

**NEWS FROM
OUR PASTOR**

I have figured out why reality TV is so popular. It's not because it's real. It's because it's not.

Deep down we really don't like reality.

We prefer to be spectators in our lives and in our world. We can blame that on television or on the Internet or on any number of the devices we have that allow us to sit back and watch, but the result is the same.

We are uninvolved. And that's our loss.

We are spectators, observers, paying customers who live vicariously through others. We spend more of our life hiring someone else to do than we do doing for ourselves. Of all of the places in the world where that disease is most debilitating, it might well be our faith life.

Spectators make horrible disciples.

Which is, after all, what we're supposed to be doing here.

The church has been diminished of this age of disengagement, where we pay professionals to do church for us, where we believe attendance, even occasional, sufficiently represents our salvation. And when it does not, we pass that blame onward, imprisoned in the pattern of grievance and sorrow that has become so defining of our culture today.

Spectators are judgmental. We are experts in the things we do not do. It is far too easy to shift our gaze to something else when our attention wanes. We are masters of the safe distance, using the anonymity of media to speak without accountability, holding others to impossible standards while we claim grace for our inheritance. We are desperate for a perfect world, caught up in the dis-reality of the one we see on our screens. Reality is hard, messy, inconvenient, and ultimately unsatisfying. So we separate ourselves from it, looking down upon it in disdain.

Spectators are suspicious. We step back because we see only the worst in the world, the worst in each other. We exist in small bubbles of the like-minded where we can safely share our common critique - until that bubble bursts and we become further separated.

It is no surprise then that we are lonely. We abide on islands distant from the dangers and difficulties of the world, where no one can reach us or hurt us. We are disconnected, separate from anything or anyone meaningful in our life. We have seen the cost of caring and we have decided that we can no longer afford it. We have abandoned honest love in favor of feigned relationship.

There is much more to say, but in the end only one thing is important.

We are the losers here.

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Message	1 & 2
Notes, Dates, & Reminders	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 10
Children's Ministries	8
Youth News	9

Thank you for your hospitality!!

There were over 45 people who helped make our Christmas Eve worship services welcoming, meaningful, and beautiful. Thank you for your time and your kindness during this special season!



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



(Continued from Page 1)

Jesus calls us into discipleship not because he needs us to do for him but because he knows we need to do for ourselves. We are the ones crying out our fear of abandonment upon the cross. But he bids us to come and follow him, to leave behind what we pretend to be and become what we were made to be. We have been gifted with awesome purpose and tremendous hope. Our souls and our world are at stake.

That is not to say by any means that reality is easy. It is painful and exhausting, the work is stressful and never ending, people are challenging, and yes, sometimes difficult. Discipleship is not a vaccine against the troubles of this world but a head-first dive into all of its risks and troubles. Faith is our inoculation against despair, that we might know we are strong enough for whatever life might ask of us. Which it does. And there is only one way to meet that truth ...

... heart first.

If you think these words are just a way to say that the church needs you to volunteer more, then you've missed my point. Yes, we do, you do, but don't stop there. You need you to do more, to be more, to live more. There is more to life than watching it pass you by. There are great joys and important triumphs and an abundance of gifts to be found in the simple act of living life. None of that is available to spectators.

But all of that is promised to disciples.

-Pastor Glen

We are now
livestreaming our
worship services on
Facebook Live.

Please join www.facebook.com/flcblair to be alerted whenever a live video Begins. This is a real-time, virtual worship experience, and we invite you to join us if you can't be with us in person. Each live video will begin as the regularly scheduled worship time.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



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

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✠Family of Marilyn Swanson | ✠Julia Maettes - cancer treatments - prayers & healing |
| ✠Family of Helen Sheets | ✠Elijah - healing |
| ✠Family of Gordon Soderberg | ✠Thomas Uhlman - diagnosed with lung cancer |
| ✠Randy Isaacson - prayers | ✠David Kaiser - healing |
| ✠Debra Harris | ✠Helen Garnett (Jim Garnett's mom) - healing |
| ✠Chancey Schwedhelm | ✠Randy Backman - healing |
| ✠Mary Jean Rahlfs - healing | ✠Deloris Matson - early stage lymphoma - healing & prayers |
| ✠Alicia (Niece of Deb Katt and Mother of Georgia) - prayers | ✠Vivian Walvoord - healing & prayers |
| ✠Gavin James - prayers | ✠Dana - healing |
| ✠LaDean Untiedt (Mother of Teresa Preister) - treatment for breast cancer | ✠Betty Anderson |
| ✠Greg Megrue (Son of Betty Megrue) - serious health problems | ✠Irene Thorsen |
| ✠Paul Kempcke - healing | ✠Meredith Dickerson - Alpha Gal Syndrome |
| ✠Jennifer Novak-Haar - healing | ✠Zach - cancer healing/treatment side effects |
| ✠Mary Rasmussen - healing | ✠Misty - healing and pain relief |
| ✠Mary Connely | ✠Marilyn Svendgard |
| ✠Schaapveld Family, Stirek Family, Gubbels Family, Warrick Family, and all others affected by the recent storms | ✠Sue Marsh - healing |
| ✠Sana and Elley Smith | ✠Merriebeth Ferguson (sister-in-law of Merriellen Bourn) - cancer - healing |
| ✠Marcie Ellenberger - healing | ✠Chris Kesling - healing |
| ✠Brooklyn Schroeter - healing | ✠Alex - surgery & healing |
| ✠Carla | ✠Mary LaScala |
| ✠Kari Hernandez - healing | ✠Martin Kuhr - prayers and healing |
| ✠Clint Clausen - prayers | ✠Riley |
| ✠Ellie Mommsen | ✠Georgia (great niece of Debbie Katt) -prayers & healing |
| ✠Greg Reed | ✠Kyler Reed - healing |
| ✠Mary Frey (mother of Rhonda McMurtry) - prayers | ✠Scott & Katie Abrams - prayers & healing |
| ✠Wayne & Carolyn Behrend (Parents of Deb Henson) - prayers for healing | ✠Kay Melby (Angela Ulven and Kari Hernandez's mother) - healing |
| ✠Jo Royuk (mother of Anne Chrans) - healing | ✠Stacy Thompson Green (daughter of Marcy Bottorff) - prayers & healing |
| ✠Mick Jensen | ✠Larry Kastrup - healing |
| ✠Patrick McKinnis - healing | ✠Leo Aguilar-Hicks - healing for Leukemia |
| ✠Amie Clausen - prayers & healing | ✠Lekura Parish |
| ✠Sunni Wilson (mother of Melody Dubon) | ✠Texas Flood Victims and all those we name in our hearts. |

***Rushed on Wednesdays?
Let us do the cooking!***

**W.O.W. Meal has started back up. It is every
Wednesday evening from 5:30pm-6:15pm.**

Join us for the W.O.W. Meal in the Fellowship Hall from 5:30 pm – 6:15 pm
prior to Worship Lab.

**** Free-will offering ****

*Come at 5:30 to fuel your body and then
stay for Worship Lab at 6:15 to feed your soul.*

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Mark Your Calendars



Sunday, January 25, 2026 Annual Meeting of the Congregation of First Lutheran Church

We will have our regular 8:15am & 10:15am worship services on this day.

Saturday, Jan. 24th—regular 5pm worship will be held

The Annual Meeting will begin directly after the 10:15am worship.

Annual Meeting Budget Forums:

There will be three annual meeting budget forums held prior to the Annual Meeting:

Saturday, January 17th at 6:00pm
Sunday, January 18th between worship services
Wednesday, January 21st at 6:45pm

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



ATTENTION High School Seniors and College Students: The Christian Growth Board is accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 school year for post-secondary education. Any member of FLC that is currently a high school senior or college student may apply. Applications are available on the church website or by the Welcome Center. If you have any questions please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.

The deadline to submit an application is April 15, 2026.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Give us a hand!!



- Could you answer the phone for an hour?
- Could you wash dishes for a half hour?
- Could you collect offering at worship once a month?
- Could you pull weeds in the prayer garden for an hour?
- Could you bake 3 dozen cookies once a month?



- Could you prepare the wafers/wine for 1 worship service once a month?
- Could you help hang the worship paraments in the Sanctuary?
- Could you welcome people to your worship service once a month?
- Could you bake a batch of communion bread once every 3 months?
- Could you cut out craft items for LIFE Night?

Our church continues to grow; however, our staff does not. We could use some help with tasks around FLC that YOU—a lay person—could do!

Please consider helping out at FLC in one small way.
Contact the church office to offer your helping hands.

Offering Envelopes

The 2026 Offering Envelopes are out for you to pick up. The Offering Envelopes are in alphabetical order in the Narthex. Please stop by and pick your envelopes up. If you have any questions please contact Dawn in the Church office at (402) 426-4073. Thank you!

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed on Thursday, January 1st and Friday, January 2nd. If you have any questions please contact the church office at (402) 426-4073.

New Christ in Our Homes are here

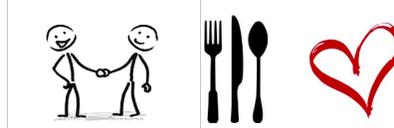
Christ in Our Homes-If you would like a Christ in Our Homes daily devotional they are available at the Welcome Center in the Narthex and also on the usher table outside of the LIFE Center for January, February, and March. The Christ in Our Homes is a book that has a daily devotional to read and pray. Please stop by and pick one up if you would like or if you need one delivered please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



MWM

MID WEEK MEAL



**We are now serving ~ 240 individuals EACH WEEK.
 The need is at the highest level since the Covid shutdown.**

Please consider giving to this ministry in any of the following ways:

- Monetary donation to purchase supplies, ~ \$650/week
- 3 dozen homemade cookies/bars, 21 dozen/week
- Prepare/cook the meal, weekly on Wed @ 1-3:30pm
 - Deliver meal to 6-8 addresses
 (~ 42 residences & 6 apt complexes, up to 10 weekly routes)

Please contact Erika @ 402-533-0918 to serve your neighbor

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Greetings from the Call Committee:

At this time, the Call Committee is working with the Congregational Council to hold candidate forums with Pastor Glen Thomas. These forums are not to be confused with the budget forums, which are being held on January 17th, 18th, and 21st.

Rather, they are a time for congregants to bring their questions, answers, and concerns to the forefront. Members of the Call Committee and Council will be present at each forum.

There will be three forums you can attend:

Sunday, January 11th between services

Sunday, January 11th at 11:15am

Wednesday, January 14th at 6:45pm

There has been a majority vote-to-call from the Call Committee and from the Council.

The Call Committee and Council are currently reviewing Pastor Glen's interim contract.

Christian Growth Fund Update:

The following update to the Constitution will be presented at the annual meeting for adoption by the Congregation.

This updates the opportunities for students to receive a scholarship for a wider variety of post-secondary education.

C5.05.01 The Christian Growth Fund

Replace C.2.B

A minimum of 10% of annual distributions shall be for scholarships or grants to members of the congregation for the purpose of post-secondary education, including but not limited to college, seminary, nursing or medical school, Community College or trade school (preference given to those attending Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affiliated institutions); and/or for church related camping or leadership conferences, or such other training that enables members of this congregation to grow in Christian faith and service to the community.

The amount of this scholarship will be determined by available resources in the Christian growth fund and the number of applicants. An applicant may receive a scholarship a up to four times throughout the course of their educational career.

Scholarship applications can be made to the Christian Growth Fund from January 1 through April 15 for distribution for the upcoming academic year.

FLC KIDS NEWS

JANUARY 2026

A note from Erika:

We are starting another year! 2026!

As we begin another year at FLC, we continue on our adventure with God! We will learn more about our merciful God, we will continue to find ways to serve our neighbor, and we will love one another in our words and our actions.

Let's keep God in our hearts as we begin this new year and remember to show our love for God in our community each and every day!

Much love-
Erika

Next BIG Event:

Kids sing on February 25th!!



The kids will sing at Good Shepherd Nursing Home at 6:15pm & come back to sing for us at worship. Please have the kids in the Sanctuary by 6pm!

Looking ahead:

JAN 7TH JAN 14TH	The Man Who Would Not Be Quiet! Lesson & Service Project - 1/7 Art & Music - 1/14
JAN 21ST JAN 28TH	How Can I Pray? Lesson & Service Project - 1/21 Art & Music - 1/28

Jan Kids Offering:



FOODBANK
FOR THE HEARTLAND

Food Bank for the Heartland provides healthy and accessible food to hungry individuals in 93 counties (in NE & western IA). They are moving to a new facility in 2026 and are serving more people than ever before.

JANUARY BIBLE VERSE:

GOD IS LOVE, AND THOSE WHO ABIDE IN LOVE
ABIDE IN GOD, AND GOD ABIDES IN THEM.
1 JOHN 4:16B



FLC YOUTH NEWS

JANUARY 2026



Announcements

Thank You Council Reps!!

Thank you Sophie Kempcke & Lane Christensen for your service in 2025!!

Welcome Hannah Gross and Ike Petersen, our 2026 Youth Reps!!

February = FAITH Month!!

In February, Erika will host youth group each Sunday (Feb 1, 8, 15, 22) @ 5-5:30pm.

Each week, there will be a short faith-based lesson, an activity, and we will close with prayer.

If you want to stay afterward and hang out, that's great too! There will be food and drink, as usual. :)

Confirmation in January

All Grades:

The Trinity
FAITH MENTORS
Apostle's Creed, Articles 1-2



Fundraisers

Fundraiser Results!!

Holiday Greenery

We raised \$1,277!

Thank you Tom & Deb Parks for picking it up!

Cookie Bazaar

We raised \$1,852!

Thank you to all our cookie bakers!!

9 to 12 YG Plans

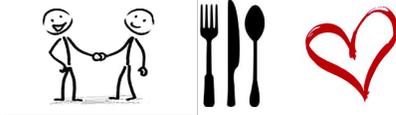
- **Jan 4:** Winter Break
- **Jan 11:** No Meeting
- **Jan 18:** **Bowling and Dinner**
Meet at FLC @ 3pm to head to Omaha for bowling and food!
- **Jan 25:** **Annual Meeting of FLC**
*After 10:15am worship
Please come and vote as a member of FLC!!*

Micah 6:8



Do justice
love kindness
walk humbly
with your God.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

MWM**MID WEEK MEAL****THANK YOU!!**

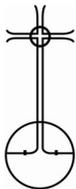
Thank you to all those who donated funds and/or time to this ministry in 2025. We are blessed to be able to serve our neighbors every single week in Blair. This ministry is not part of the FLC budget. It runs solely on donations and 1-3 grants per year. Thank you for loving your neighbor through your gifts to the Mid Week Meal.

Erika Cada



To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, **please do not file your 2025 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgement of your contributions from the church.** Some of your contributions may not be tax-deductible if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgement of your contributions from the church. Year-end statements will be available by the end of January.

Reminder: Pastor Glen will be preaching at Good Shepherd Home on Sunday, January 4th at 1:00pm. Please let your friends and family that are at Good Shepherd Home know. If you have any questions please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
January 2026