

**First Lutheran Church**  
**309 Ninth Street North**  
**Northwood, IA 50459**

**www.flcnorthwood.org**  
**Office Phone: 641-324-2984**  
**E-mail: flc@flcnorthwood.org**

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# **First Lutheran Focus      January 2026**

Address Service Requested

<b><u>Week</u></b>	<b><u>Counter</u></b>	<b><u>Lay Reader</u></b>	<b><u>Greeter</u></b>	<b><u>Acolyte</u></b>
<b>January 4</b>	Mike & Judy Stevens	Madelyn Midtgaard	Ballantynes	Logan Trenhaile Wes Ballantyne
<b>January 11</b>	Stu & Kim Anderson	Gary Nerlien	Ruglands	Austin Schutz Max Rugland
<b>January 18</b>	Randy & Laure Buehrer	Morgan Johnson	Flattums	Tucker Janssen Axel Flattum
<b>January 25</b>	David & Sharron Petznick	Tim Knutson	Holstads	Kellan Stambaugh Graham Holstad

**Share Shoppe**  
**Saturday, January 3rd**

# PASTOR'S PAGE

**Jeremiah 29:11**

**For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.**

**(Have you ever wondered, God, is this what you had in mind?)**

**Philippians 4:4-7**

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**(Have you ever wondered, God, could you get a bit closer? I need you!)**

These two passages rank high on my list of favorites and are frequently referenced. What are your go-to verses? How about favorite hymns? My favorite is "my life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation .... how can I keep from singing." A close second is "All Are Welcome."

The New Year is beginning full of hope and excitement because God is walking with each of us each and every day. I don't have plans for a specific resolution other than living with a song in my heart and on my tongue.

How did last year's plan go? What are your plans for this new year? Here are some suggestions:

- Strengthen your private devotional life.
- Take time to read the Bible and pray each day because it is as important as eating right and exercising daily. Prayer is a wonderful time to pray for the needs of others. And prayer is a good place to ask for God's direction in life.
- What are the gifts that God has given you?
- What new and exciting focus is God calling you to?
- Where will you proclaim God's presence and witness to Jesus Christ in your life?
- Where will you be the hands and feet of Christ this year?
- How will you give thanks for all God has done for you?

Be brave and write down your plan and share it with someone you trust who will be your accountability partner.

Our journey of faith is an important part of balance in our lives – but it doesn't just happen to you. It involves you actively doing your part in worship, prayer, learning, sharing, giving of time and talents, faithful stewardship – all those things which come to us as a gift from God. Make a commitment to walking daily with Jesus and you will find the journey exciting!

In Christ, Pastor Becky

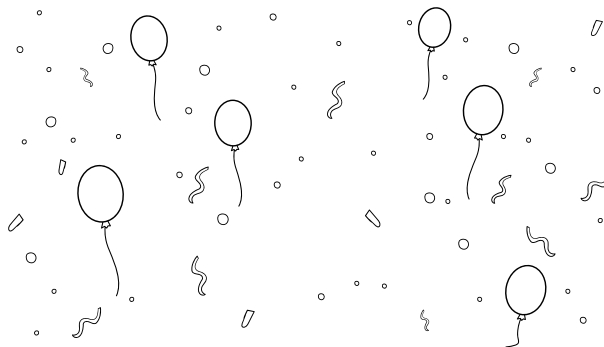
# YOUTH NEWS

**December was a very busy month down in the Youth room. With all our normal activities happening, it was capped off with a combined Junior and Senior High Lock-In on New Years Eve!**

**We started out the month with a lesson on how God has created all of us as individuals and we need to focus on who and what God wants us to be (Romans 12:2). We then had a night learning about pain (mental, physical and emotional) and how God wants us to deal with it (Romans 8:18). At the end of the month, we had our Christmas parties, with lots of fun, goofy presents, and reading of the Christmas story. We did have to cancel the very last Jr. High Youth of the year as a blizzard stopped us that evening.**

**The Youth were busy around the building a few times this month as well. We helped move The Caring Tree presents after they were done, helped set up and tear down the risers for the children's program and choir services, as well as helped to hang the new tv in the sanctuary.**

**I'm looking forward to 2026 and all the opportunities it will provide for me and our Youth. We'll start the year off with a lesson focused on making our faith a solid foundation – and making a large blanket fort in the Youth room those nights.**



**Regular Council Meeting  
November 18th, 2025  
First Lutheran Church - Northwood**

Members Present: Kris, Pastor Becky, Hayley, Weston, Judy, Mike, Connie, Kimberly, Mariah, Megan

**We Assemble in God's Name**

Devotion – Connie Kenison

**We Celebrate our Past**

**Presidential Correspondence - Kris K.** – Thank you cards were received from the scholarship recipients. Confirmation breakfast went well. Office hours will be adjusted to Mon-Thu 9am to noon until further notice. Along with this change, the council is in support of hiring someone temporarily during staff’s leave of absence.

**Secretary's Report -Megan O.** – Minutes from the previous meeting approved.

**Treasurer's Report- Judy S.-** Numbers are close for the month, and -\$7000 for the year. Generous gifts usually come in around the holidays, so this is ‘normal’. Ideas for continued stewardship were discussed. The proposed budget was presented to council. No vote at this time.

**Pastor's Report - Pastor Becky** – The November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for pastoral leaders was rescheduled to December 7<sup>th</sup>. Annual meeting date set for January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Sabbatical scheduled for Jan 20<sup>th</sup> – February 16<sup>th</sup> 2026

**Motion/Vote to accept all reports (Mariah/Hayley). - Approved**

**We Present our Offering**

**FINANCE** - Judy S.

**WORSHIP-** Kimberly A. – Meeting held Nov 11, planning for December. Decorating Wed, Nov 26. Many holiday services are approaching. Candlelight service, Christmas Eve, Christmas and community meal. Next meeting on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**INSPIRE-** Kevin M. – Everything is going well! No services for Thanksgiving or New Years Eve. They are very excited to start Christmas music.

**YOUTH** - Weston W.- Attendance has been great, and relatively consistent. Looking forward to New Years Lock in. Youth kitchen was repainted and received two new cabinets. We can’t thank Youth Leadership enough.

**EDUCATION** - Mariah B. & Hayley M. – Preparing for the Christmas Program “Campfire Carols” on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Attendance has been good. The Sunday School program has been going well.

<b>First Lutheran Missions</b>	
<u>November 2025</u>	
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	\$ 511.97
Youth Fund	\$ 438.06
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,934.32</b>

<u>Donations</u>	
Youth	\$100.00
Education	\$100.00
<u>Memorials</u>	
IMO Dick Hagen	\$20.00

**PROPERTY** - Mike S. – Have not met since last meeting but are planning a meeting soon. Few repairs have been noted: The sink in the upstairs men’s restroom needs attention. Sink in the women’s/girl’s bathroom on the top floor does not work.

**MISSION**- Gina S. – We are officially titled for Feed My Starving Children. First payment will be coming up, and there are funds available between those asked for from the Trust, and the ELCA conference to cover. The second payment will be due at the time of the event. Planning to host at the Timbers.

**FELLOWSHIP**- Connie K. – Served 40 people for confirmation breakfast and everything went well! 3 funerals in 30 hours was very busy, but everything worked out well!

**Concerns for the Present** – Nominations Committee – Kevin M., Dennis Johnson and Tim Knutson. Kimberly A. to join the committee for this year. **Annual Reports are due in the office December 29, 2025!**

**New Members/Baptisms/Funerals**

Transfers out: -  
 Funerals: - Mike Walton 11/7/2025; Brian Bestul 11/7/2025;  
 Richard Hagen 11/8/2025  
 Baptisms -

**Communion Servers:** Dec 7 – Kimberley, Mariah, Weston;  
 Dec 21 – Weston, Mike, Mariah Christmas program

**We Go Out in God's Name**

**Motion to Adjourn MMSP** – (Mike/Mariah) - **Approved**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Next Meeting December 16, 2025 5:15PM**

**Devotions:** Mariah Ballantyne

<b><u>First Lutheran Financial Update</u></b>	
<b><u>November 2025</u></b>	
Income	\$ 11,486.36
Electronic Income	\$ 2,863.37
Expense	\$20,835.40
End of Month	(\$6,485.67)
<b><u>YTD as of November</u></b>	
Income	\$142,572.00
Electronic Income	\$34,068.69
Other Income	\$33,446.21
Use of Church	\$605.00
Expense	\$224,291.28
End of Month	(\$13,599.38)

<b><u>November General Budget</u></b>	
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>	
Payroll:	\$ 12,366.36
E-Giving Expense	\$ 46.03
Church Maintenance	\$ 199.34
Utilities	\$ 1,467.74
Telephone	\$ 192.93
Office Expense	\$ 1,534.34
Insurance	\$ 4,654.00
N. Iowa Synod	\$ 375.00
Total Expenses	\$ 20,835.40
Income	\$ 14,349.73
Net	\$ (\$6,485.67)

**Annual Meeting**

**The 2025 Annual Meeting will be held during service on Sunday, January 18, 2026 . All members are encouraged to come and take part in this meeting. The 2025 First Lutheran Church Annual Report booklet will be available in January for your review prior to the meeting. Reports will not be read at the meeting.**

## 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.

### Here are a couple portions of the latest update from Dayspring. More updates are on the last page.

Our academic year concludes in December, so we held our Annual Awards Day on November 29th. The children showcased their God-given gifts and talents through praise songs, dance, and scripture recitations. It is always the highlight of our year. This time, instead of holding it at Dayspring, we hosted the event at a local church. We have been blessed with abundant rain this season, making our roads difficult to navigate, and the church was far more accessible for parents.

This is a busy maintenance season for us—a time of cleaning, painting, and repairs as we prepare for the new school year in January. It is not much of a holiday, but it is certainly quieter without 101 children and 22 staff on the property! With limited funds for maintenance this December, we will focus on the most urgent needs, as we trust God for additional provision in the New Year.

“Last year, the government drastically reduced our Education Department subsidy without notice. Normally, it covers teacher salaries until March of the following year, but in 2024 it ran out in December. We struggled to cover wages and basic operating costs. This year has been even more difficult, with the Education Department refusing to communicate with schools or independent school advocacy groups. Subsidies were either unpaid, delayed, or deposited in random amounts with no explanation, making it impossible to know how much funding we needed to raise each month just to cover staff salaries”.

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Blessings from Elijah, Kim and the family at Dayspring

Below are the bank details for anyone who God lays on their heart to give.

USA: Dayspring Children’s Mission, Inc.

Northwood State Bank, (Northwood, IA)

Account Number: 1026712

Donations are given a tax receipt.

If sending a check, please send it to: Dayspring Children’s Mission, PO Box 172, Northwood, IA 50459

Contact for questions: Kris Gordon 1-641-390-1529

**Alternatively: There is a PayPal link on our new website: [www.dayspring.org.za](http://www.dayspring.org.za)**

Thank You for your partnership in ministry and faithful giving to the general fund which makes it possible to faithfully worship, teach and reach out to the youth and neighbors. A special thank you to our Music Director, Senior Choir, Bell Choir, Narrators and Musicians who participated in the Candlelight Service. Also, a sincere thank you to our Sunday School children and staff for putting on a great program. Attendance was good and the children did a great job! A HUGE thank you to everyone who has helped make our Advent Season and Christmas celebrations wonderful services. The Community Christmas Dinner was a success, and we thank all those involved with the planning and execution of that wonderful event. THANK YOU FOR A MEMORABLE DECEMBER!!



- 1) Gretchen Hengesteg, Eric Roerish, Grady Walk, Colby Trenhaile
- 2) Ethan Binnebose, Tristan Hanson, Shelby Mattern, Sawyer Ogea, Diane Ubben
- 3) Michael Read
- 4) Chase Boyden
- 5) Michelle Schulz
- 6) Bryck Abrams, Kristen Null
- 7) Stephanie Harmon
- 8)
- 9) Sandra Sime
- 10)
- 11) Amy Hennigar, Justin Nerlien
- 12) Roger Odegaard, Joann Ogea, Zoey Andreasen
- 13) Jayson Olson
- 14)
- 15) Connie Fett, Eldora Stehn
- 16) Brian Costello, Dayna Strauss, Landen Nelson, Michelle Petznick, Nolan Senne, Blake Stevens
- 17) Zachary Costello
- 18) Breckan Willier
- 19) Bonnie Roppe, Jason Solberg
- 20) Collin Houg
- 21) Shana Brunsvold, Olivia Urbatsch
- 22) Charles Hengesteg, Travis Johnson
- 23) Josh Mattern
- 24) Chad Nelson, Loghan Nelson, Judy Stevens
- 25) Hallie Hanson, Jason Hanson, Dianne Johnson, Emersyn Wahl, Nate Wilder
- 26) Josie Einertson, Sonya Medlang, Michele Schaefer, Matthew Tufte
- 27) Megan Gentz, Atlas Wright
- 28) Barnes Toresdahl
- 29) John Midtgaard, Galen Pixley, Karen Pixley, Thomas Watts
- 30) Sally Aase, Bryden Willier
- 31) Douglas Fallgatter, Tanya Hebrink, Ward Willand



## *Poinsettias*



*In Memory of James, Alice & Wendell Watts; Bill and Doris Erdman  
given by Tom and Joan Watts*

*In Memory of loved ones  
given by Carolyn and Dan Reeder*

*In Memory of Elaine Hill and Kevin Klitzke  
given by Larry Klitzke*

*In memory of Dennis and Helen Orvedal  
given by Stacie Harms*

*In Memory of loved ones  
given by Carol Liljedahl*

*In Memory of loved ones  
given by David and Sharon Petznick*

*In Memory of Avis Lehman  
given by David, Patty, Lisa and Mary Irons*

*In Memory of loved ones  
given by Gary and June Nerlien*

*In Memory of Hellen Holstad  
given by First Lutheran Alter Guild*

*In Memory of Brian Bestul  
given by Sue Bestul*

*In Memory of loved ones  
given by Russ and Delores Knudson*

*In memory of loved ones  
given by Keith and Fran Olson*

**Dayspring Farm, Doornkloof, Magaliesburg, 1791; telephone: 014 577 1238**  
**NPO registration no. 062-966.PBO# 930018767 email: [dayspringcv@gmail.com](mailto:dayspringcv@gmail.com)**  
**[www.dayspring.org.za](http://www.dayspring.org.za) (WEBSITE PLEASE CHECK IT OUT!)**

**December 2025      News from Dayspring!**

*Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7a The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.* Such a beautiful and precious truth, which encompasses the whole Christmas Gospel message.

During this season, let us take time from the demands of the holiday to meditate on this prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ almost 700 years before He humbled Himself and appeared on earth in the form of a human baby. Then we can sincerely celebrate and be grateful for the true meaning of Christmas.

This has been an incredibly challenging financial year—one of the most difficult in my 29 years of serving here. We are deeply grateful to each of you who have “put your hand to the plow” with us through prayer and giving. God has been amazingly faithful, and by His grace, we made it through. As 1 Peter reminds us, our confidence in God’s love and care is tested, and it is in seasons like this that we get to witness His faithful provision once again.

One of our greatest blessings since 2017 has been the sponsorship of the majority of our food by an amazing organisation. What a relief it has been to know our children would always have three meals a day. We were the only full school they supported, as they typically assist preschools only.

Unfortunately, due to their own funding struggles this year, they made the very difficult decision to end their contract with us last month. This means we must now add \$1400 per month to our existing \$900 food budget beginning in January. While we are profoundly grateful for their support over the past eight years, we ask you to trust God with us for increased provision in the coming year.

Earlier this year, we experienced a wonderful development: through a generous gift from a former volunteer, we added two rooms onto an existing hostel. This allowed us to house all our Grade 2–9 girls in one building—crowded, but together. It is a temporary solution as we trust God for Phase 2 of our building needs, but it has been a huge answer to prayer. Previously, our girls were housed without proper in-room supervision, which concerned us greatly. The girls absolutely love their new hostel, and we look forward to the day when both they and the boys can be accommodated in proper, purpose-built hostels.

We are also grateful for a donation given a couple of years ago for hostel renovations and to a company that donated materials and one day of labor to complete the finishing work, including tiling and painting inside and out. We continue to trust the Lord for a second bathroom and solar hot water, as the building currently has no geyser.

Beyond these building needs, we urgently require a new school minibus, repairs to the rondavel and main house roofs, and assistance with monthly operating costs. We deeply appreciate your prayers and support as we trust God for these provisions.

Our core staff worked exceptionally hard this year, and we are so grateful for their dedication through both the highs and the extreme lows. For more than 40 years, this has been God’s school, and He has never failed us. We KNOW He will not start now.

The staff and children of Dayspring Children’s Village wish all of our Dayspring family a very blessed Christmas. We send a HUGE thank-you for your faithful and ongoing love, prayers, and support. We are truly overwhelmed with gratitude for each of you. May God our Father, through Jesus Christ, meet you at your point of need and surround you with His grace, love, mercy, and Presence.

What a great season to remember the price Jesus paid to reconcile God to man and open up a new living way to commune with God the Father. May this reminder of who Jesus is and what He came to do fill you with all peace and joy in the Kingdom of God as you look forward to 2026.

# January 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> HAPPY NEW YEAR	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 9:00am: Service/Communion 10:10am: No Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 1:00pm: Staff Mtg 6:00pm: Worship Comm 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>7</b> 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>8</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:00am: Service. 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV with H.C. 6:30pm: JH. Youth	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 4:00pm: Altar Guild Mtg. 6:00pm: Council Mtg 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>14</b> 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>15</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9:00am: Service/Annual Mtg 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV/Annual Mtg 3:00pm: LRH 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>21</b> 2:00pm: Maple Crt worship 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>22</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts <b>**Pastor Becky travel to Dayspring Children's Village**</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 9:00am: Service 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>28</b> 4:00pm: Confirmation 6:15pm: Inspire 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>29</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

First Lutheran Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00am until Noon