

# First Edition



## Thoughts From Pastor Matt!

Many of you already know that I love to go golfing. Being in nature enjoying the ups and downs of a round of golf is something that for some odd reason brings me closer to my Creator. However, golf is much more than a game. It can teach us many different lessons as we go through the game of life.

For example, what makes a great golfer great? It actually takes place before the round even begins. The great golfer will analyze all 18 holes before they step foot on the first tee box. They will calculate where the ideal tee shot will go on every hole to set them up for their approach shot into the green. They will locate all hazards and trouble areas on every hole to help determine which clubs to use to help avoid those areas. They make sure to study every slope and grain of grass on each green to give them the best percentage of making their putt. To be a great golfer, one must learn to strategize, plan, while also expecting the unexpected.

So if you are looking for a New Year's resolution, here is something that I would like to suggest. Try taking that same mentality of a great golfer and applying it towards your relationship with Jesus. Analyze these next 365 days while also reflecting on the past 365. Where do you want to see your relationship going this year? Where do you want it to end up? What areas last year gave you troubles and made you feel distant from God? What plan of action are you going to put into place to avoid those trouble areas? What tools or resources are you going to use to help strengthen your relationship? Just reflecting on these few questions can take a good relationship with Jesus and make it into a great one.

But here is also some great news for everyone who wants to pursue Jesus more this year. When you watch all the great golfers on television, what is it that they all have? A caddy. The caddy has probably the most important role in helping a golfer succeed. They are there to know every distance down to the yard. They know what areas of the course are safe and what areas to avoid. The caddy studies the wind, direction and speed, and calculates how that will affect the golf shot. Also, the caddy makes decisions and offers suggestions to help the golfer hit the most successful shot. And lastly, the caddy is there to keep the golfer calm and focused while also encouraging them to keep fighting the good fight.

Can you make a guess Who the caddy might be in a Christian's life? That's right! It's the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always there to guide us, convict us, teach us, encourage us, and give us the strength to keep fighting the good fight of faith. So as we dive into 2026, let's make a commitment to improve our relationship with the Lord. Let's draw near to Him and He will draw near to us. Let's be led by the Holy Spirit to help reach a level of intimacy we never thought possible with our Heavenly Father. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. May all those reading this article have a new year filled with the amazing richness of God's blessings!

Pastor Matthew

## THOSE WHO ARE ILL OR IN THE HOSPITAL

Roxann Kaiser  
JoAnn Artmann (Karen Fundine's daughter)  
Rex Manchesian (Rita Peterson's brother)  
Brenda Hoppe  
Dana Robinson (Rita Peterson's daughter-in-law)  
Dale Lyon (Sherry Holm's cousin)  
Mara Dokukin (Karen Fundine's granddaughter)  
Eric Lee (Avis Lee's grandson)  
Troy (Linda Converse's son)  
Pete Simons (relative of Shirley Smith)  
Curt Thering (Wendy Jacobson's dad)

### 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, Assisted Living/Nursing Home

### ASSISTING LIVING/NURSING HOME

**Good Samaritan** Ken Kelling,  
Riverside: Edith Pietz

Check out our Website at  
[firstlutheranpillager.net](http://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.

### 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 218-232-8699.

### Church Council

**President:** Griff Eisel (952) 239-0878

**Vice President:**

**Secretary:** Dan Jacobson (218) 746-4167

Bob Harmson

Don Osowski (763) 286-5405

Don Tichy

Chris Warren

Glen Welters

Thank you to Shirley Smith and Diane Wright for serving on our church council for the past years! Glen Welters and Don Tichy welcome to the council!

If you need a person to talk to about challenges in your life, someone to pray with, or just a visit, please contact Pastor Matt. He would be more than willing to help you or visit you. If you are in the hospital or know of someone in the hospital, please contact him. There are times he has not received word that someone is dying or in the hospital recovering. You can contact Pastor at (320) 260 9100.

## **FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH PILLAGER MINUTES October 14th, 2025**

Call to Order: 6:33 PM by President Bob Harmsen

**Present:** Lynn Bushinger, Griff Eisel, Bob Harmsen, Matthew Sundquist, Diane Wright, Shirley Smith, Chris Warren, Don Osowski, Marliss Eisel, Julie Warren, Cindy Walgren, Marlene Lindeman. **Absent:** Dan Jacobson

**Opening Prayer:** Pastor Matt

**Treasurer's Report:** Lynn reported that we are right on track with 75% of the church year behind us. She said the normal church offerings were down about 5,000 dollars, but that the Parsonage Maintenance Fund is up about 19,000 dollars, so with the two of them, giving is actually up. She and Griff discussed the copier refund of 300 dollars and a credit of 50 dollars that will be applied to the next bill. Griff moved to approve the Treasurers report and Chris seconded it, Approved by acclamation.

**Pastor's report:** Matt reported that he will be meeting with the other pastors next week about the community service. Matt and Griff still haven't been able to contact Horizon (due to voicemail being full) about getting the new furnace and AC, but they will keep trying. Julie then shared about going to the LCMC Conference with Matt and Cindy and presented a two page sheet on the things they learned; possible ways to get more people involved in the church, and ways to keep the kids aging out of Sunday School to keep coming to church. I added the sheet to the minutes. Cindy then spoke about how we as a congregation may be able to help teachers at the school with bags of items they might need for their classes, possibly with First Lutherans name on them. Matt thought these were all great ideas. Matt then spoke with Julie about handing out Bibles to some of the older Sunday school children.

**Secretary's Report:** Don made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes, which was seconded by Griff. Griff moved to approve the minutes, and Chris seconded. Approved by acclamation.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**Worship/Music:** Staples men's choir coming to sing for the church January 11th.

**Congregation and Community Outreach:** (Marliss) - Marliss said the mission committee was looking for more local things to do and then the breakfast club was brought to her attention by Matt and she thought it was the perfect thing for the church to do, so she gave them a check for 500 dollars. Then we discussed getting First Lutheran shirts printed or ironing on the logos ourselves, Matt thought it might be more cost effective to do the latter. Marliss then spoke about the meatball supper October 25th, Halloween Trunk or Treat on October 31st, and possibly Salvation Army bell ringing.

**Hospitality:** None.

**Sanctuary:** Shirley needs a new extension cord for the vacuum, Bob said he will pick one up. She also said the asian beetles are back. Don said it is now too late to spray the church for them.

**Facilities/Building:** The new lights on the front of the church look great. Bob then reported about his work on the cross for the north side of the church, he talked to Steve Roberts about it, and decided to order the materials to build and install it ourselves. He said the materials are going to cost 672 dollars. Griff made a motion to spend 1000 dollars on the cross, Don seconded it. Approved by acclamation.

**Staffing:** None.

**Old Business:** Digital Horizons talked to Dan about possibly getting a digital mixing board and about a monitor for the pillar in the back of the church.

**New Business:** Rosie is wondering if we need to order offering envelopes for next year, but Matt said we have a bunch of envelopes from past years we could just renumber and use, so we don't have to buy new ones this year. We also discussed the need to do Matt's fall review and a budget review and we need a chairperson for each. Griff said he would be the Chairperson for Matt's review and he would talk to Tom Kavanaugh to be on the committee. Chris nominated Dan to be the Chairperson for the Budget review, it passed by acclamation.

**Adjourn & Closing:** Shirley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Diane and approved by acclamation.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer

### **First Lutheran Church Pillager Minutes November 18, 2025**

**Call to Order:** 6:35 p.m. by President Bob Harmsen

**Present:**, Bob Harmsen, Matthew Sundquist, Dan Jacobson, Chris Warren, Shirley Smith, Diane Wright, Don Osowski   **Absent:** Griff Eisel, Lynn Bushinger

**I. Opening Prayer:** Pastor Matt

**II. Treasurer's Report:** Shirley made a motion to accept the Financial Report as received, Don seconded the motion which was carried unanimously. Bob reported that the anticipated donation of \$15,000 from the Deanne Tessmer estate had been received. Dan moved to place the donation in the general fund and Chris seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. Dan, Chris and Nicole Buerksen will comprise the budget committee and complete a 2026 budget prior to the FLC Annual Business Meeting on Dec. 7.

**III. Pastor's Report:** Pastor reported that Thomas will be having surgery on Dec. 19 and his follow-up appointment is on Dec. 29, so pastor will be taking his comp day of vacation on the Sunday of the 29th. Council and paster will look for pulpit supply for that Sunday. Community Service update: the Baptist church decided to put a pause on the Thanksgiving service this year. Also pastor reported he has communicated with the Pillager School District about the use of the church for safe shelter for students in the event of an emergency at the school. Pastor also shared a new bulletin design that we would like to begin using.

**IV. Secretary's Report:** Chris made a motion to wave the reading of the minutes, which was seconded by Dan and approved. Don moved to approve the minutes, and Diane seconded. Approved by acclamation.

## V. COMMITTEE UPDATES:

**1. Worship/Music:** Staples Men's Chorus had to change schedule and will be attending the Feb. 8, 2026 service to perform a few numbers as part of the worship service.

**2. Congregation and Community Outreach:** (Marliss) – Family Holiday Workshop will be held Wednesday, Dec. 10 from 5-7 pm at the church. The church fall dinner brought in more than \$2,000 net after expenses.

**3. Hospitality:** None

**4. Sanctuary:** None

**5. Facilities / Building:** Griff put some silicon caulking on the new church lights on the front side of the building. The lumber ordered for the cross on the north exterior wall of the church has been received and assembled. Bob is locating professional services to help with the installation.

**6. Staffing:** None.

**Old Business:** The council will be reviewing and confirming that Shirley and Diane's seats are up for election at the Annual Meeting. Both seats are three year terms beginning January 2026.

**New Business:** None.

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

Meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer

## FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES December 14, 2025

Pastor Matthew Sundquist did an opening prayer and council president Bob Harmsen called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM, a quorum was present.

### Recap for 2025

Bob asked Marliss Eisel to provide a review of the Mission Committee's activities over the past year. Marliss said the committee provided 30 Operation Christmas Child boxes, they did a float in the Pillager parade, helped with the Family Holiday Workshop, did bell ringing for the Salvation Army, and donated to the Breakfast Club.

Bob did a recap of the year that included a thank you to the quilting ladies who provided quilts to many groups and used quilt sales funds to help support the church. He also said thank you to everyone who contributed for another successful bake sale. The church had a makeover—the church siding was glass bead blasted and repainted and a large wooden cross will soon be installed on the exterior wall facing the parking lot.

Council secretary Dan Jacobson read the December 22, 2024 annual church minutes. Bob asked if there were any needed additions and none were needed. Marlene Lindeman made the motion to approve the December 22, 2024 annual minutes. Cindy Walgren seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## Financial Report

Dan went over the 2026 ministry budget. The 2025 actual budget as of 10/31/25 was at \$4,493.13, which is \$500 over the proposed budget, and he noted there are two more months to go. The 2026 budget will be set at \$7,100 and includes designated monies to funds like the breakfast and pancake funds. Tom Kavanaugh made a motion to accept the 2026 ministry budget and Shirley Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried. Bob and Dan noted that the overall 2026 budget is set at \$135,836.

## Election of Council Members

The terms of two council members are up this year: Diane Wright and Shirley Smith. There are no volunteers or nominations at this time. Council will set up a nominating committee at the next council meeting to find two new council members for these three-year term positions.

## Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Marlene, seconded by Tom. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

## ADDENDUM TO THE CHURCH ANNUAL MINUTES: MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 28, 2025

Council secretary Dan Jacobson called the meeting to order and said the two new council members needed to be elected. Shelley Lumsden made a motion to nominate Glen Welters and Don Tichy as new council members to replace Shirley Smith and Diane Wright. Dan Jacobson seconded the motion. Motion passed. Don Osloski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chris Warren. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Buersken



***During worship on November 9th, Susan Roberts led the Sunday School class in a presentation of the "The Butterfly Song." Thank you for this musical enrichment!!!***



**Thank you Roger for leading our worship service on December 28!!!**



**Giving God glory for all who contributed to the 2025 Christmas Quilt Sale! We sold 20 quilts and raised \$845 for quilt supplies to help with donations to those in need!**

## Quilting News:

Wrapping up the Fall Quilting Session with great gratitude for all who participated in the sale! Interested in our process? Join us noon-3 p.m. on Tuesdays in the fellowship area. No experience necessary. We'll train you for this outreach ministry!

Thank you to Bob and Griff for building the cross for the outside of our church! Thank you to Steve Roberts for helping with the supplies. Thanks you to Bob, Griff, Robert, and Chris for installing the cross on the outside of our church! BEAUTIFUL JOB!



### 🎵 Choir Notes 🎵

188 1873 1873 1873 harmony.

With great gratitude for all who shared their gift of music and time during Advent as we prepared our hearts for Emmanuel – God with us!

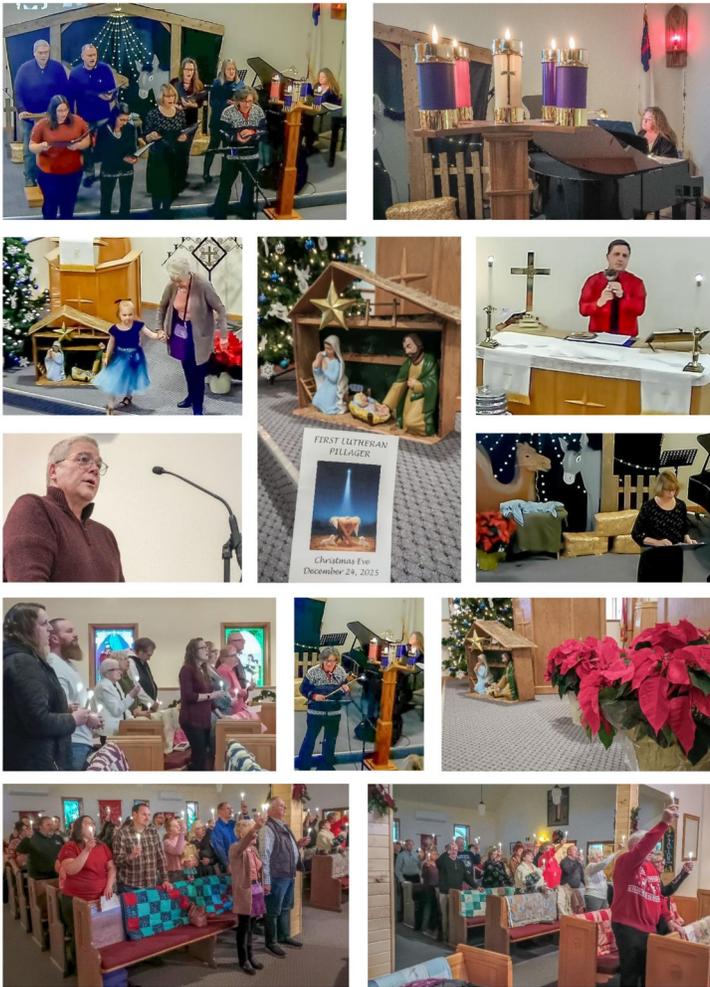
**Thank you to the choir and Rita Peterson for the music provided during the Advent Season!**



**Sunday School teacher Julie Warren and Pastor Matthew Sundquist presented Brynlee with a Bible on October 26th and on December 7th Pastor Matthew also presented Charlotte with a Bible. Pastor Matthew and the congregation prayed over both girls. Gigi, not pictured, will also be receiving a Bible this year.**

## Christmas Eve Lessons-and-Carols Communion Service

4 pm Wednesday, December 24, 2025



Thank you to everyone who attended the Christmas Eve Service! It was beautiful! Thanks to the people who organized and planned this special service!

Thank you to everyone who placed poinsettias on the altar area this Christmas!!



Words cannot express how much we appreciated the Sunday School Christmas Program today. Thank you to Julie and Chris Warren, Nicole and Robert Buersken for all the work in getting the stage ready and working with the costumes! Thank you to everyone who helped with getting the kids ready for the play. Parents, thank you for having your kids participate in this play to make it so special!!!!

Thank you to Wendy Jacobson for taking the pictures and putting the pages together!  
Appreciate everything you do!!



## Sunday School Christmas Program

The Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025





Thank you to everyone who donated to the Christmas Mission Tree this year. Pillager Schools appreciate your generosity!!

## Family Holiday Workshop

Thank you to the Mission Committee for hosting the Holiday Ornament Night! Thanks to Nicole, Robert, Chris, and Julie for all the prep work that you did to make this a success!!! The kids loved it. Thanks to the volunteers in helping with the crafts and the food!!!



### TREATS FOR FELLOWSHIP!

We need people to sign up for treats for fellowship after service. Please consider bringing something to eat with our coffee! The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen.!



Meeting will be held on Monday, February 2, at 6 pm. We will be discussing the schedule or 2026.

# Prayer Focus

The Prayer Focus Slides for January (February will be available in a couple of weeks) are on the table by the sign up sheet for scriptures.



Please join us for a tea party at the Riverside Assisted Living on Thursday, January 15, at 1:30 pm! The residents love this event!!!!

## Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 2026  
at 6:30 pm

## Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 10, 2026  
at 6:30 pm



PANCAKE BREAKFAST ON JANUARY 11, 2026. PLEASE STAY AND HAVE SOME PANCAKES, SAUSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP!



## THANK YOU!

To those who volunteered to ring the Salvation Army bells this year!!

Redo



CALLING ALL STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS!  
WE'RE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IS NOW LIVE!



Interested in volunteering for Pillager Breakfast club??

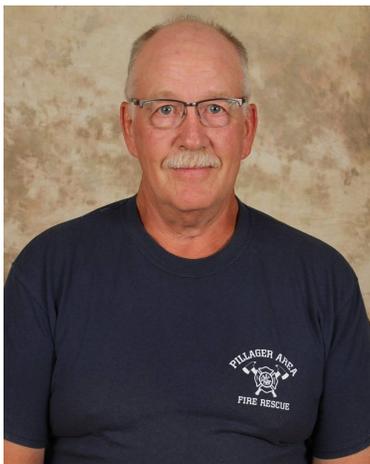
Scan the QR code or text the word "BREAKFAST" to 866-714-2927



## DECORATE THE CHURCH!!!

Thanks to everyone who came and decorated the church for the Christmas season!!!!!! Please consider bringing poinsettias to decorate the altar! If you want to bring one to honor or in memory of someone, please leave a note on the plant and I will acknowledge this in the bulletin!

www.PageBuilder.net



**A Memorial Gathering will be held on Monday January 5, 2026 from 11 am - 2pm at the Pillager Fire Hall (204 Cedar Ave, Pillager). Food will be served starting at 11:30am at the Pillager Community Center (207 East 2nd St, Pillager). A Graveside service will be held at 2pm on Monday January 5, 2026 at Wildwood Cemetery in Pillager.**

## **Randall "Randy" Duane Lee**

Randall "Randy" Duane Lee, age 71, passed away on December 24, 2025, at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Randy was born on June 10, 1954, in Bertha, Minnesota, to John and Avis (Gudim) Lee. He was raised with strong family values that guided him throughout his life.

Randy proudly served the Pillager Fire Department for 42½ years, dedicating 28 years as Fire Chief. His commitment to protecting others was more than a role—it was a calling. He led with humility, courage, and steady leadership, leaving a lasting legacy within the department and the community he served.

Outside of his service, Randy found great joy in hunting and fishing, attending his children's and grandchildren's sporting events and life milestones, and indulging in his favorite sweet treats. He appreciated life's simple pleasures and was deeply devoted to his wife, whom he cherished with unwavering love.

Randy will be remembered for his strength, kindness, and steadfast dedication to both his family and his community.

Randy is survived by his loving wife, Kathy Lee; his children LaVonne (Chad) Clark, Samantha (Brandon Pribyl) Lee, and Josh (Kristina) Lee; his grandchildren Cole (Chelsea) Shake, Caitlyn Clark, Chloe Lee, and Carter Lee; and his great-grandchildren Oaklee Shake and Saylor Shake. He is also survived by his siblings Jack (Char) Lee, Lori (Paul) Dauphinais, and Dave (Sheila) Lee, along with many nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents and grandparents.

Arrangements are entrusted to Halvorson-Taylor Funeral Home, Brainerd.



# January 2026 FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER

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

# February 2026 FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship	2	3 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	4 6:30 pm Bible Study	5	6	7
8 9:30 am Service <b>SUNDAY SCHOOL</b> 10:30 am Pancake Breakfast	9	10 12 pm Quilters 6:30 pm Church Council 8:00 pm AA Mtg	11 6:30 pm Bible Study	12 1:30 pm Tea At River-side	13	14
15 9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship	16 <b>Presidents' Day</b>	17 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	18 7:00 pm Ash Wed	19	20	21
22 9:30 am Service <b>SUNDAY SCHOOL</b> 10:30 am Fellowship	23	24 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	25 5:30 pm Soup & Sandwich 6:00 pm Lenten Service	26	27	28
1	2	3	4	5	6	7