

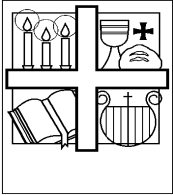


FOCUS AT FIRST

Volume 22 Issue #1

A monthly publication of First Lutheran Church – Barron, WI

January 2008



FIRST GRADERS & PARENTS:

The pastors will be teaching an introduction to worship class for first graders and their parents. There will be two sessions that will take place of the regular Sunday School hour for first graders on **January 13th and 20th at 9:40 a.m.**

The Annual Meeting of First Lutheran Church will be **Sunday, January 27, 2008 following the 10:45am service.** In addition to elections (for the Church Council, Cemetery Board, Trust Fund Committee, Nominating Committee) and approving the 2008 budget, we will also vote on the Church Council's recommendation that during the summer of 2008 there be only one Sunday morning service beginning at 9:00am.

The due date for committee reports for the Annual Meeting is Friday, January 11th at noon.

Thank you in advance for your help with this due date!



Your 2007 offering envelopes are ready to be picked up in Luther Hall. Please help save on postage fees by picking up your envelopes as soon as possible.

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Questions on Being Lutheran?

During the season of Lent, we will be offering a class on basics of the Christian faith and being Lutheran. We will be using two small books for the class and will come together for discussion on a couple of Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. This class is for you if . . .

- You were not confirmed in your youth and would like to be confirmed
- You would like to be a member of First and are presently a member of another denomination

You would like a refresher on some of the basic teachings of the church

Upon completion of the class, you could participate in an Affirmation of Baptism on Palm Sunday and become part of the confirmed membership of First Lutheran. Please contact Pastor Lisa or the church office if you would like to take part.



A schedule reminder:

CHRISTMAS at *First Lutheran*

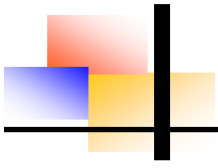
JUBILEE! Sunday, December 23rd. 10:45 is also Worship on the Level.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY WORSHIP, December 24, 4:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, December 24, 11:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP, December 25, 11:00am.

CHRISTMAS DINNER, December 25, 12:00 noon



REFLECTIONS FROM Pastor Lisa

Excerpts from Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, edited by Brian Kolodiejchuk, M.C., pp. 314-315.

Remember the five fingers – you – did – it – to – Me. Remember – love begins at home – our community – our family. Remember – works of love are works of peace.

It is said that Mother Teresa liked to use the “Gospel on five fingers” as a teaching tool for her Missionaries of Charity. She wanted each one to remember to serve Jesus in each person they met – no matter how poor, no matter how ill. Love of God and neighbor begins at the very basic level, in our homes with our families and extends out to reach the ends of the earth. When we live out that life of loving service, who knows what God could and will do through us.

*The fruit of silence is prayer,
The fruit of prayer is faith,
The fruit of faith is love,
The fruit of love is service,
The fruit of service is peace.*

This saying was printed on Mother Teresa’s “business cards” that she distributed to the Missionaries of Charity and other places. God will work wonders of faith when we take the time to be silent in His presence, pray, love and serve. May this new year be a blessed one filled with much peace.

See you in church,
Pastor Lisa

“Worship on the Level” is becoming “Worship with a Ride” (up the ramp that is!)

Beginning in January, we are revamping our efforts to reach out to those who have some difficulty navigating the ramp and the steps. On the fourth Sunday, 10:45 service, the plan is to have volunteers ready to give a wheelchair ride up the ramp to any who request or want it. Those same volunteers would be available during the service to give rides down the ramp if the need arose during worship, and also at the end of worship. To make this service a reality, we need your help:

- Do you have a spare wheelchair to donate or lend to the church? Please call the church office at 537-3575.
- Would you be willing to give wheelchair rides up the ramp? Please call the church office.

The name “Worship with a Ride” brings up another question – would you be able to come to church if you only had a ride? Let us know if a “chauffeur” type service would be helpful to you. We can explore making that ride happen as well. Call the church and let us know.

**Minutes of the Congregational Council
November 19, 2007**

Members present: Clarice Fall, Jim Forsman, George Unteriner, Paul Amundson, Joe Johnson, Pastor Lisa Shank, Cathy Anderson, Terry Jergenson, Kolleen Felber, Pastor Bruce Beyer, Gail Smith, Dallas Sloan, Barb Swant, Lissette Ritchie, Ardis Ress, Mary Shearer. Guests - Tim Goosby, Barb Kirk, Cheryl Johnson.

The meeting was called to order by V.P. Clarice Fall and opened with devotions by Pastor Lisa.

The secretary's report was approved as presented.

The treasurer's report was given, and as of the meeting date, we had a total in checkin/savings of \$2,605.69. It doesn't look likely that we will have to borrow in the month of November. Jim/Mary moved that the treasurer's report be accepted. The motion carried.

Barb Kirk and Cheryl Johnson presented a proposal from the Outreach Committee in answer to the Vision Team's call to action. They pointed out that some years ago, First Lutheran had a very active and dynamic group of trained Befrienders, lay volunteers who provide a listening ear and emotional support to parishners in difficult or transitional situations. The Outreach Committee proposed reactivating the Befrienders Ministry here at First Lutheran for the purpose of systematically visiting our inactive members. It would be a very personal and informal way to reestablish contact, as well as a way to listen compassionately to people's needs and concerns. However, the Befrienders would need to refresh their training, and new Befrienders will need to be trained as well. Paul/Lissette moved that up to two people from our congregation (Pastor Lisa is one of them) be "trained as trainers" at a cost of \$649.00 per person. Tuition costs are to be covered by the Hawkinson Fund. The motion carried.

Tim Goosby appeared before the council to ask for their blessing on a large-scale Youth project. In response to their experience at Godstock this fall, First Lutheran's high school - aged youth propose a concert of a popular band from Godstock at the BACC in March. The concert will be heavily

promoted and self-funded. They hope to involve youth from all denominations across NW Wisconsin. The event will also double as a fundraiser for the Adventure Trip. Terry/Ardis moved that the council offer their prayers and support to the project. The motion carried.

Joe/Lissette moved that permission be given to purchase a new sound system. The current sound system is operating at about 50% capacity since a lightning strike damaged it earlier in the year. The motion included a transfer of \$971.00 from Gifts and Memorials to make a down payment on the purchase. The motion carried.

Jim/Joe moved that \$100.00 be transferred from the Emergency Fund to the General Fund. The motion carried.

Mary/Jim moved that the date for the 2008 Annual Meeting of the congregation be set for Sunday, January 27, 2008 immediately following late worship. The motion carried.

Nominations were taken for an appointment to the Trust Fund Committee. Nominees will be contacted, and if they are interested, their names will be placed on the ballot for elections at the Annual Meeting.

Paul/Ardis moved that we participate in promoting the First Call Debt Retirement Fund beginning in January. The fund is set up in response to the current pastoral shortage to help small congregations throughout the ELCA offer debt repayment incentives to first call pastors. The motion carried.

Kolleen/Terry moved that we authorize an expenditure from the council budget not to exceed \$50.00 for Synod membership fees. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

AN UPDATE TO THE CONGREGATION FROM THE VISION TEAM

The Vision Team has been meeting frequently over the last few months and it has been quite awhile since we have given you an update on our work. We are taking this opportunity to do so. The congregation council charged our group with studying “the state of affairs” of our congregation and recommending strategies for improving attendance, involvement, etc. As previously communicated to you, we chose the Natural Church Development process as our means to organize our work. With the guidance of the Synod office we determined that seeking input from the congregation was essential. Thirty of you provided feedback during a focus group session and the information supplied on your surveys was instrumental. It ranked the development of Passionate Spirituality as the first task to approach. After presenting this information to the Council we received their support to proceed. A group of prayer warriors was then put in place to provide us with a much needed anchor. Deep, rich, complex, and analytical discussions followed over the next few weeks. Various means of developing Passionate Spirituality began to become apparent. Yet, we knew that before these could successfully begin we had other work to do. There were barriers in the way that needed to be addressed. And, more importantly, we identified key assets that our congregation has that will serve us well. This past fall we took this information to all of our church committees, asking them to examine the details and see how they could link them to their committee’s mission and vision. Since then, there’s been an energy that’s developed and we have committees excited about some ideas. Seeds have been planted and are growing! What lies ahead? That remains to be seen. But, we are confident that growth has begun. Soon, we’ll be giving the congregation opportunities to submit their ideas and additional feedback. Next fall, we’ll need another group of thirty people to form another focus group and provide the next phase of survey feedback. And, all along the way, our prayer warrior group will be holding up our work in prayer and asking that we are guided all along the way. What a wonder this support has been.

Thank you and God Bless!
First Lutheran Vision Team
(Rob Davis, Terry Miller, Sally Ellison, Carolyn Verhulst,
Terry Jergenson, Len Meysembourg, Sharon Nelsen)

This and that.....

FOOD PANTRY FUNDRAISER: Thanks to the generosity of you and our area merchants, we raised over \$200 in cash and supplies at Wednesday’s travel party. About eighty winners received prizes from over two dozen merchants, with a number left over for the Christmas Day dinner. It is suggested that those receiving gifts write a personal thank you to the business that provided them.

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT at the Chanhassen Dinner Theater! The Hay River Lutheran Church has organized a bus trip to see this wonderful play and would like you to join them. The play is Saturday, February 9th - cost is \$60 per person and includes lunch, the play and the bus trip. Sign up by January 9th or as soon as possible. Contact Diann Hovland at 632-2463 to sign up or get more details!

EVERY WEEK a group of volunteers delivers large-print bulletins to many of our members who are unable to worship in our building. This has become a valuable part of our ministry. Beginning January 1 we need a new coordinator for this ministry. If you can serve in this capacity, please talk to Pastor Beyer.

Youth & Sunday School Activities



Meet with us January 12th at 5:30pm for S.W.Y.G.! All middle school youth are required to attend as part of their confirmation activities. Plan on joining us for fellowship, a meal and fun!



Senior High Youth Group Activities!

- You'll be meeting on Wednesday, January 9 and 23 at 6:00pm. We need you there!
- **ANY HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MEMBER** interested in participating in the June 15-20th Namekagon/St. Croix canoe trip needs to complete a Luther Park registration form, which can be found on the Youth Announcement board in Luther Hall, and return it along with a \$25 nonrefundable deposit to the church office absolutely no later than December 31st. The youth group is working to fundraise the remainder of the cost of the trip. This should prove to be an exciting and spiritually rewarding adventure, so please don't miss it!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FROM BONNIE:

Thanks to Val Scheps and Judy Folstad for all their work on the Christmas program. Thanks too to all the teachers that helped and every one else that made our program a time to remember!



Thank you to all the Sunday school children and their parents for making our Christmas project "Gift from the Heart" a big success again this year

On Jan 13 & 20th the first graders and their parents will be having a worship class with the pastors. From 9:40 to 10:30, this is a special class for the students and their parents so they can get to know the pastor and the church a little better and the pastors can get to know them.

If any one would like to bring a snack for the Sunday school children please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board out side the Education office. We need about six dozen snacks here by 9:30.

Twelve Ordinary Men by John MacArthur



This book is about the twelve disciples, who were indeed ordinary men. They were not orators or theologians and had no special intellectual abilities. Their personalities were much like ours and the people we know.

At least four, and possibly seven, were fishermen. One was a tax collector. One was a radical who wanted to overthrow Roman rule. We do not know what the others did before they were chosen by Christ.

Andrew was the first to be called and he immediately brought his brother Peter, who became the leader and spoke for the whole group. James and John were the sons of Zebedee. James the elder was a passionate man, but also was ambitious and overconfident. John is known to us because he wrote much of the New Testament. He was the apostle of love. Philip was a practical man, but he had the heart of a personal evangelist. His closest companion was Nathaniel (also called Bartholomew) who had many prejudices, but a seeking heart and was faithful to the end. Matthew (also called Levi) was a tax collector. He too brought friends to meet Jesus. He was the author of the gospel that bears his name. Little has been written about Thomas, the doubter; James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zelot and Judas Thaddaeus.

Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, is an example of the depths to which the human heart is capable of sinking.

This is the story of how Jesus shaped his disciples for greatness. They were often disciplined. If Christ could accomplish his purposes through common men, what can he accomplish through you?

Thank you very much for your continuous support of the Barron Area Food Pantry. We are seeing an increased need for food so your generous donations are especially appreciated.

Thanks again.
Lynne Hanse, Director

A **HUGE** thank you goes out to all the folks who fold, assemble, coordinate large-print bulletins and deliver them *and* to the group who faithfully come every month to assemble newsletters. I'm so grateful for your dedication and willingness to lend a hand!

- Michelle Davis

THE YOUTH COMMITTEE would like to extend its thanks to Bill Koser and his crew for the repairs and improvements they made to the aluminum can recycling trailer. When asked to help us out, Bill never hesitated for a minute. He is a true friend to our Youth. We would also like to thank all of those members of First Lutheran who support the Youth Ministry by contributing their cans. So far this year, we have collected \$363.35 worth of aluminum. These proceeds go to support our Youth in their annual retreats and mission trips.

Me? ***Serve coffee on Sunday morning?***



Well, I'd like to, but.....

- ... I don't know how.
- ... I'm not able to provide the goodies.
- ... I have the time to bake,
but I'm not able to serve.

You can extend a welcome to our members and visitors on Sunday morning - and we can help! We can team you up with the right person.

Call Ardis Ress at 458-2412
Or Lissette Richie at 837-1446
for more info and to sign up



Welcome to the New Year! With the new year comes many opportunities and challenges for me personally as your new leader, for our new W/ELCA Board... and for you too, as a member of our congregation and therefore a member of W/ELCA. **We share the opportunity** of serving our congregation and its members. **We share the opportunity** of involving those who haven't been involved. **We share the opportunity** of spreading God's good news and love to those who need a helping hand. Join me and the other members of our Board in facing these opportunities! Every woman in this congregation is a member of our group - and we need the talents of each and every one of you! Do you see an area where you can serve? Let us know. We'd love to have you involved!

Your 2008 W/ELCA handbook will be arriving in the mail soon. Please take the time to read it and mark your calendar. We have many interesting programs on schedule for you.

Join us on Wednesday, January 9th at 1:30 for our first program of the year. We'll enjoy a skit, select prayer partners and enjoy a bite to eat afterwards. All are welcome!

I'm looking forward to the chance to work with you over the next year! The challenge of our W/ELCA mission is a big one - one that we can make happen together. Thank you for your prayers and support of our W/ELCA Board through the coming months.

God Bless you in 2008.
Michelle Davis, President



For December we are collecting canned goods for the pantry along with personal care goods. When you're out and about in our wonderful weather try to remember those who are having a hard time meeting their daily needs. Keep safe and warm and God bless you all.

- Heidi Verhulst, Mission Community

Duties this month:

- Mission Correspondence: Faith Circle
- Communion Assistants: Harmony
- Kitchen Maintenance: Ruth Kittleson & Becky Knutson
- Care of Altar: *Carol Brown, Betty Dodge, Linda Marvin

Bible Study on the Beatitudes.
Theme verse is Matthew 5:6, the theme is Follow Your Heart and Find the Heart of God. "Our heart is restless until it rests in you." (African Christian Augustine.)

Other themes are:

- Restlessness of the human heart (Jeremiah 17:9-10)
- The steadfastness of the Divine Heart (John 3:16)
- The Fastest Way to a Disciples Heart (John 15:9-15)
- Practice: Beyond Charity and into Solidarity

Next month we'll enter the second set of four Beatitudes that treat those in need.



MISSION GLOBAL:

Remember the many Malnourished in Malawi. Dr. Solofu said there are 50 very malnourished small children being given food. The refugees are still coming across the borders and it means that certain areas will have no food. It is dry season and planting doesn't start until a month after rains begin in March or April.

When a missionary was in Central African Republic just this week he met a man who was carrying 200,000 francs (\$100,000) to try to get his children back after they had just been taken captive. Further on, he saw a truck with a driver killed by the terrorist. There is a work project for water for two towns so this missionary was there to get it started and will continue helping in 2008.

Please continue to pray for God's work in this time of terror that Christians will be protected and peace will come.

- Lorraine Haugen, Mission Global

Save BIG Money On Food With SHARE

SHARE is a nonprofit food buying club that offers good, nutritious products at reduced cost through a volunteer-run, community-based distribution system. Find out more information online at <http://www.sharewi.org/> or in the church office. Hurry, the due date for ordering is January 2!

Congregations and Outdoor Ministry Sites: A Strong Partnership for Forming Faith

Bethany Walker, Program Director, Luther Point BibleCamp

Imagine if your child, grandchild or your whole family could go to a place apart from everyday distractions to experience God's love in a safe, beautiful setting surrounded by God's creation. Such an opportunity can be found at Outdoor Ministry sites. Many congregations in your Synod, the Northwest Synod of WI, already have a relationship with one of two such Outdoor Ministry sites: Luther Park Bible Camp in Chetek and Luther Point Bible Camp in Grantsburg. These camps are separate entities with a common mission; to partner with the congregations they serve in a way that offers life-changing, Christ-centered faith formation opportunities as an extension of each congregation's ministries.

Outdoor Ministry sites offer amazing relational ministry. Our various programs have the same aim of bringing people into relationship with one another and a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Many people come back year after year to reunite with old friends and leave with shared memories that last for years. Outdoor ministry sites also offer a place to intentionally and regularly practice faith in daily activities like meal time, games, crafts, Bible study, worship and fellowship. Faith is lived out through community in a unique way that helps campers experience it in a personal and genuine way.

Time spent at Bible camp enhances congregational life as people return to their congregations refreshed and renewed by their camp experience. From breaking bread together by candlelight in an aged chapel, to exploring the mysterious woods after dark, to gathering around a beautiful campfire for a sing-a-long and scripture, to eating in a dining hall overflowing with conversation and laughter, to worshipping using a familiar liturgy with a brand new rhythm, people leave camp transformed by having met Jesus in unexpected ways.

Congregations and camps are truly blessed to be in partnership with one another as together they work at forming faith in a way that is meaningful and relevant for generation after generation of God's children. May you discover all that your Outdoor Ministry site has to offer you, your child, your family or your congregation. You will be forever changed by a God who is always at work on these sacred grounds.

January 6, 2008

Philip Gulley – If Grace is True...

Romans 11:33-36

One of the favorite questions many Christians love to ask is, "Who is saved? Is She? Is He? Am I?" The question grows in interest when people who do not profess Jesus Christ are included in the question. Philip Gulley, a popular author and Quaker minister, has some very important things to say about who gets saved. If grace is true, as a concept, a word, and as the defining characteristic of God, reasons Gulley, then it must be true for ALL people.

January 13, 2008

Jim Autry – Rethinking Miracle Stories, John 10:38

Jim Autry is a former Fortune 500 business executive, a leadership consultant, poet and author. But he is something else too. He is the loving father of an autistic son. Raising this son has caused Autry to read the healing miracles of Jesus in a way that might surprise many conventional or orthodox Christians. If you are wondering whether or not to believe in miracles, and whether they might be pointing to something larger, this program is for you.

January 20, 2008

Immaculée Ilibagiza (Part I) – Burning Hate, John 15:23-25

Immaculée Ilibagiza is an amazing woman. She narrowly escaped death in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 by hiding in the bathroom of her pastor's house for 91 consecutive days. In this compelling interview, the first in a two-part series, Immaculée gives an inside look at the faith that carried her through a horrific ordeal. She discusses the mystery of hatred and the necessity of Christian hope.

January 27, 2008

Immaculée Ilibagiza (Part II) – Forgiving the Unforgivable

Luke 7:36-50

Immaculée Ilibagiza returns for the second of a two-part series on the tragedy of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. She is the author of the book, *Left to Tell*, a gripping narrative of the ordeal that left her family and most of her village dead. In this broadcast Immaculée relives the jail encounter that brought her face-to-face with the killer who stabbed her parents and brother to death. This woman of faith will reawaken the power of forgiveness for all who are seeking a new way of life.

**GATHERED TOGETHER
BY THE SPIRIT**

GENERAL FUND OFFERING

2007 Budget	311,000.00
Received This Week	15,168.61
Needed Year to Date	286,791.52
Received Year to Date	275,246.18
	- 11,545.34

REPAIR AND DEBT FUND

Received Year to Date	9,892.00
Needed Year to Date	14,423.00
	- 4,531.00

RADIO BROADCASTS

January 6: To honor our 30 years of marriage
by Nan & Nate Carlsen

January 13: In memory of my husband Larry
by Lynne Hanse

January 20: In memory of our parents, Ralph &
Lucille Brandt and Henry & Hilma Kirk by John &
Barb Kirk

January 27: In memory of Orville Floan
by Belva & Family

BAPTISMS

Caleb Parker..... 12/25/07

WEDDINGS

Ashley Coleman & Jeffrey Ellenbecker..... 12/03/07

MEMORIAL & HONOR GIFTS

In memory of Cal Romsos
for the Bible Campership Fund..... \$50

In memory of Alice Nelson
for the Radio Broadcast Fund..... \$150

In memory of Sigfrid & Alice Nelson
for the new SoundBoard &
the Radio Broadcast Fund..... \$2800

In memory of Les Lambert
for the Debt Retirement Fund..... \$25

In memory of Grace Odden
for the ELW Hymnal Fund..... \$20
for the Debt Retirement Fund..... \$20
for the Undesignated Fund..... \$50

To establish the First Lutheran ELCA
Scholarship Fund..... \$10,000

In memory of Robert Felber
for the First Lutheran ELCA
Scholarship Fund..... \$25

In memory of Lucille Brandt, Alice Nelson,
Grace Odden & Della Neuman
for the ELW Hymnal Fund..... \$100

There is a growing crisis in the ELCA. Currently it is estimated that it costs between \$70,000 and \$102,000 to attend the required four years of seminary to become a pastor in our church. Many first call pastors find themselves with crippling debts which are difficult to pay back on starting salaries. As a result, many qualified men and women are deciding not to become pastors. Our Synod is attempting to address this issue by establishing a First Call Debt Reduction Ministry Fund. During the month of January we will learn more about this fund and be given the opportunity to contribute to it.

First Lutheran Church

4 W. LaSalle Ave.
Barron, WI 54812-1307

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January



Summer Schedule:
(Memorial Day - Labor Day)
Saturday Worship,* 5:30 p.m.
Sunday Worship,* 8:30 & 10:00 a.m.

Winter Schedule:
Saturday Worship,* 5:30 p.m.
Sunday Worship,* 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School, 9:40 a.m.

*Holy Communion,
each Saturday and 1st and 3rd Sunday

First Lutheran Church

4 W. La Salle Ave. · Barron, WI 54812

Church Phone: 715-537-3575
Telephone Ministry: 715-837-4122

e-mail: office@firstlutheran-barron.org
www.firstlutheran-barron.org

Pastor:

Bruce Beyer home: 537-3480
Lisa Shank home: 637-7916

Parish Secretary & Newsletter Editor:

Michelle Davis church: 537-3575

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 8:30-11:00 & 12:00-4:00
Friday: 8:00-12:00

President:

Jason Erb

Vice-President:

Clarice Fall

Treasurer:

Johnson, Agen, Kupferschmidt
& Associates

Financial Sec.:

Mary McDonough

Senior Choir Director:

David Midboe

Dir. of Education:

Bonnie Hilbert

Custodians:

Ron & Brenda Kahl