

A Special Gift



As we prepare for the Christmas season we know there are going to be differences from years past, from celebrating with our families and friends to the worship services at First Lutheran Church. The Christmas Eve service has always been my most favorite service throughout the year as we celebrate Jesus' birth. God picks an innocent young teenage girl to bear this precious gift for the world. The Holy family would endure much pain through the years, but they were faithful and stood by their blest son.

This is a good time to ask the question, "What does Christmas mean to me"? This year we are really going to have to answer that question. Do we allow commercialism to take over Christmas or is the best gift from God, His Son, Jesus? The joy of Christmas is in the gift of Jesus. Jesus is given to you no matter who you are or what you have done. The wonderful gift of Grace comes to us in human form that we might see and believe. God gave us in human form His Grace that we might grow in faith as we learn from the teaching, life and death of Jesus. **Christmas is for you.**

On December 23, 2002 our son died of cancer. He lived in Houston, Texas and we were with him when he went home to be with our Lord. We flew back to Ohio on Christmas Eve and I'll never forget the feeling I had getting off the plane and walking down the hallway and seeing our other three children waiting there to take us home. The children had made oyster stew for us, a Christmas tradition that goes back several generations and they stayed with us to enjoy the stew and sandwiches, and to make sure Sue and I were okay before they left to join their own families. We then watched TV and that year the ELCA broadcast a Christmas Eve service at 11:30. It was beautiful and I felt closer to God than I ever had and the blessed gift God has given to us. Jesus is born for you and me. It gives us hope out of our despair.

Yes, Christmas may be different this year, but I do think there is opportunity for us to be closer to the real meaning of Christmas. Jesus was born in a stable and the angels sang, *"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom He favors!"*

God gives us this precious gift of His son, Jesus. I hope and pray that this Christmas we accept this most holy of gifts, God's grace given in the form of a baby, Jesus. When we accept this wonderful gift, we will realize the peace that God gives us with His grace.

I hope you have a blessed and Merry Christmas.

Pastor Paul DeMoss



Christmas Eve Worship

4:00 in Parking Lot
7:00 Inside

(Covid permitting)
(If "Red" on Dec. 20th
we will worship
in the parking lot)

Love and Memories Tree

Make checks to First Lutheran Church

My gift \$ _____

Given by: (PRINT) _____

In loving memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Due by December 20th.



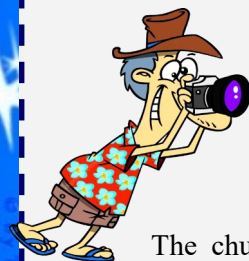
All Aboard! The STEWARDSHIP

ST. THOMAS ... Like all of the U.S. Virgin Islands, St.

Thomas has plenty of opportunities to lounge on the beach, splash in the sea, or amp it up with watersports. It also boasts a bountiful duty-free shopping scene – just be prepared to brave the cruise ship crowds. Charlotte Amalie swells with Danish colonial architecture and pirate legend. Shiver ye timbers at Blackbeard's Castle, then work up an appetite by climbing the historic 99 Steps, constructed from the ballast bricks of 18th century Danish ships.

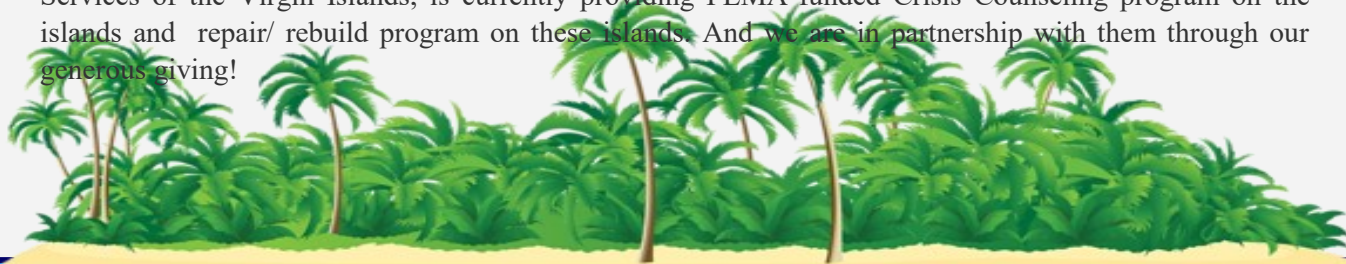


So, who was St. Thomas, the man for whom this lovely island was named? St. Thomas (his name means “the twin”) was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. He is remembered for two bold statements recorded in Scripture: “Let us also go, that we may die with him [Jesus]” (John 11:16) and “My Lord and my God!” (John 20: 28). One of these statements is a commitment to mission and the other a confession of faith. Thomas, not in doubt but in faith, followed Jesus to the end...and the end of the earth. Tradition says that he traveled to India and established several churches there. Legends even assert that he went to Indonesia, China and Paraguay! But it seems to be true that Thomas took the mission of Jesus seriously and followed the Lord with great passion and courage. Our congregational and churchwide stewardship programs are always directed to this local and global mission to share the good news of Jesus’ love with dedication, commitment and passion!



Did you know that the oldest Lutheran congregation in the western hemisphere is Frederick Lutheran Church in St. Thomas? Frederick was established in 1666 by Danes who inhabited the islands. It has been proclaiming the Good News for 354 years! It also translated Luther’s *Small Catechism*, a hymnal and a grammar book in Creole in 1770 [before the Revolution!] Frederick is a member of the ELCA’s Caribbean Synod and worships 175 people on Sundays!

The church building is 200 years old and has been severely damaged by hurricanes over the centuries. In recent years, they have been assisted by Lutheran Disaster Relief and Lutheran World Relief. With several hurricanes and earthquakes causing devastation in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and Haiti LWR and Lutheran Disaster Relief has been there to help. Lutheran Disaster Response, through Lutheran Services of the Virgin Islands, is currently providing FEMA-funded Crisis Counseling program on the islands and repair/ rebuild program on these islands. And we are in partnership with them through our generous giving!



Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.

1 Corinthians 4:1

Library News

Okay, members of First:

I challenge you to borrow a book from the Church library during the next twelve months. We have some of the best reading material. Check it out.

Now let’s get on with the newsletter. Merry Christmas, Everyone. The hope we all rely on is brought forth this month in the rejoicing of the birth of the Christ Child. Let us forget the disappointments; remember, instead, the blessings that came about this year of COVID. We were daily given chances to give glory to God and spread His word through text, letter, ZOOM, phone and giving to others. We have had the opportunity to worship at home or in person. We have kept in touch. We have cared for one another. We have prayed for one another. And, when all else failed, as Phil Tuttle taught us, we ate chocolate ice cream!

As we come to the end of the year, it is time for all of you who borrowed the e-readers, to return them to the library to be loaded with the new book club readings. If you have any suggestions of books for our club, let me know. New selections will be chosen at the gathering December 1. And, by the way, if you want to avoid waiting for books at the library, plan on checking out an e-reader for next year and then join us for book club. The first Tuesday of every month.

Currently, on the book cart, you will find many different translations of the Bible. Sometimes it is good to read other translations to get a clearer understanding of some parts of the Bible. I even recommend reading the children’s versions of the Bible for a clear-cut, concise picture of the history. If you wish, borrow a Bible from the cart for as long as you need. While you are at it, borrow a puzzle book for as long as you like. Hey folks, it is your library. Use it.

This past year, money was donated to the library for purchases in Phil Tuttle’s name. I am still working on spending that money. (As always, if you have suggestions, let me know.) In the past month, several people donated a total of 80+ books. They are excellent titles. I am still shelving all of those.

This advent, instead of my sponsoring a library advent activity, I am suggesting that you participate in WELCA’s “Reverse Advent Calendar.” Beginning the first of December (that’s like now, Folks) daily add the suggested item to a box. On Christmas Eve, donate the contents to a food bank. The list of items was included in November’s newsletter and in the Thankoffering Sunday Bulletin, November 15. It is also posted on the library door. (Wait! What’s that you say? Your fixed income is already stretched? Well then, why not put some change in a jar every day and then donate that money to our Community Dinner? Make your own rules.)

Finally, a quick review of my recent reading list: *Finding Chika* by Mitch Albom is Albom’s processing of the death of a little girl he brought home from his Haiti orphanage to find her a cure. *The Other Family* by Trollope tells the story of a man with two families who learn of each other when the man dies. *The Daughters of Erietown* by Schultz (Sherrod Brown’s wife) follows four dissatisfied women in a tiny town in Northeast Ohio who examine their lives.

I do not know who recommended *The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox* by O’Farrell; I purposely ordered the book; I just can’t remember why. It was an excellent read; unlike anything I have ever read before. Wow! Then I dived into the *Greek Mythology* as I first read the play *Medea* by Euripides and am now listening to *Circe* by Madeline Miller.

Have a blessed holiday. Enjoy what you can. Keep in touch with your loved ones. Thank God for giving us His Son. God bless and keep reading. Kathy Brooks
(kathleenbrooks15@gmail.com)

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.
Blessed are the people He chose to be His own.” Psalm 33:12



People could no doubt point out many weaknesses I have as a pastor, and I would probably agree with most of them, but I would hope that anyone who has served on Church Council with me would never categorize me as selfish and closed-minded. I listen, and I change my mind if I feel God pulling me in another direction. I also believe that First Lutheran belongs to God and God’s people, and that I am just one of the flock. God can and does speak through all of us, not just through those of us with funny collars!

For the last three months, I’ve been writing about the advantages of in-person worship. The beloved children of God gather as a family, confess their sins, pray together, sing together, hear God’s Word together in scripture and in interpretation & application of scripture (sermons), confess their faith together, share the peace and a meal together, give thanks together, get blessed and sent together. So much of this is lost if we do not gather.

Watching people gather, receive forgiveness, pray, sing, receive the Word, confess, hug, eat, give thanks, get blessed and sent is not the same thing. But God is well aware of pandemics, and God is gracious and understanding. Desperate times call for desperate measures.

So, we gather outside, just as Jesus and the disciples did. And it is harder to hear and see, and it is much less comfortable. For some, the difficulties are too much to overcome. So, I have decided, with Council’s permission, to also offer recorded worship on Sunday morning. Starting on December 6, we will not only have a parking lot service available at 10 a.m. but also a recorded service that we will create during the week and post on Friday or Saturday. I hope that it will touch the hearts of all who watch. It won’t be in person, but it will be us (me, Miriam, volunteer musicians and assistants). The Holy Spirit will be in attendance, and it will be First Lutheran worship.

My second change of heart concerns Holy Communion. There is simply no way that we can use the envelopes we’ve been using outside. So, I have ordered the individual communion sets that many churches are using now. They are actually very nice, and I deeply regret having characterized them as McDonald’s Happy Meal Toys! I told you that I have some weaknesses as a pastor, and an overactive sense of humor is occasionally troublesome. Seriously, the kits aren’t as difficult to open as I imagined, and they will work well outside. We will, once again, receive bread and wine (grape juice, actually), and Christ will be truly present.

I hope that you all will be gracious to me and to all of us as we work through these difficult times. This is all new to us. We are working very hard to stay on top of everything, but we will make mistakes and there will be road bumps. I will change my mind and try to remain faithful to the gospel while listening to all of you. Please keep us in your hearts and minds and cell phone speed dials.

God’s blessings,
Pr. Bob

December

2020		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
wSun							
6	10:00 Worship Parking Lot 11:30am Community Dinner	7	1-Dec 9:30am Newsletter Mailing 1:30 Staff Meeting 4:30pm *Riehm Farm 7pm *Book Club	2	4:30pm Organ Rehearsal	4	5
				10am WELCA Board Meeting 7:00 Confirmation	9:30am Bulletin Assembly		
13	10:00 Worship Parking Lot Noisy Offering	14	8	9	10	11	12
			9am Martha 9:30am Rachel	7pm Endowment 7:00 Confirmation 8pm Theology Pub	4:30pm Organ Rehearsal 5:45pm Girl Scouts 6pm BSA Eagle	9:30am Bulletin Assembly	1pm McCann Family
20	Worship Parking Lot 10:00	21	15	16	17	18	19
			4:30pm *Riehm Farm	7:00 Confirmation	4:30pm Organ Rehearsal	9:30am Bulletin Assembly	
				9:30am Poinsettias Set-up 9:30 Bulletin Assembly	Christmas Eve Worship 4:00 Parking Lot 7:00 Inside (7:00—if we are not "Red" Outside if we are "Red")	25	26
27	Worship Parking Lot 10:00	28	22	23	31	1-Jan	2
			9:30am *Ladies Bible Study 12pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30pm *Council		9:30am Bulletin Assembly	Office Closed	
			Office Closed 10:30am *Ladies Bible Study	9:30am Newsletter Mailing?		Office Closed	



Elected to the
2021 Church Council

Julie Buck, Beth Meier,
Daryl Rotman, and Janet Wobser

Appointed to replace Elaine Ashley
Nikki Needles
Thank you for your willingness to serve.



Food Cart Requests
Laundry soap, cleaning
supplies, Potato mixes All
donations benefit
Lutheran Social Services.



Send A Card
To Our Homebound

Ruthie Meyer	Beulah Bishop
Bev Yammine	Marilyn Wilson
Mary Fleming	Mike Meyer
Jim Staschiak	Pauline Streicher
Sue Montgomery	Ken Otte
Sally Rice	Beth Hardesty
Jack & Nancy Meek	
Paul & Donna Brockman	

Please email (FLCFindlay@gmail.com)
or call the office (419-422-2638) if
you would like an address.

Women of the
ELCA

WELCA Calendar of Events for December

Because of the fluid situation all dates, places,
and times are subject to change.

Rachel Circle is in-service for the month of December

Dec. 2	WELCA Board – February Social planning meeting - 10am
Dec.	Martha /Rachel Circle <u>Brunch canceled</u>
Dec. 14	Hannah Circle, 7:00 pm in the Church Lounge, Christmas Party

Thank You!

Thank you to all who helped with the November
Thankoffering service. A special thanks to Pam Cochran
for leading the service and Kylee Timbrook for assisting;
Miriam Gibson for planning the music; Jane Ebersole,
Carolyn Bryant and Beth Maurer for singing; Beth
Maurer for the lovely new song "Gifts"; and Nina Dukes
for the special bulletin.



There is a whole new year
of Sundays that you can
choose to place flowers on
the altar. The 2021 flower
chart is posted in the
hallway across from the
church office. This is the
perfect way for you to honor,
remember, or give thanks
for those people and events
in your life.



There are three additional electronic giving
options for making regular offerings. To First
Lutheran Church. These options are only additions and
you can still give with cash, check, bank bill payment
or the current simply giving program. Electronic
giving offers convenience for you and provides much-
needed donation consistency for our congregation.

Giving online...

... is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view
your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet.
Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit the church website at www.1stlutheranchurch.org,
- 2) Click on the Forms/Gifts button,
- 3) Click on the online giving button under Vanco payment solutions
- 4) Click on sign in/Sign up>Create Profile button, then
- 5) Create you Give+ account and follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and
to schedule your recurring contributions.



Give Mobile.

- 1) Download the FREE app on your Apple or Android phone (available on the phone's app store for
"GivePlus Church")
- 2) Make one-time or recurring donations using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account
- 3) Log in or donate as a guest
- 4) Securely and conveniently manage donations using Touch ID/Fingerprint, PIN or password.

Give by Text



You can also make a contribution with a quick text message!

- 1) Simply send a text to 419-721-6921 with the amount you would like to contribute. Make sure to
include the dollar sign before the amount. Example: \$25.
- 2) Within a few minutes, you'll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your
cardholder name and credit or debit card information.
- 3) Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt via email. For
future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and it will process automatically!

December

Helping Angels

January Newsletter Deadline

Monday, December 21st,

Weekly Bulletin Deadline

Wednesday Mornings

SOUND ROOM

Dec. 6

Dec. 13

Dec. 20

Dec. 24

Dec. 27

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Dec. 6

Dec. 13

Dec. 20

Dec. 24

Dec. 27

ALTAR GUILD

Tom & Cindy Fitzpatrick

COUNTERS

Jerry Luth, Erika Cunningham

LSS DELIVERY

Marty Schmidt

FLOWER DELIVERY

Marilynn Dunn

ALTAR FLOWERS

Dec. 6 - Janet Wobser

Dec. 13- Jon & Sandra Burnside

Dec. 20 - Pat Needles

Dec. 27

Forms for your bulletin announcement are available on the bulletin board and at 1stLutheranChurch.org

Flowers need to be delivered to the church by noon on Friday.

Birthdays

Celebrations

Stanley Wise	12/1	Thomas Fitzpatrick	12/16	Kurt Ebersole	12/23
Amy Tabler	12/5	Elizabeth Kutschbach	12/16	Carol Peters	12/23
Jack Taylor	12/6	Pamela Basinger	12/18	Merrill Maurer	12/24
Margaret Meyer	12/8	Rob Leipheimer	12/18	Al Stacy	12/24
Nick Thomas	12/8	Melissa Mathias	12/18	Michael Meyer	12/25
Samuel Fruchey	12/11	Stefanie VanAtta	12/18	Jeff Wobser	12/25
Sally Hartzell	12/13	Ann Fifolt	12/19	Nathan Adler	12/27
Carolyn Howe	12/13	Lesley Betts	12/21	Miriam Gibson	12/27
Gemma Cox	12/13	Rebecca Huff	12/21	David Otte	12/29
Jax Cox	12/13	Brandon Maas	12/21	Joseph Spoon	12/31
John Adler	12/15	Zoe Thompson	12/21		
Zachary Thompson	12/15	Nikki Needles	12/22		

Anniversaries

Michael & Sharon Thompson	12/19/1970	50
Larry & Virginia Borger	12/28/1968	52
Aaron & Linda Ried	12/30/1994	26

first

Lutheran

First Lutheran Church

109 E. Lincoln Street

Findlay, OH 45840

NONPROFIT

ORGANIZATION

US POSTAGE

PAID

Current Resident or:

This newsletter was mailed:
December 1
Give or take a day

Advent

First Lutheran Church

Parking Lot Worship

Sundays 10:00 am

www.LutheranChurch.org

109 E. Lincoln St.

419-422-2638

9

10