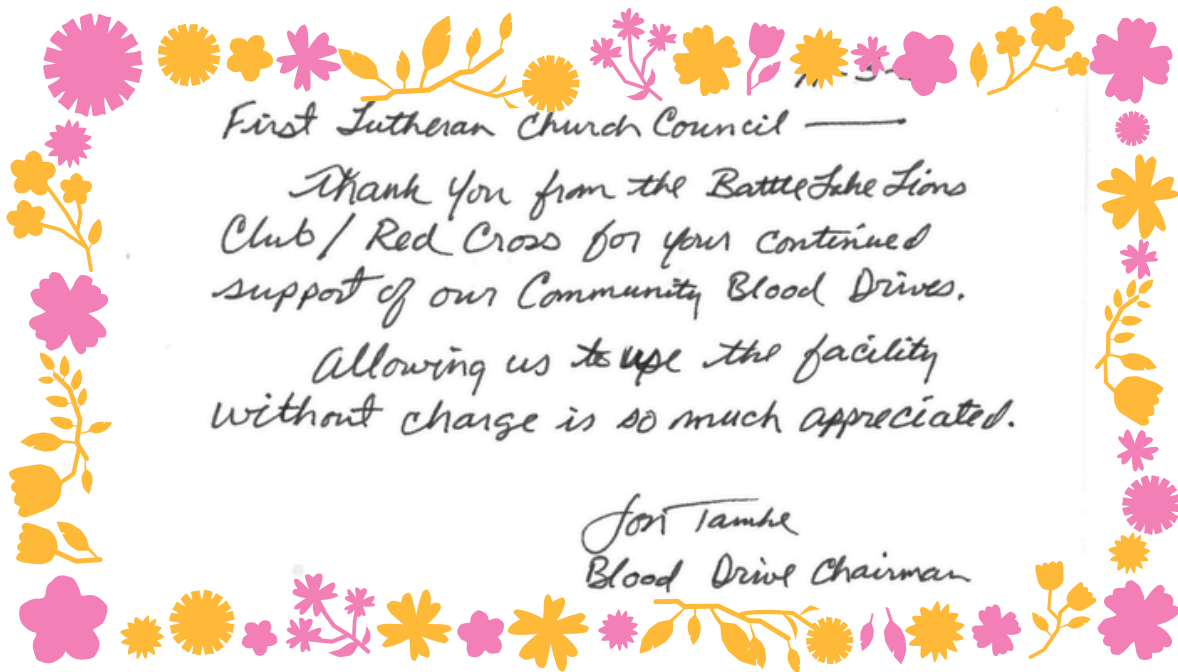


The WAFL students held their Christmas program on Wednesday, December 17th & again on Sunday, December 21st. They did an amazing job putting on the program with very little practice, since we were snowed out the week prior. Wednesday's program was followed with a soup and sandwich dinner which was very well attended and served by the youth group students and a visit from the Grinch. Thank you to all the WAFL teachers for helping and supporting the students. Everything that you do is greatly appreciated. The WAFL students & teachers also completed Christmas gifts for Matthew's & Barbra's House. The gifts contained quilts, from the quilting ladies, personal hygiene kits, decorated jars of nuts, socks, hot chocolate, puzzles, homemade crafts and pictures etc...



We will be having our annual Valentine's Dinner for WAFL families on Wednesday, February 18th at 5:30pm. Volunteers to prepare the meal, dessert, decorations or help that evening would be greatly appreciated. This is a great opportunity for kids to show appreciation to their parents by serving them and to show our support of hard-working moms and dads. Talk with Missi if you are free to help.

Battle Lake School is holding a career fair on Feb 26, 2026. They need help with mock job interviews, career cluster panels, and an employability skills panel. If you can help, please get in touch with the school at 218-864-5215.



Worship and Music



Welcome all Sopranos and Altos!!

Join us in the month of January to learn one or two songs for worship on January 25th. 45 minute Practices at 9 am on Sundays (1/4, 1/11, 1/18 & 1/25) and 5:30 pm on Wednesdays (1/7, 1/14, 1/21). Sound files for vocal parts will be texted and/or emailed to you so we can quickly put the music together in 7 practices. Contact Cindy Peterson 701-840-0708 for sound files. Copies of the songs will be available at the First Lutheran Church Office in Battle Lake. Contact Laurie Zelinsky in the office for more information."

We the staff, council, and finance committee of First Lutheran would like to say thank you for your time, gifts and support throughout this year.

Blessings to all! Happiest of New Years!!

Pastor Lynn – Laurie – Missi – Jeri – Mike – Pete – Stacy – Henry Julie –
Dan – David – Gail – Joan – Doreen



SHARE AND CARE GROUPS:

Group One, December, January, February

December

Missi Abfalter, Jess
Granby, Remi Alto
Myron Dahle
Meg O'Kane
Chrys Kirschbaum
Jane Dixon
Wayne & Marilyn Horgen
Doreen & Doug Stave
Nancy Senyk
Linda & Gary Morical
Scot & Cathy Englin
Jack & Betsy Everts
Inez Flores
Doug & DeeAnn Troisdahl

January

Missi Abfalter, Jess
Granby, Remi Alto
Myron Dahle
Meg O'Kane
Chrys Kirschbaum
Allison & Aaron Buehler
Jim & Carol Sagerhorn
Shelly & Jeff Sagerhorn
Arlene Pieske
Jon Tamke
Beth & Lou Davis
Cindy & Jeff Harms
Tom & Ann Rasmussen
Mike Youngblood
Dennis & Nancy Quam
Doug & DeeAnn Troisdahl

February

Jane Dixon
Jim & Carol Sagerhorn
Shelly & Jeff Sagerhorn
Arlene Pieske
Jon Tamke
Beth & Lou Davis
Cindy & Jeff Harms
Bonnie Pfeffer
Luke & Haley Himmelspace
Norm Stolle
Warren & Carol Boese
Jenna Kavanagh
Roberta Skibness
Larry & Kim Charest

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP



First Lutheran Men's Fellowship met Thursday, December 4, 2025 at the Shoreline with 15 members in attendance. We received an invitation to attend a dinner sponsored by Habitat for Humanity on January 13th at MN State Legacy Hall. This year our Christmas Food Ministry, we will be sending out 53 Christmas cards (Larry's gift cards). Clair Prody and Lynn Johnson are co-chairing the Art in the Park Food Stand project in 2026. Our next meeting will be Thursday, January, 8, 2026.

Women of the **ELCA** 

WELCA Board – January 5th @ 1 pm
Naomi Circle – January 13th @ 10:00 am
Lydia Circle – No January Meeting
Mary Circle – January 14th @ 9:30 am
Evening Circle – January 18th @ 6:30 pm

Women of the



ELCA



Happy New Year!

It is hard to believe that 2026 is right around the corner. I just want to leave you with this promise from God. Great words to live by.

John 3 :16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

I wish everyone a great and prosperous New Year!!
See you next year!

Jeri Wilmore
Parish Nurse



I am excited to host our newest get-together. I am hoping this will be an opportunity for us to get to know each other better. I ask that you bring a treat to share, but if that is a problem, then just bring yourself. If you have any ideas of how this group could spend the time, please let me know. We will do this on the first Friday of each month at 11 am. I look forward to visiting with you.

January meeting will be on January 9th!

Jeri Wilmore

PRAYING YOU'LL SEE

the blessing
OF
GOD'S plans
UNFOLDING FOR YOU IN THE
new year.



Summary December Church Council Meeting

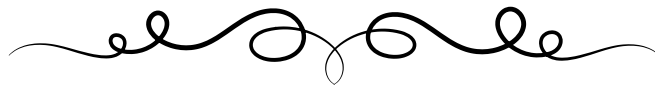
The December council meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. The rescheduled December council meeting was also cancelled due to inclement weather. To ensure nice weather during the holidays, we will not reschedule a third time. :)

The next council meeting will be on January 13th.

Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices cultivate a deeper connection with yourself, others, and the divine. It is one way to know God better - rather than just knowing facts about God.

Each week in 2026, we will be adding a spiritual practice to our bulletins. It may surprise you how easy it is to practice spirituality!



Financial Updates

November 2025 Finances: YTD Budget Tracking:

Income \$ 28,463 Budget \$377,225/ 93.68%

Credit Line -7,000

Expenses \$ 27,488 Budget \$377,225/87.23%

Net \$ 975

**Haven't filled out a pledge card to support our 153rd year of ministry?
No worries - you can still pledge toward 2026.**

153rd Year of Faithful Ministry Estimate of Giving Card

"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

I/We support First Lutheran's Pastor, Staff, Building, and Ministries and intend to give: \$_____per Week Month Year

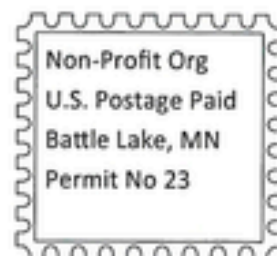
I/We understand that this is a faith commitment and the amount above can be changed due to changing circumstances many change the amount.

Name_____ Date_____

JANUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 New Years Day Office Closed	2	3
4 9 am Women's Practice 10 am Worship/communion 11 am Fellowship Cindy Organist	5 9 am Quilters 12 pm OEA 1 pm WELCA Bd.	6 1 pm WELCA Study 2 pm Worship/Music	7 3:15 pm WAFL 5:30 pm Confirmation 5:30 pm Women Practice 7-9 pm Youth Group	8 8 am TOPS 8:30 am Men's Fellowship	9 11 am Meet & Eat	10 Christmas party lock in
11 9 am Sunday School 9 am Women's Practice 10 am Worship 11 am Fellowship Gail Organist	12 9 am Quilters 12 pm OEA 2:30 pm Finance	13 No Lydia Circle 10 am Naomi Circle 5:30 pm Faith Formation 6:30 pm Council	14 9:30 am Mary Circle 3:15 pm WAFL 5:30 pm Women Practice 5:30 pm Confirmation 7-9 pm Youth Group	15 8 am TOPS 1-3 pm Snow Dying (AOL)	16 1-3 pm Snow Dying (AOL)	17 10 am Lake Ave Apt. Communion
18 9 am Women's Practice 10 am Worship 11 am Fellowship 6:30 pm Evening Circle Gail Organist	19 9 am Quilters 10 am Staff 12 pm OEA Newsletter articles due	20	21 3:15 pm WAFL 5:30 pm Women Practice 5:30 pm Confirmation 7-9 pm Youth Group	22 8 am TOPS	23 4-6:30 pm Pasta Class (AOL)	24
25 9 am Women's Practice 10 am Worship/communion 11 am Potluck Gail Organist	26 9 am Quilters 12 pm OEA	27	28 10 am Good Sam 3:15 pm WAFL 5:30 pm Confirmation 7-9 pm Youth Group	29 8 am TOPS	30	31
Notes 7:30 pm Wednesdays NA @ Sr. Ctr. 7 pm Fridays AA & Al-Anon at Sr. Ctr.				First Lutheran Church		

First Lutheran Church
505 Holdt St. West
Battle Lake MN 56515
218-864-5686
www.blfirstlutheran.org



Address Service Requested
Newsletter

Sunday Worship 10 AM

Communion 1st & 4th Sundays

Coffee/Fellowship 11 AM following service

Online worship @ Youtube-First Lutheran Church Battle Lake and Facebook



First Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor: Pastor Lynn Melchior : pastorlynn@blfirstlutheran.org

Office Secretary: Laurie Hanson-Zelinsky: office@blfirstlutheran.org

Parish Nurse: Jeri Wilmore: parishnurse@blfirstlutheran.org

Faith Formation: Missi Abfalter: wafi@blfirstlutheran.org

Website: www.blfirstlutheran.org