

Brighter Days

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus!

Christmas is winding down and we are stepping into a new year. Bye bye 2020! Hello 2021!

Even though there is no substantive difference between December 31 of one year and January 1 of the next year, and nothing significantly changes over the course of one day, it sure feels like a corner gets turned and we have a sense that the next year will be better. Even though we know in our heads that change takes time and we can't expect results overnight, our hearts tell us that when January 1 comes everything starts over and we take the first steps toward the change that we expect will happen immediately.

Okay, so that is just a little bit of exaggeration. But, I use that exaggeration to point out what we all experience in certain degrees. It is almost as if the moment we take down the calendar from the previous year and hang up the new one, it is like closing the back cover of a well written book with a sigh of relief (and, hopefully, satisfaction), putting it back on the shelf and picking up the next book in the series, ready to see where the author plans to take the story next. It is like coming to the end of a James Bond movie knowing there will be another movie coming out within a few years ready to take us further into the depths of international espionage and really cool technological gadgetry. Putting up the new year's calendar feels a lot like that.

We all know what 2020 has been like. Coronavirus, racism and American politics have revealed the greatest tragedy of just how much the human people are bent on hating and demonizing each other at this point in history. I have to believe that we all hope the next year will bring brighter days. I have to believe we all want that. If I don't believe it, then I am left in despair over the callousness of humanity. No, we want better! We want better because God wants better of us, and God is going to use us to bring brighter days!

Besides coronavirus, racism and American politics, 2020 has been particularly challenging for you as a congregation. You began the year with such high hopes for your church, just like every other church did. You had all kinds of ministries in motion, you had a solid pastor shepherding you, you had excitement and momentum for being a church for the community, and you were largely on solid ground financially with all kinds of plans for the future. Then, COVID-19 hit and worship as you knew it changed. In the midst of lockdowns and alternative forms of worship, your pastor discerned a call out of Iron River, out of the Northern Great Lakes Synod, and out of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America completely. You found yourself thrust into another transitional period, this time without the partnership of another congregation (ie., Trinity). Bye bye 2020! Hello 2021!

And yet, regardless of how frustrating 2020 was for you, one thing remains as true today as it was yesterday and the yesteryear: God is faithful. God is faithful! God wants better of us and of you, and God is going to use you to bring brighter days! None of us can predict the future, nor can we say confidently that things will return to "normal," whatever that was. But we can be confident in the unfailing, unwavering faithfulness of God to bring about new life and renewal for God's created world. In fact, that has already begun in our Lord Jesus the Christ. Following the guidance of our Lord Christ, we walk into the unknown of 2021 trusting that brighter days are ahead, and I have to believe we all want that.

Interim Pr. D. J. Rasner



CHURCH



COUNCIL

The church council held its regular monthly meeting December 8th.

The council decided to establish a part time paid position of Administrative Assistant. This position will be open to church members and the community at large. The job description was discussed and a draft has been written for council approval.

The treasure reported that the PPP loan we had received has been forgiven in its entirety.

The roof replacement was discussed and bids which have been received will be verified as to the possibility of material cost increases the first of the year.

The Technology committee reported the new equipment to be used for the Sunday morning broadcasts has arrived and is being installed. As with all things new, a little “tweaking” will be involved.

Upon recommendation from the Worship and Music committee, it was decided to cancel the Christmas Eve in church service. Pastor will be recording a service to be broadcast on Christmas Eve and the Synod will be airing a recorded service to be aired on WLUC and Fox UP. Pastor is sending a letter to the congregation with times and dates of the broadcasts.

A committee was formed to review the church purchasing policy and reported they had met and will be meeting again to revise the existing policy.

A discussion was had concerning the council members terms of service. There will be openings available for council members to be voted on during our annual meeting set for January 31st, 2021. If you feel lead to be a leader of the congregation and serve in that capacity, contact any member of the council or contact the office. In 1 Peter 4:10, we read; “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

Wishing you and yours a blessed, safe and healthy New Year,

Gale J Holm

Council President



Treasurers Report

Happy New Year! The New Year of the church begins with Advent and like every year in my memory, the ball dropped in Times Square to signal the beginning of the New Year. May your challenges of 2020 be dwarfed by the blessings of 2021.

November income was up from prior year by \$462 mainly due to memorial contributions. Again income for November exceeded expenses by \$1,147. The PPP loan from First National Bank has been forgiven and FLC is again debt free. Thank you to everyone who supported our PPP effort.

| | Income | Debits | Net |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| November | \$8,000.29 | \$6,853.60 | \$1,146.69 |
| | | | |

As we close on fiscal year 2020, please consider making a contribution to our roofing project. You will be receiving a letter soon announcing the beginning of a roof fund campaign.

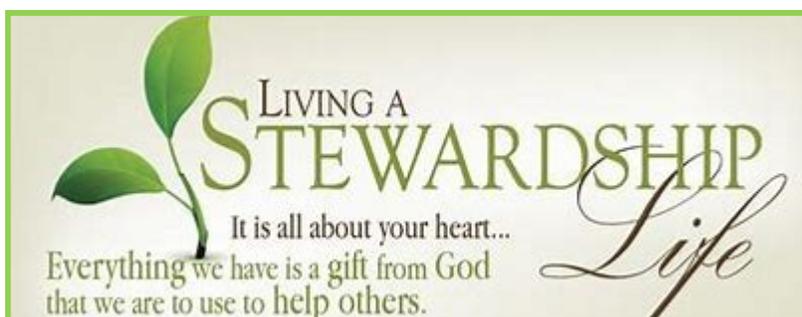
Technology

If you haven't viewed the collaborative Christmas Eve Service, please take the opportunity to do so. It can be viewed on the First Lutheran FaceBook page, our Web page under Live Stream, or on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSeCXx4z810> Pastor DJ did a great job tying three congregations together with technology and God's Word.

We have received all the pieces of equipment to enable our video live stream of Sunday services. We await expert eyes to "sew" the pieces together. We are looking for members who are willing to help with our broadcasts and those who are gifted with computer skills. Thanks to those who have already offered their assistance.

Blessings for 2021

Curt



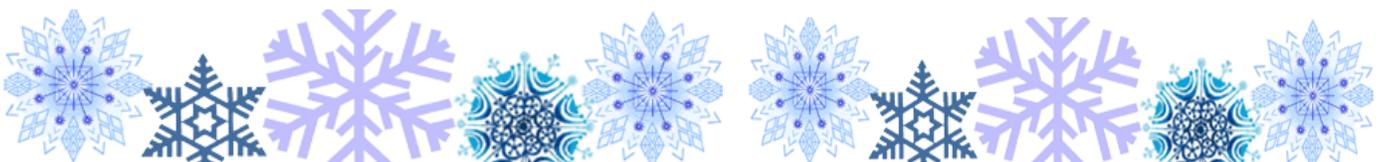


Happy Birthday

January 3 Gary Scalcucci
January 3 Dale Kemppainen, Sr
January 5 Lisa Starkey
January 6 Cindy Johnson
January 6 Jennifer Detterbeck
January 8 Addison Bortolameolli
January 12 Deborah Sitkoski
January 13 Pam Barry
January 13 Tracey Stine
January 14 Kyle Detterbeck
January 15 William Secord
January 19 Marian Masnova
January 27 Greg Garavet
January 28 Angie Stine

Happy Anniversary

January 3 Tom and Donna Sheldon
January 28 Mike and Judi Hemeleski



WELCA NEWS

On 12/14 Women of the ELCA met in the Fellowship Hall.

We divided into two groups and worked on preparing for Christmas. One group wrote Christmas cards for our homebound and Care Center members. The other group decorated the Christmas tree and Sanctuary. Thank you to the men's group for putting up the tree and outside Nativity.

Happy New Year everyone. We pray for everyone's health and hope we can gather again in 2021!

Next WELCA meeting will be January 11th at 11:00AM in the Fellowship Hall.

Men's Group

The Men's Group of First Lutheran met on Monday, December 14th to help put up our Christmas tree in the sanctuary and set our nativity scene outside the front of the church. Afterwards we warmed up inside with coffee, fellowship and enjoyed a wonderful lunch thanks to the WELCA women.

Next meeting is January 15th in the Fellowship Hall. Hope to see you all there. We do maintain social distancing and follow CDC guidelines, so please wear a mask.



Karen Kallio and Helen Berglund addressing cards for our shut ins. Not pictured: Jana Aho.



Joann, Karen and Jill Poulos help decorate the tree. Not pictured: Donna Ahlberg and Clovis Capadagli



Joann Wedegartner and Helen Berglund.

Northern Great Lakes Synod

Registration is open for the winter schedule of Lifelong Faith Formation, a program of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. The classes provide fun and interesting opportunities for people to connect with each other online, via Zoom, during these challenging times. The following classes begin in January:



Introduction to Biblical Greek II

Reflections on Bonhoeffer's Life Together, While We are Apart

The Doctrine of Discovery: From Myth to Reality

Bias in Our Communities: Addressing Race in Rural America

Walking Together: Companionship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

The Gospel of John

For more information, visit our website or contact Deacon-Elect Lori Ward at (615) 519-1969 or lori.ward@nglsynod.org.

Smile Amazon



- Thank you First Lutheran Church for shopping with AmazonSmile. Amazon shoppers everyday purchases generated over **\$236 million** in donations to charities worldwide so far.

AmazonSmile's impact:

\$470.89 to First Lutheran Church of Iron River

- **\$217,644,976.48** to all charities in the US
- **\$237,615,915.89** to all charities worldwide

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

If you missed our Christmas Eve Service, you can still view it on You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSeCXx4z810>



Virtual Epiphany Worship Service

Lighting the Way

A celebration of Christ's light through 90 years of ministry together!

Sunday, January 10, 2021

Worship with the Fortune Lake Association churches

In appreciation of our association congregations through this pandemic, we invite you to this worship experience with our FLLC community! The service will be [posted on our YouTube channel](#) on Saturday, January 9.

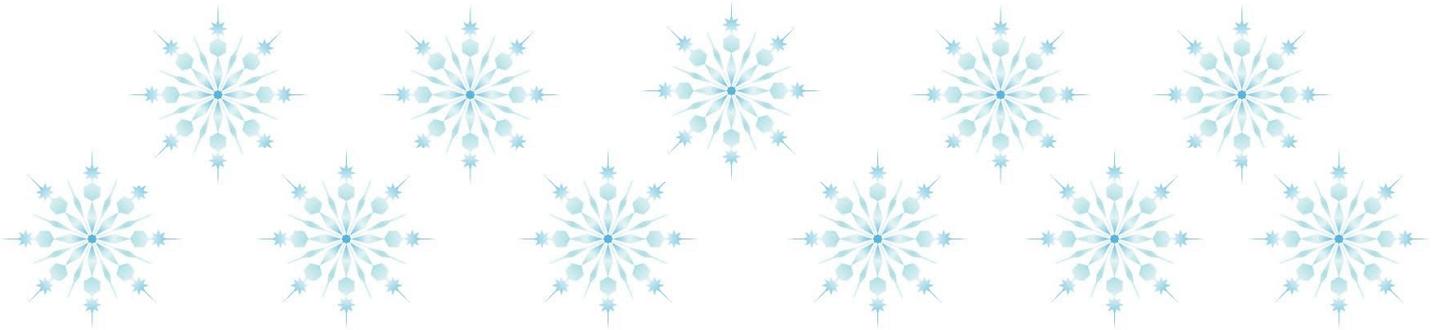


January 2021



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-------------------|---|--------|-----|------------------------|--------|
| | | | | | | 2 |
| 3 10:00 Service Lori Ward | 4 | 5 9:00 Quilters 12:00 Worship & Music | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 10:00 Service | 11 11:00 WELCA | 12 9:00 Quilters 10:00 Finance 6:00 Council | 13 | 14 | 15 8:30 Men's Group | 16 |
| 17 10:00 Service, with Communion Rev Doug Johnson <i>Noisy Offering</i> | 18 | 19 9:00 Quilters | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 10:00 Service Rev Bob Langseth | 25 | 26 9:00 Quilters | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 10:00 Service Lori Ward | | | | | | |

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Happy New Year

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