

First Edition



Thoughts From Pastor Matt!

As I am writing this newsletter, I could not help but be reminded of the great pandemic of 2020. I had a great idea of what I wanted to focus on in regards to the mission and vision of the church. What better year to cast vision than the year 20-20? But nobody saw what was coming just shortly into that year. Church was shut down, hospitals were full, and a world was thrown into confusion and chaos.

Now that we are in the year 2025, what should our mission and vision be? The more I think about that question, I always seem to get one answer: Go back to the basics. Sunday school kids sing "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so." But do we *really know what the Bible is telling us, or are we just stopping at Jesus loves me and that is all I need to know?* Yes, Jesus does love each and every person. That is clearly outlined throughout all of Scripture. However, how do we grapple with verses that talk about Jesus taking a whip and driving people out of the temple? That doesn't seem very loving. Or when Jesus talks about sending people into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. How can Jesus be loving and send people to Hell?

These are just two small examples that can really shake our faith. If we are taught that Jesus loves us because the Bible tells us, then come to find out Jesus said and did those things that don't seem very loving, then maybe our view of who Jesus is is all messed up. Or what our definition of love really is. Going back to the basics and digging into God's Word will help us build a firm foundation in our faith for the year 2025 and beyond.

There are 8,760 hours in a year. It is estimated that it takes approximately 60-70 hours to read through the entire Bible. If you do the math like I did, that's about .8% of your year. Not even one percent!

Will you join me this year in giving God .8% of 2025 to learn and grow in your relationship with Jesus? Just think of it as a tiny mustard seed and watch it grow. If we can get back to the basics, I believe we will see God do mighty things in the hearts and lives of this congregation. But be warned: it's one thing to just read the Bible. It's a whole other thing to actually do what it says. Are you willing to surrender your ways and start doing things God's way? Let's do this...together. As one body of believers.

Blessings,
Pastor Matthew

THOSE WHO ARE ILL OR IN THE HOSPITAL

Roxann Kaiser (cancer)
JoAnn Artmann
(Karen Fundine's daughter)
Rex Manchesian

Jill Clark
Ryhley Mattison (Marlene's great
granddaughter)

ASSISTING LIVING/NURSING HOME

Good Samaritan Ken Kelling,
Riverside: Edith Pietz

MILITARY

Joseph DeLude—Army, Grandson of Don DeLude

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.

Also check our Website for the Newsletter,
Sermons and the Calendar will be updated as
the schedule changes! All of this is under
Resources on the Webpage

Pastor's Schedule

Sunday: **Worship Service**
Monday: **Off**
Tuesday: **Office Hours 9-3**
Wednesday: **Midweek Service/Bible**
 Study
Thursday & Friday: **Office hours/Visitation**
Saturday: **Off**

****Office hours will typically be from 9 am until**
3 pm unless I am out making visits.

UPDATING

Please contact Connie Vieths at 218-839-3767 or
cvieths1@gmail.com if there are any changes or
additions to your personal data such as address,
phone, or email address. Also if someone needs
to be added to the Ill or in Hospital listing, Assist-
ed Living/Nursing Home listing or Military listing,
please let Connie know! Thank you!

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: Bob Harmsen (218) 575-3068
Vice President: Griff Eisel (952) 239-0878
Secretary: Dan Jacobson (218) 746-4167
Don Oslowski (763) 286-5405
Shirley Smith (218) 838-1483
Diane Wright (218) 851-8964
Chris Warren (320) 749-2031

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

To Nicole Buersken, Lynda Converse, and Julie
Hofius for serving on our church council! We will
miss you!

To Don Oslowski, Chris Warren, Bob Harmsen for
serving the next term on our council!

January/February Newsletter is now online.

First Lutheran Church Pillager Minutes
November. 19, 2024

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m. by Interim President Buersken

Present: Pastor Matthew Sundquist, Griff Eisel, Nicole Buersken, Dan Jacobson, Shirley Smith, Julie Hofius, Diane Wright. Absent: Bob Harmsen (Lynda's Seat)

Opening Prayer: Pastor Matt

Treasurer's Report: Lynn reported she is working with Bob Harmsen to generate annual giving statements for members. Through the end of October, income to the church is \$26,885 more than expenses, including all giving and fundraisers for the building maintenance fund. In order to make accounts and record keeping easier to manage, Griff moved that we remove inconsequential line items from the budget and merge these items into more easily recognizable accounts. This motion was seconded by Nicole and approved. Dan moved to approve the financial report. Griff seconded the motion, which was then approved.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Matt was asked to provide the invocation at the Veterans' Day Dinner held at the Pillager Community Center. He also reported that the school canceled the fun fest this year, which is a normal mission outreach for the church. Also this past month, he presided over the funeral for Avis Lee. Rosie shared with pastor that she is canceling movie night until further notice due to lack of interest. Trunk or Treat was a good success and was held at the same time as the Baptist Church's outreach. Some of the kids have now been coming multiple years. A celebration of life for David Peterson, father-in-law of our church pianist, will be in December. The last Bible study in the Chosen series will be held November 20. Casino Church will host the community service on November 27. Pastor will bring in samples of shirts and mugs to see if it is something we would like to do as promotional items featuring our church logo. Pastor tracked 40 visits within the last month. Griff brought up that the council would like to see more regularity and coverage in Pastor's visitation schedule and suggested that we should bring back the idea of having a committee alert Pastor to any new visitation requests or opportunities when they arise.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the Oct. 8 th Council meeting were presented by Secretary Dan. Motion made by Shirley to accept the minutes. Motion seconded by Diane and approved.

Committee Updates:

Worship/Music: Advent worship planning in process, which will include the candle lighting and Christmas Eve service music. Special December services planned for December include hosting Adult and Teen Challenge on Dec. 15 and the Sunday School Christmas program on Dec. 22.

Congregation and Community Outreach: (Marliss) – There will be a family holiday work shop on making Christmas ornaments at the church on Dec. 11 from 5-7 p.m., with sandwiches provided for the attendees.

Hospitality: Lefse making for the bake sale is in progress. The sale will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 23.

Sanctuary: (Shirley) Nothing to report.

Facilities/Building: Dan will look into a solution for the monitor needed in the back of the church to provide visibility to the PowerPoint for attendees with obstructed vision. The HDMI cable will most likely need to be split between the existing monitor and a new one to be mounted on the pillar on the right side of the old sanctuary.

Staffing: (Nicole) – Griff made a motion to install Bob Harmsen on the council to replace Lynda Converse until the December election. Motion was seconded by Nicole and approved.

Missions: The committee helped with the Trunk or Treat event, bake sale, and is continuing to coordinate bell ringers from the church to raise funds for the Salvation Army at Cub Foods in Baxter.

Old Business: County has asked for updated paperwork for our property tax exemption and Nicole volunteered to take care of the paperwork.

New Business: The budget committee presented the proposed 2025 church budget to Council for review and approval. The budget is \$115,290, which includes \$4,500 for replacing the parsonage air conditioner (which stopped working at the end of summer) if repairs can't be made. There was discussion about the necessary tracking of expenses vs. revenue throughout the year to ensure the general fund stays balanced. Griff moved to approve the proposed budget, which was seconded by Nicole and approved. The council discussed proposed dates for the Annual Members' Meeting were Dec. 22 and Dec. 29. The Dec. 22 date was selected to ensure most members would be in attendance.

Adjourn and Closing: Shirley made a motion to adjourn, which was second by Dianne.

Meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer

First Lutheran Church Pillager Minutes

December 10, 2024

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m. by Interim President Buersken

Present: Pastor Matthew Sundquist, Nicole Buersken, Dan Jacobson, Shirley Smith

Absent: Griff Eisel, Diane Wright, Bob Harmsen (Lynda's Seat), Julie Hofius (NOTE: Meeting was held without a quorum. All decisions were voted on remotely)

Opening Prayer: Pastor Matt

Treasurer's Report: Lynn reported that the financial year through the end of November was tracking according to budget. Income through 11 months is about \$22,000 greater than expenses overall on the year and we are on track to finish at or under budget. One thing to watch is the copier expense. The Church paid \$300 in addition to our lease fee for November and the council needs to discuss how we will reduce that expense going forward. Motion made by Shirley and seconded by Dan to approve the report. Voted on by email acclamation.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Matt reported that holiday decoration workshop is getting good publicity at the school so attendance should be high. We are going to have two new members: Joan and Dean Holmberg. They have officially submitted the form to transfer membership. Pastor met with Edie Pietz after bible study at Riverside and she is doing well. He also visited Ken Kelling at Bethany and had a good conversation. There were a total of 29 visits since the November council meeting. Pastor did receive another survey response that he would like to discuss with council at the next meeting. Nicole mentioned we should look at something for the youth to participate in during the week. Would like something to start during 2025, depending upon how much interest there is from students and parents.

Secretary's Report: November minutes submitted by secretary. Shirley moved accepted and Dan seconded.

Committee Updates:

Worship/Music: December visit from adult and teen challenge, along with the Sunday School Christmas Program and Annual Congregational Meeting on Dec. 22.

Congregation and Community Outreach: (Marliss) – Plan to hold the holiday decoration workshop on December 11.

Hospitality: Lefse bake sale was a big success, bringing in over \$3,500.

Sanctuary: (Shirley) Nothing to report.

Facilities / Building: HDMI update. Dan took a look at the monitor connections needed to add a secondary monitor for people sitting in the old sanctuary. Looks like an HDMI splitter could be used. Because of the way the existing sanctuary monitor is mounted, it will require professional help to install.

Staffing: (Nicole) – Nicole has not spoken with anyone yet about open council positions. Bob Harmsen and Don Oslosky do plan to join. The third seat is up for discussion.

Missions: Total came back from the mission tree for the school. We raised and donated \$960. The staff in charge of purchasing gifts said they had run out of money before receiving our donation, so we were able to help another family in the school.

Old Business:

New Business: Our financial secretary asked if we are having an audit for 2024. The Council discussed forming a committee to conduct an audit in the first quarter of 2025.

Adjourn & Closing: *Shirley made a motion to adjourn, which was second by Dianne and voted by email acclamation.*

FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

December 22, 2024

Called to Order at 10:41 a.m., a quorum was present.

Nicole Buersken read the annual meeting minutes from the December 10, 2023, meeting. A motion was made by Tom Kavanaugh to accept the minutes as read, seconded by Jennifer Fundine. Motion carried.

Facilities Recap for 2024

Leasing a new copier/printer from The Office Shop for \$58/month

Setup of sound-dampening, movable panels for a second Sunday School room so the older and younger kids can be split up

Speaker set up in nursery so service can be heard

New eternal flame

A door was installed in the narthex going down to the basement to help cut down on noise

Removal/disposal of bent flagpole

Replacement of two furnaces: ~\$7,700 plus material cost to get up to code

Events Recap for 2024

Hiring of new financial secretary, Lynn Bushinger (thank you to Julie Hofius for being the interim financial secretary!)

Spring Tea: second annual tea; this year was a Scandinavian theme

Summer FUNdraiser: \$1,953 raised

Garage Sale: \$5,007.34 raised

Participation in the Pillager Parade, "Jesus is our Life Savior" theme

Pillager Fest: Quilting ladies raised \$495 at their booth to be used for materials for graduates, veterans, the women's shelter, and others

Fall Meatball Dinner: \$2,020 raised

Lefse/Bake Sale: \$3,538.50 raised

Family Holiday Workshop: About 30 children came, hoping this can become an annual event!

Missions Report for 2024

Helped with all the church fundraising activities and in addition:

Volunteered monthly at the Food Shelf

Donated to the Eye Clinic Pie Giveaway

Made a clothing distribution to the women's shelter

Donated to Mission Aviation

Had the float in the Pillager Parade

Salvation Army bell ringing

Put together 30 boxes for Operation Christmas Child

Helped with the Family Holiday Workshop

Put on Trunk or Treat

Took lap quilts to the Riverside residents, along with a couple of prayer shawls

Took plates of Christmas cookies to all the Riverside residents and employees

Donated food to the Pillager Teachers breakfast

Financial Report

The budget committee compared actual numbers from 2022 to 2024 to prepare the 2025 budget.

The current budget has been increased based on expenditures from 2023. The Missions and Ministry budget was shown on the power point to the congregation. The budget has decreased slightly from \$4,620.96 to \$3,900. There were no questions from the congregation. A motion was made by Tom Kavanaugh to accept the missions and ministry budget, seconded by Julie Hofius. Motion carried. Thank you to all of those on the budget committee for their work.

Election of Council Members

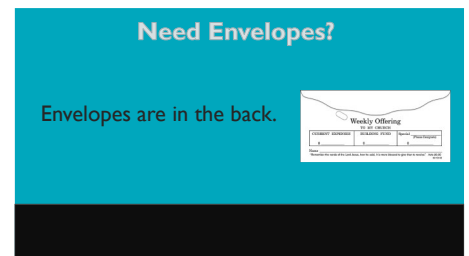
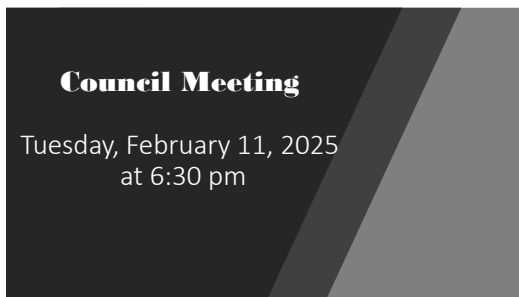
The terms of three council members are up this year. They are Nicole Buersken, Julie Hofius, and Lynda Converse. The following individuals are candidates for the positions: Bob Harmsen and Don Oslowski.

As there are only two candidates for the three positions, and no new nominations on the floor, Shirley Smith made a motion to accept the nomination and election of the two candidates (Bob Harmsen and Don Oslowski). Motion was seconded by Diane Wright. Motion carried. Thank you to Nicole, Julie and Lynda for serving on the council. Council will reach out to a couple of individuals to see if they might be interested in serving. If they are not, Marliss Eisel said she would be willing with the understanding that both she and her husband, Griff (current council member) will be absent at the same time when on vacation, etc.

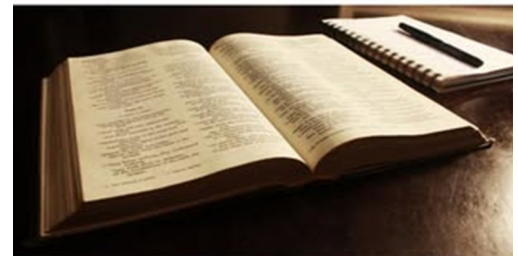
Nominating Committee for 2021

The nominating committee for 2025 will be voted on at the council meeting in January 2024. A motion to adjourn was made by Diane Wright, seconded by Rosie Harmsen. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Julie Warren



Bible Study Wednesday
evenings from 6:30
pm—8:00 pm



A BIG thank you to this small choir who gathered for practice in December to brighten our Advent and Christmas season worship services with their musical gifts!



The Quilting ladies have been visiting the Riverside Assisted Living for a Tea Party every month. If you would like to join us, please contact Wendy Jacobson as to time and dates!



On Saturday, October 26th, the Meatball Supper, Basket Raffle and Quilt Sale raised \$2,020 (after expenses) for the church siding fund. The workers served 147 people and sent home seven takeout meals with visitors. One quilt sold for \$60 and 21 baskets raffled in individual drawings brought in \$550. The rest of the proceeds came in the freewill offering. With great gratitude to all who made the fellowship and fun possible this fall. God is good - all the time!

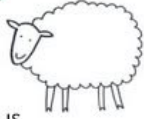


Family Holiday Workshop

Make an ornament gift to share with someone special:
grandparents, parents, godparents, neighbor, teacher, etc.

5-7 pm Wednesday, December 11, 2024

First Lutheran Church
717 River Street South
Pillager, Minnesota



Bring the kids and join us
for a sandwich supper and Christmas crafts.

This community event is free;
RSVP recommended to the church FB page;
An attending adult is required.

For more information,
text or call 218-232-4580





Preparation
of the Lefsa!!!!







ASH WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 5, 2025

7:00PM

Looking Ahead!

The Lenten Season

For 2025



BY FEBRUARY 23 THERE
WILL BE A SIGN UP
SHEET IN BACK OF THE
CHURCH



When Forest Gump died, he stood in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said, "Welcome, Forest. We've heard a lot about you." He continued, "Unfortunately, it's getting pretty crowded up here and we find that we now have to give people an entrance examination before we let them in."

"Okay," said Forest. "I hope it's not too hard. I've already been through a test. My momma used to say, 'Life is like a final exam. It's hard.'"

"Yes, Forest, I know. But this test is only three questions. Here they are."

- 1) Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?"
- 2) How many seconds are in a year?
- 3) What is God's first name?

"Well, sir," said Forest, "The first one is easy. Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'? Today and Tomorrow."

St. Peter looked surprised and said, "Well, that wasn't the answer I was looking for, but you have a point. I give you credit for that answer."

"The next question," said Forest, "How many seconds are in a year? Twelve."

"Twelve?" said St. Peter, surprised and confused.

"Yes, sir. January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd ..."

St. Peter interrupted him. "I see what you mean. I'll have to give you credit for that one, too."

"And the last question," said Forest, "What is God's first name? It's Andy."

"Andy?" said St. Peter, in shock. "How did you come up with 'Andy'?"


"I learned it in church. We used to sing about it." Forest broke into song, "Andy walks with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am His own."

St. Peter opened the gate to heaven and said, "Run, Forest, Run!"

January 2025 FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Pancake Breakfast		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 6:30 pm Council Mtg 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			
19	20 Martin Luther King Day	21	22	23	24	25
9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			

February 2025 FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Pancake Breakfast		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 6:30 pm Council Mtg 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study	1:30 pm Tea Time Riverside Assisted Living		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship	Presidents' Day	12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 – 8 pm Bible Study			