



FIRST LUTHERAN C H U R C H

The Visitor is the monthly newsletter for the members and friends of First Lutheran Church

December 2023

Parish Staff

Pr. John Dietz, pastor
Rian Johnson, secretary
Melissa Peterson, custodian
Elaine Sweeney, musician

Parish Council

Lynn Schweiberger, president
Kay Dague, secretary
Barb Bautch
Connie Bryant
Pr. John Dietz
Gen Lervik
Mary Maki
Dave Peterson
Stephanie Skraba
Sheryl Tokarczyk
Nancy White

Office Hours

Monday-Friday
8:00 am- 2:00 pm
After 2:00 pm by appointment

Contact Us

2201 Third Avenue East
Hibbing, Minnesota 55746
Call the office: 218-263-8388
Email Rian: rianjohnson@firsthibbing.org
Email Pr. John: pastorjohn@firsthibbing.org



Follow us on Facebook at:
firsthibbing



YouTube Channel:
First Lutheran Church- Hibbing, MN

Join us!

Sundays

9:30 am Worship
Service of Holy Communion
10:30 am Fellowship
Conversation and refreshments
10:30 am Sunday School & Confirmation
Age 3 - Grades 6+ Faith Formation

Tuesdays

11:00 am Lunch & Learn
Bible Study and Lunch

Wednesdays

6:00 pm Confirmation
Grades 6+ Faith Formation

Baptisms Weddings & Pastoral Care

Please contact the church office to schedule a Baptism or a Wedding in advance. If you are seeking pastoral care for yourself or a loved one, please contact the church office to set up an appointment or call the pastor directly in an emergency. Always leave a message at 218-969-5108.

Hibbing Public Access TV

Watch on channels 805 or 118.5 or on the website:
hpat.org- go to **Educational Access** and scroll down to
First Lutheran Church
Live on Sundays at 9:30 am
Rebroadcast on Sundays at 8:30 am, Wednesdays at
8:00 pm, and Thursdays at 2:00 pm

First Lutheran Church – Hibbing is a parish of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, one of 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region.



ELCA

Pastor

You yourselves are our letter,
written on our hearts, to be known and read by all;
and you show that you are a letter of Christ.
2 Corinthians 3:2, 3

I walked into Lowe's a few days before Halloween and all of the Christmas decorations and inflatable displays greeted me at the door. It seems to be earlier and earlier that the stores introduce Christmas. Of course, "Christmas" is synonymous with "shopping" which means spending money, and all of these stores are in the money-making business, after all.

I'm not upset by any of this, really. People spend their money on all sorts of stuff all year long. And if they start their Christmas shopping in October — presumably buying gifts for other people — it's all the more time they've been given to think about others with kindness and generosity.

But what I've thought more recently about this "early Christmas" is that maybe it's meeting a need in our culture. We have so much sadness, negativity, bad news, anger, hopelessness . . . Maybe we used to be able to wait till December for "the most wonderful time of the year" to begin. But now it seems we need a jumpstart on that. And if Christmas decorations and blow up displays and some holiday music get us into a more charitable or happier state of mind, I'm OK with that. It's certainly not opposed to the spirit of Christmas, but we would say that this isn't all there is to it, either.

It's not the culture's job to proclaim the gospel — that's ours. Amid the holiday music and the cookie baking and white elephant gift exchanges and ugly sweater parties, we are still able to proclaim the incarnation of God in the birth of Christ. In fact, Jesus was born into a world full of festivals and parties, along with the bad news of war and domination. It's to the real world that God decided to come and make known the good news of the kingdom of peace — then and now.

So, as we live in the real world, let's remember that we are the bearers of Christ to the people we meet and the places we go. We are walking, talking Christmas cards to our friends and neighbors and family . . . and we hope that when they encounter us they find the joy and kindness they need, and not dour judgment, which too often many have come to expect from church people.

On that subject: I know it's a thing nowadays that people get upset about others saying "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas." As a pastor of the church, I can't quite figure out how we made something so small into something so big. There are, in fact, a number of religious holidays during December. Maybe people are just trying to cover all the bases, or maybe they don't know which holiday you celebrate and they are trying not to offend you. If the only time other people know you're a Christian is when you're telling them that you're feeling disrespected or dismissed because they won't greet you in a specific way during a certain time of year, then you might be doing Christianity wrong.

I'm hoping that when people come to worship this Christmas Eve — whether they come at 9:30 am or 4:00 pm (since Christmas Eve is a Sunday this year) — they will receive a genuinely warm welcome, and experience the joy of Christ through us, and encounter the grace of God in the Word and in the Sacrament. We love Christmas at First Lutheran, and we hope you'll invite family and friends to be part of it with us.

~~Happy Holidays!~~
Merry Christmas!

+ Pastor John Dietz

Worship God

DECEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

December 3

9:30 am — An Advent Service of Holy Communion

Cloth for the Manger

December 10

9:30 am — A Service of Holy Communion
with the Annual Christmas Pageant

December 17

9:30 am — A Communion Celebration of Light
with the Scandinavian tradition of Sankta Lucia

December 24

Two (nearly) identical services on Christmas Eve
9:30 am Christmas Eve Worship Service
Carols, Communion, and Candles
4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service
Carols, Communion, and Candles

December 31

9:30 am — A New Year's Eve Service of Holy
Communion

January 7

9:30 am — Epiphany Service of Holy Communion
with the Blessing of the Church

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

Join us for a Christmas Choir practice on Wednesday,
December 13 at 6:00 pm. This will be the first practice
for a pop-up choir so we can sing a song or two during
the Christmas Eve services. Let Pastor John know if
you're interested!

GUARDIAN ANGELS EUCHARIST

The December Lutheran service of Holy Communion
will be held at the Guardian Angels chapel on Thursday,
December 21 at 3:00 pm. Pastor John Dietz presiding.

HPAT TV and YouTube Schedule

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Rebroadcast on Sundays at 8:30 am, Wednesdays at
8:00 pm, and Thursdays at 2:00 pm

Grow in Faith

Lunch & Learn

We will be re-convening our Lunch & Learn Bible Studies
after a winter break. We'll be exploring a different day
and time with a new format. Stay tuned for more
information!

Mom's Bible Study

A group of moms has been meeting twice a month to
study the Bible and talk about life - and they'd love to see
you at one of the Mom's Bible Studies. Come when you
can. They're meeting this month at 6:00 pm on
Wednesdays, December 6 and 13. Kids can come play in
the nursery or hang out in the youth room.

Breakfast Book Club

Our breakfast book club was a fun experiment and one
some of us would enjoy being part of in the future. If you
have book ideas, let Pastor John know. We will plan a
meeting in January — look for more details in next
month's newsletter and on the bulletin boards.

Sunday School

Our Sunday school students continue to meet on Sundays
right after worship (10:30 am) until 11:30 am. This
month, we will have class on December 3 which will serve
as our final practice for the Christmas Pageant. On
Sunday, December 10, students will host the pageant
during worship — come to church at 9:00 am to get
ready! On Sunday, December 17 we will host a Christmas
Party for the students. No classes on Christmas Eve (Dec
24) or New Year's Eve (Dec 31). Thank you to our
teachers: Ashley Dietz and Jane Plese. You are awesome!

Confirmation

Remember to put these confirmation classes and events
for the month of December on your calendar!
Sunday, December 3 (10:30 am) and Wednesday,
December 6 (6:00 pm) Confirmation Class # 7; Saturday,
December 9 (9:30 am - 1:00 pm) help out with the
Christmas Bazaar; Sunday, December 10 Confirmation
students are helping lead the Christmas Pageant! Come
to church at 9:00 am to get ready; On Sunday, December
17, join us for the Christmas Party after worship. There
are no Sunday or Wednesday classes over the Christmas
Break (December 24, 27, 31, or January 3).



Build Community

Silent Auction- Youth & Family Fundraiser

We want to thank everyone who donated to our Silent Auction. All the bids from the donated items will go toward funding some of the great Youth & Family ministry events that happen here at First Lutheran Church. Thank you to our individual sponsors and donors: Paula Kangas, Ashley Dietz, Jane Plese, Barb Bautch, Mary Maki, and Barb Tanem; and thanks to all of the local area businesses and organizations that helped out: L & M, The Wellness Club, Shine Salon & Day Spa, Bechthold Jensen Eye Care, Moxie, Benders, Arrowhead Motorcycle Apparel and Supplies, and Emily Law's From Design and Photography. Thank you, everyone!



Movie Day

Thanks to everyone who came out for the Veteran's Day Movie Day event! We were at the Hibbing Mann Cinema 8 for the afternoon enjoying the classic 1990 movie "Home Alone." The manager of the theater was glad to report 65 people were in attendance for this event.

Community Support

First Lutheran hosts a number of outside groups — all of which support our over-all mission of reaching out to make God's love real in people's lives. Our building is used by three groups on a regular basis, and by others on an occasional basis.

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota has its own dedicated space in the basement. They use the old nursery to hold supervised visitation for families with custody issues. They meet at all times and days of the week, and use the south alley entry.

AlAnon meets every Monday at 7:00 pm. AlAnon is a support group for people who have been impacted by another person's alcoholism.

SAFE is a group meeting once a month that serves as support for the LGBTQIA+ community. SAFE stands for "Supporting Allies, Family, Friends, and LGBTQIA+ for Equality." It is facilitated by Pastor Ellen Taube, a pastor of our Synod.

Fellowship

Please consider signing up to host fellowship following worship. Any Sunday in December is open for you to bring a treat — homemade bakery, fruit and veggies, cheese and crackers, store-bought donuts or cookies, it can be anything. Coffee and juice are here, all you have to do is get it ready. If you need someone to show you the ropes, just ask!



Serve the Neighbor

Second Sunday Collections

Care Cupboard
December 10

We are still receiving donations every Second Sunday for the Care Cupboard. First Lutheran's Care Cupboard is here for anyone who might be in immediate need for some basic food or hygiene items. We have a few gift cards on hand to local businesses for grocery and personal care items as well. If you would like to donate, we are looking for easy to make meal options, and gift cards to SuperOne or Walmart (for groceries only, not for alcohol or tobacco). Thanks for your support!





**Gifts of Joy
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2201 THIRD AVENUE EAST - HIBBING

Saturday, December 9
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Brunch \$8.00/ person
served 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

Baked goods

"Next to new" Christmas room

Unique crafts & gifts

Leifse making demonstration

Free men's & women's coats available

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gifts of Joy Christmas Bazaar

Be sure to invite friends and family to our 2023 Christmas Bazaar — Saturday, December 9 from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm. This year's theme is "Gifts of Joy" and there will be something for everyone, from homemade crafts and baked goods, vendors, a "next to new" Christmas room, and more. Remember that this is the last day to bid on the items for the Youth & Family Silent Auction as well. Brunch will be served from 9:30 am - 1:00 pm.



**CELEBRATION
OF
Light & Music**

Saturday | 09 | December 2023
1:00 pm - 6:30 pm
Camp Hiawatha
36944 Camp Hiawatha Rd
Deer River, MN 56636

For meal tickets and more info visit:
<https://2023CLM.givemart.com>
Meal tickets are available for purchase through December 1st.

SCHEDULE

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm Cookie decorating, sledding, campfires, food demonstrations, etc

3:30 pm - 4:00 pm Hymn Sing

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Worship

5:15 pm - 6:30 pm Dinner

GET MEAL TICKETS HERE



MENU

Swedish Meatballs w/ Gravy
Mashed potatoes
Vegetables
Dinner rolls
Risgrim
Fruit Soup
Herring
Cranberries
Lefsa
Ginger Cookies
Rosettes

Questions? Contact the VLM Office at
(800) 331-5148 or vlmvlmcamps.org

Celebration of Light and Music at Camp Hiawatha

The Celebration of Light and Music combines afternoon family activities, such as sliding, food demonstrations, broomball/ ice skating, camp fires, and snacks and warm beverages with a music-filled worship service and festive holiday meal. Space is limited for the meal, so call now to reserve a spot: (218) 246-8604.

Camp Hiawatha: 36944 Camp Hiawatha Rd | Deer River, MN 56636

Council Meeting Minutes 11-26-23

Property Committee Report:

- Rian to put the kitchenette cabinet on market place to sell. Ron Vogt will do the construction, need to check on who will do the demo. Counter top and cabinets to be ordered on Tues.
- Dishwasher for the kitchen where the old hand washing sink was will be ordered on Tues. Sink by the door will be designed as a hand washing sink.
- Energy Audit: Waiting to complete audit until fall. Dave Rian met with them. No report at this time. Lynn to check with to see if the receipts for light bulbs have been sent to the PUC.
- Instant water heater for dish washer has been installed. Connie asked for a manual on how to run it.
- Air conditioner on the sanctuary side- service company suggested replace instead of repair - On hold at this time.
- Looking into increase in PUC bills. Plumber to look into repair/replace for the steam traps. Iron Range Plumbing quote was for \$1200.00 for inspection of all traps with estimate on what needs to be fixed. Report sent to the church office on Oct 10. Lynn to check with Rian to see if it was received.
- Plaster in sanctuary on south side and north side needs to be done due to water damage. The north side has been repaired. The South side to be repaired soon.

Old Business:

- Bazaar on Dec 9th. Barb Bautch and Mary Maki in charge of food/lunch and Barb Tanum chair of the bazaar.
- New chairs for the fellowship hall . Lynn to see about the chairs on website (oakstreetmfg.com) for availability and shipping cost.
- New cart for moving the tables. On hold.
- What to do with the pew in the fellowship hall. Pastor John suggested to have it made into a table. Searching for someone to do this.
- Personnel policy - Pastor John to meet with staff to review the new policy which will be in place on Dec 1.
- Policy for disruptive behavior during services. Pastor John and Lynn will work on the policy.
- 2024 proposed budget reviewed and distributed. To be voted on at the Dec meeting.

New Business:

- Staff gifts for Christmas.
- New members for council.
- Change in Dec council meeting to Dec 17.

Next Meeting on December 17, 2023

December Birthdays

December 1:

Cole Hughes

December 2:

Bob Muhich

December 5:

Shirley Poirier, Zach Fearing

December 7:

Courtney Johnson

December 8:

Betty Brandt, Cathy Koland, Barbara Vogt

December 9:

Jon & Joe Grabanski, Larry Ochsner

December 10:

Steve Carlson, Jeremy Moen, Scott Skraba

December 11:

Arlo Walters

December 14:

Barb Tanem, Alexander Foster

December 15:

Nichole Fairbanks

December 17:

Van Bautch, Steven Bartek

December 18:

Jennifer Sundvick

December 20:

Janice Rice

December 21:

Conrad Engelstad

December 22:

Cassie Otto

December 23:

Kathy Lind, Trae Wherland

December 26:

Marlene Barto

December 27:

Lucas Willard

December 28:

Rocco Sampson

December 29:

Hilda Knuckey

December 30:

Loyal Tanem

December 31:

Josephine Inforzato

First Lutheran Church Monthly offerings

Many thanks to everyone who faithfully supports the mission and ministries of First Lutheran Church with your generous offerings to our general fund for operating costs, and also to the building fund that helps with repairs and maintenance. Together, we make ministry happen here at First Lutheran Church!

General offerings:

November: \$12,140.86

Building fund offerings:

November: \$733.29

thank
you

***Amounts reflect what was recorded at the time of newsletter print.

CHRISTMAS EVE – DECEMBER 24
Join us for Christmas Eve services at either 9:30 am or 4:00 pm

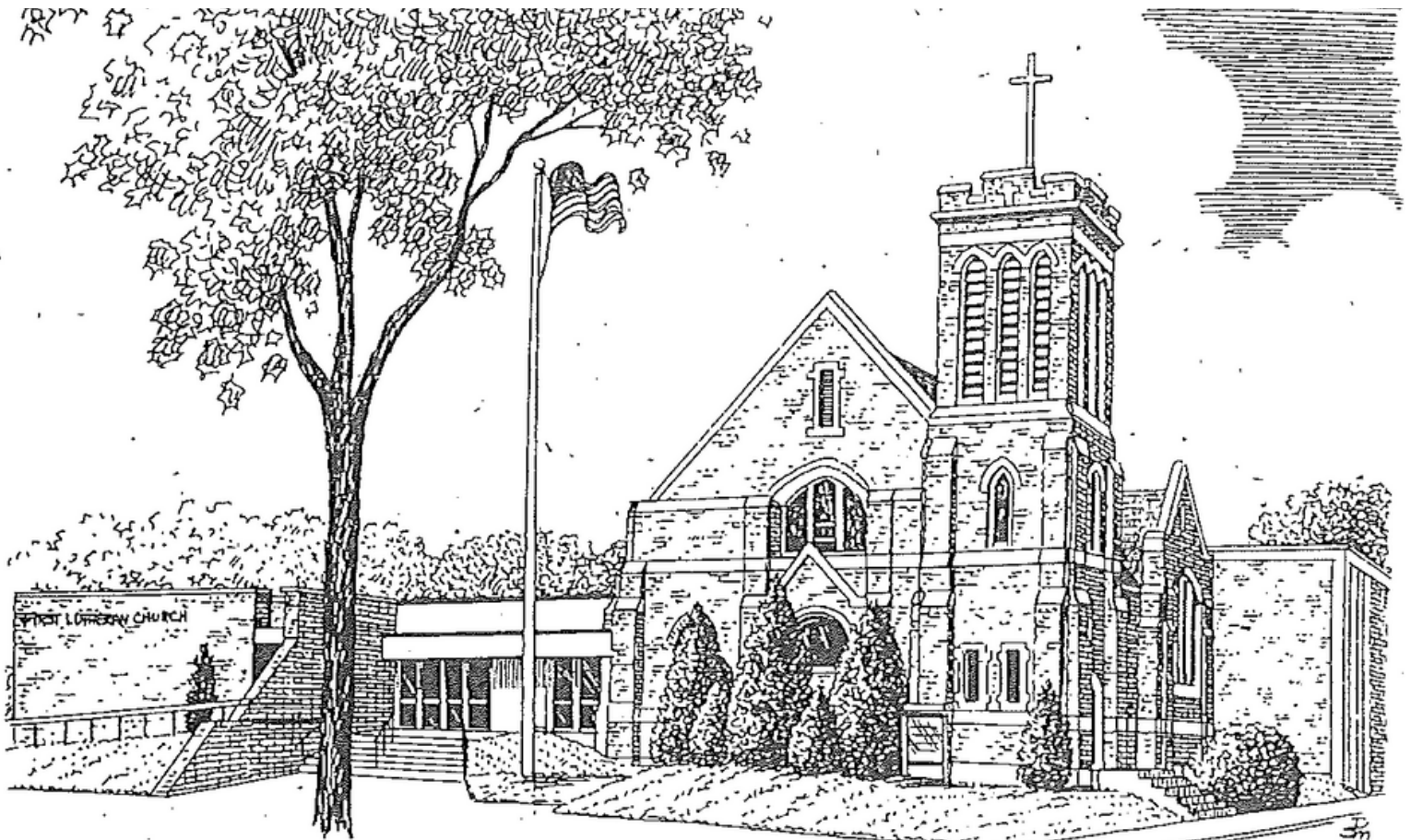


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