

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

I intended this month to talk about giving, and how Christmas is the season of generosity. I watched the movie “The Man Who Invented Christmas” about Charles Dickens on HULU the other night, and I was inspired for Christmas and how sharing is what it means to be a person. I encourage you to keep sharing this Christmas time.

But, I received news that our Bishop Brian Maas has resigned his bishopric, effective the end of August 2022. This changes a few things for us at First Lutheran. First, with her incredible gifts, Erika, our Director of Youth and Family has managed to again have Bishop Brian be with our congregation early this Spring. More details will be coming, but I invite you to be there to offer him best wishes.

Secondly, our Synod Assembly will elect a new Bishop. FLC will have six delegates to this assembly, and I invite each and every one of you reading this to consider if you wish to be one of those delegates. Discerning and electing a Bishop will set our Synod on a trajectory for the next 6-12 years, and this is a major consideration for us. Much of what we do and how we participate with other ELCA congregations in Nebraska and across the globe will be determined by the leadership set forth by the Bishop. It is a big deal. The Assembly is in Kearney, NE, June 2-4, 2022. Please let a member of the Nominating Committee (Jean Hundtoft, Ryan Schroeter, Loren Havekost, or Tracy Gross) know of your interest.

Finally, the election of a Bishop is a chance to dream into the future. The COVID-19 pandemic has re-arranged how people behave. Perhaps that is why I was so captivated by the movie about Dickens the other night? No matter what the circumstances, going into the future kindness and generosity are the bedrock of a human being. Jesus of Nazareth did a lot of things as the Son of God, but none more important than becoming human and showing us how to be kind and generous. And that seems to me what Christmas is all about. Merry Christmas!!

--Pastor Scott



Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Pastor's Message | 1 |
| Notes, Dates, & Reminders | 2, 3, 4, 5, & 11 |
| Children's Ministries | 6 |
| Youth News | 7 |
| Social Concerns | 8 |
| Blessed to be a Blessing Stewardship Appeal | 9, 10, & 11 |
| Thank you's | 12 |

FLC strongly recommends
that the following people wear
masks while in the building:



unvaccinated,
children under 12
and immunocompromised.

**We believe
this is the
safest way
to keep
people
healthy as
they
participate in
the ministries
of the
congregation.**



*The Christian Growth Board would
like to remind members of FLC to
consider including the Christian
Growth Fund in your estate
planning.*



**WE REMEMBER IN
OUR PRAYERS**-Please keep these
people in your
thoughts and prayers

✠Family of Lorraine Hansen
✠Family of Arland Gross (father of Jerry Gross)
✠Family of Dick Vercruysse
✠Family of Kenneth Wilson (father of Melody Dubon)
✠Family of Curt Pederson (Jill Graber's brother)
✠Shane Reeh - prayers and healing
✠Jim Dinsmore - prayers and healing
✠Heather Dederman - prayers & healing
✠Dale Mruz - healing
✠Melissa Templar - healing
✠Clark Jenson - prayers and healing
✠Martin Kuhr - prayers and healing
✠Nicole Schmidt - prayers and healing
✠Riley
✠Wayne (father of Deb Henson) - prayers for healing
✠Pat Bentsen - prayers for healing
✠Jeff Gunderson - healing
✠Georgia (great niece of Debbie Katt) -prayers & healing
✠Barb
✠Rod
✠Kyler Reed - healing
✠Justin Roberts-healing
✠Malachi Chrans-surgery & healing
✠Gary Ford-prayers & healing
✠Clyde Johnson - healing & prayers
✠Scott & Katie Abrams - prayers & healing
✠Kay Melby (Angela Ulven and Kari Hernandez's mother) - healing
✠Mr. S. Akot - healing
✠Patrick McKinnis - continued healing
✠Stacy Thompson Green (daughter of Marcy Bottorff) – prayers & healing
✠Lisa Garcia – strength & healing
✠Larry Kastrup – healing
✠Leo Aguilar-Hicks – healing for Leukemia
✠Lekura Parish
✠ELCA World Hunger, Women's Thankoffering, and all those we name in our hearts.



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS**MWM****MID WEEK MEAL****Pickup or Delivery**

We are serving our meal in the east parking lot
2146 Wright St.

Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

For Planning

Text # of meals to 402-533-0918
NOT REQUIRED

For Delivery

Text name & address & # of meals
402-533-0918

Volunteers STILL Needed!!**Cooks**

You join a group of folks to cook the meal on
Wednesdays 1pm-3:30pm

Servers

You join a group of folks to serve the meal into to-go
containers on Wednesday 4:45-6:30pm

Delivery Drivers

You deliver meals to about 6 locations on
Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

Please contact Erika if you can volunteer!!
All times are flexible—weekly, biweekly,
monthly, whenever it fits into your schedule!

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



Let us do your baking for the holidays!

FLC Youth Cookie Bazaar

December 11th @ 4:30-7:30pm
December 12th @ 9am-12pm

All funds raised will support the FLC Youth Fund & the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering Fund

Please join us and experience the joy, music, and wonder of Christmas with FLC's Children!!

FLC CHILDREN PRESENT:
A CHRISTMAS PROMISE



SUNDAY, DEC 19 @ 10:15AM

Please note... we will be preparing contribution envelopes for 2022 in December. If you do not currently have an envelope box and would like one, or if you would prefer not to use envelopes, please contact the church office no later than December 10th.

Thank you.

Mark Your Calendars!

Christmas and New Years Schedule

Sunday, December 19th 10:15am
Children's Christmas Program in LIFE Center

Wednesday, December 22nd 6:15pm Worship Lab
(No LIFE Night Classes)

Friday, December 24th
 Christmas Eve 4pm, 6pm, & 10pm

Saturday, December 25th
 Christmas Day 10am
No 5pm service on Christmas Day

Sunday, December 26th 9:30am

Wednesday, December 29th **No LIFE Night**
(No Worship Lab or Classes)

Saturday, January 1st 5pm

Sunday, January 2nd 8:15am & 10:15am



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

**Would you provide a Sunday night meal
for our 9 to 12 Youth Group?**

A batch of chili? Some tater tot casserole? A donation for pizza?
Please contact Erika if you would help feed our high schoolers
while they attend Youth Group each Sunday night. Thank you!!

ELCA Youth Gathering 2022 Minneapolis, MN July 23rd—28th

Please pray for this group as we prepare for our trip to the ELCA Youth Gathering in July of 2022. We learned about God's boundless creation in our last meetings.

Please join us in this **Creation Litany**:

L: The Spirit of God be with you.

C: And also with you.

L: "The heavens are telling the glory of the Lord; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

C: All around us are signs and wonders, fingerprints of the Creator. Praise be to God! "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it; and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). All around us we find life; all the created world is related to us. Praise be to God!

L: Come, let us dwell in God's work of art! Here in this wondrous world we are not alone. We shall share this life with the heavens and the earth.

C: With the waters and the land, with the trees and grasses, with fish, birds and animals, with minerals and creatures of every form, and with all people. Praise be to God!

L: God is good, and everything God makes is good.

C: Praise to the Creator of all that is, seen and unseen! Amen.

I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured.
Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. Ephesians 3:19 CEV



December Lessons

- Dec 1:** Manger Tales—Sam the Sheep
Dec 8: Manger Tales—Cody the Camel
Dec 15: Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal
Dec 22 & 29: NO CLASS

FLC CHILDREN PRESENT: A CHRISTMAS PROMISE



SUNDAY, DEC 19 @ 10:15AM
 (CHILDREN HERE AT 9:45AM)

Volunteer of the Month!!



Kelsey McCaig
Preschool Teacher

- Favorite Bible story:** Creation/Adam & Eve
Favorite food: Chinese Takeout
Favorite part of FLC: Welcoming environment—you can feel God's presence there
Favorite Xmas Tradition: Singing *Silent Night* with candles at worship

Children's Offering in December

The weekly children's offering is shared with the following:

- **FLC LIFE Night Supplies & Curriculum**
- **The Friends of the Jeanette Hunt Animal Shelter**—a non-profit group that works to provide a safe & humane environment for animals & educate the community about pet ownership & animal needs.



The 2nd group is a rotation of local charities chosen by the Children's Ministries Team. Please let us know if you have a charity you would like to highlight!





2022 ELCA
YOUTH GATHERING
beyondless
GOD BEYOND MEASURE

ELCA Youth Gathering
Sunday, January 2nd @ 2-8pm
Fellowship Hall

This meeting is required.
Service project, games, fundraiser planning,
catered dinner from Mangia, and FUN!!
Parents attend at 7:30pm

IMPORTANT DATES

12/5

No Youth Events
Erika out of town

12/11-12

FLC Youth Cookie Bazaar
Saturday, 4:30-7:30pm
Sunday, 9am-12pm

12/12

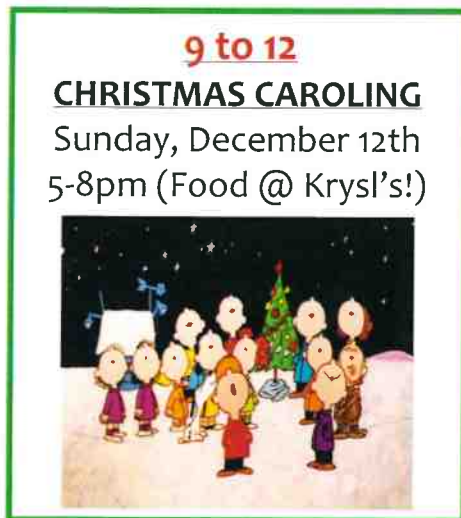
9 to 12 Christmas Caroling
NO MEAL
5pm-8pm
Snacks and drinks to follow

12/19

9 to 12 Youth Group
Dinner and Chill Time before Finals!

12/26

No Youth Events



Do justice, love kindness, and
walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8



To Serve As Jesus Served... *projects and events of the church, the community, and the world reported monthly by the FLC Social Concerns Committee.*

**FLC AMBASSADOR
SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE
December 2021**

The ADVENT SEASON is nearly here! As you reflect on the awesome ways the birth of Christ has impacted your life, we invite you to take note of the **CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE GIFT EXHIBIT** in the narthex, and ask that you prayerfully consider giving a gift that has the capacity to change the course of someone else's life. It could solve your dilemma of what to do for "the person who has everything" and help others in need—a win-win situation! This year we are focusing on **God's Global Barnyard** (global), **Lutheran Family Services** (regional), and **Washington County Food Pantry** (local). Each gift counts twice—once for your loved one and once for someone whom you may never meet. An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need—providing food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops, and offspring to sell on the market. Thus with one gift you can help a family escape poverty. **Or**, your gift to **Lutheran Family Services**—now resettling 730 refugees by February 13, can help resettle a refugee family. **Or**, you can make a difference to a struggling local family by providing for basic food, soap, and paper products through your gifts to the **Washington County Food Pantry**.

You can find over 50 options in the **ELCA Good Gifts** catalogs found at the display—from pigs to water wells, school uniforms to microloans—and honor a friend, a loved one, a pastor, or a teacher at the same time. Gift cards for the above-mentioned gifts and others, Christmas cards, and "in loving memory" cards are also available there. And don't forget to pick up an **Advent Calendar** for your family's use if your child has not already brought one home! You might also consider ordering gifts from the **SERRV** catalog, a Christian nonprofit resource which helps provide needed income to Third World artisans and their families by paying fair prices and promoting just relationships. All these options and more are available at the **CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE GIFT EXHIBIT**.

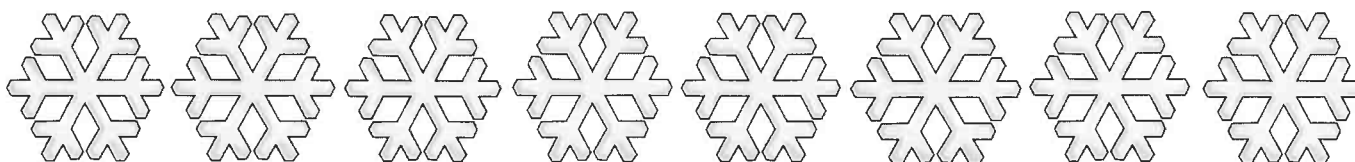
Also, our **OUTERWEAR INGATHERING** for **Joseph's Coat** and **Lutheran Family Services**, and/or **Open Door Mission** begins on **November 27** and continues through **December 19**. Please bring new or gently used winter coats, caps, hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, and/or warm socks for children or adults, and drop them in the receptacle so marked by the coat closet. Thank you for your generosity!



EQUAL EXCHANGE Fair Traded products—coffee, tea, chocolate, and nuts—will again be offered at **First Lutheran Church** on **Saturday, November 20**, at the **Annual Craft Fair Alternative Gift Exhibit** and following weekends for **Alternative gift shopping!** These items can made great "stocking stuffers."

The WASHINGTON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY needs your gifts of food (especially holiday type foods), soap products, and paper products for our near neighbors in need. You may deposit your gifts in the receptacle in the narthex at any time.

WE WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED CHRISTMAS as we celebrate the birth of our Lord, and a safe and healthy **NEW YEAR!**



Blessed to be a Blessing Stewardship Appeal

Frequently Asked Questions

*I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.” **Genesis. 12.2***

What is the Status of the debt on the LIFE Center loan? The original amount of the loan was \$2.28 million in 2005, and the congregation has steadily been paying \$12,755 a month to pay off the loan. Thanks to previous donors, the current balance due (\$400,000) it is to be paid off in the summer of 2024.

Why a Fund Appeal now? Our Stewardship Committee believes the balance is low enough that if our congregation can commit to 12-14 months of paying the balance we can enter 2023 debt-free! We have other building maintenance issues that need to be addressed and paying off this debt will free us to work on them.

When does “Blessed to be a Blessing” begin? Currently our committee is visiting with long-time donors to the LIFE Center project. The congregation at large will be encouraged to make a donation or pledge in December 2021 and January 2022. Pledges can be paid until the appeal closes on December 31, 2022.

How will I be able to participate? How much should I give? Initially people will be visited, and everyone sent an information packet with a giving/pledge card. The Committee hopes to visit with as many people as possible over the course of 2022 in order to encourage everyone to participate. You may give any amount, but on average if each person or family commits to giving \$20 more a week (\$1000 annually), we should be able to pay off the loan. This is a gift over and above your regular donations and contributions, as we want to continue to provide high quality ministry, and maintaining to support our many mission partners in their endeavors.

What will “Blessed to be a Blessing” look like? Because so much of our ministry is now on-line as well as in-person, we will be providing a wide variety of videos to highlight many of the blessings we help provide with our ministry partners. Our ministry partners work across the globe, and every person of First Lutheran provides support for them. Take this opportunity to learn about the blessings you have shared as a valuable member of our congregation. Thank you for all you have given and will give to the ministries of First Lutheran.

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING



I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.
Genesis 12.2

We have been blessed through the years by our faithful givers who have brought us to the threshold of paying off our debt for the LIFE Center addition. **Blessed to be a Blessing** is a one-year appeal to get the debt paid off. All the while continuing to fund our ministries which are blessings to so many.

Any size gift that you are able to contribute is needed. By working together and having a debt-free building, FLC can not only serve our neighbors this year but can continue to serve well into the future.

Thank you for considering a gift to this fundraiser as your presence in our congregation and your generosity are greatly appreciated.

How Can I Give

⇒ **Cash and/or Check**

- 2145 Wright Street Blair, NE 68008

⇒ **Online Giving**

- firstlutheranblair.org/giving

⇒ **Text Giving**

- Text **FLCBLAIR** plus any dollar amount to **73256**

⇒ **Mutual Fund, IRA, or other Capital Asset**

- Talk with your financial advisor

(Blessed To Be A Blessing Continued on Next Page)

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Blessed to Be a Blessing

Name: _____ Amount of Gift: _____

Phone Number: _____ Annual / Quarterly / Monthly / Weekly

Email Address: _____ (please circle one)

**This commitment, offered in faith, may be increased or decreased due to my changing circumstances*

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



End-of-the-Year Contributions

In order for you to claim a deduction for contributions made to First Lutheran Church during 2021, the church office must receive your contribution by December 31, 2021. All contributions placed in the offering plates on any of the Christmas services or on Sunday, December 26 will be recorded as 2021 contributions. If you are hand-delivering checks, please have them to the church office by Noon on December 31. All checks must be dated in 2021 and if mailed, must be postmarked no later than December 31. First Lutheran Church will be following these tax rules when posting receipts.

Advent Worship Services

This year, we will be holding Advent worship services on Wednesdays at 6:15-6:45pm.

The Worship Lab format will still be followed with a few tweaks to enhance our worship during the Advent season - focused on our waiting for the birth of Jesus Christ.

Please join us!! This is a service for **ALL** our members - to focus on *Advent*.

Time Change for Saturday Night Worship Service!

There will be a time change for the Saturday Night Worship Service. The time for worship will be 5:00pm instead of 6:00pm.

If you have any questions please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.



Thank You Notes

Craft Fair Thank You!

Thank you to all who helped make the FLC women's craft fair successful. It took many hands to serve the lunch, bake the coffee cakes and desserts, set up and take down the tables, and plan the event. You are very much appreciated by the craft fair committee.

Dear First Lutheran of Blair,

Thank you for the food donations that you supported us with at Hillstrom House. We appreciate your generosity and will make good use of the supplies. All the best to your entire community! Thank you for supporting the Lutheran Volunteer Corps.

Peace,
Ryan James and Sarah Anderson

Thank you to Pastor Scott and Rod Hansen for the special visit and the beautiful birthday flowers.

-Phil and Florence Larsen



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
December 2021