

2025 — DECEMBER NEWSLETTER — FIRST EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

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Dear Siblings in Christ,

“The waiting is the hardest part.” This phrase is the refrain to a song by one of my favorite musicians, Tom Petty. It’s one of those phrases that show up at times in lyrics that speak to a deeper truth. Lyrics that remind us of what it means and feels like to be human. Lyrics that reassure us and give us comfort during challenging times. Lyrics that are also very much present throughout Scripture and our Christian tradition. I think especially of the hymns we will sing and Psalms we will read together this Advent season: “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” “Restore us, O God of hosts” (Psalm 80), and “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah.” These words we speak and sing leave an imprint on our collective heart, reminding us that we belong together and that we never have to go through life, especially the hard parts of waiting, alone.



As I’ve shared with you before, waiting for Christmas was really hard for me growing up! I loved everything about the season: the cookies, the snow, the presents, the music, and did I mention the cookies? I wanted every day to be Christmas, and I remember counting down the days with excitement as I opened the next box on the Advent Calendar. When I was about seven years old, I remember being so excited for Santa that I woke up at 2:30 am to find he had already stopped by and left our presents on the mantle! I stayed up the rest of the night and until 10 pm the next day playing with my new toys, enjoying Christmas treats, and listening to Christmas music. Now a parent myself, I will be sure to ask Santa to wait until closer to sunrise:)

Reflecting over the years, I’ve come to the realization that my desire for things to hurry up and get to the good stuff was kind of missing the point of living. Of being present in the moment. Of being attuned to the people and world around me. It goes without saying that sometimes wanting the waiting to end as quickly as possible is helpful—especially when we are in pain—and I also believe *the waiting* can teach us so much about who we are and who God has called us to be in our lives.

This calling is what we can explore together this Advent season. I invite each one of us to lean into *the waiting*. To notice and pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, and emotions in the days to come. To wonder where Jesus is among us and how we are being invited to share in the same good news of great joy for the world that the angels first shared with the shepherds who were also waiting—keeping watch over their fields by night to be sure that the sheep under their care made it safely through the night and all its uncertainties.

We have many opportunities for waiting this month: Come and share a meal followed by a short Advent service on Wednesday nights. Join for worship on Sunday mornings as we light a new candle each week to watch for the Messiah. Come to Christmas in Kenyon and the Beau Chant Choir Concert on Saturday, December 13 at 2 pm. And, continue to pray for our community, our state, our nation, and world—that we all may learn to act with hope, peace, joy, and love as we wait together for Creation to be renewed in God’s grace and love.

Advent Blessings to You,
Pastor D.J.



**May the love of Christ fill your heart and home
bringing you peace, comfort, and joy**

DECEMBER 3
5:00 to 6:15 P.M.
Come & Be Fed



Community
Meal at First
Lutheran

Free of Charge – Free Will Offering Accepted

WEDNESDAY ADVENT WORSHIP: DEC. 3,10,17 - 6:30 PM

**Saturday,
December 13
2 P.M.
at
First Lutheran**



BEAU CHANT
Community Choir
In Concert
*See flyers for
Admission Info*

CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE


December 24 - 4 pm



**SUNDAY WORSHIP
DECEMBER 28 – 9 am**

Readings & Carols
~~~~~

**YOUTH**

*Sunday  
School  
Christmas  
Shopping  
**SUN, DEC. 7**  
at 9 am  
in the Ed  
Wing*

*Christmas  
Simmer Kits  
for sale  
until gone*

*Sunday School  
Christmas Program  
**SUN DEC 21***

**FLCW**

*Meeting  
Sun Dec. 14  
10 am  
in the  
Joy Room*

FIRST EV LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES — NOVEMBER 19, 2025 @ 6 PM

**Welcome and Call to Order:** President Erica Aronson @ 6:03 pm

**Devotions:** presented by Tammy

**Present:** Candy Herrlich, Amy Lee, Luke Cordes, Tammy Fletcher, Eric Hoversten, Erica Aronson, Pastor D.J. Chatelaine, Brad Nesseth, Carmen Nesseth

**Approve Agenda:** Motion to approve the agenda. Carmen/Eric/pass

**Consent Agenda Items:**

**Secretary's Report:** Reviewed as printed in the October Church Newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report:** October was and November is on track to be similar giving amounts as 2024, thank you! We will have a large insurance payment due soon. We did contract with a new insurance company for 2026 and expect a \$1000+ savings. Thank you to those who worked on securing that. We will also see a monthly savings now that the switch to Metronet is complete. There is \$200+ in the caring fund and that will be used to purchase gas and grocery gift cards for Pastor D.J. to have on hand to disperse to those in need. Anything left at the end of the year will be given to the food shelf.

**Pastor's Report:** I am thankful for our congregation, and for the leadership we have on council. It has been a fulfilling first year as your pastor, and I am excited for where the Holy Spirit may guide us in the years to come. And, thank you for your prayers and support of me and my family as we welcomed baby Jack on October 1. Thank you to Annette for planning October services ahead with me! Updates from my ministry: Resumed home visits. Thank you to Carmen and other who kept in contact with homebound folks through letter writing. I heard from many how much these notes are appreciated. Community Connections: First and Gol tailgates wrapped up for Football but will resume for winter sports and concerts. Organ celebration on 11/16: kudos to the organ committee, Tammy Hanson, Annette, and Tanya for their leadership of the hymn sing and to everyone who helped make and serve lasagna. Kenyon area Thanksgiving service planned for Tuesday 11/25 at 6pm at Dale. Attended Veterans Day program at KWHS- special shout out to Eric for his speech and Oliver for playing the "Taps" solo! Confirmation/High School: Confirmation Sunday was a nice service- 5 confirmed. Special thanks to Cora Lee for her work in prepping the stoles for the confirmands. Fall Fellowship, Food and Fun on 10/29: thank you to Bryana and EdYou for your leadership and organization of this event for area middle and high schoolers. Wednesday night Confirmation began on 11/5: learning together through the New Testament this year. 7-7/8<sup>th</sup> graders actively involved this year. Synod/Churchwide Events: Attended ISAIAH gathering on 9/25 and virtual training on 11/6- plans in the works for a Palm Sunday Event in the PM. Missed Fall Theological Conference due to newborn care. Participated in First Call Retreat on 11/13. Synod Assembly will be on 5/2/26 in Mankato. Other: Grief support group met on 9/29 and 11/3, and will meet on 12/1 at 2pm. Everyone is welcome and can invite friends/family. Men's Ministry Bible study finished discussion on John's Gospel- starting new topic on Sunday. Community meal on 12/3: free or free will offering. Advent Wednesday night services will be at 6:30pm, following congregational meals. Advent Theme: Light One Candle. I plan to use about 7 more weeks of parental leave as follows: 12/28-1/20 (Back for annual meeting); then 1/26-2/17. Received a request to host a piano and violin concert in 2026. Thanks to the congregation for the baby shower as well as the 1995 birthday card and leather journal. October 22-November 19 Mileage (\$147.70) + other expenses (\$32.20) Total: \$179.90

**President's Report:** This year is wrapping up quickly—I feel like I blinked, and October disappeared! During October, I continued helping with Communion setup and serving. I attended the FLCW meeting, and I worked with Pastor Marggie to confirm her plans and to share feedback from the congregation after her first Sunday with us so we could make the next service even smoother. I also stepped out of my comfort zone by participating in the lay-led service. It went better than I expected, though you still won't see me jumping to the front of the line to be a reader! I will be working to get the balance of Pastor D.J.'s parental leave taken care of, getting volunteers to fill open positions for the 2026 committees we have open and working on my president's report for the annual report.

**Approve Consent Agenda:** Motion to approve the consent agenda: Tammy/Carmen/pass

**Ongoing Items:**

1. Organ Repair: Motion was made to move the fundraised balance of \$9521.48 to the general fund.

Eric/Tammy/pass

2. Constitution Review: Communion cards are in the pews, Pastor D.J. will announce this in worship on Sunday. No new updates on a replacement record keeping platform. The synod recent sent inquiry to congregations about what resources they use. The final proposal of the Constitution with updates is approved by the council and will be sent via email to the members for review. Will vote on the changes at the annual meeting.

3. Sanctuary Screen & Projector Research: Considering mounting TVs. Pastor D.J. is going to research this and bring information back to council.

**Youth Rep. Report:** Football lost in the first round of playoffs but it was the 1<sup>st</sup> game in which they scored the first points, so celebrating the small wins! Volleyball list in the section championship game. Girls basketball, Boys basketball, and wrestling have begun. First home GBB game will be 11/24; first BBB home game will be 12/1; first home wrestling

meet with be 1/8/26. Meet the Basketball Teams and Donkey Basketball on Thursday 11/20. Band benefit dinner and middle school play on 11/21. High school music concert on 12/9 at 7 pm.

**New Items:**

1. 2026 Preliminary Budget: Tammy presented and council reviewed. No action needed at this time.
2. Approve 2026 Compensation: Council reviewed the compensation plan as presented by personnel committee
3. Calendar: Reminder to all committees and individuals to add your meetings to the calendar or to have Annette help you to do so.

**7:30 pm–Motion** to continue the meeting for 15 more minutes. Eric/Amy/pass

**Committee Reports:**

FLCW- Thank you to all who helped make Lefse on 11/7. We had a very enjoyable day and our profit was \$533. FLCW meeting is set for 12/14 following church service in the Joy room. Agenda is the donation distribution of our funds. All are welcome to come. A flyer with information and registration forms are available in the fellowship hall for the 2026 Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention in Des Moines, Iowa on 7/16-7/19 2026. Upcoming Love Day Dates (looking for new helpers!): 12/11; 1/8; 1/22

Worship/Evangelism- Advent will include Wednesday shortened service with activity and possible meal. Sunday service will include wreath lighting. Sport themed service planned for 11/23 with members encouraged to wear sports gear with tailgating meal served after service. Community Outreach meal planned for 12/3 before Advent service to include chili and potato bar with free and freewill donations. 12/28- hymn sing

Property and Management- Committee met on November 17 with all members present. The following items were discussed: Current Property/Liability & WC insurance policies thru Church Mutual are set to expire on 11-23-25. Multiple bids were secured to consider replacing. Our carrier going forward will be Brotherhood Mutual written through the American Church Group. Coverage, limits and cost will stay very similar to last year. Our phone and internet have been moved from Mediacom to Metronet-T-Mobile (now one company). A substantial monthly/annual savings was realized in the move. The dated boiler serving the ed wing has recently been replaced by Reliable Heating & Cooling. Simplified piping and new components should make the new system more efficient. The City of Kenyon recently had placed a new storage shed of similar color next to the church's. It will be used to store picnic tables and items used for Farmers Market held on church property. Earlier this summer we directed rain water coming off the church and ed wing roofs away from the buildings by using above ground tile lines. That experiment worked with no water realized in lower ed wing basement. Now considering running underground PVC piping to achieve same. Will talk to Zumbro Valley Landscaping for thoughts and possibly a cost estimate. Organ rebuild is complete but there have been a couple of glitches - namely pedals or pipes failing to close. Obermeyer has quickly responded to repair including providing a 'tuning' at no expense. The drinking fountain is now in and will be installed soon.

Stewardship- Organized the "Thank You" Lasagna Supper after the Hymn Sing. Delivered Food Shelf items (approximately 38 pounds) from the 2 weeks of November. There is still a need, especially during the holidays. Thank you to all who donated! Assisted with Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes-20 boxes were filled and delivered to the drop off location in Faribault. Donations welcome for shipping & handling of \$10/box, checks to: First Youth.

Youth and Education- Received a grant for a Little Free Library. It is here and ready to install (have requested property and management help with this). Would like to add a Little Free Pantry for nonperishable food items next to it, possibly next spring. Fall Fellowship, Faith, & Fun was a hit, we had 24 kids attend, all feedback was great and we look forward to planning one next year. We are in the thick of our Christmas Simmer kit fundraiser, they will be available now until we sell out. Thank you, Carmen, for leading Operation Christmas child shoebox packing on Sunday November 9th, 20 boxes were packed. Advent Festival on 11/30- crafts, cookie decorating, and games. Youth Christmas Shopping on 12/7. Collection bins are out for any donations! Children's Christmas Concert/Live Nativity will be on 12/21 with noisy offering. Eric volunteered for coffee hour with cinnamon rolls.

KAIC- A survey regarding the future of the program has been developed and will be sent around to congregations.

Long Range Planning/Personnel/Endowment/Committees- Personnel will plan Pastor D.J.'s review soon.

**Next Meeting:** December 17th Time: 7 pm (following Advent Worship Service)

**Devotions:** Brad

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn Carmen/Tammy/pass Time: 7:55 pm

**Closing with the Lord's Prayer**

Respectfully submitted, Amy Lee, Secretary



# December 2025



SEASON:

Advent  
Christmas

|                                                                                    |                                                    |                       |                                                              |                  |                            |                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                    | 1<br>2:00 Grief Support<br>5:30 Worship Evangelism | 2<br>12-1 Open Prayer | 3<br>5:30 Community Meal<br>6:30 Advent Worship              | 4                | 5<br>4:30 Ed/You Committee | 6                                            |
| 7 Advent 2<br>9 Worship<br>10 Sun School<br>S/S Chr. Shopping<br>10 Coffee         | 8<br>Grand Piano Tuning this Wk                    | 9                     | 10<br>5:30 Advent Supper<br>6:30 Advent Worship              | 11<br>1 LOVE DAY | 12                         | 13<br>2 pm<br>Beau Chant Concert<br>AT FIRST |
| 14 Advent 3<br>9 Worship<br>10 FLCW Mtg-Joy Rm<br>10 Sun School-Class<br>10 Coffee | 15                                                 | 16<br>7 KAIC          | 17<br>5:30 Advent Supper<br>6:30 Advent Worship<br>7 Council | 18               | 19                         | 20                                           |
| 21 Advent 4<br>9 Worship w/<br>S/S Chr. Program<br>10 Coffee                       | 22                                                 | 23                    | 24 Chr Eve<br>4 Candlelight Chr Eve Service                  | 25 Chr Day       | 26                         | 27                                           |
| 28 Chr. 1<br>9 LAY LED Worship<br>Lessons & Carols<br>10 Coffee                    | 29                                                 | 30                    | 31                                                           |                  |                            |                                              |

*Happy Holidays*



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# December

## newsletter



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**PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO ALL  
FROM HEAVEN'S ALL-GRACIOUS KING**

*from 'T CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR'*  
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