



From Pastor Bill

As we approach the New Year, I find myself reflecting on what 2024 can mean for me, our church, and for the world. While I don't want to appear to be naïve, I am convinced that the new year could mean some life-giving change.

There is no doubt that issues around the stewardship of our bodies need to be of serious concern for many of us. You and I are living in a time when so many of us struggle with obesity. I personally believe that this struggle is a societal one that demands more than individual action. I am convinced that until we address some of the systemic issues of our time we won't get very far in this struggle. Until we take a hard look at our fast-food system, until we examine what the desire for convenience has brought us in terms of the production of our food, until we eliminate food deserts, until we make our cities less car-centered, we probably won't adequately address the obesity epidemic. Our weight problems are not simply a matter of bad individual choice.

Yet, we as individuals do have a role to play. While we wait for a healthier food system and while we wait for a culture to create societal structures that contribute to health, we as individuals can make some changes in our lives that will aid us individually. I wonder how the church can assist with that. How can we bless you as you attempt to steward your body well?

Could we as First Lutheran:

- ◆ Help create walking groups
- ◆ Highlight in a bigger way our building as a place for walkers, pickleballers, cardio drummers
- ◆ Reduce our use of sugary snacks at coffee hour and other congregational food experiences
- ◆ Find ways to link people who are discovering ways to live healthier and to lose weight
- ◆ Encourage people to purchase CSAs (Community-supported Agriculture shares), which include locally grown vegetables
- ◆ Foster small group development that focuses on shared healthy meals
- ◆ Do a better job of promoting the resources that come from our yoga instructor, Sandy Hutchins
- ◆ Learn from those in our midst who have been active in fasting or other means to limit food's control of our lives

It strikes me that obesity is a public health crisis for our nation. We all need to work hard to do what we can to lead us toward greater health. Join me this year in thinking about how our congregation can assist with this hard work. After all, our bodies are temples for the Holy Spirit.



From Pastoral Assistant Paula

Emmanuel, God with us, is a glimpse of God through the lens of a tiny baby. It is a glimpse of God through the love which entered and continues to enter a world wrought with pain, suffering and somehow...hope. It is a glimpse of God where the longing of Advent *and* the promise of Christmas are both held within the same hope. The lament of Advent and the joy of Christmas living side-by-side. This is the story of Jesus - of hope that is born into the margins of society, into lands ravaged with war and into the seasons in our lives when we find ourselves asking, "Where is God?" The story of Jesus, you see, is the story of great joy and brokenness all wrapped into the incarnation of God.

I believe, that as this new year unfolds, we come with great expectation and with high hopes that things will be different. We enter this time with a new release on life that enables us to do better, be better and be happier. However, oftentimes these high hopes come because we suppress the past and think the future is in our control. But how *can* we forget the death of innocent people scrolling across our screens twenty-four hours a day? How can we forget the tragedy that unfolded on October 7 in Israel, or the 17,000 (and counting) Palestinians who have died, or those who continue to live as refugees, or those pushed to the brink of suffering, or the hostages who are still not free, or the West Bank still living under Israeli occupation for 75 years? How can we forget Ukraine and Russia have been at war for over 663 days and millions of people can no longer call home, home? How can we forget broken relationships that ended in divorce, a devastating diagnosis, a loved one living in addiction or thousands of people without healthcare or proper nutrition? How can we forget? We can't, nor should we.

You see, being honest about the past and open-minded about the future *is* living into "Christmas hope." When we allow the promise of Advent to usher us into a new year, we proclaim the love of the Christ child. New opportunity fueled by hope and founded upon God's faithfulness was the Israelites' story. It's our story, too. It's the age-old story we waited for and longed for during Advent. Our lives can fall apart in a million ways and try as we might to engineer our own happiness, there are certain realities we have to live with as we move forward into a new year. But somehow, joy meets us right in the depths of our can't make-it-work humanity.

Emmanuel, God with us, *is* a glimpse of God in the wonder and tears, through sorrows and celebrations and through the amazement and disbelief of life. As theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "The joy of God has gone through the poetry of the manger and the agony of the cross; that is why it is invincible, irrefutable. It does not deny the anguish, when it is there, but finds God in the midst of it." Through the lens of the tiny baby rests the basis of all that is most true and trustworthy: love. This is how joy comes to us.

So where do we get a glimpse of God in 2024? We get a glimpse of God through the lens of a tiny baby - a baby who keeps coming to a world that is *still* not right. And this baby keeps coming to you and to me and to our community to be God's love in human form. Emmanuel, God with us.

In hope, peace, love and joy,
Paula



Super Sunday Chili and Soup Cook-Off and Annual Congregational Meeting

Date: January 28, 2024

Place: Family Life Center

Time: After the 10:30 worship service

**Bring your quarters to vote for your
favorite chili or soup winner**

**Desserts, bread, crackers and drinks
will be provided**

**Sign-up sheets are at both
Information Stations**

Confirmation

Confirmation will resume on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 7:00 pm. Final year students will be assigned their mentors as we move toward Confirmation on May 5, 2024.

Confirmation kids raised \$342 from their Wednesday night dinner on November 29th. All the proceeds went to Noah Project to support the shelter animals! Way to go, kids!

Upcoming Classes

Living Lives of Awe and Wonder

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. beginning January 14

Faith and Civic Life

Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. beginning January 16
(Zoom and in-person)

Leadership Retreat

January 20

10:15 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
at First Lutheran Church

Members of Church Council and all
ministries are urged to be present.

Lunch will be provided.

FOR THE YOUTH



High School Youth Event

January 21st

Watch for more information



National Youth Gathering Meeting

January 14 at 7:00 p.m.

For youth and parents

Weekly Offerings

Week ending 11/5/23

General Fund: \$9,066.21

Building Enhancement Fund: \$180.00

Dollar-A-Day (for new sign): \$534.39

Building Rent: \$305.75

Week ending 11/12/23

General Fund: \$8,364.89

Building Enhancement: \$225.00

Building Rent: \$1,7667.97

Noisy Offering (For RP Schools Gratitude Project):
\$480.21

Week ending 11/19/23

General Fund: \$8,171.21

Building Enhancement: \$165

Building Rent: \$130

Noisy Offering (For RP Schools Gratitude Project):
\$224.13

Week ending 11/26/23

General Fund: \$3,839.90

Building Enhancement: \$200.00

Building Rent: \$88.00

Noisy Offering (For RP Schools Gratitude Project):
\$175.96

Ski Club 2024

Caberfae Ski Resort

Begins Friday, January 5th!

Contact Amy Badley for
details

New this season: ONLINE
Waivers must be submitted
(no more paper copies!)



OFFERING

GIVING BACK TO GOD



Thanks to Dave and Theresa Buchan who assembled the December Chimes.



American Red Cross

Thank you to all who donated—or tried to donate—blood at First Lutheran’s November blood drive on November 20. We collected 46 pints—10 more than our usual number! Thank you also to all the loyal volunteers who helped make the blood drive possible and a success.

The next blood drive is scheduled for Monday, February 19, from 11:30 A.M to 5:15 P.M. You can make an appointment online at: www.redcrossblood.org or by calling Kim Westerholm, First’s blood drive coordinator at 712 539 -8536.

Fellowship Board would like to thank everyone who joined us for our trip to Frederick Meijer Gardens and the Downtown Grand Rapids Farmers Market and Christkindl Market on December 2. We had 36 people attending the event. We took the church bus and rented a 12 passenger van and 2 couples drove behind us.

Thanks to Stan and Diane for driving us around. We had a wonderful time. What a way to start off our holiday season. We saw the most beautiful trees and gardens at FMG and had a taste of Europe at GRFM. There were lots of activities happening around us.

The Fellowship Board plans to do more trips so please let us know some ideas in what you might be interested in doing. We will be planning more trips later in the spring.

Sincerely ,
Deb Roest and Diane Kroll



Thank you for your generosity in raising funds for Dar Al-Kalima School in Bethlehem. The Wednesday night dinner and auction brought in a little over \$4,100 for tuition assistance and school families who are in need of food and support.

Please keep the school - the students, staff and their families in your prayers as they live in death and fear on a daily basis. The amazing staff has

integrated more opportunities into their curriculum for the students to experience music and art to help offset the mental strain of coping with the realities of war all around them.

If you are interested in helping these families, please consider your Choice Dollars and look for our next dinner! See Paula if you have questions or would like to know more about the families we are supporting!

[paula@firstlutheranmuskegon.org](mailto:Paula@firstlutheranmuskegon.org)





Christmas Trees Wanted!

Have an extra pre-lit Christmas tree that you no longer need? We are looking for one larger tree (no more than 7 feet tall) and 4 more smaller trees of varying sizes for the Memorial Garden next year. Please leave them in the garden. Contact Sande Borushko at 231-343-4553 with questions.

Official Acts



Deaths

Lottie Will
Born: 07/19/1974
Died: 12/10/2023

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Weekly Scripture Readings</i>
1/7	Gen 1:1-5, Ps 29 Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11
1/14	1 Sam 3:1-10 [11-20] 1 Cor 6:12-20, John 1:43-51
1/21	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Ps, 62:5-12 1 Cor 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20
1/28	Deut 18:15-20, Ps 111 1 Cor 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28

Calling First Lutheran Members!

In celebration of First Lutheran's 160th celebration, we need interviews from our members to play in our church services from January to August 2024. We need you to record your interview on your phone and send it to Lisa Ziemelis at lisa@firstlutheranmuskegon.org as soon as possible. We are asking you to answer 2 questions.

What brought you to First Lutheran?
What do you enjoy about First Lutheran?

The interview should be 1-2 minutes.

We need all ages of members to be involved with this event. If you do not know how to record on your phone, Carl Luther or another person will be at the church to do this in the Fellowship Hall on the first Sunday of the month, starting in January. If you can not do this after church, please call Carl Luther at 231-750-6737 to set up a specific time you could meet.

Please join us in honoring our memories here at First Lutheran with your videos. If you have any questions, please call Deb Roest at 231-744-1936. Thank you.



January Birthdays!

1	Martin Shields Karin Carlson	14	Donald (Bill) Webber Sylvia Robbins	25	Stanley Shank
2	Amy Smith	15	Chuck Carlson	26	Sara Henry Kim Beidler
3	Dennis Plekes Connie Robinson	16	Mel Wei	27	David Shields
4	Sue Van Hoesen	17	Heidi Hampton Pamela Hanophy Marge Visscher Mark Besteman Lisa Naymick VanDyken	28	Lark Roberts Bud Fiser Chris Kooiman
5	Timothy Vanderstelt John Smith	20	Jim Boardwell Sharon Hanson	29	Gabriel Cahill
6	Ysabela Golden	21	Katie Neel	31	Marianne Newman Reese Giles Paula Love
7	David Neumann	22	Kimberly Fenbert Paul Becker		
8	Jackson LaChapelle Pat Clifford	23	Stephen Dix Ben Werling		
9	Marilyn Nygren Jack Lamoreaux	24	Diane Kroll Kathy Boardwell		
12	Jane Boyle Lori Archer Maggie O'Connor				



Keepers

Gerald and Betty Crenno

1740 Village Dr Apt 318
Village at the Oaks
Muskegon, MI 49442-4288

Nancy Hazekamp

1350 W Hackley Apt. 215
Muskegon, MI 49441

David Kleis

Overon House—Room 48
9160 W 64th Ave
Arvada, CO 80004

Pat Mullinex

Mailing Address:
2284 Riverwood Drive
Twin Lake, MI 49457
Home Address:
Sanctuary at McAuley
1380 Sherman Blvd
Muskegon, MI 49444

Warren Robinson

1845 Moulton Ave
Muskegon, MI 494445-3127

Keith Stapel

1228 Lawrence St
Muskegon, MI 49442

Dave Walborn

18552 W Spring Lake Rd
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Mary Warden

1740 Village Dr. Apt 222
Muskegon, MI 49442-4283

First Lutheran Church

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 **New Years Day** **Office Closed** 7:00PM-AA Meeting	2 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 3:00PM-Burnished Brass Rehearsal 6:00PM-Lion's Club Meeting 9:00PM-Compline	3 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 4:00PM-Grief Share 6:00PM-Berry Junction Trail Meeting	4 12:00PM-Lectonary Bible Study 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class	5 7:00PM-AA Meeting	6 8:30AM-Stephen Ministry
7 Dollar-A-Day Weekend 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 7:00PM-AA Meeting	8 12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class 7:15PM-Gentle Soul Yoga	9 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 9:30AM-1st on 2nd Quilt Bee 3:00PM-Burnished Brass Rehearsal 6:30PM-Choir 7:30PM-Band 9:00PM-Compline	10 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 4:00PM-Grief Share 5:30PM-Wed Night Dinner 6:00PM-Kid's Music 6:05PM-Bible Study 7:00PM-Confirmation	11 12:00PM-Lectonary Bible Study 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 6:00PM-Rental 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class	12 5:30PM-Bunco 7:00PM-AA Meeting	13 9:00AM-Worship & Music Meeting
14 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 2:00PM-Rental 7:00PM-AA Meeting	15 Chimes Deadline 12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class 7:15PM-Gentle Soul Yoga	16 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 9:30AM-1st on 2nd Quilt Bee 11:00AM-Adult Education Class 3:00PM-Burnished Brass Rehearsal 6:00PM-Lions Club 6:30PM-Choir 7:30PM-Band 9:00PM-Compline	17 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 4:00PM-Grief Share 5:30PM-Wed Night Dinner 6:00PM-Kid's Music 6:05PM-Bible Study 7:00PM-Confirmation	18 12:00PM-Lectonary Bible Study 6:00PM-Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class	19 6:00PM-Crafty Group 7:00PM-AA Meeting	20 8:30AM-Men's Breakfast 8:30AM-Women's Breakfast 10:15AM-Leadership Retreat
21 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 7:00PM-AA Meeting	22 12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class 7:15PM-Gentle Soul Yoga	23 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 11:00AM-Adult Education Class 3:00PM-Burnished Brass Rehearsal 6:30PM-Choir 7:30PM-Band 9:00PM-Compline	24 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 5:30PM-Wed Night Dinner 6:00PM-Kid's Music 6:05PM-Bible Study 7:00PM-Confirmation	25 12:00PM-Lectonary Bible Study 6:00PM-Restorative Yoga 6:00PM-Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class	26 7:00PM-AA Meeting	27
28 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 12:00PM-Annual Meeting/ Chili Cook-Off 7:00PM-AA Meeting	29 12:00PM-Quilter's Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming Class 7:15PM-Gentle Soul Yoga	30 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 11:00AM-Adult Education Class 3:00PM-Burnished Brass Rehearsal 6:00PM-Choir 7:30PM-Band	31 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 5:30PM-Wed Night Dinner 6:00PM-Kid's Music 6:05PM-Bible Study 7:00PM-Confirmation			