

FIRST NEWS

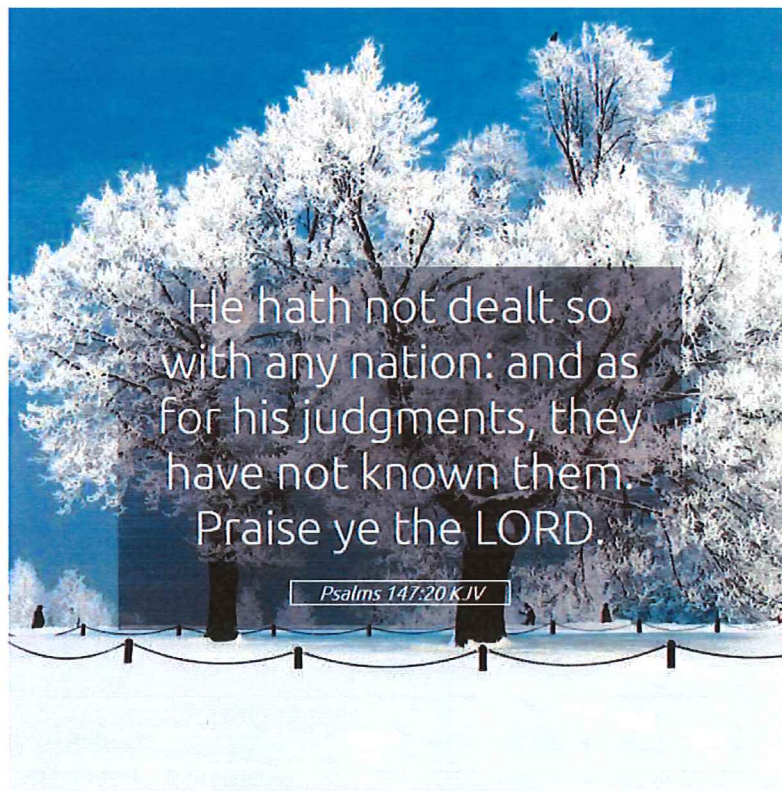
First Lutheran Church
Freeport, IL 61032

*Through worship and loving service,
We make Christ known to all*

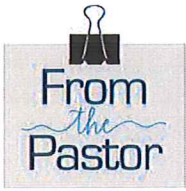
Volume 52 #1

January 2025

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.



Caregivers give emotional support when a member is in need. If you know of anyone who could benefit from a Care Giver's visit, don't hesitate to get in touch with Ruth Wardlow at (815) 275-8540 or the church office at (815)235-9790



A MESSAGE FROM PARSON BARB

Even though this is the January newsletter, we are still before December 25 and I haven't had a chance to send heartfelt and warm Christmas greetings to all. Several years ago we received a Christmas card that I cherish and keep with my decorations so that I can enjoy the sentiments year after year – these I share with you.

My Christmas List of Blessings

My Christmas list is more that just a way to keep track of
 The special people God has brought into my life to love.
 It's like a treasured scrapbook filled with pleasant memories
 Of all the times God's answered prayer through friends and family.
 Every name's a touchstone that leads to a place and time,
 Where God has used another's heart to reach out and touch mine.
 It may have happened years ago or even yesterday,
 But every person on my list has changed my life some way.
 Through simple conversations, a warm hug or shared meal,
 Every person on my list has helped me grow or heal,
 Or laugh or love or learn or smile...
 The blessings never end
 As God allows our paths to cross as family and friends.
 So please know that this greeting is more than a Christmas wish.
 It's a "thank you" card to God for putting on my list
 Each and every one whose name I've come to hold so dear...
 Those who've shown me Christmas joy each day of the year.

Dear family of First Lutheran, you all are part of my Christmas blessings. May the wonder of Christ's love be a part of your day at Christmas and always, and may his blessings be with you throughout the coming year.

Parson Barb



WORSHIP

Streaming – Sunday morning services are available to watch live on Facebook at 9:00 a.m. You can view this by clicking on or typing in this address <https://www.facebook.com/firstlutheranfreeport>. Once you are on the page, you must click on the video. If you cannot watch us live at 9:00 a.m. you can view the recorded version of the service at the same link or by going to the First Lutheran website www.firstlutheranfreeport.org. If you watch it on the website, scroll to the bottom of the home page and choose the service you want to view.

Sunday Bible Study –You are invited to join us for a casual, comfortable, informative bible study every Sunday in the Martin Luther Room at 10:30 a.m. Grab a cup of coffee and a donut and join us. Everyone is welcome.

January Worship Volunteers				
Date	Altar Guild	Usher	Reader	Assisting Minister
January 5	Bev & Duke Herrling	Volunteer Needed	Eric Hoffman	Dena Kampmier
January 12	Nancy & Steve Olson	↓	Eric Hoffman	Jeff Cowman
January 19	Rochelle & Brad Heilman		Eric Hoffman	Judy Kaufman
January 26	June Brandt & Esther Eden		Eric Hoffman	Barb Statdfield

Usher / Greeters Needed – Usher / Greeters are needed for January / February. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex on the Usher stand. Please consider giving a little time to help us at worship with this crucial but simple task. Thank you.

Baptism - On Sunday, December 29th Addison Esther Salina Melgara, daughter of Daughter of Orlando Salina and Janelis Melgara Gonzales will be baptized during the worship service. Following the service a brunch will be served by the Women of the Church in Fellowship Hall. Come and celebrate this special day as we welcome the newest member of our church family.

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS



Members and Friends who need extra prayers – Jesse Baldwin, Connie Bartels, Donna & Marvin Beyer, Sarah Lower Borstad, Arlene Camerer, Donny Carpenter, Kristen Davis, Lauren Diehl, Laith Dougherty, Jennifer Duarte, Donna Frakes, Mary Lee Gerbode, Ryan Griffith, Gail & Marv Harris, Sharon Janicke, Theresa Kavran, Jane Klemm, Norma Klentz, Karina, Keaton & baby Luca Korosec, Bob Last, Joann LeBaron, Beth Luke, Kevin Madsen, Kay Mammoser, Raymond Marschang, Gary Ogrin, Reuben Pearson, Margarite Potthoff, Marilyn Rice, Debbie Rousch & family, Marilyn Ruthe, Lorene Sciutto, Phyllis Seffrood, Sue Sellen, Mary Smith, Wayne Smith, Jerry Stalcup, David Staver, Corrine Wallace, Kathy Wilkin, and Gail & Bob Willis.

Members and Friends who need skilled care - Margaret Althoff, Sharie Bill, Dee Burstrom, Fred Busker, Shirley Diestelmeier, Donna Dwyer, Susan Swank Eckert, Harriett Gustason, Charles Janicke, JoAnn Kohn, Jean Sorn, Audrey Stees, Jennifer Stees, Delores Stewart, Nadine Strohecker, Betty Tormohlen and Ruth Wardlow.

Military & First Responders - Military Personnel: Seth Heilman, Tyler Kennan, Aiden Kerr, Jonathan Kerr, Owen McVicker, Jeff Meiborg, Kaydin Rabey, Madison Scace, and Derrik Triem. First Responders: Officer Daniel Moore, Detective Tony Bradbury, and Officer Josh Garrett.

ACTIVITIES



Luther N Brew – Do you enjoy pizza and conversation? Then consider joining the men of First Lutheran on the first Tuesday of every month at Cannova's Italian Cuisine, 1101 W. Empire St., Freeport. The men will meet on Tuesday, January 7th at 6:30 p.m. No reservations are needed.

Saturday Morning Bible Study – Every Saturday morning at 7:30 a group from First Lutheran gathers at Amigo's restaurant, 306 N. Galena Ave. for breakfast and bible study. The group studies the lessons from the upcoming Sunday. Everyone is welcome to join. For questions please contact Bob Neuendorf.

Knitting Group - First Lutheran's knitting group will meet on January 4th & 18th at 10:00 am at the Wall of Yarn shop on Stephenson Street. Come join us and bring a project of your choice to knit or crochet. We are always looking for people to knit prayer shawls and prayer squares. If you are interested, we have a supply of yarn and patterns you may use. Just contact Jan Butterfield or Bev Herrling for more information.

Project Day - Project Day will meet this month, on Thursday, January 9th & 23rd from 10:00-3:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther Room. Sewing skills are not required to help with some projects. We will start collecting supplies for Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief, which are distributed to people throughout the world, especially after natural disasters. Items needed are lightweight bath towels, soap, wide-tooth combs, and nail clippers. We also need large pieces of material or bedsheets for quilt backings. Donations may be left in the WELCA box next to the mailboxes. All are welcome to come for part or all of the day. Bring your lunch if you plan to stay over the noon hour.

Bunko - The monthly Bunko group will gather on Thursday, January 16th from 1:00-3:00 pm in the Martin Luther Room. No reservations are needed, and beginners are always welcome. Come on down and bring a friend - a good time is had by all!

WELCA



December Lunch Outing

Friday, January 3rd
La Patrona Mexican Cantina and Grill
1725 S. Ihm Blvd.
Lunch at 11:30

Sign up on the Activity sign-up board next to the water cooler
Contact Judy Castle with questions or concerns



Circles - Two women's circles will gather on Tuesday, January 21st for bible study and fellowship. If you're interested, just stop down and join us. Mary Circle will meet at 9:30 am in the Martin Luther Room, and Rebecca Circle will meet at 10:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Bible study materials are available for everyone who comes.

November Attendance

Date	Sunday 9:00	Facebook Live	Sunday School
November 3	70	104	21
November 10	60	56	16
November 17	46	91	15
November 24	61	102	17
Total	237	353	69

November Financials

	Current Month	Year to Date
Total Income	\$16,220.51	\$214,850.83
Total Expenses	\$12,127.64	\$172,092.96
Income Less Expenses	\$4,092.87	\$42,757.87

OTHER NEWS

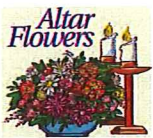
Annual Meeting



The church's annual meeting will be held on January 26th in Fellowship Hall. A potluck lunch will begin after Sunday School at 11:30 am, followed by the meeting. Bring a dish to pass as well as your table service if you plan to attend, beverages and dessert will be provided. Because Elwyn has been our faithful Custodian for over 25 years? We would like to recognize his many years of service to our church on January 26th, during the potluck. Anyone wishing to express gratitude or thanks may do so through cards, notes, or any way you wish. Please bring them to church before the meeting on January 26th.

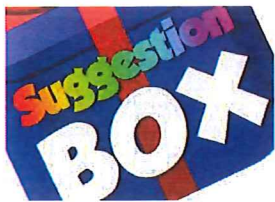
Offerings - If you wish your offerings and/or donations credited to your giving record for 2024, please have them turned in by Sunday, December 29th, so they can be deposited in the bank on the following morning. Also, don't forget to turn in your Stewardship Gifts sheet for 2025 as soon as possible. Thank you.

Lutheran Disaster Response - Lutheran Disaster Response is supporting people affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. If you would like to donate to this appeal, you may send a donation to the church or use a pew envelope and mark it Hurricane Relief. Checks should be made payable to First Lutheran Church, and we will send in one check for all donations received. This is one way we can assist people and communities affected by these natural disasters.



2024 Altar Flowers- If you are interested in signing up for Altar Flowers for 2025 the flower chart will be in the hallway by the coat racks until January 1st at that time it will be moved to the copy room bulletin board. The cost is \$23. Please submit your altar flower fee to the church in an envelope marked altar flower. Thank you.

FACC – For January we have been assigned to collect canned pasta (for example ravioli, spaghetti O's, etc.). Each month FACC posts a list of items needed in addition to the assigned item, here are a few items that are looking for: Men's and Women's clothing (all sizes), cleaning supplies, washcloths, pillows, gas gift cards, children's coats, toilet paper, paper towels, body wash, deodorant, band-aids, and razors. You can see a complete list on their Facebook page. As always please put them in the bin across from the coat rack. Your generosity is always appreciated.



Suggestion Box – The council of First Lutheran Church is asking for suggestions on what you would like to see and have in our future pastor. All suggestions are confidential and will be forwarded to the Call Committee. You will find the suggestion box and forms in the Galena St. entryway. Please give us your positive suggestions, and place them in the suggestion box. Your participation in helping the Call Committee is so important. Please take a minute and give them your thoughts. Your name is not required. Thank you for your participation.

The deadline for the February issue of First News is Monday, January 20th.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER - The last Sunday of each month has been designated as World Hunger Sunday. Donations received during Fellowship time will be sent to ELCA World Hunger Appeal. You may also place a donation in the offering plate anytime during worship by using a World Hunger envelope found in the pew. Checks should be made payable to First Lutheran Church, and we will send in one check for all donations received. This is one way we can help people and communities throughout the world address their hunger issues. The World Hunger initiative was launched in 1974 and is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year!

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Help Wanted – First Lutheran has an open position for a piano accompanist for church services and/or the adult choir. This is a paid position. There are fliers on the table in the Galena St. entryway. **Please take some and share.** Your help in getting the word out is appreciated. Please contact Teresa Parkinson with any questions.

Annual Report – Reminder that it is time to begin working on your reports for the annual report. All reports are due to Melissa by Friday, January 10th. The Annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 26th following worship. Watch for more details.

THANK YOU



Thank you to the Neuendorf family for decorating the sanctuary Christmas tree this year. It is beautiful and we appreciate your hard work and dedication.

END OF DECEMBER REMINDERS



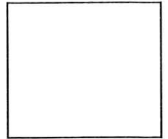
Poinsettia – Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Christmas poinsettias. The plants add to the beauty of First Lutheran during the Christmas services. You are welcome to take your poinsettias home after the Christmas morning service, or you can stop at the church on December 26th or 27th from 9:00 to 2:00. Any plants left after the Sunday, December 29th service will be donated to a shut-in. If none of the options work for you but you would like your plant please call the office and Melissa will put your plant aside for you.

STEWARDSHIP GIFTS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FORMS. If you have not turned in your form. Please take a little time to think about this and then fill out your form and return it to the church office or Jan Butterfield as soon as possible. Thank you for your participation.



How to Care for Poinsettias – To rejuvenate your poinsettia for next year's holiday season, move it outside when night temperatures are not apt to fall much below 50°F (10°C) and prune to keep it bushy and compact. To initiate flowering, the poinsettia needs long nights in complete darkness starting in early October. Cover the plant with a cardboard box or keep it in a closet from about 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. and water sparingly. When buds form in early December, stop the dark treatment.

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January Birthday's

1/2	Stacey Moore	1/15	Pam Hoffman	1/25	Susan Sellen
1/3	Carrie Tresemer	1/16	Zaya Love	1/26	Deloris Stewart
1/5	Denise Kinney	1/18	Gayle Ashman	1/27	Jalynn Coffee Brianna Love
1/6	Louis Lane Chris Slater	1/20	Brad Heilman Jamie Nielsen	1/29	Kali Schweertman Betty Simler
1/8	Melody Schulz	1/21	Daniel Arana Betty Conder Paige Kerr	1/30	Aubrey Michelle Olson Elizabeth Rainwater
1/10	Donna Beyer Rylee Field				
1/11	Carsten Brandt	1/22	Martin Murray	1/31	Jane Klemm Alyssa Moore
		1/23	Bob Dwyer		
1/13	Craig Cuplin Lisa Johnson-Thake	1/24	Kristof Leopold		
Anniversary's					
1/3	Brad & Rochelle Heilman		1/17	DuWayne & Martha Pople	
1/6	Gene & Sharon Wall		1/27	Brian & Jan Butterfield	



January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:30 NA	2 NO Choir	3 11:30 Lunch @ LaPatrona 6:30 NA	4 7:30 Bible Study 10:00 Knitting 12:00 NA 2:00 Girl Scouts
5 9:00 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Bible Study Home Communion 1:00 Terri Meier Baby Shower	6 7:00 Boy Scouts	7 12:00 NA 6:30 Luther N Brew	8 6:00 Council 6:30 NA	9 10:00 Project Day 7:00 Choir	10 6:30 NA Annual Report Due	11 7:30 Bible Study 12:00 NA
12 9:00 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Bible Study	13 7:00 Boy Scouts	14 7:00 Boy Scouts	15 6:30 NA	16 1:00 Bunko 7:00 Choir	17 6:30 NA	18 7:30 Bible Study 10:00 Knitting 12:00 NA
19 9:00 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Bible Study	20 7:00 Boy Scouts February First News Due	21 9:30 Mary Circle 10:00 Rebecca Circle 5:00 Girl Scouts 7:00 Boy Scouts	22 6:30 NA	23 10:00 Project Day 7:00 Choir	24 6:30 NA First News Sent	25 7:30 Bible Study 12:00 NA
26 9:00 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Bible Study 11:30 Annual Meeting & Potluck World Hunger Sunday	27 7:00 Boy Scouts	28 7:00 Boy Scouts	29 6:30 NA	30 10:00 Project Day 7:00 Choir	31 6:30 NA	