

a letter from the pastor

we have transformed it into a religious observance by holding services on Thanksgiving Eve and by making sure that all depictions of Thanksgiving Dinner include scenes of the family gathered with bowed heads around a table heaped with the bounties of the earth. The implication is obvious: God is responsible both for meeting our needs and for holding us together as families.

Thanksgiving is immediately followed by all the material trappings of the Christmas Season as corporations that provide those trappings become almost ravenous in their insatiable lust for the almighty consumer dollar. In God We Trust, but on Black Friday, We Lust.

Black Friday is so named because in the 1960's the streets of Philadelphia became so congested with shoppers on the day after Thanksgiving that the sidewalks and streets would vanish from view and chaos would reign. Originally, of course, Black Friday was the day we commemorated our Savior's horrific death on a cross. That day was also called "Good Friday" because from the beginning the word "good" also meant holy or pious.

The season of thankfulness that started with humble prayers of thanksgiving and culminated in the unselfish gift of the birth of our savior has been reduced to a season of raucous binge eating and "I better get what I asked for" present opening. Black Friday has become more about purchasing luxury items for ourselves we've been lusting after all year than about finding heart-felt gifts for those we love in honor of the ultimate gift of love we've received from our Lord.

As one who is as guilty as anyone of putting my focus on the wrong things at this time of year, all I'm suggesting is that instead of starting Christmas with the day after Thanksgiving, we try to restore the connection between Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve.

For the ten years I've been back in Findlay, Christmas has always started for me with a group of us taking some of the First Lutheran children Christmas caroling at Birchaven and Primrose (on December 3 this year) and with Pastor Mike Thompson giving me a CD copy of his Christmas program, which I play in my car all through the holiday season. This year, I'm going to start a little earlier: at the community Thanksgiving service at Trinity Lutheran (7 p.m.) because saying "Thank you" is the reason for the season.

Pastor Bob

HERE WE ARE AGAIN...at that time of year when we are supposed to be thankful for all the blessings we've been given. First comes Thanksgiving, which is really a national holiday, but



*Joy to the world
the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.*



Family
Candlelight
Worship

7:30

Prelude at 7:00

Featuring
Special Music

Christmas Eve Worship

Festival of Lessons and Carols

Candlelight Worship

10:30

*Prelude at 10:00
Featuring Bell Choir,
Piano & Harp*



share the joy



Decorating

Help is needed to decorate the sanctuary and church on Saturday, December 2nd, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

No special skills required other than a festive spirit. Join the fun as we prepare the way for Lord.



Christmas Caroling for our at home members will be Sunday, December 3rd. All are invited to share in our community dinner and then venture out at 1:00 to share the Good News with those confined to their homes.



Prepare Ye the
Way of the Lord



Snowflake Social

Before the hustle and bustle of the Christmas rush, all sisters in Christ, young and mature, are invited to our SNOWFLAKE SOCIAL on Wednesday December 6th, from 6:30 – 8:00. Let us gather for hearty appetizers, a craft, devotions, and a time of fellowship as we prepare for the coming of the Christ child. The social is free and RSVP tickets will be available.



Social Ministry will again gather COATS FOR CHRISTMAS. Any coats collected can be placed in the blue box in the coat room marked with the Coats for Christmas sign. These coats are then taken to City Laundry and will be cleaned and taken to Glenwood Middle School for distribution on Dec. 15 and 16. Coats will be collected until Dec. 4. Any new gloves, hats or scarves can also be donated. Thank you for helping to provide warm clothing this winter for those in need.

December Ministry Spotlight

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Our spotlight for December is on our congregation's Social Ministry Committee and all the work they do providing ministry for community needs. This month we look at the many ways we seek to serve those outside of our congregation, in the immediate vicinity of our church, agencies, special needs and drives, and ministries that follow the biblical mandate: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebrews 13:16)

Stewarding the Christmas Story

"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria." Luke 2:1-2 (NRSV)

So, how do you hear this story this year?

As Christians we live in these days of Advent in a sense of "both -- and." We celebrate Christmas as an event that took place 2000 years ago that also takes place again, here and now, in our lives today. We hear once again this Good News of Great Joy -- that to us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

For most of us when we hear the word "stewardship" we think of our money, our possessions, our time, or our particular talents. And all of that is certainly true. But I want to suggest to you that as Disciples of Jesus, our "stewardship" also includes how we steward this Good News of Great Joy. Our stewardship is also about how we both receive and share the message of the Gospel.

Frankly we are no different than the gospel writers. We too are blessed with the Good News of the Gospel, and we are called in our discipleship to "steward" this Good News and to share it with the world around us. Just as we steward, just as we take care of, manage, and share the blessings and resources we have received, so too are we entrusted to steward this Good News of Great Joy!

I am very aware that in the midst of all the things on our lists to do this Christmas season it is easy to overlook this area of our stewardship. We are busy -- often too busy -- to even hear the angel's message to the shepherds in that field outside of Bethlehem. So my prayer for you is that you can make the space in all of the busy-ness, to receive this blessing of Good News -- and to steward this gift -- for you and for all the people -- "that to us is born in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."- Scott Jacob

Carolyn Bryant has been a member of First Lutheran since 1971 and has served on the Social Ministry Committee for many years. She is currently the Committee Chair.



Briefly describe the work of the congregation's Social Ministry Committee.

The Social Ministry committee has the opportunity to bring social awareness such as World Hunger, human trafficking, drug abuse, injustices and any items we think are important for the congregation to know. We try to be aware of needs both locally, nationally, and worldwide.

What are some of the local projects and ministries that the Committee has been overseeing?

Areas or agencies locally that the congregation has helped include: Stuff the Bus, Coats for Christmas, Clothe-A-Child, Habitat Build, LSS, Food Boxes for distribution at the Community Dinner, The Daughter Project, Komen Race, Glow Run, Bake Sale, distribution of meat from Chipotle to agencies in Findlay, Riehm Farm produce for community dinner guests or members of congregation and City Mission, CHOPIN Hall, Open Arms, Salvation Army and the Learning Center near the high school. We have helped Lincoln School in their school lunch program, collected Box Tops for them to use and have recently purchased items for Purses with a Purpose. [We also support global ministries including Baby, School and Fabric kits to send to Lutheran World Relief; we have offered Fair Trade coffee and chocolate for sale and have delivered food supplies to areas affected by hurricane disasters.]

How are all of these projects funded?

In 2017, the congregation budgeted \$750 for LSS, \$900 for City Mission, and \$1500 each for Hancock Christian Clearing House and CHOPIN Hall. Most of our funds come from generous special gifts (of money and other gifts) from members and friends. We have asked for donations from the congregation of useful items and also have approached the Endowment Committee for monetary needs.

It is a busy committee and we would encourage anyone to join us or take time to volunteer at any of the local agencies. These agencies are always in need of volunteers to help in various ways. It only takes a few hours per month or as many as a person wants to give. We try to do God's Work with Our Hands and a willing heart.

Where does our money go? Each month the Stewardship Committee will highlight a ministry of the Church: congregational, local, national, and global. We will get a glimpse of how our offerings are being put to work.

Sharing God's Gifts



The Church Library

Well, hello everyone. May the expectations of the birth of the Savior this season bring you joy that gives you peace and lets you share the good news with others. And, by now, you have seen the Christmas activities for those over and under 18. If not, pick up a copy in the library and go do God's work.

This month's book I am featuring is Norman Vincent Peale's How to Cope with Ten of Life's Toughest Problems. A few suggestions: 1. Any fear can be overcome with a combination of love and faith. 2. Cope with fatigue by ridding yourself of sustained anger. Hand over future perplexities and fears to Jesus. Channel God's energy through you to others. 3. The way out of a troubled marriage is through it. It takes courage, persistence, determination, control. 4. If you obey the Ten Commandments, if you will do your best to live up to the Golden Rule, the criticism of self-appointed critics will make little impression on you. 5. You can cope with poor health – try living one day at a time without any unhealthy thoughts. Make it a habit.

6. Solve your money problems with his seven suggestions. 7. Trying to cope with discouragement? Get a philosophy of life. Trouble is here. It is for a purpose. Feel God's restoration of your soul bringing you to a place where he gives you serenity, peace, and powerful control. 8. Tired of coping with loss, sorrow and grief? What a marvelous chapter of suggestions given here. My favorite prescription is this: "Go to your room, put on your hat, go out and do something for someone. Repeat ten times." 9. Feeling defeated? The Bible says, "I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me." 10. Are you a worrier? Get with Jesus! "Fear thou not; for I am with thee..." That is the way to deal with worry and to defeat it.

Fifty-eight powerful pages. Well worth reading. Currently on the book cart. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this small text and learned more than I could absorb in one sitting.



*"Fear
thou
not;
for I
am
with
thee..."*

Also, this time of year, I always call in the e-readers. If you have signed one out, please return it now to the Church so I can load it with new books and give service if needed. On December 5, the book club will be choosing new books. Let us know your suggestions for 2018. What books do you suggest that will not disappoint? E-mail me.

Over the past year, several young adults and adults have shown an interest in helping in the library. Okay, here is my first assignment for those who wish to help in the library: choose a new addition to the library from the book cart at the library doors, read and then write a review of the text. E-mail it to me at the address below. Anyone else interested in writing a review can do the same. I would love to read others' reviews instead of my own. I can't wait to hear from you.

I have been sent, several times, writings from "The Voice of Martyrs". Here's an area of which I know nothing. If anyone of you is interested in doing more research than I have time, please feel free to let me know what you find. The Voice of Martyrs at 1815 SE Bison Rd. Bartlesville, OK 74006. (Persecution.com.) "Voice of Martyrs" newsletters introduce us to the ministry and share stories of the brothers and sisters worldwide being persecuted for Christ.

Another reminder - J.D.Vance, author of Hillbilly Elegy will provide a public presentation at the Marathon Center for the Performing Arts on March 22. The public library has copies and we can indeed make the text available on our church e-readers. Just let me know.

God bless and Keep reading. Kathy Brooks. (Kbrooks@Lrbcg.com)

YOUth matter



HELP SUPPORT

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH YOUTH GROUP - EPIC

WHERE 1971 Tiffin Avenue, Findlay, OH 45840

WHEN Thu, Dec, 7th

FROM 4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Bring this flyer or show an electronic version to the cashier when you place your order and we'll donate a portion of the proceeds from your purchase.*

Ordering Online for Rapid Pick-Up or Delivery?*

Enter "FUND" as your Promo Code to have a portion of your proceeds donated to your organization.

Confirmation
Wednesdays at 7:00

No Confirmation
Dec. 20, 27, & Jan. 3

Attendance Required For
Ash Wednesday, February 14
Lenten Services
February 21, 28
March 7, 14, 21

No Class March 28
(Holy Week)
No Class
April 4

Last Class—April 25th
8th Graders and parents only

Confirmation April 29, 2018

Taco Night
SUCCESS

The Texas Taco Night was a great success for not only the students attending the ELCA Youth Gathering but for those who attended the fundraiser, as well! We had good music, good food, and good times, and none of that would have been possible without the help of those who donated Silent Auction items, those who helped set up and decorate Fellowship Hall, those who cooked, and those who cleaned. In addition, we are so appreciative of Los Tres Caballeros, our trio of musicians for their fantastic tunes. We can't leave out those of you who purchased tickets, gave monetary donations, and those of you who successfully purchased Auction items; many, many thanks to you all! We raised over \$2,500, and all that money goes directly to expenses for our youth and adults attending the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, TX next summer. Muchas gracias!



Women of the ELCA

Thank you to all who helped with the Thank Offering Sunday. Well done!
Thank you to the Martha Circle for cleaning, sanitizing, and setting up the nursery.

Dec. 6 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. - Snowflake Social for all women of the church. We will make crafts, have good food, and best of all, share fellowship with one another.

Dec. 12 - 9:30 a.m. - Fellowship Hall - Circle brunch, Hannah, Martha, Rachel Circles

Dec. 31 - Cookie Sunday - Rachel Circle

Kudos

A gigantic thankyou to all the volunteers who gave generously of their time and energy for setting up the fall rummage sale, worked during the sale, and the final cleanup. Another thank you to all those who contributed so generously with their donations to the rummage and bake sales. The bake sold out completely and the rummage sale was larger than in the past few years!

We cleared \$1,239.90. The bake sale made a profit of \$451.50 which has been added to the rummage sale monies. Therefore \$1,691.40 will be divided and sent to the Hancock County School "Boot" Project and to the ELCA Disaster Relief for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma victims.

Seed money for he rummage and bake sales were provided through Thrivent Action teams.



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Alex Treece
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Elected to the 2018 Church Council

Julie Buck, Daryl Rotman,

Alex Treece, Jenny Welte

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Dec. 3—Tom & Cindy Fitzpatrick
Dec. 10—
Dec. 17— Todd & Cindy Thompson
Dec. 24—Fred & Karen Makrancy
Dec. 31

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.



Tuesday, December 5th

11:30 at Café Marie's

All are invited to join the fun!



"Serving individuals affected by domestic violence and sexual assault through crisis intervention, emergency shelter, outreach, advocacy, prevention and education."

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



NewsLetter DEADLINE

**Monday.
December 18th**

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!

Additional information and how to guides will be available in the narthex at the church.

December

Helping Angels



January Newsletter Deadline
Monday, December 18th,
Weekly Bulletin Deadline
Wednesday Mornings

LECTORS

Dec. 3
8:15 – Jeff Kamm
10:45— Arlene Powell

Dec. 10
8:15— Acolytes
10:45— Acolytes

Dec. 17
8:15— Kathy Brooks
10:45— Renee Smith

Dec. 24
9:30—Elaine Timbrook
7:30—Marilynn Dunn
10:30— Daryl Rotman

Dec. 31
9:30— Tad Schell

GREETERS

Dec. 3
8:15 – Jeff & Jennifer Kamm
10:45— Arlene Powell

Dec. 10
8:15— Dave & Janet Wobser
10:45— Acolytes

Dec. 17
8:15— Paul & Kathy Brooks
10:45— Renee Smith

Dec. 24
9:30— Dave & Shirley Gerber
7:30— Mike & Chris Meyer
10:30—Cyndy & Daryl Rotman

Dec. 31
9:30—Cloyce & Janet Baker

ACOLYTES

Dec. 3
8:15 – Shelby Dale, Zach McRill
10:45— Emily Meier, Seth Franks

Dec. 10
8:15— Karissa Welte, Evan Clark
10:45— Lily Cox, Emily Meier

Dec. 17
8:15— Shelby Dale
10:45— Abbey Zawisza, Emily Meier

Dec. 24
9:30 -
7:30—Zach McRill, Evan CLark
10:30 -

Dec. 31
9:30—

SOUND ROOM

Dec. 3
8:15 – Sam Ried
10:45— Jerry Bryant

Dec. 10
8:15— Dave Gerber
10:45— Todd Thompson

Dec. 17
8:15— Tim Roth
10:45— Alex Treece

Dec. 24
9:30—Tim Roth
7:30—Sam Ried
10:30—Tim Roth

Dec. 31
9:30—Tim Roth

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Dec. 3—Tim Cochran
Dec. 10—Pastor Chris
Dec. 17—Tim Cochran 8:15
Traci Roth 10:45

Dec. 24
9:30—Pastor Chris
7:30—Tim Cochran
10:30—Traci Roth
Dec. 31—Pastor Chris

DEACONS

Jeff Kamm, Nick Thomas
Dawn Franks, Daryl Rotman
Mike Zawisza

12/24
9:30—T. Mitchell, S. DeMoss

8:15 Ushers

Jim Schoerger, Gary May,
Dave Wobser, Cloyce
Baker, Aaron Ried

7:30 Sue DeMoss,
Tad Schell, Eric Timbrook

10:30 Daryl Rotman,
Dawn Franks, Jerry Bryant

ALTAR GUILD

Fitzpatrick, Renee Smith

COUNTERS

Jerry Luth, Cyndy Rotman

LSS DELIVERY

Sue DeMoss

FLOWER DELIVERY

Ken & Katy Otte

COMMUNION BREAD

Dec. 3—Devra Hall
Dec. 10—Julie Dittmar
Dec. 17—Cyndy Rotman
Dec. 24—A. Schriener, T Poling
Dec. 31— Beth Bonnoront

COOKIE SUNDAY

Dec. 3—Community Dinner
Dec. 10—Youth
Dec. 17—Christian Ed.
Dec. 24—Council
Dec. 31—Rachel Circle

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Dec. 3—Steve & Traci Roth
Dec. 10—Bart & Jenny Welte
Dec. 17—Mike & Amy Tabler
Dec. 24—Merry Christmas
Dec. 31—Tim & Dawn Franks

Birthdays

Stanley Wise	12/1
Carol Bottoms	12/3
Amy Tabler	12/5
Jack Taylor	12/6
Amelia Leatherman	12/7
Nick Thomas	12/8
Samuel Fruchey	12/11
Chance Rossman	12/12
Sally Hartzell	12/13
John Adler	12/15
Zachary Thompson	12/15
Thomas Fitzpatrick	12/16
Elizabeth Kutschbach	12/16
Connor Thompson	12/17
Madison Thompson	12/17
Pamela Basinger	12/18
Rob Leipheimer	12/18
Melissa Mathias	12/18
Stefanie VanAtta	12/18
Ann Fifolt	12/19
Karon Makrancy	12/20
Lesley Betts	12/21
Rebecca Huff	12/21
Brandon Maas	12/21
Zoe Thompson	12/21
Ryan Buck	12/22
Nikki Needles	12/22
Kurt Ebersole	12/23
Carol Peters	12/23
Merrill Maurer	12/24
Al Stacy	12/24
Cynthia Habegger	12/25
John Kapostasy	12/25
Michael Meyer	12/25
Jeff Wobser	12/25
Nathan Adler	12/27
Miriam Gibson	12/27
Glen McCann	12/27
David Otte	12/29
Sarah Wilson	12/30
Chris Dudics	12/31
Ashley Rakestraw	12/31
Joseph Spoon	12/31

Baptisms

Ryan Maas	12/2
Paul DeMoss	12/3
Alexandria Johnson	12/5
Zachary McRill	12/5
Stanley Phillips	12/5
Carolyn Wilde	12/5
Joanne Connor	12/7
Marilynn Dunn	12/9
Laura Leopold	12/10
Jon Burnside	12/11
Anthony Neiling	12/11
Kim Peplinski	12/12
Harper Cleary	12/14
Oliver Cleary	12/14
Samantha Franks	12/14
Cole Beutler	12/15
Karen Rose	12/20
Judy Routson	12/20
Larry Borger	12/21
Martha Schmidt	12/22
Sara Cleary	12/23
Allison May	12/24
Toni Poling	12/24
Wendy Price	12/24
Jim Schoerger	12/24
Alec Bonnoront	12/25
Lindsay Elchert	12/25
John Eakin	12/27
Marisa Rose	12/27
Cynthia Rotman	12/28
Cindy Thompson	12/28
Carole Wittenberg	12/28

Anniversaries

Michael & Sharon Thompson	12/19/1970	47
Larry & Virginia Borger	12/28/1968	49
Bartley & Beverly Pardee	12/29/1950	67
Aaron & Linda Ried	12/30/1994	23

Celebrations

Current Resident or:



This newsletter was mailed:
November 28

Give or take a day

Worship With Us

Sunday Worship
8:15 & 10:45 am
Sunday School
9:30 am

Christmas Eve
9:30 am
7:30 pm
10:30 pm