

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

As I sit here at the end of 2021, and contemplate the year 2022 for First Lutheran Church, I am taken by two certainties: this will be the most difficult year for our congregation in a long time; and our congregation and its people will grow greatly in their faith. While these ideas may seem contradictory, they are related to each other.

I assume sometime in 2022 the pandemic will “be over.” Either we will continue to find ways to evade or treat the coronavirus that lead us to a less pandemic induced frenzy; or, the virus will mutate itself to relative impotence. Maybe both? And should one year from now I be required to rewrite this paragraph again, well, so much for my prognostication skills.

With the pandemic being over eventually, this puts FLC into a bind. We are not ready for it. Our ministry skills have atrophied from 2 years of little use; our priorities have shifted, and that changed how we use and value our time; and God has proven-- beyond a shadow of doubt-- that the mission of God’s love is not constrained only to those places and people where unity of creed and building are the only binding factors. We could be in for a difficult time as we navigate these new realities.

We have one thing working in our favor: God’s love for you and the world. God does not want to see us fail, God prefers when we do not suffer needlessly, and God dreams for us to live together sharing virtues of hope, and peace, and love. I have been around our congregation long enough to know that when we experience God’s presence with us, we can do amazing things. God’s mission is moved forward, and our faith grows.

I do not pretend to know where or how our faith will grow in 2022. Perhaps we will begin a new, never-before-tried ministry that captures our hearts? Maybe we resurrect a previous ministry for a new era, designed to bind us together in love and care? Maybe we do the hard work of sitting down with one another and talking about our faith, and where we see God moving us into the future? But as we live and move in this new reality brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will participate in God’s love in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, and our faith will grow. Of that I am certain too.

--Pastor Scott

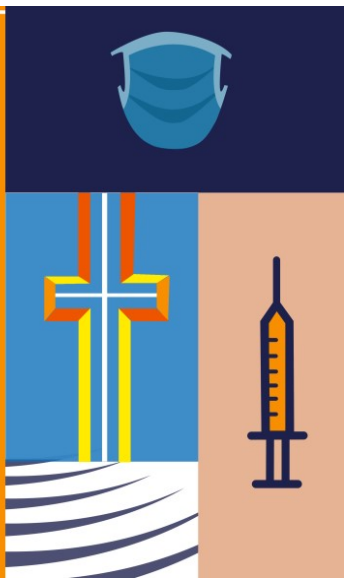


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Due to the rise of Covid-19 numbers, masks are STONGLY RECOMMENDED for all those worshipping with us.

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.

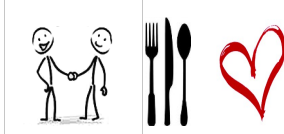


WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS-Please keep these people in your thoughts and prayers

†Family of Clyde Johnson
 †Family of Rev. Don Marshall (Executive Director of Oaks Indian Mission)
 †Family of Amy Murray
 †Family of Lyle Truhlsen
 †Family of Jim Dinsmore
 †Family of Jackie Heinssen
 †Family of Lorraine Hansen
 †Tim Jensen - healing
 †Phil Larsen - prayers and healing
 †Debbie Kempcke - cancer - healing
 †Vaughn Christensen
 †Kenny Truhlsen
 †Dick Shaw
 †Shane Reeh - 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
 †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
 †Lutheran Disaster Response and all those we name in our hearts.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

MWM MID WEEK MEAL



Pickup or Delivery

We serve 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!

**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!!

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Mark Your Calendars



Sunday, January 30, 2022
Annual Meeting of the Congregation of
First Lutheran Church

9:30am—One Worship that morning in the
LIFE Center

Saturday, Jan. 29—regular 5pm worship
 will be held

The Annual Meeting will begin directly
after worship.

Please Join Us for
Worship and Reception
for Kay Dickinson

OneWorship, Sunday, January 9 at 9:30 am! Kay Dickinson is retiring from Directing our Choir after 31 years, and we are honoring her with a worship experience of music and talents. In appreciation of her inspiration and devotion everyone is invited to come and celebrate the many notes of music Kay has brought to our congregation over the years. Sunday, January 9 at 9:30 am with a reception to follow.

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.



To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, **please do not file your 2021 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.



January Lessons

**Jan 12 & 19: The Way, The Truth, The Life
Reese's Cup**
There is only ONE way to God,
through our Savior, Jesus Christ!

**Jan 26 & Feb 2: Paul & Silas in Prison
Kit Kat**
Even when things are "breaking
apart", God takes care of us!

Volunteer of the Month!!

Sara Foulk
5th Grade Teacher



Favorite Bible story: I don't have one favorite. I look up, read & reflect on verses based on how I am feeling & things going on in my life.

Favorite food: Sushi, steak and pasta

Favorite part of FLC: The people! The kids and I love our Wednesday nights at church.

Favorite Winter Activity: Sledding & then cuddling under a blanket for a good movie or book.

Children's Offering in January

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

- **FLC LIFE Night Supplies**
- **Completely Kids**—a non-profit group that works to help kids and families overcome barriers to their success (in Omaha area)



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

Mark your 2022 Calendars

January 5th: Worship Lab begins

**January 12th: LIFE Night
Classes begin**

**March 16th: NO CLASS
Spring Break**

**April 6th: NO CLASS
Holy Week**

**April 20th: End of Year
FAMILY PARTY!!**



2022 ELCA
YOUTH GATHERING
boundless
GOD BEYOND MEASURE

ELCA Youth Gathering

Sunday, January 2nd @ 2-8pm

Fellowship Hall

Sunday, January 30th @ 6:30-8pm

Youth Room

These meetings are required.

ON JANUARY 2:

Service project, games, fundraiser planning, catered dinner from Mangia, and FUN!!

Parents attend at 7:30pm

ON JANUARY 30:

A regular meeting with dinner
No parents

Upcoming Activities!

Jan 9th @ 6:30pm: Dinner
Lesson on Christ's Baptism

Jan 16th @ TBA: Dinner & a movie
(Theatre? LIFE Center?)

Jan 23rd @ 6:30pm: Dinner & Guest Speaker
Jeff Smith will tell us about his 40 years of sports officiating—lots of good stories!!



Do justice, love
kindness, and
walk humbly with your
God. Micah 6:8

Youth Opps

9 to 12

High School Youth Group

Sundays 6:30pm-8pm

Discussion, dinner, games, & more

Starts January 9th

9ers

Wednesdays 6:45pm-7:45pm

Homework, chat time, & snacks

Starts January 12th

678

Confirmation

Wednesdays 6:45pm-7:45pm

Starts January 12th

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
January 2022**

As we welcome the New Year and the SEASON OF EPIPHANY, may this be our fervent prayer.

Oh God, give us the kindness to hear with compassion, to offer support, loving comfort, and care.

Give us courage to do what is needed, the wisdom to choose what is right and most fair.

Give us the vision to see what is possible.

Give us the faith that will help pave the way for a present that's hopeful, a future that's peaceful.

Give us the heart to bring joy to each day.

"And Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14).

Perhaps you chose an **ALTERNATIVE GIFT** to honor a loved one and, in the process, helped a third world family with an animal from **God's Global Barnyard**, or made a gift to **Lutheran Family Services** and by doing so helped to settle a family of Afghan refugees, or to **Lutheran Disaster Response** to help victims of recent tornadoes, or helped a local family in need with a gift to the **Washington County Food Pantry**. What wonderful ways these are to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the light of Epiphany, for **"Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me"** (Mt. 25:34)

A BIG THANK YOU also goes to all who contributed winter outerwear for **Joseph's Coat and Open Door Mission**. These items have been gratefully received and distributed to those in greatest need. Thank you for your generosity!

The WASHINGTON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY continues to need your gifts, especially hamburger helper, peanut butter, jam, and paper products such as toilet tissue for our "near neighbors" in need. You may deposit your gifts in the receptacle in the narthex at any time. While many think of Christmas as the time for giving, the need goes on. Monetary donations are also important to the long-term success of the **Pantry** and **Joseph's Coat**, as cash contributions not only cover daily operational expenses, but allow the Pantry to purchase food in bulk at significantly reduced prices.

Stay tuned for information about our upcoming **HAVE A HEART FOR HUNGER** emphasis in February!

WE WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED NEW YEAR as we celebrate the Epiphany Season and the coming of God's true Light into the world, our Lord Jesus Christ.



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

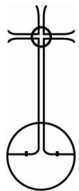
Blessed to Be a Blessing

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*



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
January 2022