

Living Connected... To GOD & EACH OTHER

December '21-January '22

SENIOR PASTOR'S COLUMN

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Word..... 1
Ministry News..... 2-7
Photos 8

Sunday Worship:

8:45 & 10 AM

YouTube & Facebook Live
(All Age Worship)

Pastoral Staff:

Bonnie Wilcox
Senior Pastor
Jill Bergman
Associate Pastor

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Editor: Joyce Weaver,
joycew@flcch.org

Close to Home...

"Close to Home" is our theme this Advent. When something hits *close to home*, it affects us deeply. During the Advent and Christmas season, we journey through scriptures and rituals that are tender, heavy with emotion, and vulnerable. We carry the memories and truths of this season close to our hearts. The Close to Home theme acknowledges the "already but not yet" tension of our faith: Emmanuel is with us, and yet, God's promised day—our everlasting home—is not fully realized. It names our deep longing for God to come close to us.

The Advent and Christmas scriptures are rich with home metaphors and imagery. In these scriptures, home is something we seek and something we are called to build. In many ways, these scriptures are like blueprints—detailing the dreams of a God who makes a home with us. Ultimately, God is our home and resting place. God draws near and makes a home on earth; sacred ground is all around us.

This Advent, may we be comforted by the One who dwells intimately with us. May we expand safety and sanctuary for everyone wandering far from home. May we come home—wherever home is found—to live fully with joy, hope, and courage.



The icon in our *Close to Home* logo conveys a theological concept of home. The hands express our deep longing for connection, intimacy, and for God to come close. As the hands—representing both God's hands and the hands of humanity—draw closer to one another, they form a structure of home. The home structure is not one dimensional; it expands outward, with a doorway offering an open invitation to us all. The hands break through the house structure, centering human connection and mirroring the in-breaking of God in our lives. The logo is both structural and personal, comforting and nostalgic—reminding us of the ways God's home is close but not yet complete. —Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman & Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Advent begins with our weekly theme of "Homesick." We light the first candle of Advent for Hope. For December 5, the weekly theme is "Laying the Foundation," and we light the second candle for Peace. "A Home for All" is the weekly theme for December 12, with the third Advent for Joy. And the 4th candle will be lit on December 19, when our theme will be "Seeking Sanctuary."

Column continues page 2

MINISTRY NEWS

Senior Pastor's column continues

I'm excited that our Children's Program will be held on Dec. 19, at 10 AM with the whole congregation invited to participate for the first time in Las Posadas, which literally means "The Inns." It commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus. "The Inns" are a series of doors where the family seeks shelter and are turned away. There will be music and a procession and a traditional lunch with tamales!

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox, Senior Pastor

BUSINESS OF THE CONGREGATION!

Town Hall Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 16, at 11:15 AM (Sanctuary). We will review First Lutheran's 2021 financial results and the 2021 Budget. *Community Lunch to follow.*

Annual Congregation Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022, 11:15 AM (Sanctuary). To do the yearly business of the church, we will approve a budget, elect leaders, pray and celebrate our ministry! *Available to watch by live stream. Voting by members can only be done if present.*

Council Board Retreat

Saturday, Jan. 29, 9:30 AM-1 PM. This event is for members of all the Boards, Church Council, and standing committees. It is to get acquainted as a new formation of leaders and learn some skills for leadership. Our learning will be led by David Scherer and Joe Davis, leaders of JustMOVE.

2021 Contribution Statements

Will be mailed to your home mid-January. Please email Julie Wilson with any questions: Julie@flech.org

HOLIDAY HOURS & CALENDAR

The church office will be closed:

Mondays, Dec. 27 & Jan. 3

No Community Meal will be served

Sundays, Dec. 26 & Jan. 2

First Lutheran Calendar

For calendar items & events, visit flech.org or contact the office for a printed copy.

We Welcome First Lutheran's New Members! 2020-2021



Emily Olson de Alvarez &
Jaime Alvarez Arroyo,
Aida & Roland
2638 Taylor St. NE
Mpls. MN 55418
Jaime cell 612-272-9404
Emily cell 612-225-8433



Steven & Sonja Ketchum
3932 Polk St. NE
Col. Heights, MN 55421
Steve cell 507-990-1947
Sonja cell 763-607-5352



Joyce & James Weaver
6471 Alvarado Lane N
Maple Grove, MN 55311
Joyce cell 612-597-6859

The next New Member Class will be held on Sunday, Feb. 6. Contact the church office to learn more about formalizing your membership at First!



Dorothea Opheim
3422 Stinson Blvd.
Mpls. MN 55418
Cell 612-789-6595



Tom and Liz Yuze
2336 - 19th Ave. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418
Tom, 951-805-8923/ Liz, 951-575-8923

First Lutheran's Annual Scandinavian Lutefisk & Meatball dinner: Saturday, Jan. 15, 2022. (Curbside pick-up only)

Lutefisk Tickets are being sold through Dec. 20 and can be reserved by calling Cheryl at 651-633-0679 or online from this link: [Lutefisk Tickets](#). To avoid congestion, tickets will list a specified window of time for pick-up from 11 AM - 6 PM. **Lutefisk Dinner will include:** lutefisk with optional white sauce, meatballs, mashed potatoes, gravy, carrots, mashed rutabagas, beet pickles, lefse, julekake & rice pudding with raspberry sauce. Cost: \$22. *No refunds or walk-ins.*

Dinner Helpers Needed for Lutefisk!

Please email Ruth Dodson if you know where and when you'd like to help at: ruthdodson@msn.com or look for sign-up sheets in early December. The cost of carry-out meals for those working is \$11. Tickets can be purchased from Cheryl at church or call 651-633-0679.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP & CONCERTS



Lessons & Carols

Sunday, Dec. 12, 10 AM

Join the Sanctuary Choir, Campanile Handbell Ensemble, soloists and instrumentalists in a service of lessons and carols celebrating the Savior's coming. We will celebrate through spoken word and music the coming of Jesus.

Christmas Program: Las Posadas

Sunday, Dec. 19, 10 AM

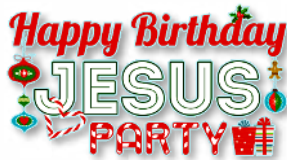


The children will tell the nativity story with an interactive experience following the annual celebration of Las Posadas, a tradition held throughout Mexico and Guatemala.

Happy Birthday Jesus Party

Sunday, Dec. 19, 11 AM

All ages are invited to join us for a Christmas party following the 10 AM worship service. We will have cupcakes and sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. There will be crafts, Christmas music, and a decorating cookie-station.



Christmas Eve

Candlelight Worship & Holy Communion

Friday, Dec. 24, 4 & 6 PM

We worship the birth of the Savior of the world led by special music. Candles and the singing of *Silent Night* will be highlights of the service.



Christmas Garden



...A wonderful way to remember or honor a loved one. Purchase poinsettias for worship on behalf of a loved one. Sign up at the welcome desk in the Commons to donate a plant, \$12 each (we will purchase the plants).

Make checks payable to "FLC" by Dec. 17. Those who purchase a plant for the Sanctuary may take one home following worship on Dec. 26.

Mississippi Valley Orchestra

Sunday, Dec. 5, 3 PM

Please join the Mississippi Valley Orchestra conducted by Ho-Yin Kwok and guest conductor Andrew Kim for a spectacular Christmas concert. A pre-concert talk will be in Martin Luther Hall at 2:15 PM. Come and hear some old favorites and delight in some new favorites as well! Visit: www.mississippivalleyorchestra.com for more info.



Chorus Polaris:

Together for Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 12, 3 PM

Join the "Welcome Back" concert of Holiday Favorites with Chorus Polaris & Bells of the Lakes under the direction of William Mathis. This heart-warming event with surprises and old-fashioned audience "Sing Along" will be held at First Lutheran on Dec. 12. Ticket costs: \$10 advance / \$15 at the door / \$10 seniors. Tickets & info: www.choruspolaris.org



Bella Lumina

Winter Solstice Concert

Sunday, Dec. 19, 3 PM (FLC)

Bella Lumina is an adult treble choir based in the Minneapolis area. The *Winter Solstice* program weaves together themes of light, winter, angels, birth, and celebration. The program will feature talented vocal soloists from the choir as well as guest instrumentalists on violin, cello, solo handbells, and accompanist, Jeffrey Patry. Adult tickets at the door: \$20: FREE for 12 and under. Musicians will be masked. We ask the same of our audiences. Visit: www.bellaluminachoir.org



The National Lutheran Choir: Christmas Festival

Sunday, Dec. 10, 11

(Live performance at the Basilica)

Join the NLC this holiday season for the 36th annual Christmas Festival, *The Earth Adorned*. Concerts will be held Dec. 10 & 11 at the Basilica of Saint Mary, and a livestream of the concert will be available during the 8 PM concert on the 10th. For tickets and more information, visit: NLCA.com



MINISTRY NEWS

Sunday Bible Study

Bible study is offered at 8:30 and 11:15 AM (same study at different times, in Katie Luther Cellar). Participants should feel free to bring in their coffee, morning cookie or snack. If attending the later study, participants can get their community lunch first and bring it in, or enjoy lunch afterwards at 12:15 PM.

All are welcome to join any Sunday!
Questions to Michelle Edwards,
763-300-8419, shell-lyn@hotmail.com



Dearest First Lutheran Friends...

Thank you for the prayers and cards during my recent cancer surgery and radiation treatments. It warmed my heart & was very comforting to hear from so many of you! I'm happy to share that I am now done with radiation. Your kindness and caring was deeply appreciated. *Pastor Jan Bornhoft (former pastor at FLC)*

Thank you for your generosity in providing meals during the time of Cheryl's hip fracture & surgery. Your continued prayers and the many comforting cards & calls brought us much joy & comfort. FLC folks are the best! *Cheryl & Mark Blinkman*

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Tuesday, Dec. 28,
9 AM- 3 PM

The American Red Cross is currently experiencing an emergency blood shortage. Our work hosting blood drives at FLC has been essential to the health of our communities and is critical for enabling donors to give a gift more meaningful than anything that can be purchased this holiday season – the gift of life. Every day, blood donors help patients of all ages: accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those battling cancer. In fact, every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Registration is open! Please schedule your preferred time to donate: [FLC Blood Drive](#) Question to: Joyce, joyce@flech.org, 763-788-9653.



FALL DRAMA 2021

Thank you to the many cast & crew members who performed, wrote, designed & filmed this fall drama, and to all who attended a Western style telling of King David and Bathsheba!



LAST SUPPER DRAMA 2022

Anybody looking forward to our LAST SUPPER DRAMA?! How it hurt to cut our rehearsals short in 2020 and completely cancel the play in 2021!

At last, we are preparing to be back! We are in need of cast and crew for this large production. Rehearsals begin in February, with performances on April 14 & 15 (Holy Week).



If you are interested in acting, assistant directing, costumes, set design and management, or tech, we want to know. Please contact [Pastor Jill](#) or [Nathan Roberts](#) ASAP. (You'll never believe church can be this much fun until you join us!)

CHECK OUT OUR FIRST EVER PODCAST!

Advent is meant to be a time of reflection and preparing for the arrival of the Messiah. Let's make Advent 2021 an especially meaningful time as we add a daily reading from the book of John.



The staff of FLC has recorded passages from John followed by brief reflections that take us through the entire book during the four weeks of Advent. You are invited to listen daily and to pray for understanding. Starting on Nov. 28 and throughout the season of Advent, you will find our podcast on our church website and Facebook pages and many popular podcast platforms, as well as our YouTube Channel. For **FLCCH** site: [Click Here](#) or **Spotify**: [Click Here](#)

SINGLES 55+

Singles, age 55+ gather to eat and socialize on Fridays at 5 PM. During the colder months they meet at First Lutheran. Emails are sent out weekly to invite interested Singles and advise you of any meeting changes. Please bring your own: supper, drink & a mask. Contact Faith with questions or to be included in the group's email. 612-799-4245, whitefa@comcast.net

MISSION WORKSHOP

All those interested in helping to make quilts with Mission Workshop are welcomed to join in Katie Luther Cellar, 9 AM-Noon on Wednesdays! To confirm schedule, contact Lisa at 763-789-4101. If no answer, please leave a call-back message.

YOUNG AT HEART

Young at Heart will be celebrating Christmas on Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 12 noon. A light lunch will be served in Martin Luther Hall with a program of Christmas inspiration and music to follow. Sign-up sheets are posted on our bulletin board. Reservations can also be made by phoning Judy Eddy, 612-788-5951 or Faith White, 612-799-4245. Cost: \$6 requested at the door.

FIRST LUTHERAN BOOK CLUB

Join the Book Club on Jan. 18 at 10 AM for fellowship, refreshments and a discussion on "Reader Choice." Contact: Char, charzarich@gmail.com

Sunday, Oct. 31, 2021



Congratulations Confirmands!

*Cole Vernon Enrique Young
Karina Marie Kaplan
Ethan Dayton Dittbenner*

Sunday School Schedule

December 2021 - January 2022

- ♦ Dec. 5: Being a Good Neighbor
- ♦ Dec. 12: Christmas Program/Practice
- ♦ Dec. 19: Christmas Program/Party
- ♦ Dec. 26 & Jan. 2: *Christmas Break*
- ♦ Jan. 9: Wedding at Cana
- ♦ Jan. 16: Service Project
- ♦ Jan. 23: Light of the World
- ♦ Jan. 30: Woman at the Well

Confirmation Schedule

- ♦ Dec. 5: What is a Sacrament?
Holy Baptism
- ♦ Dec. 12: What is a Sacrament?
Holy Communion
- ♦ Dec. 19: Las Posadas & Happy
Birthday Jesus Party
- ♦ Dec. 26 & Jan. 2: *Christmas Break*

National Youth Gathering Team

First Lutheran has a Gathering Team of 12 preparing to join with high school youth from all over the United States meeting this summer in Minneapolis. We'll be focusing on the Boundless Love of God as we find our place in the church and world. The team is now fundraising for the event. If you would like to make a directed donation, please speak with Rachel James.

See Children's Las Posadas program pg. 3



InterFaith Unit: *Honoring the Faith of Our Neighbor*

For Confirmation this fall, we studied how we can Honor the Faith of Our Neighbors. We began with a presentation by an InterFaith scholar, Jessi LeClear Vachta. She shared with us her passion for connecting with people of other faiths, as well how to be a good guest and a good host. We looked at the story of the Good Samaritan through a lens of seeing the religious diversity in the story.

We had a field trip to the Hindu Temple of Minnesota in Maple Grove. We were able to view the building, which is the largest Hindu temple in the United States, comprised of 21 different places of worship inside the building. We learned about the tenets of their religion and the diversity in practice.

We have the wonderful experience of hosting the Islamic Resource Center youth and young adults as they presented on the basics of the Muslim faith. Our confirmation youth, parents and congregation members were able to learn about the religion and life as a Muslim in the United States. We also were able to have a live Zoom conversation with Sally Abrams of the Jewish Community Relations Council. She taught us a class called "Judaism on One Foot," sharing the fundamentals of the Jewish faith and culture. The youth asked wonderful questions and learned a lot about Jews around the world.

Pastor Jill taught a confirmation class sharing her experiences visiting Israel and the Holy Land, sharing pictures and stories about the sites. We discussed the Jewish, Muslim and Christian sites in Jerusalem. Randy also taught a class and the students wanted to discuss Norse mythology and that belief system.

Finally, we attended a Vespers service at St. Mary's Orthodox Church in NE Minneapolis. We were able to experience a different form of Christian worship and to have a learning session with the Priest following. Father Tucci shared with us the basics of the Orthodox faith and how it differs from Roman Catholicism. We were also able to find many points of connection between our Lutheran faith and the Orthodox expression!

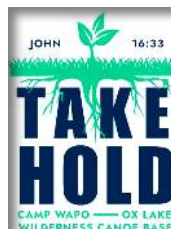
Overall, our students gained a greater understanding of diverse faiths and a deeper appreciation for our role as peacemakers in the world.



Camp WAPO

We invite you to join in the excitement at Camp Wapo - A Place of Grace. A place where faith and fun collide. A place for YOU! Camp Wapo Summer 2022 Theme: **TAKE HOLD**

This theme is based on John 16:33, which we translate as: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take hold! I have conquered the world."



First Lutheran is committed to making sure we help all kids make it to camp. All campers eligible for \$100 church gift; scholarships up to full amount available.

Open registration: Jan 15-Feb 15
REGISTER AT <http://lwlbc.com/first-ch>

⇒ **Wapo Youth Camp**, completed grades 4-8 / Aug. 7-12, 2022 / \$545 session code *OX-9* for *FIRST-CH*

⇒ **Ox Lake Roots Camp**, completed grades 9-12 / Aug. 7-12, 2022 / \$545 session code *W9* for *FIRST-CH*

⇒ **Wapo Seeds Camp**, completed grades 1-3 / Aug. 5-7, 2022 / \$225 session code *S-F* for *FIRST-CH*

HOSPITALITY & OUTREACH MINISTRY NEWS / THANK YOU'S

Community Lunch continues to serve & support! We have had a wonderful group of volunteers to serve over 100 Community Meals each Sunday from 11:15 AM - 12:30 PM. So far, we have been blessed with zero reported COVID cases at Community Lunch!

A special thank you

to all who attended, cooked and served our SpudFest Fundraiser during the Community Meal this fall. You helped raise \$875 in support of those attending next year's National Youth Gathering!



Our Scandinavian Choir performed at the Columbia Heights Centennial Cultural Festival. We were proud to represent Norwegian Immigrants on behalf of First Lutheran!

We have a great group of After School volunteers and staff who provide mentoring, crafts, and dinner for neighborhood children. The families in the program really need our support as they are often overcoming big challenges in their lives.



Trick or Treating was a HUGE success! Over 150 men, women & children braved the rain to Trick or Treat around the 9 open doors of First Lutheran. Then we celebrated Halloween with a Spooktacular concert by Jeffrey Patry.



Thank you for your gifts to help Refugees! Our church donated \$6676 to help Afghan families resettle in Minnesota through Lutheran Social Services. Along with warm clothes donations that were collected by Rebecca Dodson and distributed to refugees at her clinic! The total collection of items included: over 65 coats and 40 pairs of boots/shoes, 12 boxes of warm winter clothing, 3 full boxes (one each) of warm hats, gloves/mittens and scarves. Plus, many miscellaneous socks, hand warmers, lighter clothing, etc.



Holiday Market 2021

Thank you to the crafters, bakers, organizers, volunteers and shoppers who made the return of this year's Holiday Market possible! The Market sales brought in over \$5,800 in support of vital mission work!



Blessing our Children, Youth, and Family volunteers and ministry leaders in worship.



FLC After School December 2021

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	After School 4:30-6:00 pm	Youth Group* 6-8 pm	After School 4:30-6:00 pm		
3	After School 4:30-6:00 pm	Youth Group* 6-8 pm	After School 4:30-6:00 pm		
5	Sunday School FREE Lunch 11 am	After School 4:30-6:00 pm	Youth Group* 6-8 pm		
12	Sunday School FREE Lunch 11 am	After School 4:30-6:00 pm	Youth Group* 6-8 pm		
13		Christmas Party			
15	Kids Christmas Program FREE Lunch 11 am				
16					
22					
23					
24				Christmas Eve Worship 4:30 & 6:30 pm	
26				After School starts again January 4th!	



Financial Updates will be made available in January's Annual Report.

Thank you for your generosity throughout 2021!



For End of Year Giving, please consider the ease and security of giving electronically or dropping your gifts off at the church. If you are unable to do so, please mail any donations or payments to be postmarked on or before Friday, Dec. 31 in order to be credited to your 2021 Year End Statement.

Many Blessings to you and yours this holiday season!

2022 Offering Envelopes

Your 2022 Offering Envelopes have arrived and will be available for pick-up the week of Sunday, Dec. 12. Contact the church office to request that they be mailed.

GIVING

First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights is financed by the generous, direct monetary gifts of its members and friends.

There are several ways you can bless this mission of Jesus with your gifts:



- Drop off your **Check or Cash** during Sunday Worship or send a check thru the mail. Please use an offering envelope so we can give you credit for your gift.

- **Stock Transfers to FLC**
- **Electronic Funds Transfer** See our website, flech.org (upper right hand corner) to set your donation frequency.
- **Bill Pay.** Follow the directions of your bank or credit union to create First Lutheran as a Payee at 1555 40th Ave. NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421. Choose weekly or monthly offerings. For more information, contact Julie Wilson 763-788-9653, julie@flech.org



DIRECT GIFTS FROM AN IRA

If you are at least 70½ years old, you can make a gift of up to \$100,000 each year to First Lutheran Church directly from your IRA. Qualified charitable distributions may be able to reduce your taxes while fulfilling your required minimum distribution.

This charitable transfer excludes the gift from your gross income for Federal Income Tax purposes and can be especially attractive for donors who do not itemize or would like to keep reportable income down to avoid having social security and other income taxed at a higher rate.

Who Might Benefit?

- Persons who do not require the income in an IRA
- Persons whose charitable contributions are reduced by the percentage of income limitation
- Persons having so few deductions that they choose not to itemize

It's Easy to Get Started:

Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift. Your funds will be directly transferred to First Lutheran Church to extend our ministries in this community.

For Your Account Administrator:

First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights
Tax ID: 41-0780895

Let us know of your decision to make a gift, so that the church can thank you and ensure that your gift is used as intended.

GIVEPLUST You can also support the church with this free mobile app!
A VANCO COMPANY



First Lutheran Church
1555 40th Avenue NE / Columbia Heights, MN 55421-3195
WEB: flcch.org / PH: 763-788-9653

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SUNDAY WORSHIP
8:45 & 10 AM

10 AM WORSHIP
ALSO AVAILABLE
ONLINE- LIVE
STREAMED VIA
YOUTUBE &
FACEBOOK LIVE

SUNDAY MEAL
11:15 AM - 12:30 PM

CHURCH OFFICE
is open by appointment
due to COVID-19 crisis.

Please check our
website or call for any
updates: 763-788-9653

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

Don't miss Worship, Music & Family Fun at First!

