

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

When the ELCA was formed in 1986, it was intended to move past the ethnic and parochial roots of its past and become both a fully American church. And a public church. That meant becoming fully engaged in the important questions of the day that affect the lives of people both in and outside of the church.

In the first Social Statement of the new church, the ELCA affirmed that it would:

- be a community where open, passionate, and respectful deliberation on challenging and controversial issues of contemporary society is expected and encouraged;
- engage those of diverse perspectives, classes, genders, ages, races, and cultures in the deliberation process so that each of our limited horizons might be expanded and the witness of the body of Christ in the world enhanced;
- draw upon the resources of faith and reason—on Scripture, Church history, knowledge, and personal experience—to learn and to discern how to respond to contemporary challenges in light of God's Word;
- address the issues faced by the people of God, in order to equip them in their discipleship and citizenship in the world;
- contribute toward the upbuilding of the common good and the revitalizing of public life through open and inclusive processes of deliberation.

I don't need to tell you that the result of that plan has been mixed at best.

It is a lofty goal. It is the right one. The purpose of faith is to shape our lives and guide us as we deal with the challenge of living out that faith every day. We are not baptized to be good church members. We are baptized to be people who express the gift of our salvation in everything we say and do. And every day we face hard and important questions. The church should be a place where we can work through those questions together.

But the ways of the world infest the work of the church, and instead of faithfully talking together about important questions we use those moments to compete, choose sides, judge, and put others down in hopes of lifting ourselves up. We believe everything is defined by winners and losers, and it is no wonder that instead of being a community of peace and mutual love, the church has become a fractured association filled with suspicion and even enmity.

The church has become like the world, and so the world uses the church to advance its own agenda of corruption, evil and death. Who will speak truth into the darkness?

It must be us. It can be us.

IF, and only if, we can learn to have "Courageous Conversations" together.

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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.

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No, we are not good at this. We are not naturally able to do this well. But we are the bearers of the Grace of God, we are filled with the Holy Spirit! This challenge is why we are here, this witness is our gift to the world. In days defined by fear, we are the antidote to all that ails the world.

So let the work begin! In January Pastor Glen will lead us in a first step of what we hope will be a series How to Have Courageous Conversations Together. These will take place after worship on Saturday 1/20, Sunday 1/21 and Wednesday 1/24. Then, beginning in February, the Social Concerns Committee will host Courageous Conversations on important questions based on what you tell us matters to you. There will NOT be persuading, voting or judging. There WILL be growing in faith and growing closer to one another.

Do not sell this moment short. The well-being our of congregation depends on our ability to have these conversations. The depth of our faith depends on growing in understanding and love. The peace of the world awaits our example of how to live together in this complicated time.

Please be a part of this important work.

-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

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.

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.

Offering Envelopes

The 2024 Offering Envelopes are out for you to pick up. The Offering Envelopes are in alphabetical order on the Welcome Center 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!



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

✠Family of Jordan Rishel
 ✠Family of Donald Rathjen
 ✠Family of Charles "Steve" Herron (father of Abbie Thompson)
 ✠Family of Babette Garder (mother of Scott Garder)
 ✠Mike Boeka - prayers for healing
 ✠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
 ✠Paul 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

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.



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

ATTENTION High School Seniors and College Students: The Christian Growth Board is accepting scholarship applications for the 2024-2025 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 14, 2024.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Mark Your Calendars



Sunday, January 28, 2024
Annual Meeting of the Congregation of
First Lutheran Church

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

Saturday, Jan. 27th—regular 5pm worship
 will be held

**The Annual Meeting will begin directly
 after worship.**



**Remember how much \$\$ we
 need to get to New Orleans?**

Please drop some change in our
 gas pump collection box
 each week!

Thank You!

***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.

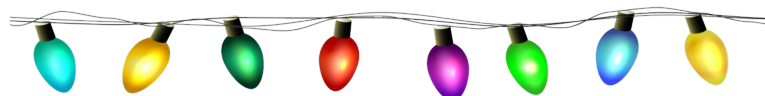
***** Free-will offering *****

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

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Christmas Eve at FLC was an AMAZING evening!
Thank you to all our hospitality helpers!!

Barb Triplett	Schroeter Family
E. Petersen Family	Hannah & Ollie Grace
Preister Family	Sydney & Leah Chance
Boone Family	Carl & Marla Rennerfeldt
Kathy Sonderup	Derrick Parker & Lorelai Bryant
Rump Family	Foulk Family
Jean & Paul Hundtoft	Sara Getty & Ayden Klitzke
Esther & Wyatt Gunderson	Stirek Family
Gross Family	Melody Dubon
Nicole & Henry Sok	All the others behind the scenes
Moeller Family	



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.



To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, **please do not file your 2023 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.

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

Choir News

Could the Spirit be calling you to add your voice to the choir? If so, we can promise with great certainty:

You will feel welcome, comfortable, and involved. The choir rehearsals are on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm in the choir room (take the elevator to the second floor and turn left). Regular attendance is encouraged but don't be discouraged if you can't make it each week. You are welcome to join as often as you can.

For more information and questions, contact Vince at VKrysl@firstlutheranblair.org

Come, join us in making a joyful noise!





JANUARY LESSON THEMES

Jan 10th: Epiphany Celebration!

Jan 17th & 24th: Esther Saves the Jewish People
Esther had compassion and empathy as she cared for her Jewish people, as a courageous Queen.

Jan 31st & Feb 7th: Deborah Leads an Army
Deborah displayed great leadership and strength as a judge and prophet of Israel.

Mark your 2024 Calendars

Jan 10th: Worship Lab & LIFE Night Classes begin
Feb 21st: Kids sing at 6:15pm
Mar 6th: NO CLASS—Spring Break
March 24th: Kids sing at 10:15am
PALM SUNDAY
March 27th: NO CLASS—Holy Week
March 31st: EASTER SUNDAY!
April 24th: End of Year
FAMILY PARTY!!

Monthly Family Prayer Practice: Play Doh Prayers

Supplies needed: A lump of Play Doh

- 1) Make the lump into a ball and pray for the world, God's creation, places where there is war or hunger and natural disasters.
- 2) Make the lump into a cross and pray for God's church, people who work in churches, people who are in prison because they believe in God, and people who need church.
- 3) Make the lump into a heart. Pray for people you know, for people you don't know, for people who need help, for people who are lonely or sick.
- 4) Make the lump into the 1st letter of your name and pray for yourself. Ask God to bless you, to help you, to comfort you and thank God for all he has given you.



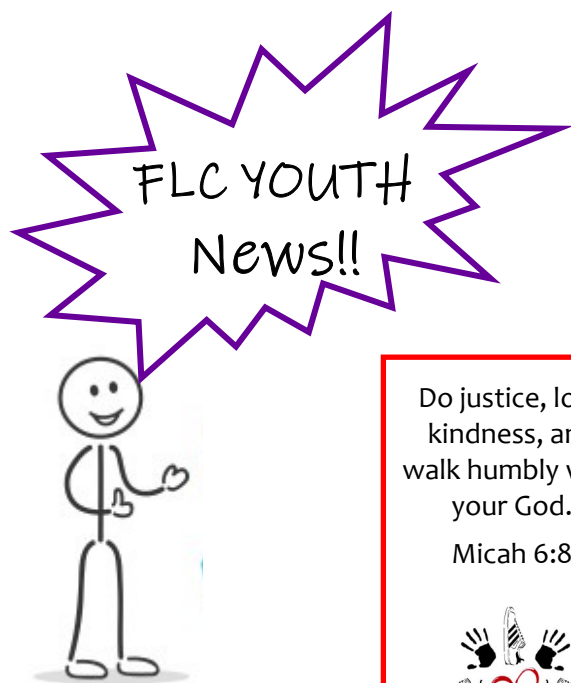
Children's Offering in January

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.





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

Micah 6:8



**CREATED
TO BE**

New Orleans (NOYG)

Team Bonding #5

January 14th @ 5pm

Quick meeting followed by caroling

Created to be **FREE**

To be transformed by Christ's love

REQUIRED for ALL participants!!

PARENTS ATTEND @ 6pm!!



9 to 12 Youth Group

Jan 7th: Jimmy John's and
Other religions'
holidays

Jan 14th: NO MEETING
NOYG meeting

Jan 21st: NO MEETING
Erika out of town

Jan 28th: Pizza and Games



Confirmation Topics

Jan 10th: Erika's not sure yet!! :)

Jan 17th: "Other Religions"

Jan 24th: 6th&7th -"Can I Be a Christian
Without Going to Church?"
8th -"Vocation"

Jan 31st: Faith Mentors
"Stewardship"



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

**FLC AMBASSADOR
SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE
January 2024**

IS the CELEBRATION of CHRISTMAS OVER?

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas beings:
To find the lost;
To heal the broken;
To feed the hungry;
To rebuild the nations;
To bring peace among people;
To make music in the heart.



Howard Thurman (from "Face to Face," a Publication of Church World Service)

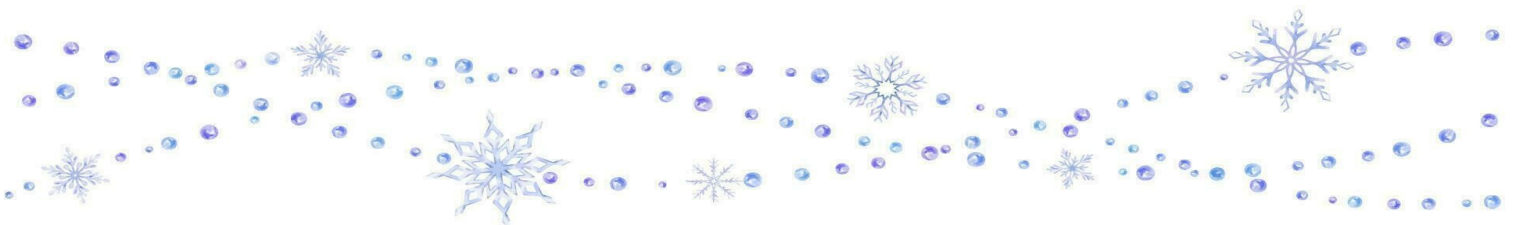
Perhaps you chose an **Alternative Gift** to honor a loved one, and in the process helped a third world family with an animal from **God's Global Barnyard**, or made a gift to **Oaks Indian Mission** to help a Native American child or to help support a refugee the Mission is serving, or helped a local family in need with a gift to the **Washington County Food Pantry**. What wonderful ways these are to celebrate the birth of Christ and the light of Epiphany, for "**As much as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me**" (Mt. 25:34).

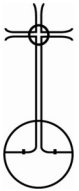
A BIG THANK YOU also goes to all who contributed winter outerwear which has or will soon be delivered to the **Open Door Mission and Joseph's Coat**.

The WASHINGTON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY continues to need your gifts, especially hamburger helper, peanut butter, jam, and paper products such a toilet paper 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 a time of giving, the need goes on. Monetary donations are also important to the long-term success of the **Pantry and Joseph's Coat**, as cash donations not only cover daily operational expenses, but allow the **Pantry** to purchase food in bulk at significantly reduced prices.

Stay tuned for information about the upcoming **HAVE A HEART FOR HUNGER** emphasis in February and a new exciting discussion option that will be coming up in that month also!

WE WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED EPIPHANY SEASON AND A SAFE AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!





FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
January 2024