

First Edition

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST
LUTHERAN DECEMBER 2020



Well...we have made it to the last month of this year. As I was thinking about the year 2020, I had to chuckle. If you remember back in January I began a sermon series called 2020 Vision, but I don't think any one of us could have seen what was going to happen this year. This has been a year we would all like to put behind us and never talk about again.

But even though this year has been brutal for a lot of people, God has still been working. I heard a Christian musician say something that really challenged me to the core. He said "why do we call Good Friday good?" That was the day the worst things imaginable happened to the best person on earth and yet, we call it good. The reason we call it good is because we know what happens on Sunday. I know it is the Christmas season and I'm talking about Easter, but I have a point, I promise.

We don't always see the big picture of how God is working through things. Maybe someday in the future we will be calling 2020 a Good Year because we will finally get to see how God used this year for our good. For my wife and I 2020 has been one of the greatest years because God answered our prayers and blessed us with Lillian. We have been praying for a child for six years and now we have one. Praise be to God!

And maybe you have your own story of how you saw God move in your life this past year even though there were many things taking your attention off of Him. But right now, with one month left in the year, let us bring our attention back to God. We celebrate the birth of Jesus. This same Jesus that would grow up, conquer death, and sit at the right hand of the Father. He is still in control. This year was not a surprise for Him and I believe He is going to work out something good through all of this.

So let us put on our glasses, get our 20/20 vision back, and focus our attention back on Jesus. God came to be near to us because this world has a way of making it seem God is nowhere to be found. But here is the Good News of the Christmas season: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means "God with us"(Matthew 1:23). God is with us and His name is Jesus Christ. Happy Birthday, Jesus! And Merry Christmas to all who are reading this and may you have a happy, blessed, and joyful New Year.

Pastor Matthew



PLEASE KEEP THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

THOSE WHO ARE ILL OR IN THE HOSPITAL

Kaylee Mudgett
Lindsey Kennedy (cancer)
(Pat Long's granddaughter)
Jessica Nornberg
Kerry Meyer
Brady Fiest (motorcycle accident)
Beverly Williams (cancer)
(Glen Pilgrim's niece)
Dena Dixon (daughter of Clancy Hanson)
JoAnn Artmann
(Karen Fundine's daughter)

Bonnie Anderson
Darlene Zabel
Tim Litsheim (cancer) Dan Long's nephew
Rita Peterson (cancer)
Amber Baerg (Chris & Julie Warren's daughter)
Sheila Pohle (cancer) (Sister-in-law Glen Pilgrim)
Adam Long (grandson of Dan Long)
Nancy Worden (sister of Neal Hofius)

PEOPLE IN NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING HOME

Riverside Assisted Living

Irene Pietz
Barb Reimer
Ken Kelling

Harmony House/Brainerd

Char Brattlund

MILITARY

Jennifer Vasquez—Navy, Daughter to Don and Sharon Gehrke
Chad Hagg—Army, Son of Arlene Hagg, Nephew of Eileen Ausland
Joseph DeLude—Army, Grandson of Don DeLude
Isaac Jacobson—Navy, Son of Dan & Wendy Jacobson
Sonja Larson—Army, Granddaughter of Mel & Gwen Larson
Patrick Anderson— Army, Nephew of Julie Hofius



UPDATING

If the military, those who are ill or in the hospital, or people in nursing homes is not up to date or if names need to be added or deleted, please contact Sharon Gehrke so that these lists can be updated.
Thanks

**Check out our Website at
firstlutheranpillager.net**

We also have a Facebook page to check out!!!! Please free to post anything or post comments!!! Facebook page search type in First Lutheran Pillager and this should take you to the page. The Calendar will be updated as the schedule changes!

PRAYER CHAIN

When you need prayer support, there is a group at our church who will pray diligently for whatever the need is. Please call Marlene Lindeman at 218-746-3541.

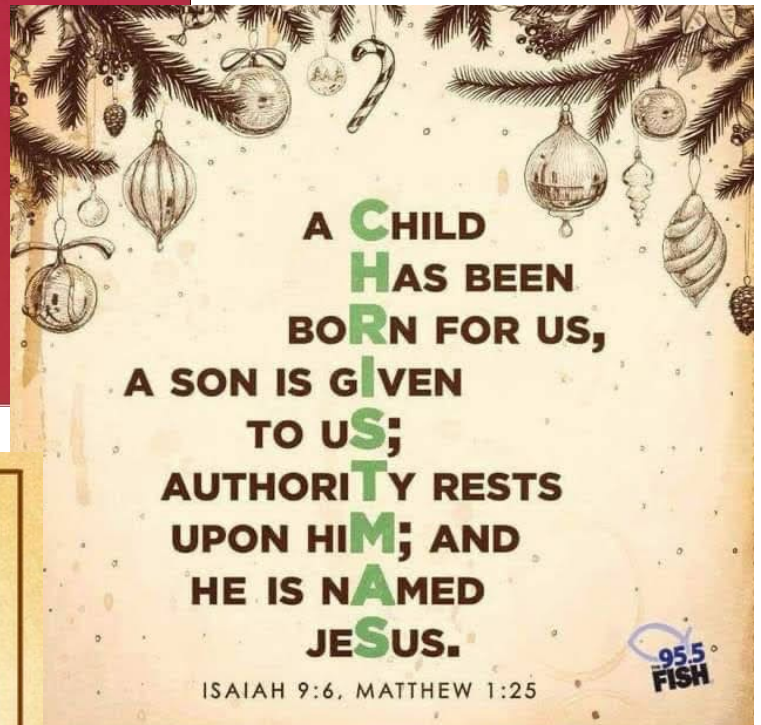
Church Council

President: Don Osowski
Vice President: Tom Kavanaugh
Secretary: Julie Warren
Mike Bellos, Bob Harmsen, Julie Hofius, Shirley Smith

Pastor Matthew Sundquist
Office 218-746-3775
Parsonage: 218-746-3750

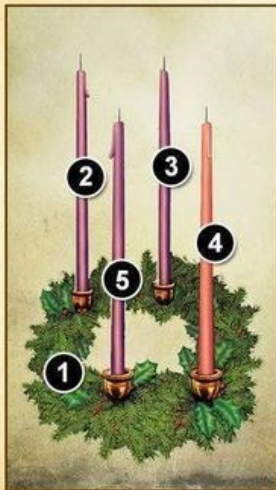
A Christmas Letter from Jesus

When you look for me at Christmas,
You won't need a special star.
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right here where you are.
You may not be aware of me
amid the celebrations.
You'll have to look beyond the stores,
and all the decorations.
But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do,
To close your eyes and say a prayer,
I'm waiting here for you.
You're the one I want to be with.
You're the reason that I came!
And you'll find me in the stillness
Where I'm whispering your name.



ADVENT FEATURE

ADVENT WREATH SYMBOLS



(1) **Evergreen Wreath** - The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God (the Alpha and Omega). The evergreen is chosen as the base because God is the foundation of all good. Green is the color that represents hope and new life.

Four Candles - represent the four (4) weeks of Advent. Traditionally, each week represents one thousand years, to sum to the 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the Birth of the Savior. The first two purple candles symbolizes (2) hope and (3) love respectively. The (4) third candle (which is pink/rose) symbolizes joy. The fourth and last purple candle represents (5) peace.

The light of the candles signifies the light of Christ to mankind.



MATT BOLD BLACET | DAILYJESUS.NET



Veterans Sunday at First Lutheran Pillager

Visiting Pastor Kendra Diehl from The Master's Institute Seminary led worship on November 8, 2020 during Pastor Matthew's paternity leave.

On this day - and in connection with the upcoming November 11th Veterans Day - we recognized and thanked those in attendance who have served in the military.



Eric McIntyre lead our worship service on November 15. Pastor McIntyre is the Director of Spiritual and Character Formation at M.I. Seminary. He is Pastor Matthew's spiritual leader and teacher.



On Sunday, November 22, Devyn Baker came and spoke to us about her life and Jessie, her husband's, addiction. She gave a beautiful testimony on what her life was then and what it is now with her relation to God.



On November 29, we welcomed Pastor Matt and Kirstie back from Pastor Matt's paternity leave!



Quilting ladies have been super busy making quilts for a local rehab program. They will be delivering 2 dozen or more on December 16. Quilts are for sale and are draped over the pews. You can purchase one for \$50!



A special thank you to Rosie's brother who made our Advent stand. It is so beautiful and adds so much to our Advent Season

If anyone wants communion, please call Pastor Matt at **218-746-3750** and he will be happy to make home visits to give you communion.



Quilting Today

DRINKING FROM MY SAUCER

I've never made a fortune
And its probably to late now,
But I don't worry about that much
I'm happy anyhow.

And as I go along life's way
I'm reaping better than I sow.
I'm drinking from my saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed!

Haven't got a lot of riches
And sometimes the going's tough,
But I've got loving ones around me
And that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for His blessings
And the mercies He's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer
"Cause my cup has overflowed!

Oh, I remember times when things went wrong
And my faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke
And sun peeped through again.

So Lord, help me not to gripe
About the tough rows that I've hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer
"Cause my cup has overflowed!

An old man calls his son and says, "Listen, your mother and I are getting divorced. Forty-five years of misery is enough." "Dad, what are you talking about?" the son screams. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," he says. "I'm sick of her face, and I'm sick of talking about this, so call your sister and tell her," and he hangs up....Now, the son is worried. He calls his sister. She says, "Like heck they're getting divorced!" She calls their father immediately. "You're not getting divorced! Don't do another thing. The two of us are flying home tomorrow to talk about this. Until then, don't call a lawyer, don't file a paper. DO YOU HEAR ME?" She hangs up the phone. The old man turns to his wife and says, "Okay, they're both coming for Christmas and paying their own airfares!

An old man meets a young man who asks:

"Do you remember me?"

And the old man says no. Then the young man tells him he was his student, And the teacher asks:

"What do you do, what do you do in life?"

The young man answers:
"Well, I became a teacher."

"ah, how good, like me?" Asks the old man.

"Well, yes. In fact, I became a teacher because you inspired me to be like you."

The old man, curious, asks the young man at what time he decided to become a teacher. And the young man tells him the following story:

"One day, a friend of mine, also a student, came in with a nice new watch, and I decided I wanted it and I stole it, I took it out of his pocket.

Shortly after, my friend noticed the flight and immediately complained to our teacher, who was you. Then you went to the class:

'This student's watch was stolen during classes today. Whoever stole it, please return it.'

I didn't give it back because I didn't want to. Then you closed the door and told us all to get up and you were going to search our pockets one by one until the watch was found. But you told us to close our eyes, because you would only look for his watch if we all had our eyes closed.

So we did, and you went from pocket to pocket, and when you went through my pocket, you found the watch and took it. You kept searching everyone's pockets, and when you were done you said 'open your eyes. We have the watch.'

You didn't tell me and you never mentioned the episode. You never said who stole the watch either. That day you saved my dignity forever. It was the most shameful day of my life. But this is also the day my dignity was saved and I decided not to become a thief, a bad person, etc. You never said anything, nor even scold me or took me aside to give me a moral lesson, I received your message clearly. And thanks to you, I understood what a real educator needs to do. Do you remember this episode, professor?

And the professor answers: 'I remember the situation, the stolen watch, which I was looking for in everyone's pocket, but I didn't remember you, because I also closed my eyes while looking.'

This is the essence of teaching:



Poinsettias at Christmas

The poinsettia was made widely known because of a man called Joel Roberts Poinsett (that's why we call them Poinsettia!). He was the first Ambassador from the USA to Mexico in 1825. Poinsett had some greenhouses on his plantations in South Carolina, and while visiting the Taco area in 1828, he became very interested in the plants. He immediately sent some of the plants back to South Carolina, where he began growing the plants and sending them to friends and botanical gardens.

One of the friends he sent plants to was John Bartram of Philadelphia. At the first Philadelphia flower show, Robert Buist, a plants-man from Pennsylvania saw the flower and he was probably the first person to have sold the poinsettias under their botanical, or latin name, name 'Euphorbia pulcherrima' (it means, 'the most beautiful Euphorbia'). They were first sold as cut flowers. It was only in the early 1900s that they were sold as whole plants for landscaping and pot plants. The Ecke family from Southern California were one of, if not, the first to sell them as whole plants and they're still the main producer of the plants in the USA. It is thought that they became known as Poinsettia in the mid 1830s when people found out who had first brought them to America from Mexico.

There is an old Mexican legend about how Poinsettias and Christmas come together, it goes like this: There was once a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give the the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Services. As Pepita walked to the chapel, sadly, her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up. 'Pepita', he said "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves him will make Jesus Happy."

Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made them into a a small bouquet. She felt embarrassed because she could only give this small present to Jesus. As she walked through the chapel to the altar, she remembered what Pedro had said. She began to feel better, knelt down and put the bouquet at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw them were sure they had seen a miracle. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena', or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'.

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the [Star of Bethlehem](#) which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.

Please consider bringing a poinsettia to church to help decorate the altar area for our Christmas season. If you would like to leave a note and have the poinsettia in memory of or in honor of, please leave a note with the poinsettia, and we will publish a list in the January Newsletter and also in the bulletins. You may pick up your poinsettia after Christmas Eve. Again lets make the altar area beautiful for this joyous season!