

First Fruits

Worship Ministry

January 2023
Volume 27, Number 1

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM "MANGER TALES" WAS PRESENTED AT FIRST LUTHERAN.

Thank you to Gayle Bortz who directed the youth in telling the Christmas story from the animals' perspective. Following is a note from Gayle:

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! I hope you enjoyed the Christmas program from the animals' perspective. It's always been my pleasure to engage the youth in the wonderful Christmas story and I think they enjoyed presenting it in "animal form." Thank you to the parents for understanding the importance for their children to partake in the blessed story. It means a lot to our congregation and to me. Until next year..... Gayle Bortz



CONFIRMATION NEWS
Confirmation classes will resume at First Lutheran on January 11.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS —FIRST LUTHERAN

There will not be Sunday School December 25 or January 1. Will resume January 8.

YEAR-END OFFERINGS should be in the office by noon on Wednesday, December 28 or received in the mail by December 31 to be recorded in 2022.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Christmas Eve Services—FLC 5 PM; CTS 6:30 PM
- Annual Meetings—CTS on January 8 & joint on January 15

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SCHEDULE

5 PM—First Lutheran
6:30 PM—Corydon
6:30 PM—Radio Broadcast on KIIC
Radio – 96.7 FM out of Albia



Worship Ministry (Continued)



Pick up your complimentary copy of “The Story”, a compelling story of our God. Starting **January 8**, sermons at both congregations will focus on chapters based on the schedule included with

the book. Starting Wednesday, **January 11**, you are invited to come to First Lutheran at 10 am to join a discussion group focused on the previous Sunday’s reading and sermon. This group will meet every Wednesday following the previous Sunday’s sermon on “The Story”. There is one copy of “The Story” for each family!

Annual Meetings and Potluck Dinners

Christ the Servant

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Everyone is welcome to attend the annual meeting for ministry at Christ the Servant in Corydon. The meeting will begin about noon following regular Sunday worship. A potluck meal will be shared after the business portion of the meeting is concluded.

First Lutheran

Sunday, January 15, 2023

On this day, Christ the Servant and First Lutheran will gather for joint worship at Chariton beginning at 9 AM. The business meeting will follow at around 10:15 AM. Following the business items of the day, we will join in the sharing of a potluck meal in the Fireside Room. Those who are able are invited and encouraged to bring a dish to share with others.

Discipleship Ministry

RADIO BROADCAST



THANK YOU for your support of this ministry!!

The radio broadcast of Pastor Hutton’s sermons is an ongoing ministry of First Lutheran and Christ the Servant. Ways to listen at 10:30 am each Sunday morning:

KIIC Radio—96.7 FM (Albia)

kii radio.com—website
(Click on “Listen Live”)

If you miss Sunday, catch it as a podcast on church’s website!

Broadcast Sponsors:

January 1: Geneva Wilson in honor of her family

January 8: LuAnn & Tom Mosbach in honor of Geneva Wilson’s 88th Birthday

January 15: Susan Seufferer for Morgan Peters & Gert Patterson’s birthdays

January 22: Friends in Des Moines area

January 29: Dennis & Patti Bisgard in memory of Earl & Nila Bisgard

We are taking sponsorships for 2023! With two members now in care facilities, the broadcast brings our worship to those, plus we have listeners all across southern Iowa. Sponsorships are \$35. Please call the church office to sponsor a Sunday. 641-774-4875 Thank you!

Stewardship Ministry

SAVE YOUR USED STAMPS!

Before you dispose of your Christmas cards, or any other card or letter for that matter, please trim the stamps off the envelope, leaving 1/4" around each. Deposit them into the box on the desk in the Fireside Room. They will go to a woman in TX who gets them to stamp dealers who in turn sell them to stamp collectors. The money goes to Lutheran World Relief for shipping quilts and kits. She advises to save all stamps, even the common ones. She is hoping we and other groups who save the stamps can hand them off this summer to her friends when they come to IA to visit family. But, collecting stamps will not stop!

Most sought after are commemorative, e.g. the Charles M. Schulz Centennial 2022; foreign; airmail (yes, the USPS does still print airmail stamps for various classes of "premium" airmail services); high-value stamps (of extremely high value to stamp collectors, Google it to see); and the duck stamps that you waterfowl hunters would have, even expired ones.

ON THE VINE



PRAYER SHAWL/BABY AFGHAN GROUP will gather in the FLC Library, beginning at 1:30 PM, on Wednesday, January 4.

CTS ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK will take place after worship on Sunday, January 8.

LAPLANDERS QUILT GUILD AT CTS on Monday, January 9 beginning at 2 PM.

BREAKFAST GALS will meet at 8 AM on Tuesday, January 10 at Hardees.

"SHARING THE WEIGHT" BLANKET MAKING AT CTS will take place on Tuesday, January 10 from 9 AM-3 PM at CTS.

"THE STORY" DISCUSSION GROUP will be meeting on Wednesdays starting on Wednesday, January 11 at 10 AM.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES will resume on Wednesday, January 11 at 2 PM.

THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA will gather on Thursday, January 12, at 1 PM at First Lutheran.

JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE will be held at FLC on Sunday, January 15 at 9 AM. The annual meeting and potluck will follow the worship service.

LUTHERAN ADULT FELLOWSHIP will meet on Sunday, January 15, at 5 PM. Earl and Linda Comstock will be hosts.

THE CTS WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP will meet on Tuesday, January 17, at Christ the Servant beginning at 11:30 AM.

JANUARY IS LAUNDRY SUPPLIES



MONTH for the Ministry Center. Examples would be detergent, fabric softener, dryer sheets, bleach, and stain remover. Thank you!

THE SNOW REMOVAL SIGN-UP SHEET is posted on the bulletin board in the Fireside Room at FLC. Please check your schedule to see when you may be able to help with this ministry!



NEW DIRECTORIES!

Pick up a new directory at First Lutheran and Christ the Servant. They will be available starting Christmas Eve!



Pastoral Pondering

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” – Philippians 4:8-9

It all started with an older gentleman who pulled up to the Dairy Queen drive-through in Brainerd, Minnesota, at the height of the lunch hour. *“I’d also like to pay for the car behind me,”* he told the cashier. *“Whatever they’ve ordered, I’ll cover it.”* Darla Anderson rang up the two orders and thought that would be the end of it. But two days and hundreds of cars later, she and the rest of the crew were still ringing up *“pay it forward”* orders as each person who came to the drive-through offered to pay for the car behind them. *“I’ve seen ‘pay it forward’ chains that went on for about 20 cars, but never anything like this,”* said store manager Tina Jensen. In the end, the chain spanned more than 900 cars over 2½ days.

After a year filled with news about Russia invading the Ukraine, shootings in Des Moines and around the nation, violent hurricanes and tornadoes, agricultural challenges, continuing battle with Covid and flu, reading the story of “Paying It Forward” brought joy and hope to my soul. Nothing earth shattering. Nothing that will turn the tide on the coronavirus or wipe away all the suffering in our world. Yet, a sign that it is still possible to choose to *“pay it forward”* in the best sense of the phrase, rather than to choose revenge or *“pay back.”* The fact that 900+ cars over multiple days participated in what one single man initiated says something about how hungry we are for acts of generosity and simple signs of hope and caring. As far as I know, the gentleman who started it all didn’t check with the occupants of the car behind him to see whether they shared the same politics as himself before he paid for their meal; he didn’t quiz them about their faith stance, where they came from, or other features of their biography, in order to ascertain whether they DESERVED a free lunch or not. He simply gave freely and graciously. And, by doing so, he inspired others to do the same. Generosity became contagious on that day.

The words with which Paul closes his letter to the Philippians (above) seems an appropriate way for us to begin this new year. Instead of dwelling on what is incomplete in ourselves and wrong in the world, Paul says, train your thoughts on the higher virtues, higher goals. And don’t just go there with your mind—let your feet, your hands, your hearts come along, too. *“Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”*

In his reflection for January 1st, Father Richard Rohr wrote something that gives me great hope. *“Even after fifty years of practicing contemplation,”* he writes, *“my immediate response to most situations includes attachment, defensiveness, judgment, control, and analysis. I am better at calculating than contemplating. A good New Year’s practice for us would be to admit that most of us start there.”* I find his utter transparency inspiring. When he goes on to talk about his *“hour-by-hour battle”* to embrace the True Self, which is always controlled and blinded by *“the defensive needs of the separate self,”* I nod my head in recognition. Then he goes on: *“I cannot risk losing touch with either my angels or my demons. They are both good teachers. The gaze of compassion, looking out at life from the place of divine intimacy is really all I have, and all I have to give, even though I don’t always do it.”* In this second gaze, which God ever invites us into, *“critical thinking and compassion are finally coming together,”* allowing us to see the other *“with God’s own eyes, the eyes of compassion.”*

When Rohr, a fellow Christian I admire, speaks freely about his own limitations and God’s constant invitation to taste and see God’s goodness and compassion, then there is hope for me!

I expect no miracle cures for myself or the world in 2023. But I hold fast to the promise that the One who chose to pitch his tent among us in Jesus will continue to companion us along the way, inviting us to *“pay forward”* with no small measure of delight the undeserved favor we have received from his hand.

A Blessed New Year to All!

Pastor Dick



OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Monday, December 26 and Monday, January 2.



Dear members of First Lutheran Church,

We would like to thank you for your generous gifts. Knowing that we have your support and appreciation means a lot to both of us.

Angie & Susan

Re:Newed

January Baptismal Anniversaries

During this month, we remember and give thanks for the baptisms of:

1/3 Karen Wilker	1/18 Rod Bortz
1/7 Del Kray	1/19 Sarah Peterson
1/9 Addison Peterson	1/21 Kenadee Peterson
1/13 Leanne Norton	1/21 Jackson Fisher
1/14 Lucas Harders	1/27 Karen Patterson
1/15 Becky Allen	1/30 Angie Wilson
1/17 Jaxson Mehlert	

Thanks be to Jesus for the saving waters of baptism!

(In baptism, we all are made one in Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, neither Chariton nor Corydon! Are we missing your baptismal anniversary? Let us know! Tell us the story of your baptism!)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

CORYDON BIRTHDAYS

1/7 Nathan Forbes
1/11 Grace Helbing
1/11 Josie Helbing
1/22 Jennifer Goben

CHARITON BIRTHDAYS

1/1 Ruby Hanson
1/1 Ralph Hanson
1/2 Jean Heston
1/6 Nelda Johansen
1/7 David Oxenreider
1/10 Geneva Wilson
1/11 Brad Sobotta
1/12 Gert Patterson
1/12 Morgan Peters
1/14 Katie Shore
1/17 Kim Cain
1/17 Sarah Peterson
1/17 Bob Schmitt
1/19 Carson Oxenreider
1/20 Chad Mehlert
1/23 Shari Farrell
1/24 Kenadee Peterson
1/25 Sarah Fuhs

CORYDON ANNIVERSARIES

1/18 Lucas & Alyssa Harders
1/31 Mary Ann & Paul Evitt

CHARITON ANNIVERSARIES

None



Minutes and Reports

Copies of recent meeting minutes and financial reports are available on site at both First Lutheran and Christ the Servant. At FLC, please look on the bulletin board outside the church office. At CTS, check the table by the windows on the lower level.