


*First Evangelical Lutheran Church*  
*A Member of the*  
*Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod*

*happy new year*

2021

**FIRST FRUITS**  
**January Newsletter**





Each new year brings us new opportunities  
to know Him more, to walk in faith,  
and grow by His grace.

May your year be  
blessed in the Lord.

“...Eye hath not seen, nor ear  
heard, neither have entered  
into the heart of man, the  
things which God hath  
prepared for them that love  
Him.” — 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 KJV

*Jim Lewis*



Serving Christ by proclaiming Christ crucified in the  
Minnesota North District of the LCMS

## *Pastors Corner*

Many people make New Year's Resolutions. During Biblical Times, the Babylonians would make promises to their gods at the start of each year. The Romans would begin each year by making promises to the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named. This tradition has many other religious parallels.

If you have made a New Year's Resolution, what are you planning to do? The Old Testament Reading for Sunday, January 3, is from 1 Kings 3:4-15. The reading begins with God speaking to King Solomon with this request, "God said, 'Ask what I shall give you.'" Just imagine that, God is telling King Solomon that he can ask God for one special Blessing, it can be anything-the sky's the limit. If God came to you with this request, what would you ask for? Would you ask for more money? More and new friends? A new house or a new car? What do you suppose King Solomon asked God for? He didn't ask God for money, friends or a new chariot, but he asked God for wisdom, "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" Just imagine that, King Solomon could have asked for anything but he asked God for Wisdom. The wisdom to not only make the right decisions but also the wisdom necessary to lead God's People with sensitivity, compassion and empathy.

How many times haven't we gotten so wrapped up in our own personal needs and wants that we tend to overlook the wants and needs of other people? Through experience, I believe that there is no substitute for the feeling that I receive when I am able to reach out and help a person to make a difference in their own life. To me the words of Jesus, ring so true, Matthew 7:12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them" and the words of Hebrews 13:2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained **angels** unawares".

As God's People let's begin the new year, 2021, with Matthew 7:12 and Hebrews 13:2 as our New Year's Resolution!

May the Lord God keep you **SAFE** and Bless you with a very Merry Christmas along with a prosperous New Year!

***Pastor Steve Breitbarth***



## LIBRARY CORNER, JANUARY 2021

Happy New Year to our dear First readers! We're all praying for a new year filled with thanksgiving for God's gracious care for us as we continue to follow the protocols set in place to keep us and others safe and healthy. When the news is filled with horror, after praying and reading God's Word, it's sometimes helpful to remove oneself from the present and delve into a book about a slower time not due to a pandemic, or a mystery that is solved in a satisfying way, or a ...whatever your interest may be, you can most likely find something to read to lift yourself up out of your circumstance. – *Janie Carlson, Darlene Baltus and Shela Cline.*

A very faithful reader writes: Merely by coincidence, two newly shelved books in our library by completely different authors, have a similar theme – two young pregnant girls from disastrous backgrounds with no chance of ever having a hope-filled life:

**BEFORE I SAW YOU** by Amy Sorrells, 813.54 Sor and **DEAR CAROLINA** by Kristy Woodson Harvey, 813.6 Har.

After reading these, it reminds me of Gen. 18:14 where God says “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

**FLIGHT RISK** by Cara Putman, 813.6 Put. “Cara Putman does it again. A plane crash, murders, a traumatized teen, and a crack lawyer who will do whatever it takes to protect her family and her clients. Throw in a little romance and **FLIGHT RISK** is a brilliantly woven story that takes the reader on a breath-stealing ride. I highly recommend this book.” Lynette Eason, author of The Blue Justice Series. “In her legal thriller, Putman weaves a story that proves what you read in the news isn’t always what it appears to be. Separating truth from what is perceived to be true takes her characters on a journey with twists and turns that will keep the reader turning the pages, anxious to see how it all fits together.” Martha Rogers, bestselling author.

**STATE OF LIES** by Siri Mitchell, 813.6 Mit. “In **STATE OF LIES**, Siri Mitchell has penned a page turner that I literally couldn’t put down. I confess I kept reading when I should’ve been writing my own novel. My heart breaks with Georgia Brennan as she suffers blow after blow when a past she didn’t even know she had catches up with her. Readers will applaud her resilience and determination to solve the mystery and save the lives of the people she loves – even when the face of the boogeyman

turns out to be someone she never expected. Don't miss this thrilling ride!" – Kelly Irvin, bestselling author.

**FRAGMENTS OF FEAR** by Carrie Stuart Parks, 813.6. Par, is one of the 2020 new books. If you like a fast-paced suspense book that keeps you guessing what more could possibly happen to one person, this is the one! Tavish finds herself in a lot of trouble but keeps coming back to the Bible verse from her grandmother's gravestone; Proverbs 3:5. And then there is a dog named Marley and an archaeologist or two. *Reviewed by Darlene Baltus.*

**OVERCOMER** by Chris Fabry, 813.54 Fab. When I first started this book about

a high school basketball coach (it was "their year" to win State) who was forced by budget cuts to become instead the cross-country running coach, I thought it wouldn't be interesting enough to even keep on reading. But as the plot progressed, an amazing story of God's love and grace and healed family relationships developed. It gives a detailed look at the strategy involved in becoming a winner even while battling a personal disability. A very worthwhile read. *Reviewed by Alice Hill.* (Please note that we also have the dvd of **OVERCOMER.**)

*"No person who can read is ever successful at cleaning out an attic." – Ann Landers*



## *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*

### **LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter article – January 2021**

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year. Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

- Who are you?
- To whom do I give?
- And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary. Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

- Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
- Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- Generously (2 Cor. 8:20);
- Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
- With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly,



quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It’s that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

## **Newsletter from Tamara Beaudoin**

### **Focus**

I had my newsletter ready to go out. After returning home I was rereading it and doing some final editing when I realized the focus was all wrong. I was focusing on the pandemic, my job, missing our holiday traditions and our family. Focus is where you pay particular attention to, or where you apply your efforts and thoughts. Where was I focusing? On me.

See, on my way home, when I looked up from my feet, I saw a man lying on the sidewalk sleeping. He had a blue tarp for a blanket. Next to him was a dog, carefully watching each person as they passed. Then I looked to my right. Next to the parking lot there were people laying under trees sleeping. Some young Ukrainian people saw the look on my face and said “Ameri-caan-skee”. First, I was angry, then I thanked God for the focus.



Right now, we all are experiencing hard times. We are going without family, friends, traditions, maybe jobs, food, spouses and security. One of the devil's weapons is fear. Yes, I am afraid. Seeing people sleeping on the ground in winter, and most of them elderly, scared me. This COVID-19 virus scares me. Fear can be paralyzing or motivating. I know that God is with us and will never leave us. I got motivated!

When I got home, I started talking to Kipp about what I saw. It crushed me when he said, "We need to focus our efforts. If we try to do everything, nothing will get done. One step at a time." Kipp is so good for me! So, we brainstormed how to focus our efforts and still do what we can for the people of Ukraine. We floated an idea around some of our friends, and it got rave reviews. We are working the details out and getting permission from Bishop Maschewski. Keep tuned for further updates.

Kipp is teaching a teen discussion group that started with three students and now has six. This group has potential of growing quickly and making a big impact. My English beginner's group is static with attendance of 10-15 people each session. Both Kipp and I take it personally when class attendance is light. Realistically, we know other factors affect attendance, and we remind each other of that often. Our private lessons have picked up as well. I moved four of my students over to Kipp as they can now converse and read well. Our college students told us that a professor at the university announced to her students that there are free English lessons being taught by Americans at the cathedral. That's where we got seven new students from. A Ukrainian sailor is now attending my beginner's English class and said he would spread the word to his shipmates. This is such a joy!

### **Personal / Family Updates**

- ❖ Our children are doing well in their jobs, and we are all healthy.
- ❖ Kipp and I would like to thank our congregations and pastor (Bryan Lundquist) in Michigan. We are grateful for you taking care of us, our home, holding us up in your prayers, your support of the mission and sending out our newsletters.



## Youth News

“in all things” National Youth Gathering 2022 Houston, Texas  
It has been 1½ years since Abbie Serfling, Tijanna Lattimore and I attended the National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. It does not seem like it was that long ago. In a short 1½ years is the next National Youth Gathering held in Houston Texas.

In only 1½ years we need to prepare and get ready to attend the next gathering. Who is going to attend in 2022? Will it be your youth, will you be a chaperone?

The National Youth Gathering is held every three years around the United States.

The 2022 Gathering theme is “in all things” based on Colossians 1:15-20. *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.*

The main talking points of these verses and what will be emphasized throughout the gathering are:

1. Christ is the Creator of all things and became a creature Himself, entering into His own creation.
2. Christ reconciles all things to himself through his death and resurrection.
3. Christ (risen, ascended, complete, sovereign) reigns over all authorities inside and outside the church.
4. Christ transforms the lives of all his people into his image. (The Lord and Master of all became the servant of all to show us how he would have us live [by the Spirit’s enlivening power] in service to him and others.)
5. Christ promises to return to restore all things and make his reign explicit for all to see.

The National Youth Gathering (NYG) is an experience like no other for the youth. They come together with thousands of other youth and adults to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ and God’s saving grace to His people through Christ. Those that attend will grow in their personal relationship with God and grow in their fellowship of Word and Sacrament in Christ’s Church. The Youth Gathering is a vehicle by which the Church reaches out to, cares for, and affirms young people, both church and unchurched. It

also equips youth and adults for ministry and vocational service in a variety of settings in their congregations, communities, and world. Youth Gatherings celebrate the meaning of Christian joy in all of life's situations, including transitions and crisis. It also recognizes and affirms the diversity of God's people.

Any youth that is at least 14 years to 19 years old on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, or entering his or her ninth-grade year at the time of the gathering may attend. Any young adult age 19-25 is encouraged to apply to be a Young Adult Volunteer (YAV). The YAVs get to work behind the scenes and help the Gathering run smoothly.

You might be wondering why we are talking about the NYG when it is still 1½ years away. Well, we need the youth that are interested in going to start praying about this trip. Praying about this trip to determine if they are willing and wanting to commit to growing in their relationship with God by attending. We will soon need their commitment to attend. It takes a lot of work in planning and preparing to attend an event like this, especially with it so far away. Knowing who is interested and committed to go, will help in the planning stages as we look at transportation options. A commitment form will be mailed out to all youth that will be eligible to attend in late January early February. If you have friends that would be interested in going, please let me know I would be happy to send them information. We will not turn anyone away. It also takes a lot of money to go, starting to fundraise now eases the burden in the future. This could be a huge blessing for families if they do not have to pay anything out of pocket.

You may be wondering how COVID-19 will change the event. As of right now they are planning to move forward with the gathering, the planning team is in constant contact with Houston officials and will keep a close eye on the pandemic at hand. If anything needs to change, they will communicate with us on what that will look like.

For everyone else that cannot attend, please pray for the youth that are thinking about attending. We have 19 eligible youth from First Lutheran that can attend in 2022.

For more information on the Gathering visit <https://lcmmsgathering.com> The information from this article was found on the website.

Blessings,

*Jessica Pellinen*

Family Ministry Program Director





*To All Of Our Youth Born In*



## **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY**

### **January 3**

#### **Mite Sunday**

**8:00 a.m. Traditional Service**

**9:15 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study**

**10:30 a.m. Non-Traditional Service**

### **January 10/ Communion**

#### **Dimes For Missions**

**8:00 a.m. Traditional Service**

**9:15 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study**

**10:30 a.m. Non-Traditional Service**

### **January 17**

#### **Youth Sunday**

**8:00 a.m. Traditional Service**

**9:15 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study**

**10:30 a.m. Non-Traditional Service**

**12:30PM ANNUAL VOTER'S MEETING**

### **January 24/ Communion**

#### **Food Shelf Sunday**

**8:00 a.m. Traditional Service**

**9:15 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study**

**10:30 a.m. Non-Traditional Service**

### **January 31**

**8:00 a.m. Traditional Service**

**9:00 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study**

**10:30 a.m. Non-Traditional Service**



## **Pastor Breitbarth Office Hours**

### **January Office Hours:**

#### **Tuesdays**

**Jan 5-9:00-2:30**

**Jan 12-9:00-2:30**

**Jan 19-9:00-2:30**

**Jan 26 Pastor Steve Gone**

#### **Wednesdays**

**Jan 6-9:00-4:00**

**Jan 13-9:00-4:00**

**Jan 20-9:00-4:00**

**Jan 27 Pastor Steve Gone**

## WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

**In the event of a winter storm and worship services get cancelled, please see the policy and procedure so you can find out how to be notified.**

- 1. Call the church office to listen to the recorded message at 218-326-5453.**
- 2. Visit the website at [www.flcgr.org](http://www.flcgr.org) the announcement will be on the homepage.**
- 3. Check the Facebook page at “First Evangelical Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Grand Rapids Mn”**
- 4. Watch KBJR 6 TV- Duluth/Superior for an announcement**
- 5. An email will be sent out. If you are currently not receiving emails from the church, please contact Shirley to be added.**
- 6. A text message will be sent out if you join the “Remind” class code. “Remind” is an app found in the Apple Store or the Play Store. Once you have it downloaded you can join a class by entering in the code @ha94hf. If you wish not to have the app on your mobile device, you can still sign up to receive text messages by going to <https://www.remind.com/join/h7ab86>**





*“Sharing the Love of Jesus”*  
**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**December 8, 2020**

Present: Dwight Kessler, Tom Lattimore, Mary Buech, Jessica Pellinen, Jennifer Flem, Les Flem, Doug Carlson, Greg Taylor, Linda Urevig

Call to order: Dwight K. called the meeting order at 5:30PM.

Opening devotion and prayer: Dwight K. led the devotion and prayer from 2 Peter 3:9 “God Waiting”

**Consent Agenda**

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Consent Agenda with additions to New Business (1. January Voter’s Meeting; 2. Trunk or Treat Extra Candy; 3. DPC Planning).  
Oral Reports of Boards and Committees

1. Boards of Christian Education & Youth: No Meeting

2. Board of Elders: Report in Packet/Les F.

3. Boards of Human Care & Missions: Report in Packet/Mary B.

4. Board of Stewardship: No Meeting/Doug C.

5. Board of Trustees: No Meeting/Greg T. stated that Itasca Utilities will be doing our plowing and snow removal this winter. The cost for plowing is \$95.00 an hour. The snow hauling cost will be \$200.00 an hour and will be done at our discretion.

6. Revolving Trust Fund Committee: No Meeting/Greg T.

7. Wiebe Grant Committee: No Request/Greg T.

8. Direction and Planning Committee: No Meeting/Greg T.

Family Ministry Program Director’s Report: Report in Packet/ Jessica P.  
Pastor’s Report: No Report  
Financial Secretary’s Report: Report in Packet

YTD income 2020: \$252,897.00

YTD income 2019: \$268,719.74

Treasurer’s Report: Report in Packet/Jennifer F.

As of: November 30, 2020

General Fund Chkg: \$43,808.88

Building Fund Chkg: \$3,223.65

Mortgage loan balance: \$70,515.33

Revolving trust fund Chkg: \$81,147.16

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept oral and written Board and Committee Reports.

Correspondence – Received a letter from Synod President, Pastor Matthew C. Harrison, regarding a proposal to add a year to the current 2019-2022 triennium, allowing districts to hold their conventions in either 2021 or 2022, and

moving the upcoming national Synod Convention from 2022 to 2023. This request is being made because of the coronavirus pandemic. Congregations will be able to vote either yes or no at a Voter's Meeting. We will be able to do this in January at our Annual Voter's Meeting.

### **Unfinished Business**

1. Call Committee Update – Tom L. stated that new candidates are being looked at by the committee and interviews will be done in January.
2. AV Committee Update – No Meeting/Tom L.
3. AV Upgrade Update – Tom L. stated that the work has been done and all TVs have been replaced. The hard drive has since failed, but a new one will be installed this week.
4. Security Camera System Update – Greg T. stated that the update is complete. The cameras have been installed. They are in color this time. The cost was \$399.99.

### **New Business**

1. Annual Voter's Meeting

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and approved to have the meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 12:30PM.

2. Trunk or Treat extra candy: Tom L. stated that more candy was bought at Walmart in the amount of \$157.92.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and approved to pay for the candy out of the Youth Activity Budget.

3. DPC Planning – Greg T. stated the need to set a meeting date for Strategic Planning. The meeting should be attended by representatives from each Board and anyone who wants to be part of the planning.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and approved to have a Strategic Planning Meeting on Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 12:30PM.

There was a discussion about finishing the Employee Handbook. The committee will meet on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at 6:30PM to finalize the handbook.

### **Caring and Sharing**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23PM  
The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer  
Respectfully submitted, Linda Urevig,  
Recording Secretary

### **COMING EVENTS**

January 5<sup>th</sup> – Board Meetings 6:30PM or as decided by each Board

January 12<sup>th</sup> – Council Meeting 5:30PM

January 17<sup>th</sup> - Annual Voter's Meeting



# Newsletter

**Please Have February 2021 Newsletter  
Articles to Shirley  
By January 15<sup>th</sup>.**

***Newsletter will be published and  
Sent out on January 25<sup>th</sup>.***

