

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

I am a multi-tasker. I say that with some pride.

Though I probably shouldn't be so proud of that.

Because my head is usually in at least two places most of the time, I'm almost never fully in any one place. I catch myself in the middle of a conversation not really giving the other person my complete attention. After I've talked to someone for awhile I catch myself moving on to something else before the conversation is over. I hate it when people do that to me and I should never do that to anyone else. If I've done that to you, please accept my apologies!

I used to tell myself that I was like that because I was just so smart and my brain was too big to do only one thing at a time. What an ego! Probably that's the core problem – I'm so wrapped up in myself that I fail to be fully aware of what's or who is going on around me.

And that's the problem – what I miss out on when my mind is occupied with so much internal noise. I don't always fully appreciate the important thing right in front of me. Interestingly, MS has been trying to teach me that exact lesson. Because my legs don't always go where I tell them to, I have to really focus when I'm walking or else I will probably fall. Who pays attention to what their legs are doing when they are just walking? I haven't since I was a toddler.

I need to become as a child again.

This year our theme for Advent and Christmas will be "Go And ... Be Present." In the midst of the busiest time of the year, we will take on the challenge to stop, pause, listen, breath, and just BE. We are preparing for the coming of the Savior of the World. And what if we missed out because we couldn't be bothered to be there?

It is worth noting that there were a lot of people who were also not present at the stable in Bethlehem. There were no great scholars or religious leaders, no kings or dukes or princes. (no, they weren't kings – they were Magi) Just a few disheveled shepherds and some foreign scientists. There were angels, of course, but they had a job to do and a certain amount of inside information. The rest of the world went on about its usual busy lives, oblivious as God brought the Kingdom to life in the middle of the night.

I think we'd all like to have been present there. But even if we weren't then, we can be now.

So what would it mean for you to Be Present in this most beautiful time of the year? What would help you pause from the hectic rush and breathe, to rest, to enjoy the precious moments of the season? What would help you connect to the tradition of the season, to the sacred and wonderful story of the birth of Grace in the world? What would help you remain present in the Word even as you rush from task to task, event to event?

Church will help.

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The thing about going to church is that you have to go, you have to be present. You have to set aside the demands of shopping, baking, writing cards, wrapping presents, decorating, and everything else and sit there, listen to the music, pray, ponder the mystery of the Holy Communion, be blessed to become a blessing.

The Word will help. We are being told an amazing story, incredible and wonderful, transcendent yet surprisingly real. This is the first incarnation of Grace in the world – let us Be Present as it happens for us again this year.

-Pastor Glen



**Help us fill our gas tank to
get to the ELCA Youth
Gathering in New Orleans!**

Please drop your change in
our gas pump collection box
to help pay our transportation

costs—\$15,500!!!

Thank You!

End-of-the-Year Contributions

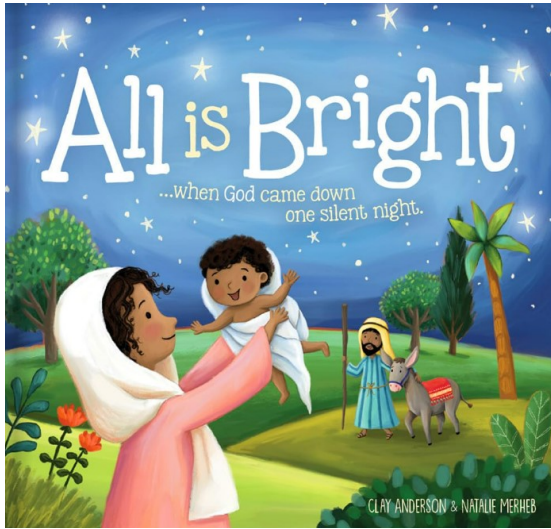
In order for you to claim a deduction for contributions made to First Lutheran Church during 2023, the church office must receive your contribution by December 31, 2023. All contributions placed in the offering plates on any of the Christmas services will be recorded as 2023 contributions. If you are hand-delivering checks, please have them to the church office by 3:00pm on Friday, December 29. All checks must be dated in 2023 and if mailed, must be postmarked no later than December 31. First Lutheran Church will be following these tax rules when posting receipts.

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



FLC Children's Christmas Program Sunday, December 17 @ 10:15am

Please join us to hear our children's voices tell the story of Jesus' birth.

Wednesday, December 20th

A special observation: The Longest Night Worship

Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. This special worship service speaks to the needs of people who find themselves somewhat blue at Christmas. You will find this worship to be reflective, accepting where we really are, and holding out for the Christmas promise of healing and hope.



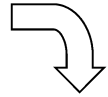
WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS-Please keep these people in your thoughts and prayers

- ✚ Family of Kenny Truhlsen
- ✚ Family of Mike Jenkins
- ✚ Family of Cheryl Baron
- ✚ Deloris Matson - early stage lymphoma - healing & prayers
- ✚ John Wick
- ✚ Vivian Walvoord - healing & prayers
- ✚ Pat Bentsen
- ✚ Betty Wolsmann - healing
- ✚ Florence Larsen - prayers for healing
- ✚ Marilyn O'Neil
- ✚ Keith Matzen & family - prayers
- ✚ Dana - healing
- ✚ Clark Jenson
- ✚ Betty Anderson
- ✚ Sunni Wilson (mother of Melody Dubon)
- ✚ Olivia Baker
- ✚ Tim Grinbergs
- ✚ Wayne (father of Deb Henson) - prayers for healing
- ✚ Ruth Ann Persson - healing
- ✚ Gordon Soderberg - healing
- ✚ Irene Thorsen
- ✚ Jo Royuk (mother of Anne Chrans) - healing
- ✚ Russ Sonderup - prayers
- ✚ Meredith Dickerson - Alpha Gal Syndrome
- ✚ Zach - cancer healing/treatment side effects
- ✚ Misty - healing and pain relief
- ✚ Marilyn Svendgard
- ✚ Sue Marsh - healing
- ✚ Merriebeth Ferguson (sister-in-law of Merriellen Bourn) - cancer - healing
- ✚ Chris Kesling - healing
- ✚ Alex - surgery & healing
- ✚ June Jenson - prayers & healing
- ✚ Frank Korshoj - healing
- ✚ Mary LaScala
- ✚ Martin Kuhr - prayers and healing
- ✚ Nicole Schmidt - prayers and healing
- ✚ Riley
- ✚ Georgia (great niece of Debbie Katt) -prayers & healing
- ✚ Kyler Reed - healing
- ✚ Scott & Katie Abrams - prayers & healing
- ✚ Kay Melby (Angela Ulven and Kari Hernandez's mother) - healing
- ✚ Patrick McKinnis - continued healing
- ✚ Stacy Thompson Green (daughter of Marcy Bottorff) – prayers & healing
- ✚ Larry Kastrup – healing
- ✚ Leo Aguilar-Hicks – healing for Leukemia
- ✚ Lekura Parish
- ✚ Maui Wildfire Relief and all those we name in our hearts.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



Poinsettia Order Form



Poinsettias will be used to decorate our worship areas for the Christmas season. If you would like to honor a special person in your life, give a poinsettia in memory of a loved one, or just help out in this way to beautify the church, please complete the information requested below, and drop this slip in the offering plate or leave it in the church office. Your free-will monetary offering may be included with this form to help cover the costs of the poinsettias. As we are tax-exempt, we will not be publishing a set "cost" for the poinsettias and therefore view them as a gift to First Lutheran to help decorate our worship space and at the same time honor or memorialize our loved ones.

Check below if you wish to order a poinsettia. Checks should be made payable to First Lutheran Church.

Orders must be received by December 17th.

☐ I would like to order _____ poinsettia(s)

All Poinsettias given to decorate our church will be delivered to a shut-in. If you know of someone who would benefit from receiving one of the poinsettias, please include their name(s) here:

I am ordering _____ poinsettias in honor of:

I am ordering _____ poinsettias in memory of:

☐ I will help deliver poinsettias

Your Name(s) _____

Phone number _____



FLC Youth Cookie Bazaar

December 9th @ 4-7pm

December 10th @ 9am-12pm

All funds raised will support the FLC Youth headed to the ELCA Youth Gathering in July, 2024

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



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

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

W.O.W. Meal is back again!

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.*

Advent theme

In the season of giving presents, how about having some? Being Present in a true gift in this age of great distractions. It's not healthy, it disrupts life and does not enhance relationships. This year let God give you the gift of Being Present. In this season, we will focus on what it means for us to Pause, to remember our traditions and to be present even when we are on the go. Special reflections and meditations will give you tools to share a very different experience of the season, a gift that will become a permanent joy for the rest of your life.

Please note...

we will be preparing contribution envelopes for 2024 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.

Communion Update:

Thank you for helping with this accommodation for Pastor Glen: because it is difficult for Pastor to bring communion to members in the pews, if you find it physically difficult to come forward during communion, we invite you to pick up the communion elements as you come into the Sanctuary and receive them during the communion liturgy when the Pastor indicates.

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
SENIOR CITIZEN
WORSHIP AND LUNCH
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023
11 AM WORSHIP
with Holy Communion
LUNCH to Follow**

***Please RSVP by
December 15th by
calling
402-426-4073***



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

Could you help deliver the MWM 1 time/month?

Please let Erika know if you could give just ONE HOUR per MONTH
Please help us continue to serve our neighbors!!

Could you bake 3 dozen treats 1 time/month?

Please let Erika know if you could provide 3 dozen treats. You can also
click the signup.com link in the weekly Eblasts.

Craft Fair Thank You!

Thank you to all the helping hands at the First Lutheran Church Women craft fair. The committee appreciates all who took the time to bake, set up tables, take down tables, serve lunch, and financially support our fund raising event. It was a success because of you.

Thank you!

Reminder: Pastor Glen will be preaching at Good Shepherd Home on the 1st Sunday of each month. 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.



DECEMBER LESSON THEMES

Dec 6 & 13: **Advent and Christmas**
 We will do some crafts and themed lessons while practicing for the Christmas Program in December.

Dec 20 & 27: **NO CLASSES**
 Christmas Break



FLC Children's Christmas Program **All is Bright**

Please join us to hear our children's voices tell the story of Jesus' birth.

Sunday, December 17 @ 10:15am



Children's Offering in December

This month, our offering will be shared with
Feeding America

Feeding America works to get nourishing food to everyone in need, while addressing the root causes of hunger, as well. The food comes from farmers, manufacturers, and retailers. Feeding America gives 98% of all donations directly to programs serving people in need.



FLC YOUTH News!!



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

Micah 6:8



12/3

No Youth Events
Erika out of town

12/9-10

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

12/10

9 to 12 Christmas Caroling
5pm-8:30pm
Vince's Smorgasbord
to follow

12/17

Chill time before Finals?
We'll see how everyone is
feeling :)

12/24

Worship @ 9:30am
Xmas Eve Services
4pm, 6pm, & 10pm

12/31

Happy New Year!!
No Youth Group

**CREATED
TO BE**

New Orleans (NOYG) Team Bonding #4

December 10th @ 4pm
Quick meeting followed by caroling

Created to be **AUTHENTIC**
It comes from knowing you are
BELOVED.

REQUIRED for ALL participants!!

9 to 12

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Sunday, December 10th 5-8:30pm
(followed by Vince's Holiday
Smorgasbord in Fship Hall)



I challenge each of you to
BE THE LIGHT
during this holiday season!!



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 2023**



The ADVENT SEASON is 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 you to 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 the **Washington County Food Pantry** (local), **Lutheran Family Services** (regional), **Oaks Indian Mission** (regional), and **God's Global Barnyard** (global). You can make a difference to a struggling family by providing for basic food, soap, and paper products through your gifts to the **Washington County Food Pantry**. Or, you may help **Lutheran Family Services** prepare an apartment for a youth who has been in foster care and is now transitioning to adult life on the former Dana campus. Or, you may help **Oaks Indian Mission** provide a home for a child in need. Or, you may provide an animal that will make a world of difference for a family by providing food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops, or an offspring to sell on the market, thus escaping poverty.

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. 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 and more are available at the **CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE GIFT EXHIBIT**.

EQUAL EXCHANGE Fair Traded products--coffee, tea, nuts, and chocolates are also available at the **CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE EXHIBIT** through **December 22**. These items can make great stocking stuffers.

And don't forget our WINTER OUTERWEAR INGATHERING that will begin on **December 2/3** and continue throughout the month of **December for Joseph's Coat and Open Door Mission**. 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 **CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE GIFT EXHIBIT**. Thank you for your generosity!

The recently completed figures on the results of the **BLAIR CROP HUGER WALK** on **OCTOBER 8** sponsored by Church World Service is \$3,362 which includes both online and cash and check donations raised by 26 walkers. Of this amount 25%, \$840.50 will be returned to the Washington County Food Pantry. Thanks to all of you who helped in any way! Contributions are still coming in for our **ELCA WORLD HUNGER APPEAL**. God continues to call us to strive for a just world where all are fed, clothed, and sheltered. For "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these who are members of my family you have done it unto me" (Mt. 25:40b).

The **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE** is still seeking new members. Come join a busy team that works to help others in the community and around the globe and who truly desire to "Serve as Jesus served." If that sounds like you, please contact Eric Filows (402-730-0978), Lynette Jennings (402-278-0164), John Mark Nielsen (402-427-4443), or Jim Peterson (402-426-2716) for more information.

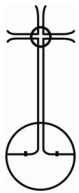
WE WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED CHRISTMAS as we celebrate the birthday of our Lord, and a safe and healthy **NEW YEAR!**

Mark Your Calendars! **Christmas and New Years Schedule**

Sunday, December 17th	10:15am
Children's Christmas Program in LIFE Center	
Wednesday, December 20th	6:15pm
The Longest Night Worship (No LIFE Night Classes)	
Thursday, December 21st	11:00am
Senior Citizen Worship & Lunch	
Saturday, December 23rd	5pm
Sunday, December 24th	9:30am (Advent Service)
Christmas Eve Worship	
	4pm-Praise Band, Bell Choir, and Brass Quintet
	6pm-Brass Quintet
	10pm-Chancel Choir
Monday, December 25th	10am
Christmas Day	
Wednesday, December 27th	No LIFE Night
(No Worship Lab or Classes)	
Saturday, December 30th	5pm
Sunday, December 31st	8:15am & 10:15am

Church Directories have **Finally Arrived!**

The Church Picture Directories have finally arrived! They are labeled and you can pick them up in the office. Please stop by and talk to Dawn in the church office to get your picture directory. If you have any questions please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
December 2023