



First Lutheran Church

Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
we are nurtured, prepared, and sent to be the light of Christ in our world.

A Time for Giving!

During this time of year, as we begin to count down the days until Christmas, we often find ourselves caught up in a lot of different activities that seem to demand our attention. We may find ourselves having to get our Holiday decorations out of storage, the basement, or the attic. Perhaps we live by a fairly regimented schedule and therefore we have to look over our calendars for the month of December to figure out what events, parties, and church advent opportunities we can attend. Of course, we may need to go online and purchase airline tickets if we will be traveling to visit relatives for Christmas. And last but not least, we will probably need to either head to some of our favorite stores to purchase gifts, or we will log on to popular websites like Amazon and have them shipped to our doorsteps.

Christmas is, after all, a time for giving as many of us have learned over the years, and it is better to give than to receive! Which begs the question, while you are making your lists of people you would like to give presents to, have you ever thought about giving God a gift? After all, he did give us the best gift we could ever receive in the form of a baby who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. But, what do you get for the creator of our universe who has the power to make anything He desires? Martin Luther would have probably replied with something along the lines of, "God doesn't need your gifts, but your neighbor does!" And perhaps that is a good place for us to start. In what ways can we help the people who are in need living in our neighborhoods and communities?

I'm certain that our social ministry team is more than happy to provide you with some ideas of the types of gifts that are needed this time of year, and after Thanksgiving Day you will be able to find stars on the Giving Tree at church listing certain items being collected for local charities. There will also be ornaments featuring things that are needed for the residents of Josephine Caring Community in Stanwood. And while you think about how you would like to show God your gratitude and generosity, I would like you to also consider the idea that, "God may not need your gifts, but your church does," and by gifts I'm talking about the gifts of your time, talent, and treasure.

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Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

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Did our amazing God give you the ability to sing or play a musical instrument? Why not consider joining our pick-up choir on the Sunday mornings we sing during worship, or talk with Peter about playing a special piece of music? Do you have a gift for studying the Bible or do you have a knack for public speaking? Why not consider being a reader or a worship assistant? Are you passionate about sharing the Good News of the Gospel with others by showing our church members and the people in our community just how much God loves them? Perhaps you should think about being a part of our Congregation and Community Care team (Evangelism committee)? Do you have a gift for hospitality, or do you enjoy being social? I'm certain you would make a good usher or greeter and we can always use individuals willing to help with Coffee Fellowship.

Whatever gift or gifts God has given you, this year I invite you to share those gifts, or regift them if you will, to the people inside and outside the walls of our Congregation. After all, as Disciples of Christ we are aware that we are called to be good stewards of all that God has given us. We also understand that God blesses us so that we may bless others! So, let's spread some Christmas joy and shine the light of Christ by serving others as Christ has served us.

Advent Blessings,
Pastor Ryan

Christmas Worship Services:

This year, since Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, we will be having a Christmas Day worship service featuring Lessons and Carols at 10am. As you are looking over and marking your Advent Calendars, please note our Christmas Eve worship services will be at 3pm and 5pm.

Thanksgiving Service

This year, I'm certain we all have a lot to be Thankful for. **You are invited to join us for a worship service on Wednesday the 23rd of November at 7pm** as we worship God and lift up our praises to Him for all that He has done and continues to do for us. After worship we hope you can join us for a **Pie Social** as we enjoy some good fellowship, some good desert, and perhaps share at least one thing we are thankful for. People are encouraged to bring either a homemade or store bought pie, but please know that you don't need to bring a pie if you are wanting to join us. Although I know we will all be eager to celebrate Thanksgiving with our families, and there may be a lot of things we need to get done, perhaps you can see this as an intentional time of rest and renewal before the big day.

Pastor Ryan



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Saturday, December 24th
3pm & 5pm

Christmas Day Lessons & Carols Service

Sunday, December 25
10am

We are nurtured, prepared...



Hymn Sing

Come 15 minutes early & join us for a hymn sing before worship on December 4.



Our current book for discussion is...

“The Sweetness of forgetting”
by Kristin Harmel

Join us for a book discussion on January 19th at noon in the Chapel.

Carols, Cocoa, & Cookies

December 11th at 4pm we will gather together and sing some of our favorite Christmas carols. Join us in the fellowship hall, honoring the birth of our savior by making a joyful noise!

Blue Christmas

Holden Evening Prayer Service

For many people these days, the Holidays can be a time of sadness and hurt, especially for those who have lost loved ones this past year and are facing the reality of celebrating Christmas without them. Perhaps you, or a family member or friend, are dealing with an illness or other tragic circumstance that might be keeping you from finding joy or delight during the season of Advent. Whatever you may be feeling as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, you are encouraged to join us for Holden Evening Prayer on Monday December 12th at 7pm. We will be singing a well-known liturgy, there will be a special time of prayer with a lighting of candles, and there will be an opportunity for us to take some time to reflect on the reality that it is ok to let go of people's expectations of how we should feel and act during the Holidays and give our burdens and hardships over to God.

Church Council Meeting Dec 15th @ 6pm

Our last Council Meeting of 2022 will be Dec 15th at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall. We ask that council members from 2022 and the newly elected 2023 Council Members attend. Retiring Council Members, please remember to bring your Council notebook to pass along to the board member who will proceed you.

An Advent Opportunity

As Christmas approaches, it seems like our schedules get fuller with all kinds of things to get done and special events to attend. That being the case, we can often get so caught up in all of the Holiday preparations and parties that we don't have much time to truly reflect on the meaning of the season. That being said, Pastor Ryan invites you to consider joining him on a journey through a special Advent devotional called, *Simple Gifts* by Rev. Kelsey Peterson Beebe. Devotion description: *Find simplicity in the season with 25 devotionals that will keep you centered in your faith and focused on the gifts that truly matter.*

Each individual or family will seek to read and take some time to reflect on the daily devotions offered in the book, and each week there will be a discussion in the Chapel at church on Fridays (12pm, beginning December 2nd) with the Pastor to discuss how our Advent journeys are going.

Sunday School

Please note that we continue to offer Sunday school at 9am on Sunday mornings. There will be no classes on either Christmas Day (December 25th) or on New Years Day (Jan 1st).

Do you have a Prayer Request?

If you have a prayer request & would welcome prayer partners please send your requests to the church office office@firstlutheranmv.org. Members of the First Lutheran Prayer Ministry would be happy to join you in prayer.

Please make sure to have permission to share the prayer concern via the prayer chain before sending it in. We want to be sure to honor the privacy of all.

Thank you to all of our "Prayer Warriors." It is pretty special to know that there is a group of brothers & sisters in Christ who are willing to join in prayer.

Would you like to join our Prayer Ministry? Prayer Chain Members receive emailed prayer requests & individually lift the recipient up in prayer. If you are interested in being a part of this Ministry please talk to Holly, in the church office 360 424-6832 or email office@firstlutheranmv.org.

Church Calendar

Remember that we have a calendar attached to our website www.firstlutheranmv.org

We do our best to keep it updated with all the church happenings & community building use. If you would like to add a meeting or event to the calendar, please email the church office at Office@firstlutheranmv.org Thank you for helping us keep the calendar up to date!



It is time for committees and boards to prepare to write their annual report. The Annual Report will be presented by the council to the congregation at our February Semi-Annual Meeting. This is a great opportunity to share, not only the happenings of 2022 but also your hopes and dreams for 2023.

Please e-mail reports to the church office no later than Sunday, January 15, so that there is plenty of time to compile, edit, and print the report for the congregation. Thank you.

Brunch with the Pastor

If you haven't had a chance to have Brunch with the Pastor, please consider signing up on the bulletin board in the church Narthex. On the 4th Sunday of each month, up to six people are invited to join him at a local restaurant to share a meal together and to get better acquainted. Please note that if you have already had an opportunity to attend one of these events, you are more than welcome to attend again but please wait until the 4th Sunday to sign-up so others have an opportunity to participate. On November 27th we will meet at the Curious Chef (Near *Michaels*) in Burlington at 12pm.



Coffee Hour

A reminder that coffee hour is back. If you enjoy this time of fellowship and would like to support this effort please remember to sign up to serve as coffee hour host.

Friendship House Meal

First Lutheran has consistent role in serving our homeless neighbors. Once per month, we gather supplies for a dinner to be served at both the *Friendship House Cafe* and now at *Skagit First Step* in Burlington. Thanks to your generosity!

Sign up to provide for the Friendship House Meal [here](#) or on the refrigerator in the kitchen. The Friendship House has reported a higher need for meals, as the cold weather has arrived.



The Social Ministry will again be offering a giving tree to help bring attention to needs in our community. Watch for detailed gift giving information in the e news throughout the season of Advent .



Our Men's group will meet on **December 11th at 2pm** at Temperate Habits in Mount Vernon. **Please note that we will be meeting an hour earlier for members hoping to attend the Christmas Sing along at 4pm.**

Fall Quilt Donations

Our First Lutheran quilters completed 45 quilts and 11 baby blankets from April through October. On October 23 during worship these quilts were blessed for distribution to those in need of warmth and shelter. Nine quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief; ten quilts each were delivered to Teen Oasis Center, New Earth Recovery, and Family Services of Community Action; six quilts were donated to Family Promise; and the eleven baby quilts were divided between Mary's Inn and WIC of Skagit Valley.



Thank you to all who helped with and participated in our Art Show Fundraiser. A huge **THANK YOU** goes to Sandy Knapp who very generously donated all the proceeds from the art show to First Lutheran!



In the mail...

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in the sewing of these beautiful quilts!

They will definitely be a source of comfort and hope to residents.

Thank you Connie for bringing them to us. What a Blessing!

Blessing of comfort and Joy to you all as we enter the holiday season!

Stephanie
On behalf of the NER Staff

End of Year Giving

You may be receiving lots of mail from a variety of charities asking for "end of year" gifts. If that is a ritual in your household, we invite you to consider First Lutheran Church and many of its designated funds as a possible recipient of that generosity. Some suggestions include: First Lutheran General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, Scholarships for Lutherwood.

Your gifts to one of these funds, or any other designation are appreciated



Thanksgiving Eve Service

You are invited to join us for a Thanksgiving Eve worship service on Wednesday the 23rd of November at 7pm.

A Glance at Stewardship

(Year to date as of End of October. 2022)

Giving \$170, 474.77

Expenses \$197, 832.14

Budget *\$231, 069.93
(The amount we budgeted to spend)

Loss -\$27, 357.37

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

2015 E. Blackburn Rd.
Mount Vernon WA 98274
Mailing: PO Box 777
Mount Vernon WA 98273

Worship Services

Sunday Worship 10:00 am

Church Office—office@firstlutheranmv.org

Website w/calendar www.firstlutheranmv.org

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Church Phone: 360 424-6832

Direct number for Pastor Ryan Rouse— 360 603-6379

To reach our Staff:

Pastor- Pastor Ryan Rouse

Pastorryan@firstlutheranmv.org

Holly Oliver,

Parish Administrator-office@firstlutheranmv.org

Pete Olson,

Worship Accompanist-peterdonne@yahoo.com



If using offering envelopes is important to your personal stewardship practice, the church will happily provide them for your use. We are not requesting worshippers to use envelopes, order them only if you find them helpful.

Our Financial Secretary records all gifts of record for you (gifts that indicate the donor's name) whether you use envelopes, or not. Giving statement are provided, by request at the end of the calendar year.

Offering envelopes will be available, by request, please email the church office office@firstlutheranmv.org to make a request. If you place an order for offering envelopes, they will be available for pick up at the church in late December or early January. Thank you for supporting the Ministries of First Lutheran.

First Lutheran

All are created uniquely by God and all are welcome here.

Your Abilities· Age· Culture· Economic Status· Gender Expression/identity· Life Circumstances· Marital Status· Questions· Race· Sexual Orientation· are welcome here.

Our Congregational Leaders

President— Donn Hollenbeck

Vice President— Bob Ramborger

Secretary— Yvonne Carter, Sandy Simon

Treasurer— Brad Pickett

Trustees

Jeff May, Lowell Larsen, Vacant Position

Deacons

Heather Romano, Bob Ramborger, Bud Fish

Parish Activities

Frances Wraspir, David Jones, Ann May