

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH + SAINT PETER

FIRST OUT LOUD!

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 2022



Pastor Chris Culuris: *A Letter from our New Pastor!*

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness- on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest...For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” (Isaiah 9:2-3b, 6-7)



Siblings in Christ,

Happy New Year! As we begin this new year, we find ourselves at several transition points in the life of our church. In early January, we are still celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, we get to explore what it means to be a baptized child of God. Next, we plunge into the season of light- the season of Epiphany- as we bask in God’s holy light and come to understand increasingly more about who this child is who “has been born for us.”

We are also at a transition point in the life of our congregation. I am excited to come and serve you as your new pastor! I want to thank Pastor Bill Nelsen for his great work as your Interim Pastor. I am also grateful for the wonderful job the members of First’s Call Committee did in their interactions with me and my family. I have met the staff and look forward to collaborating closely with them. I look forward to getting to know all the members of First Lutheran Church- you, your families, and your passion for making First Lutheran a strong and vibrant place for us to grow together in our faith and fellowship! God’s peace and blessings be with you all.

Pastor Christopher Culuris

Council President Message: *End of the Year Business*

At its December meeting, the Church Council heard reports from the pastor, president, treasurer, Ideas for Increasing Income Task Force (the Council gave the go-ahead to set up the “**ShopWithScrip**” program, details will follow in later materials), and the Technology Committee. The Council also received updates on the budget being developed for 2022 and the Boy Scout bankruptcy case.

In new business, approved two resolutions presented by the Finance Committee. One established a designated fund for future capital renewal projects and the second, states that the Council may increase the actual disbursement to the Synod up to 10% of envelope offerings if 2022 revenues exceed 2022 expenses. The Council also approved a recommendation from the Staff Support Committee to reduce the employment of the Director of Youth and Family Ministry to three-quarter time. The Council received the draft Sexual Harassment Policy from the Staff Support Committee but delayed action on it until a report form could be developed. Next, the Council approved the use of funds from the Ruth Larson Endowment Fund to pay moving expenses for Pastor Chris and certain expenses associated with the Director of Music’s upcoming sabbatical. Also, the Council received a recommendation from the Social Justice and Congregation and Community Ministry (CCM) committees to join other area churches in the LSS Circle of Welcome Distant Partnering Program for Afghan refugees. The Council authorized the treasurer to determine if funds from endowments could be used to this end. If so, Mary Spear will contact LSS to confirm our participation.

Next, the Council received the charter from the Finance Committee and postponed receiving an updated charter from the CCM Committee until the chair could be present to speak concerning the proposed charter changes. Finally, the Council approved the appointment of Barb Wilkinson to another three-year term on the Cemetery.

The last action of the meeting was to elect officers for next year. Garrett Paul was elected to serve as president, Mary Spear as secretary, and Jim Stenson as treasurer. The position of vice-president was left open at this time. If you have any questions concerning this report, feel free to contact me (507-382-8256 or wjk111@hickorytech.net).

-Bill Kautt, Council President

Special Groups: *Spreading Joy!*

The Congregation & Community Ministry Committee would like to thank everyone who helped with the Holiday Bags! The bread bakers, the card makers (confirmation students), the bag packers, and delivery people. A special thank you to Joan Miller for the beautiful lap quilts which bring much warmth and joy. Also, thanks to the Prayer Partners folks who helped with delivery of the bags. Hats off to Pastor Bill, Calleigh Carlson, Betty Thompson, Carol Solberg, Cheryl Kautt, Shirb Sylvester, and Dave Pehrson for a job well done!



A Note from the Cantor: *"Out Loud" Worship in the New Year!*

Our first month with Pastor Chris will prove to be very exciting; we have a lot of special celebrations!

January 2: Pastor Chris's first Sunday with us on the Second Sunday of Christmas

January 9: *Baptism of Our Lord Sunday*

January 16: *Martin Luther King, Jr.* commemorative service. Like last year, we have set aside this time near MLK Day to examine our own biases and reaffirm our commitment to racial equity.

January 23: *Installation of Pastor Chris Culuris*, presided by Pastor Stephen Cook from the SWMN Synod

February 6: *RIC Sunday* This is a special day in our church year that celebrates our diversity and our status as a church that is inclusive and welcoming to all, especially those who identify as LGBTQ+.

Throughout the lectionary in the Season of Epiphany, Jesus is baptized, calls his disciples, blesses the poor and hungry, and calls on his followers to love their enemies. Personally, I appreciate that we spend so much of the year's beginning looking at ways that we can live into the gospel of Christ and his call to each of us to serve, love, accept, and welcome all people through our words and actions. I also think it is important that we set aside time to acknowledge when we miss that mark; I'm guessing we all have both personal and collective work to do to be "Little Christs" in the world around us - starting in our community!

We look forward to seeing you at these special services, either in person, live streamed on Facebook at 10:00 a.m., or viewed electronically any time after that!

-Emily Bruflat, Director of Music

Important Dates in January

January 9: Meet & Greet Pastor Chris Culuris at 9:15

January 23: Communion

January 28: Blood drive, register online

January 30: Reminder Congregational Meeting for ALL MEMBERS! 11am after the worship service.

Baptisms! New Members! *November & December*

New Members

Mike & Diane Stewart

Malorie, Joshua, Sawyer, Avacyn & Dawson Kutil

Rev. Carl & Mary Kay Bruihler

Elizabeth Hanson

Sarah, Brad, Lily, Olivia, Luke & Wes Chambers

Recent Baptisms

Hannah Tengwall

Avacyn Kutil

Dawson Kutil

Torii Hanson

FORUMS ARE BACK IN 2022

Meet & Greet with Pastor Chris

January 9 9am

Every Member Reads Forum

Nature's Best Hope

book by Douglas W. Tallany

Feb 13 & Feb 20, 9am

Youth & Family Faith OUT LOUD!

Gearing up for 2022

We are filled with gratitude, love, and joy as we close the chapter that was 2021! Last month our youth participated in a variety of service projects, completed *Session #1* of First Communion Cup making, created and led all our Midweek Advent Evening Services, hosted our second HS Youth Group, and performed in a stellar *No Stress - No Fuss* Christmas Program!



January Sunday School Schedule:

Sunday, January 2nd	NO CLASS!
Sunday, January 9th 9:15am-9:55am	<i>1st-2nd Grade First Communion Cup (Session #2); Sunday School Class!</i>
Sunday, January 16th 9:15am-9:55am	<i>Game/Craft Day!</i>
Sunday, January 23rd 9:15am-9:55am	<i>Sunday School Class!</i>
Sunday, January 30th 9:15am-9:55am	<i>Game/Craft Day!</i>

January Faith Formation/Confirmation Schedule:

Wednesday, January 5th	6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC
Wednesday, January 12th	6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC
Wednesday, January 19th	6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC
Wednesday, January 26th	6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC

January High School Youth Group Schedule:

Sunday, January 9th 2:30pm- 4:00pm	Our combined High School Youth Group will go ice skating together at All Seasons Arena in Mankato!
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Resurrection Cemetery: *Committee Update*

Back in mid-August many of you received your offering envelopes for the month of September. In that mailing were the usual monthly envelopes - weekly offering, Building Fund, World Hunger, Missions, and a new envelope entitled CEMETERY UPKEEP. Thank you to those who responded and gave to Resurrection Cemetery because of that mailing. Look for another mailing in the first quarter of 2022. (If you give electronically, please use any envelope and write Resurrection Cemetery on it.) Although income from the Endowment Fund and lot sales covers most of the expenses of maintaining the cemetery, additional gifts are essential to cover those expenses above and beyond just regular maintenance. For instance, this last year several trees were professionally trimmed and, in some cases, removed and paid for by a gift from a member. Many new trees were planted and paid for and planted by a member. There was an informational sign put up just recently and paid for by a gift from a member. The current need is for the maintenance of the cemetery storage shed. If any of you want to contribute specifically to that project, please talk to any of the committee members. Thank you again to the members of the congregation for your past support and in the coming months please consider a gift to your Resurrection Cemetery.

Now you may have thought or are thinking right now, "doesn't part of my offering I already give go to the cemetery?" The short answer is no. But of course, I am going to give you the long answer.

According to the First Lutheran Church Constitution, "the operation of the cemetery is self-sustaining." So, the cemetery is to be self-sustaining. The Resurrection Cemetery Committee is to take care of the business of the cemetery operations, maintenance, upkeep, and improvements. All of this, of course, under the umbrella of the Church Council. Currently the cemetery committee members are Barb Wilkinson, Gordon Long, Tom Nelsen, Carol Solberg, myself, and a member of the church council (we are in between). The co-managers of the cemetery are Jim Stenson and Tom Thorkelson. Nita Aasen is the cemetery historian, and Laurie Dietrich is the treasurer.

Which takes us to the second aspect of the "self-sustaining". The Cemetery must be financially self-sustaining. Back to the envelopes, none of the money given in the general offering goes to the cemetery. So, where does the money come from? Cemetery funds come from proceeds from the Resurrection Cemetery Endowment fund, lot sales, memorials which are sometimes given by the family at the time of burial, and most importantly gifts to the cemetery.

Many of you over the years have given gifts regularly to the cemetery. Thank you for that. Over the years there have been special projects that many of you have given to for instance the entrance sign was primarily funded by gifts from many of you. Back to the envelopes. The Cemetery Upkeep envelope was sent out simply as a reminder and for those of you who give electronically, consider this your reminder. There will be a reminder envelope sent out about every six months.

Submitted by Paul Haukoos

**Church Finance Summary as of
11/30/21**

**328,597 inc.
351,511 exp.
(22,914)**