

FIRST  
EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

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Monday—Friday

8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

1:00—5:00 p.m.

or by appointment



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*From Pastor Mark Holmes*

I love the Christmas season. It is an exciting time of year! For me, it's more than the gifts and tree, cookies and food. Those are nice, but not exactly the reason for the season!

Consider, for a moment, the story of that first Christmas night about 2,000 years ago. A virgin mother wraps her first-born in swaddling cloths and lays Him in a manger. Then suddenly, an angel appeared to the shepherds telling them the news that the world had been waiting to hear:

"Behold, I bring you Good News of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

And what do the shepherds do when they hear this message of the birth of the Messiah?

Without wasting any time, they quickly decide to go see for themselves this great thing that happened in Bethlehem. And when they got to the manger, they fell on their knees and worshiped the King! The Gospel story reminds us that after worshiping the Christ child, the shepherds **immediately** begin to share with others this Good News of great joy: the birth of a Savior!

The example of the shepherds reminds us that the proclamation of the Good News came **before** all the rest. They recognized that something special was happening on that night in Bethlehem, and they just had to share this incredible news!

And now, it's our turn, folks. At a time when the world seems to ignore the true meaning of Christmas, may each of us be moved to share this

Good News! God is inviting each and every one of us to share this story with everyone we meet! Because when we do that, then the whole world will know of this amazing gift that God has given. And that, my friends, will be the perfect ending to a perfect story!

Living in God's Amazing Grace!

*Pastor Mark Holmes*



*Next Meeting  
Wednesday  
January 5th  
6:30 PM.*

**Please have all  
annual reports  
turned in by  
January 5th.**

If you or a loved one is in need of prayer please contact the church office or Kay Hesse at (641)521-8370.

*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world (John 16:33).*

### **Bible Quiz**

???  
In Matthew's genealogy, which woman is not mentioned as Jesus' ancestor?

- A. Tamar
- B. Rahab
- C. Mary
- D. Ruth
- E. Sarah
- F. Bathsheba



Answer on Pg. 6

The Food Pantry would like us to emphasize a specific item each month. Remember, you may bring any item you wish, but spreading this among the contributing congregations keeps a steady supply of their most basic needs coming each month. For the months of December.

**Stuffing , Canned Soup, Cereal, & Tuna Helper**

have been requested.  
Please take all donations directly to the Salvation army  
Mon-Fri 8 am—4 pm

Thank you for being so generous.

## **Zinga News!**

### **Thank you! Thank you!**

First Lutheran members were very generous during October's Choices in Mission. Individuals gave \$8385. The church gave its maximum matching gift contribution of \$5000, resulting in a total gift of \$13,385 for the Children's Hospital in Zinga, Tanzania. The mothers and children of Tanzania thank you for your kindness.

## **Derecho. Derecho. Derecho. Derecho. Derecho. Derecho**

The August storm with its high winds did considerable damage to First Lutheran Church!

> The blue roof from First Christian Church tore threw the alley knocking down electrical poles and wiring and damaging our educational unit scraping the flat roof, nine rows of bricks and concrete slabs from structure and damaging the gutters and downspouts. The wind tore a considerable amount of tiles from the church's roof.

The adjusters who were here the next day from Church Mutual claimed the roof a complete loss. Shrink wrap was placed on the roof which did not last long and was replaced. Later we had wind damage and more shrink wrap was applied and repaired. The tile was not available and it was not until late summer of 2021 when the roof was replaced.

Next, the copper gutters and downspouts were replaced. Next, the flat roof of the educational unit was replaced as well as the flat roof over the office entry way and the elevator addition. The last phase will be the repairing of water damage to several areas which will be done soon.

Corrine Coyle and I settled the claim last Monday the 15th for \$570,000. We thank God for the excellent coverage and \$1,000 deductible replacement insurance. First Lutheran Church should be in excellent condition for the flat roofs for 25 years and longer for the tile roof.

Stan Kirchhoff  
Property Chairman



## The greatest gift-giver

When we give each other Christmas presents in [God's] name, let us remember that he has given us the sun and the moon and the stars, the earth with its forests and mountains and oceans — and all that lives and moves upon them. He has given us all green things and everything that blossoms and bears fruit and all that we quarrel about and all that we have misused. And to save us from our own foolishness, from all our sins, he came down to earth and

gave us himself.  
—Sigrid Undset

## A season of waiting

Our oven recently bit the dust, and the needed replacement part is no longer manufactured. Due to an appliance shortage, we had to wait eight weeks for a new oven! Yet even amid inconvenience, I see God's purpose. We were thankful to have a grill and slow cookers in the meantime. We creatively attempted to cook favorite meals in different ways. And though we craved anything baked in an oven — cookies, casseroles, even chicken nuggets — we realized that waiting eight weeks for an oven isn't truly a trying time.

Many of us wait for much greater milestones and miracles: physical healing, the return of a prodigal child, an end to financial struggles. Paul offers us hope as we wait: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had" (Romans 15:5, NIV).

When you're in a season of waiting — including Advent! — consider what you're thankful for and what you crave. Tell God how you're feeling and ask for endurance while you wait.

—Janna Firestone



On Christmas Eve, the sanctuary will again be filled with the bright red foliage of poinsettias. We need your help in providing these plants. To order a poinsettia, please complete the form below, enclose your check or cash (\$8.50) and either bring it to the church or mail it.

**Checks should be made out to Hy-Vee for \$8.50**

The deadline for ordering is noon on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Poinsettias may be taken home after the 5:30pm Service on Christmas Eve.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Poinsettia(s) \_\_\_\_ **\$8.50/each** (Check payable to Hy-Vee)

Given in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Given in memory of \_\_\_\_\_





### ***Birthdays***

Ava Sumpter 12/01  
 Blake Baumgartner 12/02  
 Cailyn Grabe 12/03  
 Darcy Van Dam 12/06  
 Suzanne Von Seggern 12/07  
 Vicki Porter 12/12  
 Jim McVey 12/14  
 Lynette Marvelli 12/16  
 Cora Dellamuth 12/26  
 Thomas Hayden 12/26  
 Robert Sandquist 12/26  
 Craig Peterson 12/27  
 Mae Van Dam 12/30

*If you have not done so  
 already, please return  
 your Pledge/Estimate of  
 Giving sheet.*

*If you need a new one  
 please let the office  
 know A.S.A.P. so I can  
 get it to you.*

## **In Memory Of Carey Jordan**

Maytag Park is filled with beautiful light displays this year. So many local companies and businesses have decided to participate this year. If you are driving through please take notice of the display that features an ambulance. It was given by the Newton Fire Department and EMT in memory of Carey Jordan. She is missed and loved by so many here at First Lutheran.



### **Joy amid suffering**

Only Matthew records the holy family's "flight into Egypt," linking Advent with Lent and Christmas with Good Friday. In an article titled "Joy to the World/Pain in the World," James I. Cook expresses gratitude that Matthew documents the slaughter of the innocents: "I turn to it again and again, when someone I know loses a loved one at the height of the Christmas season. It helps me — and I hope it helps them — to remember that theirs are not the first tears to fall on Christmas; to recall that there has never been a Christmas of pure peace and happiness; [to recognize] that 'joy to the world' has always been sung to the accompaniment of much 'pain in the world.'"

—adapted from Homiletics



## **Christian symbol**



### **EVERGREEN—**

These trees, which keep their green leaves year-round, are symbolic of Christmas, eternal life and God's everlasting love. In the Bible, evergreen trees are called the "cedars of Lebanon," suggesting growth (Psalm 92:12), height (Amos 2:9), fragrance (Hosea 14:6) and steadfast faith.



## December 2021, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

### Merry Christmas from LSI!

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." — John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! This year has been another difficult time for all of us, and we are grateful for the Iowans who have stepped up just for the sake of giving and helping the people LSI is privileged to serve. Thank you for bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these important services!

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of foster care, who fear they will never have a forever family.

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for our neighbors who are so often overlooked in our society. In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. LSI's annual matching gift campaign is currently active, and those making a new or increased financial gift can double their impact through the end of the year. If you would like to learn more about how you can support

Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at 563.676.2065 or [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org). LSI is also available to provide a customized virtual shared ministry opportunity for your congregation. If you would like to share the message of LSI with your community, please visit [LSIowa.org/church-relations](http://LSIowa.org/church-relations) or contact our Waverly office at 319.352.2630 to get started.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org) and [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](http://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).

### Never Alone

*Two years ago, Kayla knew it was time for a change in her life. She had struggled with substance use for years. When she was pregnant with her youngest son, Rafe, she was determined to build a brighter future for him. She entered treatment to become sober and create a healthy home for her baby.*

*While in treatment, Kayla enrolled in the HOPES program through LSI Early Childhood Services, which provides in-home parenting education and guidance for parents of young children. Kellie, Kayla's LSI worker, met with her every week to ensure she had all the resources and support she needed to raise Rafe in her home. They kept track of all his important developmental milestones, sharing smiles and laughs along the way. Whether it was supplying diapers or being a listening ear, Kellie was always there for Kayla.*

*Kayla is now two years sober, has a job as a chef, and feels empowered and confident that she has everything she needs to help her family thrive.*

*"I just feel overwhelmed and overjoyed. I never thought I could do all this, so I'm proud of myself," she says. "There are people at LSI that care about you. They are there to support you and they are willing to help."*

*"God gives us all gifts, and parenting and helping in the community seemed to be what He put in our hearts," Amber says. "If you haven't found a place to help in your community, consider foster care and adoption," she says. "It could be exactly what your purpose is."*



## Church Council Meeting Review :

The council held the November meeting on the 18th. All members were present, Jim called the meeting to order, Kay shared devotions and the minutes were reviewed and approved. In new business changes were made to Synod giving and Pastor compensation. These will be added to the 2022 proposed budget to be voted on by the congregation in December. Now that there is no Special Gifts committee, the council agreed to approve up to \$5,000.00 match for International Health Partners and up to \$2,500.00 match for God's Global Barnyard for the year 2022. Any other match projects must be approved by the council prior to presentation to the congregation. This issue will be reviewed annually by the council. Jane and Corinne will work on Bylaw revisions reflecting these changes, to be reviewed by council and voted on by the congregation in a future meeting.

In old business, we will not be using an online treasurer database as it is not cost effective. A new computer and services to move all our data will be considered after the new year. New council members have been found and agreed to be on the ballot. Nominations will also be taken from the floor prior to the vote in December. With viruses on the rise, the council agreed to keep social distancing and mask recommendations in place. Offering plates may never be passed again as few actually tithe in that manner and it seems to be working fine. These issues will continue to be reviewed. The treasurer's report was reviewed and the proposed 2022 budget was presented. It will be adjusted with changes voted on by the council and prepared for the December congregational meeting. The property committee report was reviewed. The Friedman family has agreed to

set up the nativity scene prior to Christmas Eve. A Christmas program by the youth is being planned and families are being asked to light the advent candle during services.



### Special dates

- Second Sunday of Advent, December 5, 2021
- Third Sunday of Advent, December 12, 2021
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 19, 2021
- First day of winter, December 21, 2021
- Christmas Eve, December 24, 2021
- Christmas Day, December 25, 2021
- New Year's Eve/Watch Night,

### Prayer

**"Blessed be the Lord God [who] has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them" (Luke 1:68, NRSV).**

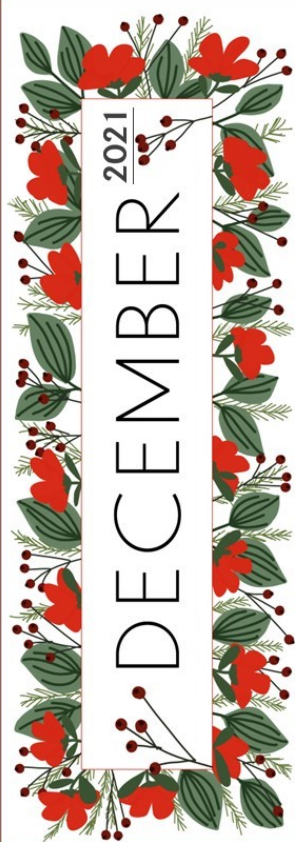
**Thank you, Lord for allowing us to take time to pray and prepare for the coming of Christ this Advent season. We will pray that others will come to know Christ not merely as a child born in antiquity, or a king returning to us crowned in glory, but as he is born daily into the human heart.**


**We pray for joy in our hearts, hope in God, love to forgive, and peace upon the earth. ... Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love and power.**

**AMEN**







Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Property Meeting	2 Dorcas 9:00 AM	3	4
5 Kids church camp Worship Service 9:30am	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Annual Budget Meeting Worship Service 9:30am	13	14	15 Lois Cr. 9:30 A.M.	16 Council Meeting 6:30 pm	17	18
19 Worship Service 9:30am	20 All Poinsettia orders are Due!	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:30 pm Office Closed	
26 Worship Service 9:30am	27 Office Closed	28	29	30 Office Closed	31 Office Closed	



### First Evangelical Lutheran Church

309 East Third Street North  
Newton, Iowa 50208  
office@newtonfirstlutheran.org

#### Office Hours

Monday—Friday  
8:30 am—12:30 pm  
Pastor's Office Hours  
by appointment

The Church office will be closed  
December 24th, 27th, 30th & 31st  
In observance of the  
Christmas & New Year's Holiday.

Have a Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year!

309 EAST THIRD STREET NORTH  
NEWTON, IOWA  
50208

FIRST  
EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Watch Past and Live  
services !**

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*The gift of God is*  
**ETERNAL LIFE**  
*through*  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
*our Lord.*

ROMANS 6:23, KJV