

First Lutheran Church
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First Lutheran Focus December 2025

Address Service Requested

<u>Week</u>	<u>Counter</u>	<u>Lay Reader</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>
December 7	Stu & Kim Anderson	Gladie Hagen	Stambaughs	Kellan Stambaugh Ayden Woodside
December 14	Randy & Laure Buehrer	Megan Ott	Amundsons	Axel Flattum Ryker Amundson
December 21	David & Sharron Petnick	Sunday School Program	Nelsons	Emelia Nelson Hadley Anderson
December 28	Russ & Delores Knudson	Stu Anderson	Ballantynes	Wesley Ballantyne Caleb Johnson

Share Shoppe
Saturday, December 6th

PASTOR'S PAGE

As I sit in my office, reading ahead and planning for the next few weeks, my heart skips a beat as I read “the days are surely coming...” “how can I say thanks...” and “stir up your power and come.” The season of Advent is full of beautiful images and wonderful words of hope.

We have condensed our vision of preparing, watching and waiting to four short weeks. Our hardships and struggles are often limited to being over-scheduled and under-focused. But, for the people of Israel, it was many, many years of waiting and watching. Their time of waiting was challenged by great hardship, false hope and wondering.

Each Sunday in Advent a candle on the Advent wreath will be lit, reminding us of our watchfulness of the coming of the Lord. Connecting us to our story of faith, giving voice to our part of God’s unfolding drama. God’s great love for us, sending Jesus as an infant reminding us that peace will reign and that the eternal light will shine brightly.

It is important that we are connected to the biblical story of faith. How the prophets spoke of the birth of the Savior. Watching and waiting for years. Preparing and anticipating through so much of history. And, it is important to know that throughout the world Christians are preparing, anticipating and waiting for the coming of Christ.

We are beginning a new year in the life of the church and with that I would like us to spend time thinking about this verse from I John 3:18. The NRSVUE version says: Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Consider it this way from The Message: My dear children, let’s not just talk about love; let’s practice real love. Or, the First Nations translation: My much-loved children, our love must not be empty words on our tongues but deeds done in truth.

My invitation to you is to embrace Advent this year. To come for worship and join in our lighting of the Advent candles, listening to the passages that lead us to the manger and join your voices as we sing the songs of Advent. Take part in this part of the journey in Luke.

Maybe put this prayer (from the 1st Sunday in Advent) on your refrigerator or mirror and use it everyday.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

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PASTORAL ACTS

November

Funerals

Mike Walton	11-7-25
Brian Bestul	11-7-25
Dick Hagen	11-8-25

YOUTH NEWS

November was a very busy month for both groups – both having lots of students show up and participate in what's going on. Jr High has had lots of new people showing up who have never been part of our group before, so we've been focusing more on lessons that involve ways to build friendship and trust among each other and God, and Senior High has had many students showing up much more consistently.

Jr. High had lessons on being a new creation in God (2 Corinthians 5:17), following and leading among the people we are with (Proverbs 29:22), Fear and how to deal with the hard questions of faith (Psalm 23:4) and just being the awesome creatures that God has made us to be (Romans 12:2). We also were happy to have Kinley Thompson able to attend one night at the end of the month. It's awesome to see how excited everyone was to see her, and that it meant so much for her to be able to come back and attend as she begins her journey through Leukemia.

Sr. High had lessons on how God uses us to fill each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), how to find freedom in faith when we are conflicted with the things we do (2nd Corinthians 3:17) and a couple of the same lessons that the Jr. High students participated in.

Christmas Youth will look a bit different for Senior High this month. We'll be having our Christmas Party on Tuesday the 23rd and the following week we'll also have Youth on Tuesday, the 30th.

We'll end the month/year with a combined Jr/Sr High Lock-In on New Years Eve at the church. Some of the college students will also be around that night to help chaperon and lead games. Always a fun time to end one year and start a new one together. Looking forward to all the great things God has in store for us next year!



Affirmation of Baptism was celebrated on Sunday, October 26. Pictured: Pastor Becky, Ivy Urbatsch, Kenly Solberg, Amaya Rugland, Bryck Abrams, Casey Gentz, Maggie Rye, Avarie Skellenger, Owen Binnebose, Jaxon Ryerson, Tegan Trenhaile and Tucker Duvall

**Regular Council Meeting
October 21st, 2025
First Lutheran Church - Northwood**

Members Present: Kris, Pastor Becky, Hayley, Weston, Judy, Gina, Kevin, Connie, Mariah

We Assemble in God's Name

Devotion – Gina Solberg

We Celebrate our Past

Presidential Correspondence - Kris K. - LRH Board requested to speak with congregation regarding capital campaign – Council in favor of request.

Secretary's Report -Megan O. - Mariah Ballantyne will take minutes for today's meeting. Reviewed previous months minutes. Correction to Hayley's name in Motion to adjourn.

Treasurer's Report- Judy S.- Starting to work on budget for next year.

Pastor's Report - Pastor Becky - Nov 7th a brainstorming session around declining numbers in pastoral leaders. Input is welcome. Annual mtg date set for January 18th. Sabbatical scheduled for Jan 20th – February 16th 2026. Shared Congregation Lead Initiative for a few council members from both churches to review.

Motion to approve all reports (Connie/Gina). - Approved

We Present our Offering

FINANCE - Judy S. - See above.

WORSHIP- Kimberly A. – Did not meet this month, will meet in December. All Saints day is Nov 2nd.

INSPIRE- Kevin M. – Attendance is up! Things are going well and some new kids have been in attendance and waiting to participate. Working on a streaming option.

YOUTH - Weston W.- Nothing new to share.

EDUCATION - Mariah B. & Hayley M. – Nothing new to share.

PROPERTY - Mike S. –

MISSION- Gina S. – Meeting will be set up for Feed My Starving Children.

FELLOWSHIP- Connie K. - No updates.

First Lutheran Missions

October 2025

Riverside Bible Camp	\$ 142.21
Good Samaritan Fund	\$ 274.20
Lutheran World Relief & World Hunger	\$ 2,730.18
Bremwood - LSI	\$ 326.39
Operation Christmas Child	\$
Education Fund	\$ 411.97
Youth Fund	\$ 338.06
Sunday School Fund	\$
Caring Tree	\$ 150.20
Meals on Wheels	\$
Manna	\$
Heifer International	\$
Campers Fund	\$
Dayspring Children's Village	\$ 103.93
Northern Lights Shelter	\$ 151.73
LRH Auxiliary	\$ 228.75
TOTAL	\$ 4,934.32

Donations

\$90.27 - Lutheran Social Services

Memorials

\$25.00 General Fund- Tom
Midtgaard and Don Griffin

\$20.00 Brian Bestul

\$20.00 Richard Hagen

Concerns for the Present

Confirmation breakfast on Oct 26th. Serving Cinnamon rolls, fruit, mild, coffee, and OJ.

Motion to approve youth to be confirmed (Connie/Hayley)

New Members/Baptisms/Funerals

Transfers out: -

Funerals: -

Baptisms -

Communion Servers: Nov 2nd – Weston, Kimberley, Mariah
Nov 16th – Hayley, Gina, Weston

We Go Out in God's Name

Motion to Adjourn – (Connie/Kevin) - **Approved**

Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting November 18, 2025 6:00PM

Devotions: Connie Kenison

First Lutheran Financial Update

October 2025

Income	\$ 12,143.64
Electronic Income	\$ 3,406.95
Expense	\$15,550.59
End of Month	(\$12.85)

YTD as of August

Income	\$131,561.35
Electronic Income	\$31,205.32
Other Income	\$33,015.50
Use of Church	\$560.00
Expense	\$203,644.77
End of Month	(\$7,302.60)

October General Budget

Expenses

Payroll:	\$ 13,372.18
E-Giving Expense	\$ 45.84
Church Maintenance	\$ 95.00
Utilities	\$ 811.57
Telephone	\$ 142.36
Office Expense	\$ 721.00
N. Iowa Synod	\$ 375.00
Total Expenses	\$ 15,563.44
Income	\$ 15,550.59
Net	\$ (\$12.85)

TRUST FUND UPDATE

The Trust Fund Committee would like to remind congregation members that grant application forms are available in the Church Office. Grants are available for new ministries, separate and apart from the day-to-day operation of the church. This year's form includes a section for approval by a committee of the Church. Please submit your application to the appropriate committee of the church for review and approval. The deadline for committees to submit approved applications to the Church Office is noon on December 17, 2025. Please contact any Trust Fund member with questions.

Annual Meeting Deadline for Reports

The deadline for all committee reports is Monday, December 29th. The best way to send your reports is by emailing a word, publisher or excel file. We can also use a printed document but hard copy printed out but it is not ideal and takes more office time to make it work in the report. If you have any questions, please call or email the church office at flc@flcnorthwood.org or 641-324-2984.

THE PRACTICE OF STEWARDSHIP: A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE The practice of stewardship begins with hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is the power of the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament that changes our hearts and wills so that we become the generous children of God. The practice of stewardship continues by providing opportunities for people to live out their faithful and joyful response to the Good News of Jesus. Stewardship is everything that we do after we say, "I believe". The practice of stewardship involves the way we speak of Jesus and our faith. Paul says that we are "stewards of the mysteries of God" which have been revealed in Jesus. As good stewards of the Good News of Jesus we speak confidently, yet humbly, of what Jesus has done for the world and for us. Our participation in worship and the Eucharist "proclaims the death of Jesus until he comes again". The practice of stewardship involves the way we devote our time and energy in daily life to God by serving others. As we are faithful in our vocations (family, citizen, job, member of a congregation, student, friend, etc.), we serve God with our activities of daily living, some of which occur within the congregation, but most of which occur outside of our congregation. The practice of stewardship involves the way we care for the earth. As people who share in dominion over the earth, we exercise responsible and careful management of the earth's resources. We value the creation not only for its usefulness to us, but also for God's evaluation that it is "very good". The practice of stewardship involves the way we manage our financial resources. As people who have received all things as gifts from God, including personal talents, skills, interests, and the ability and desire to develop these, we share a portion of what we have been given with others. Proportionate giving has been the Biblical way of determining how much we are going to faithfully manage for the benefit of our own lives and how much we are going to faithfully and generously give away for the benefit of others and the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus. We seek to grow in giving to and through the tithe (10% of our income).

Prayers of Comfort

We extend our sympathy and prayers to Gladie Hagen and her family. Gladie's husband, Dick, passed away on October 29. His service was at FLC on November 8.

We extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Mike Walton. Mike passed away on October 31. His service was at FLC on November 7.

We extend our sympathy and prayers to Sue Bestul and her family. Sue's husband, Brian, passed away on November 1. His service was at FLC on November 7.

Sabbatical plans are in the works.

What is 'Sabbatical'? "Sabbatical" is a significant amount of time away from ministry responsibilities and is to be used for both professional growth and personal renewal. The intent of sabbatical is to sharpen the recipient's skills and to refresh both the spiritual life and a sense of calling.

Pastor Becky will be taking a three-month sabbatical in two parts. The first month begins January 20. She will be traveling to Dayspring Farm, Doornkloof, Magaliesburg to join in the life and ministry of Kim Katuda at Dayspring Children's Village. Watch for more information about how you can be connected into this journey.

Thank You

The new Advent paraments on the altar, lectern, and pulpit are gifts given to First Lutheran by two Altar Guild members:

Jean Van Veldhuizen in memory of her husband, Bernie. Fran Pixley in memory of loved ones.

Our congregation appreciates the gift of these paraments. They truly add to the beautification of the altar area at this special time of the church year as we await the birth of Jesus Christ.



1. Kase Bachtle, Andrew Houg, Marlee Rasmusson, Mark Senne
2. Cole Eilertson, Jackson Foss, Jenna Bauers, Truman Hengesteg, Teresa Johnson, Bryce Ogea
3. Jacob Loken
- 4.
5. Austin Morris, Emily Tufte, Jeff Vansteenburgh
6. Ashley Leegaard, Suzanne Olson, Rylee Watts
7. Debra Brockman, Natalee Lohmann, Max Rugland, Evelyn Ralston
- 8.
9. Kory Olson, Kathleen Thrond
10. Joseph Bedford, Jessica Berry, Justin Senne
11. Tiffany Berg, Sue Bestul, Jacob Krull
12. Tony Fredericks, Addie Rugland, Hudson Haxton
13. Gary Hanson, Bret Johnson, Carter Thofson, Patricia Trenhaile
14. Linda Christianson, Daryl Love, Madelyn Midtgaard
15. Chelsea Boyden, Judith Jorgensen, Bryan Sime
16. Tom Hakes, Jesse Harang, Tyler Hillman, Barbara Trenhaile
17. Jason Adams, Holly Hankins, Bonnie Hengesteg, Frances Olson, Austin Schutz, Joclyn Shackleton
18. Troy Einertson, Kristine Gordon, Mark Skellenger
19. Callan Brunsvold, Nalda Zipse
20. Elexis Carrison, Mary Hanson, Candee Hunchis, Katelyn Thofson, Russell Knudson
- 21.
22. Wade Flattum, Ronald Hengesteg, Janelle Johnson, Mason Thofson, Avery Nielsen
23. Rhonda Taylor, O'Brian Tyrrell
- 24.
25. Mary Bachtle, Michael Lee, Carol Van Veldhuizen
26. Stephanie Hengesteg, Calli O'Neill, Hunter Ralston
27. David Borcharding, Larry Roerish, Samantha Zipse
28. Jan Mielke, Grayson Pangburn, Megan Avila
29. Larry Foley, Sawyer Hulshizer, Lauren Welty, Gina Solberg
30. Jonathan Berry, Jordan Helgeson, Arlys Reeder
31. Darin Dahlby, Olivia Gentz, Brandon Knutson, Lauren Petznick, Blythe Vandell

December 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	3 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	4 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Taekwondo	5	6
7 <u>Advent 2</u> 9:00am: Service 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	8	9 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	10 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	11 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Taekwondo	12	13
14 <u>Advent 3</u> 9:00am: Service. 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV with H.C. 6:30pm: JH. Youth	15	16 5:15pm: Council Mtng. 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	17 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth Trust Fund Requests Due at Noon	18 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Taekwondo	19	20
21 <u>Advent 4</u> 9:00am: Service 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 3:00pm: LRH 6:30pm: J.H Youth 7:00pm Choir Candlelight	22	23 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	24 4:30 Christmas Eve Worship at First 7:30 Christmas Eve Worship at DCV	25 10:00am Joint Christmas Day worship At First Dinner to follow	26	27
28 <u>Christmas 1</u> 9:00am: Service 10:10am: No Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	29	30 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	31 Youth Lock In			

First Lutheran Office hours at Monday through Thursday from 9:00am until Noon. Office is closed December 24, 25, 31st. Merry Christmas!