



First Evangelical
Lutheran Church
305 West 5th Street
North Platte, Nebraska
69101

The Visitor



Office Hours
Mon - Fri
9:00 - 2:00
Sunday School
9:15am
Coffee & Donuts
Sundays 9:45am
Worship
Sundays 10:30



CONTACT NUMBERS:
Pastor:
Pastor Patrick Sipes
402-200-0446
sgtmuddy@gmail.com
Church Council, President:
Dr. Todd Jensen
Office Manager:
Ambur Petersen
Financial Secretary:
Claudette Nelson
Music Director:
Gail Jensen

Contact Us...
Phone: 308-532-0250
firstlutheran.np@gmail.com
www.firstlutherannp.org

Inside The Issue

Dear Members of First,
The final clause of the proposed mission statement that we have been looking at says that what we do in our mission is meant to “sustain ourselves and our communities.” An important question to ask in light of this possible mission is what behaviors and activities feed you and give you life and what takes life away from you?

I’ve shared this story with some of you before, but several years ago I stopped being “happy to do things” for people. As I hope you’ve noticed, this doesn’t mean I stopped doing things for people, and that I even do things with a smile sometimes; I just stopped using those words. I stopped using them because they were often dishonest, I wasn’t actually “happy” to be doing something I said I would do and then when it came to doing it I was a little resentful and felt on some level like I was going through an act. You can call me overly sensitive but going through an act like that several times a week took energy out of me. The sustaining solution for me was honesty. First with myself about what it was taking from me, and second with others about where I really was with regards to their request. In that honesty you might hear me say something like “I’m able to do that,” “I’m willing to do that,” “I can help with that,” “I’d be honored to take that on,” and occasionally if I mean it, “I’d be happy to do that.” What this honesty has given me though is the ability to show up as I am without a false expectation from myself or others and then to really give freely of what I actually have to offer to a given project. Over time acting in this way has meant individual tasks take less from me and I actually have more to give overall. When we talk about a ministry that sustains ourselves, I invite you into a similar sort of introspection about what takes more from you than it gives, as well as consideration about what activities and practices in your life (both personal and communal) offer support and renewal on a regular to ongoing manner. Where you already have these things in your life, lean into them, where you find them lacking, let’s have a conversation about what steps to take.

Having taken care of ourselves, this mission also calls us to turn our eyes outward. As we consider sustaining our communities, it is good to start from a place that recognizes there is more to this task than simply asking, “What do I think needs to be done?” Sustaining our communities starts with conversations with those in the know about what needs are truly present and then (still within the spectrum of what sustains us) adjusting our ministries to meet those needs. For example, if we had a group that loved washing windows, but we found out there was a need for clean cars, they might want to switch the focus of their ministry toward washing cars. Notice by doing this, the group still gets to wash things and make a difference in the community doing something they love, they’ve just switched what they are washing. Beyond the service however, they might find themselves wondering, “Why do these cars keep getting dirty all the time?” and then go looking into the root causes of dirty cars. As they discover some of the reasons for the dirty cars they work to fix the causes themselves and though there are less cars to wash, the root of the problem is solved in a more sustainable way. As you think of how to better sustain our communities, work toward being conscious of who you are talking to and listen closely to what needs you are hearing that they have.

Blessings,
Pr. Patrick Sipes

Message from Pastor Sipes.....1	WELCA Minutes.....4	Announcements.....7/8
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Birthday/Anniversary/Financials.....3	Council Minutes/Highlights.....6	Annual Meeting/scriptures.....10

JANUARY

SUNDAY	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Sorry WE'RE CLOSED	2 7 Boy Scouts	3 9 Pickleball 1 WELCA 1 Quilts	4 9 Pickleball	5 9 Pickleball	6 8 Card Show
7 9:15 Salt Mine 9:45 Coffee/Donuts 10:30 Worship	8 9 Pickleball 10 PEO 7 Miriam Cir-Basement	9 7 Boy Scouts	10 9 Pickleball 1 Quilts 6:30 Confirmation Class	11 9 Pickleball 5:30 Bells 6:30 CCC	12 9 Pickleball 6 Youth Group	13 WELCA winter retreat-G.I.
17 9:15 Salt Mine 9:45 Coffee/Donuts 10:30 Worship 11:45 W & M	15 9 Pickleball 5:30 Council Meeting	16 9:30 Adah Cir 7 Boy Scouts	17 9 Pickleball 1 Quilts 6:30 Confirmation Class	18 9 Pickleball 5:30 Bells Newsletter Deadline	19 9 Pickleball	20
21 9:15 Salt Mine 9:30 Eve Cir 9:45 Coffee/Donuts 10:30 Worship	22 9 Pickleball	23 7 Boy Scouts	24 9 Pickleball 1 Quilts 6:30 Confirmation Class	25 9 Pickleball 5:30 Bells	26 9 Pickleball	27
28 9:15 Salt Mine 9:30 Annual Meeting 9:45 Coffee/Donuts 10:30 Worship	29 9 Pickleball	30 7 Boy Scouts	31 9 Pickleball 1 Quilts 6:30 Confirmation Class	The calendar is always changing. If an event is changed/added after the newsletter is sent out there is a calendar on the Church website that will be more current. If you have questions, feel free to contact the office.		



January Sunday Volunteers

Date	Reader	Worship Leader	Online W.L.	Coffee/Donuts	Acolyte	Offering Usher	Comm Assist (2)	Comm Setup/Takedown	Fill Candles	Greeters
Jan 7		Heather	Stacey		Trevyn		Sharon R Betty H			
Jan 14	Cass L		Stacey	Christians	Jacoby	Steve E Ken G	Jill and Emily H	Carla J	Liz E	Greene's Sharon R.
Jan 21			Pat	Care	Trevyn	Mark O		Liz E	Carla J	Uehling's
Jan 28			Pat	Committee	Trevyn					

If you would like to volunteer on one of the empty Sundays, please contact the church office or sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the church.

Birthday

Brad Saathoff	Jan 3	Heather Jensen	Jan 21
Randy Carlson	Jan 5	Jack Knapp	Jan 22
Mark David	Jan 5	Karly Knapp	Jan 22
Amanda Connick	Jan 6	Harlie Saathoff	Jan 23
Trisha Stout	Jan 6	Cole Schwager	Jan 23
Duane Dunbar	Jan 9	Sandi Jensen	Jan 26
Randy Heil	Jan 9	Beth Dunbar	Jan 27
Adysson Solie	Jan 9	Steve Evans	Jan 27
Tami Thompson	Jan 9	Gail Jensen	Jan 27
William Lunzman	Jan 13	Michael Connick	Jan 28
Jack Mohr	Jan 14	Tara Jedrzejczyk	Jan 29
Tatum Montelongo	Jan 14	Mollee Lunkwitz-Harman	Jan 30
Jody Lamberty	Jan 15	Rojean Einspahr	Jan 31
Angela Mohr	Jan 15	Don Sears	Jan 31
Marian Guzallis	Jan 18	Jerry Stoll	Jan 31
Stephen Sanford	Jan 19		

Happy Anniversary!

Brent & Brenda Aufdenkamp Jan 6
 Patrick & Breen Sipes Jan 10

Floyd & Karen Sue White
Jan 20 63 years!

Tom & Cindi Walz Jan 27

Please advise the church office of any errors/omissions on the Birthday & Anniversary Calendar.

Do You Know?

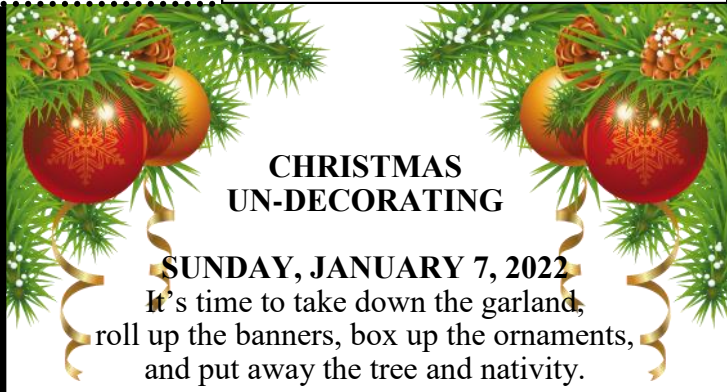
Property

What it does: To insure the over all maintenance and repair of the church, building, and grounds. Report needed action to the church council.

Members: Greg Lower, Jerry Jensen, Mark Obermeier, Ken Glass, Willis Jepsen, Steve Evans, Charles Smith, Jerry Stoll.

Meeting date: Third Sunday @ 9:30am

Sponsored by Caring Christians Committee



CHRISTMAS UN-DECORATING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2022

It's time to take down the garland, roll up the banners, box up the ornaments, and put away the tree and nativity.

Please stay after the 10:30 a.m. worship service. We will be "un-decorating" the sanctuary from it's Christmas Décor!

Thanks in advance for your help!

Year 2023	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Income	\$20,692	\$17,457	\$17,888	\$21,581	\$20,204	\$15,617	\$17,924	\$18,305	\$20,543	\$16,157	\$17,056		\$203,424
Expenses	\$22,216	\$19,514	\$28,166	\$18,486	\$23,977	\$29,790	\$17,164	\$24,617	\$30,081	\$22,364	\$24,743		\$261,118
Surplus (Shortfall)	<u>Shortfall</u> \$1,524	<u>Shortfall</u> \$2,057	<u>Shortfall</u> \$10,278	<u>Surplus</u> \$3,095	<u>Shortfall</u> \$3,773	<u>Shortfall</u> \$14,173	<u>Surplus</u> \$760	<u>Shortfall</u> \$6,312	<u>Shortfall</u> \$9,538	<u>Shortfall</u> \$6,207	<u>Shortfall</u> \$7,687		<u>Shortfall</u> \$57,694
Average Attendance	94/16	107/16	103/16	115/17	94/15	82/13	82/13	86/14	85/12	83/14	86/14		

AMOUNTS ARE ACTUAL INCOME RECEIVED AND EXPENSES PAID.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Thank you for your gifts to God through First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

- + Higher income levels around Easter/Christmas. Lower income levels typically received in the summer.
- + Income is considered any monetary gifts given to the Church but excludes any donations received for "designated gifts".
- + The expenses vary month to month, depending on the spending requests by the ministry leaders and committees.
- + Detailed financial reports are available in Narthex and office.

Meeting was called to order with devotions by Vice President, Sharon Riley

Attendance: Adah 3; Miriam 2; Eve 4;

Secretary's Report: Jill read the November meeting minutes. Marlys made a motion to approve, Mary seconded. All in favor

Treasurer's Report: Marlys presented treasurer's report after income, \$1904.20 and expenses \$1002.35 were reported, the balance as of 11/30/23 totals \$4177.73. Jill made a motion to approve, Claudette seconded. All in favor.

Bills: Presented bills to be paid included..... Ken Glass (\$29.49), Jill Falcon (\$14.13 – dishwasher soap).

Correspondence: Campus Lutheran end of year donation request.

LWR Reports: Cutting backpack material and getting the school and care kit lists out earlier in the year was discussed. No dates are set at this time. Will get the lists out earlier in the year.

Old Business:

*Harvest Dinner was discussed - pie and potatoes ran short this year. Takeout meals and prepping for those to not bottle-neck the kitchen area, having those with to go through the line as well, setting up a determined time slot for meal pick up, and advertising of deliveries to promote more ticket sales.

*Kitchen clean-up in the basement area took place on November 15th. Cabinets have started to be labeled and all items have been placed together in cabinets to easily be able to determine what is needed. Sharon stated that the one oven door needs to be looked at as it is loose. Claudette will get ahold of Mr. Appliance to come and look at it. The rugs in front/back of the sink, dishwasher and window area were very dirty. Jill checked the cost of rugs with Ideal who could come monthly to change them out. The cost for 4-4X6 rugs would cost @\$50/month. After the meeting it was determined to go with smaller 3X5 size rugs for the basement kitchen and 2 of the better current rugs will go to the kitchen on the gym side. Jill will bring back details in January and see if a month-by-month agreement can be put in place with Ideal Linen.

New Business:

*Dec WELCA coffee/donut duties – 12/3- Carla, 12/10 – Mary, 12/17 – Heidi, 12/24 – Jill, 12/31 – Carla. Please come and assist if you are able.

*WELCA Christmas Soup/Bread/Salad Luncheon is 12/7 – soup will be provided, bring a salad or bread to share. Adah Circle is hosting.

*WELCA charitable year end donations were discussed.....Jill made a motion to approve the donations as listed below, Claudette seconded. All in favor

First Lutheran – Boiler fund \$500	NP CASA - \$100	The Connection - \$100
Salvation Army - \$100	Mosaic in Axtel - \$100	Homestead Refuge - \$100
Lutheran Family Services - \$100	Campus Ministries UNK - \$100	RDAP - \$100
Good Fellow Shoe Fund - \$100	Campus Ministries UNL - \$100	Gift of Hope - \$100
Bridge of Hope - \$100	Grace Food Pantry - \$100	Deborah's Legacy - \$100
Habitat for Humanity - \$100	Episcopal meal fund - \$100	<u>Total donations = \$2100</u>

*WELCA annual report items, Marlys will compile the Nov/Dec numbers in the annual spreadsheet and Jill will work on the year end document and bring it to the Jan. meeting for review, before submitting.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

*A second kitchen clean up for the west kitchen and to clean the ovens in the east kitchen, TBD

*Spring Gathering – March 2nd First Lutheran to host.

**Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.
Next meeting Jan 3,2024 at 1:00pm**

Jill Falcon, Secretary

First Ev. Lutheran Youth

Sunday School News! Salt Mine and Faith Formation

January Theme: The Disciples are called.

Pre-K to 5th graders are welcome.
Opening starts at 9:15am in the Education Unit.

18 Children participated in the Christmas Program



Sunday School kids enjoyed making edible Nativities during cooking class!

Y
U
M



Youth Group Activities

Youth Group Christmas Party has be
RESCHEDULED!!!
6th Grade-12th Grade this means YOU
January 12th, 2024

Meet at the church at 6:00/ Bus leaves at
6:15 SHARP

Skate Night at Maranatha
Return to the church at 9:30
Admission Paid

Bring spending money for snacks
(May need parent helpers :)
RSVP to Heidi by January 10th

530.3752

flipgotsick@yahoo.com

Any 8th -12th graders interested in the 2024 mission trip
to Benton Harbor M, contact Heidi @530-3756



Church Council Minutes

Call to Order: Dr. Todd Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Sipes

Approve Agenda: Motion made by Alee and seconded by Jody to approve the agenda.

Agenda approved.

Members Present: Dr. Todd Jensen, Keith Kempke, Alee Stout, Greg Lower, Sharon Riley, Jody Hill, Linda Lehmann, Neal Criddle, Bob Hinrichs Pr. Sipes

Members Absent: None

Minutes of previous meeting: Motion made by Neal and Second by Bob to approve the minutes for the October 16, 2023 meeting. Minutes approved.

Standing Committee Reports/Committee request and motions:

Finance/Foundation: Refer to Budget

Christian Ed/Youth & Family: All groups are doing well.

Care Committee: Thanked everyone that volunteered for God's Work God's Hands.

Mutual Ministry: No meeting.

Property: Making a list of repairs needing to be done in the next few years to be published in the Annual Meeting Report. Doors have been repaired and /or painted after vandalism.

Worship & Music: Thanksgiving Eve Service Nov 22nd @ 6:30 Church Closed Nov 23&24, Christmas Eve Services Dec 24th 4pm & 7pm Church closed Dec 25&26

Pastor's Report: Reviewed Pastor's written report and he will be out of Office Dec 25-29

Ongoing Items:

***Cross and Preschool sign-** Cross is down and being worked on.

***Sound System** – Todd moved and Sharon seconded to have a representative of ECCC give a presentation at next council meeting. Motion passed.

***Boiler Bid/HVAC-**asbestos complete 9-8, Snell stated 10-9.

***Visioning-** Sharon moved and Neal seconded to have the congregation vote either/or on "Old Mission Statement" or "New Mission Statement" at Annual Congregational Meeting. Motion passed.

New Actions:

2024 Budget Worksheets: Finance Committee worked on these.

Actions with regards to 2024 Budget:

-Keith moved and Alee seconded that Worship & Music, Care Committee and Christian Ed/Youth committee's budgets not to be formally submitted for 2024 but to use designated funds until other monies are needed. Motion passed.

-Todd moved and Alee seconded that Library Funds be used for "Boosting a Post" on Facebook. Motion passed.

-Keith moved and Todd seconded that 3.5 percent raise for personnel be approved and also to form a Personnel Committee. Motion passed.

-Todd moved and Sharon seconded that the Council approve the proposed budget of \$275,673.00 which is less than last year's proposed budget of \$279,573. Motion passed.

Approvals:

Membership Changes and Facilities request: Motion approved.

Alee Stout would like to use the Basement December 15th 3-9pm for a family gathering.

Adjournment: Moved by Neal and Second by Jody Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meetings: December 18th and January 15th Annual Meeting January 28th

December Council Meeting Highlights

- Council voted on an abbreviated mission statement to be presented to the congregation for a vote during the annual meeting. (January 28th @ 9:30am)
- Needing a few more council nominees for the 2024-2025-2026 term. If you are interested please contact the Church office as soon as possible.

2024 Council Nominees

Amanda Connick

Occupation: Operations, Group Tour and Convention Sales Manager at Visit North Platte

I received my Associated Degree from Mid Plains Community College, my Bachelors Degree from UNK, and my Masters form the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Relationship to First: I have attended First Lutheran Church most of my life, beginning in the 3rd grade and attending regularly each time I came back to North Platte. I am now raising my family in this church. I help with Sunday School and VBS. Whenever asked, I donate to events and activities the church is doing. I am also currently a mentor for a confirmation student.

What would your priority be if elected: My top priority is youth. Getting kids excited about church is something that lasts their lifetime. We need to find ways to increase the number of youth that attend our church and youth programs regularly. I would also like to focus on inviting more people to our church.

What would you like the congregation to know about you: My husband Mike and I are raising two amazing kiddos, Evelyn and Micah. I want to help create an environment that I am proud of and excited to bring my kids into and in return, create an environment my kids are excited to be in and want to tell their friends.

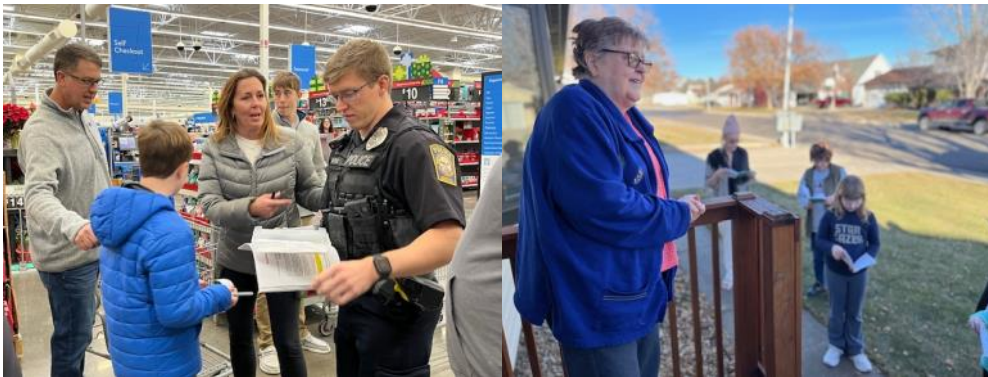
Lowell Moore

Occupation– Attorney

Relationship to First– Long time congregational member, Usher, Previous member of church council

What would your top priority be if elected– Maintain high level of pastoral service and membership.

What would you like the congregation to know about you– Married to Frankie Moore, 4 children, 8 grandchildren



Abounding Gratitude

The Caring Christians Committee (CCC) would like to thank the members of FELC for their participation in making the November and December outreach projects successful. The first project was the “Stamp It” campaign where we shared sixty-six stamped Christmas carol envelopes with the residents of Liberty House and affiliates of Deborah’s Legacy. The next activity was “Santa Cop” shopping.

Sixteen members of FELC volunteered their time to shop for toys for the less fortunate. Then the congregation shared Christmas greetings by sending Christmas cards (using address labels provided) to church members who may be unable to attend worship services. The last event was sharing the Christmas message by caroling at the homes of some of the members and friends of FELC. These outreach events happen only because of YOU! Thank you!



PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS.

Donna Schledewitz
 Crystal Carland
 Chloe King
 Mark Grubbs-Jody Hill's friend
 Kraig Keeter-Heidi Criddle's cousin
 Dave Clark- Heidi Criddle's Cousin
 Taylor Fecht-Friend of Alee Stout
 Sharen Andre- Jody Hill's Aunt



Friend and Family of

Johnadean Petersen

Please let the office (308-532-0250) know if you have anyone you would like to include in our prayers. We will continue to pray for four weeks. If more time is needed, please inform Pastor Sipes (402)200-0446

Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for a "special occasion", "Glory to God", "in honor of" "in memory of" please pick up a form in the office.

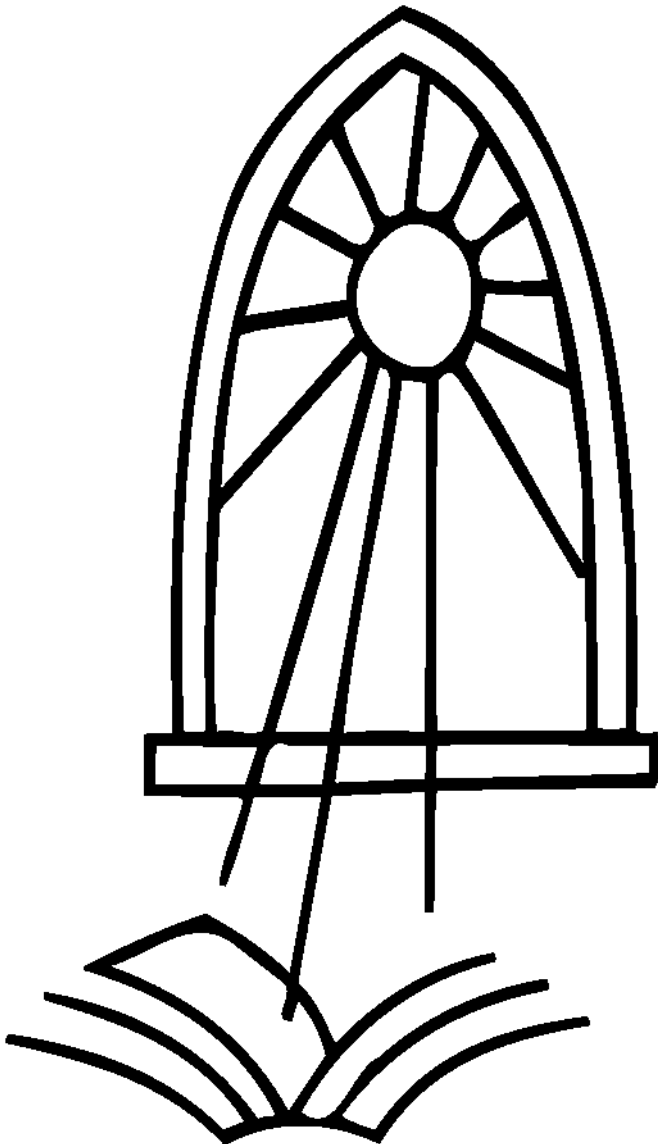
The cost is **\$40.00** for one pair of bouquets.

2024 Available Sundays

Jan	7	14	21	28	
Feb	4	11	18	25	
March	X	10	17	24	31

December Flowers were given by:

- Dec 10- To the Glory of God
By: Nyhlia Kempke
- Dec 17- In Memory of Martin and Florence & brother Melvin. By: Marion and Donna Effenbeck
- Dec 31- In Loving memory of Pat Kasson.
By: Steve and Liz Evans



IN DECEMBER FIRST LUTHERAN WELCOMED 8 NEW MEMBERS, 3 OF WHICH WILL BE BAPTIZED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

2023 Poinsettias

To the Glory of God:

By: Don and Betty Haws
By: Lynn and Sharon Riley
By: Sandi Carland

In honor of...

Gene and Claudette Nelson
By: Your grandkids and great
granddaughters
Our Families
By: Carl and Betty Hamit

In Memory of...

Bonnie LaRue Thanel
William D. Thanel Jr.
Ernest O. McClellen
Alvena M. McClellen
Lori LaRue Thanel

By: Alan Kent Nelson

Larry Allen

By: Baleigh, Quincy, & Jane Ann Allen

Dorathy Schwieger
David Schuett

By: Don and Jan Sears

Bob & Fae Guiles

Charlie & Beulia Sonneman

By: Albert & Arta Sonneman

Ron & Sharon Aden

Tracey Aden Gallagher

Pat Aden

By: Todd and Kim Aden

Vernon & Colleen Reutzell

Verlien Bowker

By: Doris, Gus, Mic, Paula and Families

Virgil & Lora Howard

By: Doug and Doris Howard

Scott Michael Johnson

By: Jerry and Mary Johnson

Wes Andre-Henn

By: Jody Hill and Family

Nadine Nelson

By: The Nelson Family

Hilda Tesar

W.D & Frances Newberry

By: Gary and Elise Tesar

LeRoy and Della Fisher

Ervin and MayBelle Rerucha

By: Doug and Peggy Fisher

In Memory of...

Steve O'Rourke

John & Arleen Gifford

By: Karla O'Rourke and Family

Randy, Helen, & Gretchen Witt

By: Christa, Terry, and Ruth

Bruce Jensen

By: His Family

Cliff & Lora Hiltabidel

Cliff & Eunice Stoll

Kenna Quinn

Ron Rains

By: Jerry and Sandy Stoll

Delwyn & Shirley Tisher

Warren Criddle

By: Neal and Heidi Criddle & Families

Lee Lamberty

By: Jody Lamberty

Gary Shaner

By: Donna Keithley

Our Parents: Clem & Elinor Nielsen

Dan Moore, Violet Rouse

By: Lowell and Frankie Moore

Wes & Barb Hansen

Antonia Cochran

By: Al & Pam Short-Mark & Jill Silos & Families

Bill & Georgia Lerner

By: Mike and Gretchen Freeman

Warren & Lavona McClintock

Eddie & Laura Uehling

Bob Uehling

By: Scott, Krista, Sam, and Nolan Uehling

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

First Evangelical Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the ELCA.

Mission Statement: Under construction

Worship Services

Sundays: 10:30 AM

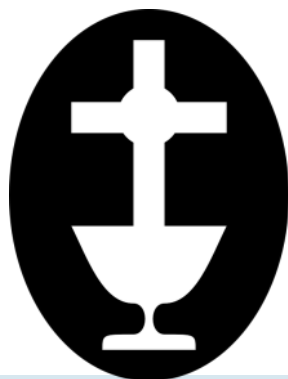
Both online and in person

Sunday School

Sundays: 9:15am

Wednesday Confirmation

6:30-7th,8th,9th grades



January 2024

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
305 WEST 5TH STREET
NORTH PLATTE NE 69101-3830
Address Service Requested



First Evangelical Lutheran Church will hold our 143rd Annual Congregational Meeting on January 28, 2024 @ 9:15am in the Fellowship Hall

In preparation of the Annual Report, each committee and organization will need to submit a report of membership, officers and activities during 2023.

Committee reports need to be in the church office no later than **January 15th**.

Report packets will be available January 21st for pick up

<i>Weekly Scripture</i>	First Lesson	Psalm	Second Lesson	Gospel
Jan 7	Genesis 1:1-5	29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
Jan 14	1 Samuel 3:1-10	139;1-6, 13-18	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
Jan 21	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	62:5-12	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
Jan 28	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	111	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28

Interested in the book of Revelation?

Sign up now for a class led by Pastor Steve Berke. "Revelation: God's Vision of Life for a Troubled World" will be offered in-person at American Lutheran Church, Gothenburg, on Thursdays, January 11, 18, 25, and February 1, 7:00-8:45PM.

Registration deadline January 5. No refunds after January 5, 2024.

The same course will be offered by Rev. Steven Berke on Zoom Thursdays, April 11, 18, 25 and May 2. 7:00-8:45PM

Registration deadline April 8. No refunds after April 8, 2024.

Texts:

Participants are asked to order and read one of these two books as background before the course:

The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation, by Barbara R. Rossing, paperback, 2005.

Reading Revelation Responsibly, by Michael J. Gorman, paperback, 2010.

This class has a \$25 fee because it is sponsored by the synod's Emmaus Lifelong Learning program. Register online at the Nebraska Synod ELCA website, nebraskasynod.org.