First Out Loud

God's Work. Our Hands. To Serve ALL People.

FEBRUARY- 2025 NEWSLETTER

Siblings in Christ,

Our Wednesday evenings at church are busy. We gather for food and fellowship from 5:30 – 6:30pm in the Dining Hall. The food is delicious and full of variety. Food allergies are taken into consideration. The youth gather in the Chapel for music learning and fun from 6:00 – 6:30pm. We worship as a congregation from 6:30 – 7:00pm. Worship is filled with the energy and enthusiasm of members of all ages – from the very young to the more seasoned members of our congregation. Education for all ages follows from 7:00 – 7:30pm. Lastly, on the first Wednesday of each month, Youth Group (Grades 7 – 12) meets from 7:30 – 8:30pm. This is led with help from GAC's Youth Outreach Team. Please join us!

This month, we are welcoming special visitors from Luther Crest Bible Camp (Feb. 5) and Green Lake Lutheran Ministries (Feb. 12). They will come, bring the Good News through the sermon and share with us what exciting opportunities await our youth, families, and members at large. Please make sure to join us to hear what these fun and faith-filled ministries have to offer us all!

During these cold, dark weeks of Winter, remember that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, our hope and our salvation. Cling to Christ and feel the warmth of the Holy Spirit fill your lives!

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Pastor Christopher Culuris

I am delighted to serve as your Church Council president for 2025. As most of you know, I have a long relationship with First Lutheran Church: I went to pre-school in the basement, received my first Holy Communion and was confirmed here. I was a young musician and; reader, active member of the youth group, and this is the church that arranged for the many summer camps that most of my classmates and I consider to be the foundation of our faith. After decades of being away from St. Peter, my family and I moved back to town in 2017 and back to my larger church family. It's been a joy to watch my girls experience the same welcoming sense of belonging and support I did as a child.

This is an exciting time for the church. We have a full staff again, we've recently completed some necessary repairs, continued to bring down our mortgage, have a full spread of healthy committees, and are blessed with joyful music and; amazing people. I promise to listen and; communicate and I will support Pastor Chris as he continues to shepherd us.

I thank the staff for their hard work and dedication, the committees for their service, and the many, many volunteers for their time. I'd also like to thank outgoing president Randy Frey-Hawkins for his leadership and energy this last year. The church is comprised of its people and there is no doubt this is a special place. I look forward to being on this journey with you.

Sincerely,
Mark Roemhildt

Women's Retreat: Saturday March 1, 2025

Arrival and Snacks at 9am

Retreat runs from 9:30am-12:30pm

At First Lutheran Church

Theme: We are the Body of Christ

With sessions on hands, feet, and heart

There will be activities for each session

All women from First Lutheran in grades 9 and up as well as their friends and family are invited to attend.

Please RSVP to the church office by February 20 so that we know how many resources to prepare.

NexTrex 1,000 lb Plastic Challenge

The Green Committee is sponsoring a challenge for First Lutheran Church. While removing 1,000 pounds of plastic from the environment through recycling in one year from March 1, 2025, we can earn an outside bench for our Church's yard. Members are asked to save items on the attached list and deposit them in the identified box in the church's entry. So start saving them now, bring them to the church, and we will collect, weigh and deliver them beginning March 1st. Watch the Green Board area and for other posters of information of what to collect.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to address climate change and beautify our grounds.

The Green Committee.

What Can Be Recycled

- Bread Bags
- Produce Bags
- Newspaper Sleeves
- Pallet Wrap & Stretch Film
- Salt & Ice Bags
- Grocery Bags
- Cereal Bags
- Case Overwrap
- Bubble Wrap
- Wood Pellet Bags
- Plastic Shipping Envelopes
- Dry Cleaning Bags
- Ziploc & Other Reclosable Food Storage Bags

RIC Sunday on February 2,

In celebration of RIC Sunday on February 2, we will welcome Pr. Stefan Swanson as our guest preacher. Pr. Stephan (he/him) is a chaplain with Lifespark Hospice, based in Minneapolis. He is a Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament with the ELCA and a 2021 graduate of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA.

Stefan grew up in Fulda, MN (near Worthington) and studied Music Education at the University of Northwestern—St. Paul, MN. He has previously worked as a band and choir director and served as a trombonist with the 1st Cavalry Division Band at Fort Cavazos, TX.

Outside of work Pr. Stefan enjoys hiking, playing volleyball, the latest craze in pop music and a really great TV show.

Please join us in welcoming Pr. Stefan to the pulpit and linger in the gathering space after the service to visit with him while you enjoy Welcome Waffles.

CITY OF SAINT PETER

January 13, 2025

Due to changes in Cable television access through Consolidated Communications and Mediacom (either previously or potentially in the near future), Saint Peter Public Access (SPPA) will be terminated on April 2, 2025.

There will be an informational meeting offered to answer any questions you may have and provide some resources for you to be able to continue to share the information with the public that you shared through SPPA. The meeting information is below:

Thursday, February 6 at 5:00pm
St. Peter Room #217
Saint Peter Community Center

Please RSVP by calling my office at 507-934-0663 or by emailing keishas@saintpetermn.gov.

Sincerely,

Todd Prafke
City Administrator

Faithful Giving Allows For Generous Benevolence

On behalf of he Stewardship Committee, we want to Thank You for your generosity in 2024. The following is a list of our benevolence giving for 2024. May these gifts be a blessing to both those who give and those who receive:

Southwestern Minnesota Synod and ELC	$4,000
Missionary Sponsorship	$1,000
The Kitchen	$1,464
World Hunger	$1,275
St. Peter Food Shelf/Lenten Offering	$2,963
Giving Tree/Wednesday Suppers	$2,225
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light	$200
Total	$13,127

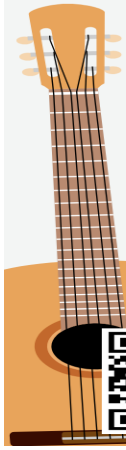
Music Ministry Corner

There is a place for you here!

The Spring Sing & Ring is coming! The Music Ministry at FLC is planning an evening of music on **May 4th at 7:00pm**. The Sanctuary Choir, the FLC Children's Choir, the FLC Wind Ensemble, and the FLC Handbell Choir will all plan to participate. Mark your calendars!

Greet the new year with song. **The FLC Sanctuary Choir** is a wonderfully active group of singers from grade 7 through adults. January is the perfect time to join the choir! Here are the Sundays that we will be singing this spring:

- February 16th (rehearsals at 9:15 on 2/2, 2/9, 2/16)
- March 23rd (rehearsals at 9:15 on 3/9, 2/16, 3/23)
- April 20th - EASTER SUNDAY - (rehearsals on 4/6, 4/13, 4/20)
- May 4th - SPRING SING & RING - rehearsal schedule TBD
- June 1st (rehearsals at 9:15 on 5/18, 5/25, 6/1)



The FLC Children's Choir is a wonderful place to learn to praise God with song. This is a perfect time to join if you're kiddo didn't come this fall. We play instruments, play games, sing songs, and have a lot of energy. Best of all - rehearsals are already built in to Wednesdays at First! Kids can eat at 5:30 and then report to the chapel at 6:00. Here is our Sunday morning schedule for this spring:

- February 16th
- April 13th - PALM SUNDAY
- May 4th - both morning and at the SPRING SING & RING in the evening.

Let's get the band back together! All in grades 7 and up who play band instruments are invited to play with the FLC Wind Ensemble at our Spring Sing and Ring. Please reach out to Sarah to let her know you are interested!

Consider serving the church as a communion server, preparer, or bread baker. See the sign up in the gathering space or contact anyone on Worship & Arts for more info. This is a vital part of our church's ministry! Please consider serving!

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?
musicflcstp@gmail.com
Sarah's office hours for February all are 9:00am - 12:00pm. 2/6, 2/11, 2/19, 2/28 - please stop by!

Pre-k - 1st grade

With two weeks of programming for the new year, we've so far learned about Jesus' Baptism and the Wedding at Cana. We as a group baptized a cabbage patch doll as we learned about baptism, and I showed the kids a cool trick for the water into wine. (It was grape kool-aid, they weren't impressed.) We've been asking the tough questions, such as; 'How did God get made?' and 'Why aren't there any stories about Jesus between when he was at the temple, until his baptism?' Thank you to Pastor Chris for answering those for us!

2nd-4th grades

Our youth programming is back in session to kick off 2025! After a busy December of joining our classroom with the preschool and 5th-6th classroom, as well as our Christmas program, we are looking to jump right in with the second half of the year. We had slightly lower attendance the first week back, but almost perfect attendance in this classroom the second week! With a full classroom, we read the "Wedding at Cana" where Jesus turned water into wine. Our 2nd-4th graders dressed up in costumes to visualize what a wedding during Jesus' time would have looked like. They had so much fun and would like to put on a play in the near future. This group is full of energy, asks lots of questions, and aren't afraid to jump in with answers!

5th-6th grades

Our older youth in grades 5 and 6, spent December being role models in a combined class with the preschool-4th graders, participated in our Christmas program, and a few of them went caroling with the youth group at assisted living facilities. The first few weeks of 2025 are underway, and this group of students are busy with the Epiphany season. They are continuing their bible stories and associated lesson plans. They love playing games and making everything a friendly competition! They continue to be active in church on Wednesdays and Sundays as acolytes, and are active listeners. They are getting ready to make the leap to confirmation in a year or two!

Greetings siblings in Christ,

My name is Brenda Handel-Johnson and I have been serving as your Minister of Word and Service for about one month. So far it has been a month of learning, listening and engaging in many conversations to see where the Holy Spirit is moving here at FLC. I come to you from Belgrade, MN where I have been serving a 3-point rural parish in the areas of preaching and presiding at worship, assisting with worship planning, education and pastoral care. Before I graduated from Luther Seminary in 2021 with a degree in Christian Ministry, I was a music teacher, church musician and a choral conductor in Minnesota, South Dakota, Tokyo, Wyoming and Colorado.

Deacons are sent out to carry the gospel "to the church scattered" so that means we serve in many different roles focusing on serving the neighbor and empowering and equipping others to do the same. My call at FLC will be to serve as a church musician, direct Christian Education, occasionally preach and be a point person for the outreach efforts of the church. I love the church, the community that it is and serves and find joy in hearing people of all ages sing, make music and discover their own call as a beloved child of God.

I am married to my college sweetheart, Andy Johnson who is a Funeral Director with the St Peter Funeral Home/ Mankato Mortuary. We have one grown daughter, Annaeka (a musician, teacher and graduate student) who is married to Karen (also a musician) and lives in Chicago. I love spending time with my family, being outside on my cross country skis or on a bicycle and taking walks with our yellow Lab, Mitzie. Like my grandmother, Josh Dobbs (short-term QB for the Vikings) and Bluegrass singer Mollie Tuttle, I am an Alopecian (which means I have no hair - it is one of my superpowers;) so I have many "looks" (hair, buffs, scarves, hats, etc). Always know questions are welcome if you're curious, and I am generally quite well and healthy!

I'm excited to join with you to praise God in song and answer our call together, serving our neighbors in the myriad ways we will encounter in our daily lives. God's Peace to you all!

Deacon Brenda Handel-Johnson
Minister of Word and Service

2025 BWCA Trip

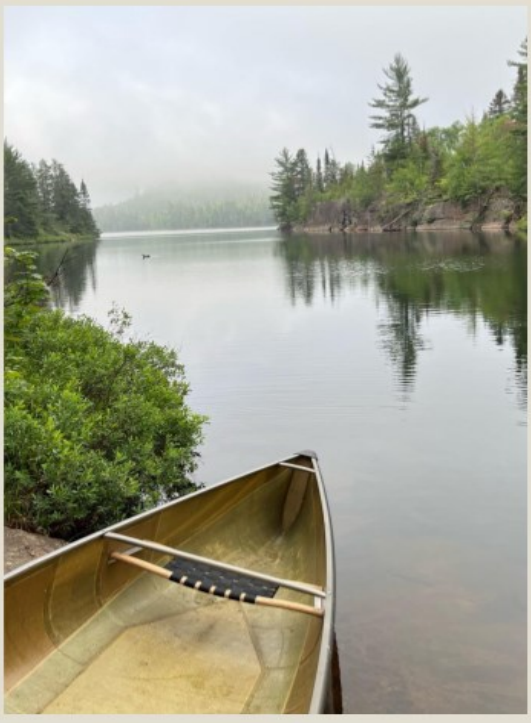
FLC Youth (grades 8-9)

We are planning another trip to the Boundary Waters this summer!

We will settle on our dates and entry point very soon!

Once again, I will be asking the congregation this spring for some equipment and support.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark Szybnski at 507.380.9180 or at markszybnski@gmail.com



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Thank You Notes

Over the holiday season the church received a number of kind and appreciative thank you notes. They are on display in the office for you to read. One in particular is of the Ryan Family and their sons who go to Gustavus and call FLC their church away from home. This shows the care and love FLC is all about!