



The *First* Word

Volume 26, Issue 3

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

December 2024

Seek FIRST His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Special December/January Dates

First Sunday in Advent.....	Dec. 1
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Dec. 4
First Edition Book Club.....	Dec. 7
Home of Bridget Michel	
Women's Christmas Event.....	Dec. 12
Joy Vibe Christmas Party.....	Dec. 13
Deadline to return DD.....	Dec. 15
Christmas gifts	
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Dec. 18
Sunday School Children's Christmas Service	
OWLS.....	Dec. 19
DD Christmas Dinner	
FLS Christmas Program.....	Dec. 20
FLS Christmas Break....	Dec. 23-Jan. 3
Christmas Eve.....	Dec. 24
Christmas Day.....	Dec. 25
New Year's Day.....	Jan. 1
First Edition Book Club.....	Jan. 4
Home of Tammy Anderson	
The Epiphany of Our Lord.....	Jan. 6
Classes resume at FLS	
Baptism of Our Lord.....	Jan. 12
WOW! Hosea Bible Study.....	Jan. 14
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Jan. 15
WOW! Hosea Bible Study.....	Jan. 28
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Jan. 29



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What would Jesus do?

Gifts like warm gloves/mittens, scarves, and hats are great gifts that Santa might bring, *but*, on December 19th this year, our adult friends with developmental disabilities will *see* and *participate* in the *greatest gift ever given!*

This greatest gift — *the events that led to the birth of our Savior* — plus a delicious dinner and the joy of receiving our material gifts, remind them as they open the gloves/mittens, hats, and scarves we have for them, that they are loved and special.

Thank you for helping us *undecorate* the Christmas tree in the narthex when you take ornaments and purchase any combination of mittens/gloves, hat, and scarf for the 220 friends with developmental disabilities who will attend the dinner on December 19th.

Please have your gift(s) back to the church by Sunday, December 15.

You can share in *more* fun and joy when you sign up to help serve dinner at 5 p.m. on December 19th at Mount Helena Christian Church (1710 National Avenue). You can find the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

Thank you!

— *The Human Care Committee*



First's DD Ministry over 40 years old

Dear members of First Lutheran,

For over 40 years, the disabled population of Helena has been coming to our church. We have a special chapel in the church's basement and, as you know, a bus that travels around Helena every Sunday to pick people up. We invite you to come and greet these special people. Just pop in at 10:55 a.m. on Sunday and say Hello! We hold our services in the chapel downstairs because we have individuals in wheelchairs, walkers, and lower-functioning people, many of whom need help from staff and volunteers.

Our bus drivers are Dan McGrane, John Champagne, and Steven Johnson. Shannon Champagne, Steven Johnson, and Joyce Nachtsheim also volunteer their time in our services, and, of course, Pastor and Shari Miller are always there for us. Tara Mercer and Kate Johnson volunteer to play piano when needed.

Our Christmas pageant, which for many years was held in our church building, will be held on Thursday, December 19th, at 5:30 p.m. at the Mount Helena Christian Church, 1710 National Avenue. Because we have grown to be such a large group, we need a larger facility.

We could not hold this dinner, pageant, and gift-giving without the help of First's Human Care Committee, and people like Debbie Williams, who makes blankets year around for those in need. And, we could not do the work that we do for the disabled community without the blessing of your prayers and gifts.

Please come, see, and help!

God Bless You, and a Merry, Merry Christmas,

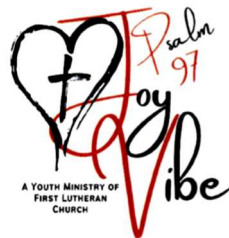
Lowell Bartels



We have multiple events available each month for the youth at First Lutheran Church. We love to have our youth gather to have fellowship events, engage in Bible study, and provide services to our church and community. Please watch the church announcements for special times and locations for our activities and come join in the fun. The specific programs that we are currently offering are:

“Joy Vibe” (FLY)

“Joy Vibe” is a youth activity led by Mrs. Hanna Hollatz, designed for youth aged 10+ who are interested in learning about God’s Word through fun, hands-on, active learning opportunities. The group had a Harvest Fest meeting in November, will have a Christmas Party on December 13, and will continue to meet twice a month starting in the new year. Join us for this exciting new fellowship activity!



Following the Lord (F+L)



This youth activity, led by Mrs. Susan Taylor, is designed for older teens and young adults who are interested in engaging in open, serious conversation about God’s Word. The group is intended for individuals who are 16 years of age or older. We meet at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month to have a devotion, open discussion about the devotion and the Bible, and then play games or go to dinner. We would love to have you join us!

**Into fussy cutting and fat quarters?
This is the group for you!**



First Lutheran’s Dorcas Circle quilters continue to be a busy group, having recently received two rolls of quilt batting purchased with a Thrivent grant. They are grateful for Thrivent’s support of their quilt ministry. These two rolls provide enough batting for 40-50 quilts, most of which are shipped to Lutheran World Relief during the May collection. The group also crafts quilts for the infants and children baptized at First Lutheran.

The quilters would welcome volunteers to tie quilts at their Wednesday meetings, which are held the first and third Wednesday of each month, beginning in September and finishing up in May. They not only do wonderful quilting work, but share fellowship and tasty treats! If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Bridget Michel.



Reservations have been made at Cane Ridge West and planning is underway for an exciting one-day Fall Family Retreat at this beautiful facility nestled in the heart of the Rocky Mountains just east of Lincoln in central Montana, nestled along the Rocky Mountain Range.

On **Saturday, September 6, 2025**, (the first Saturday after the Labor Day weekend) we will gather together to enjoy good food, fellowship, and activities for the entire family: children, youth, young and older adults!

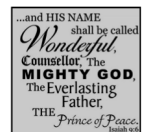
Save this date on your calendar now, watch for more details to come as planning progresses, and plan to be a part of this special event for our congregation!



The First Word

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Linda Fromm.....Editor
Shari Miller.....Calendar/Servant Schedule
Volunteer Staff.....Printing/Collation

There will be no First Word in January, 2025. Deadline for the February issue of the First Word is Wednesday, Jan. 22. Place articles in the First Word box in the church office or email to: lindafromm@mac.com



*"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"
(which means, God with us). - Matthew 1:23*



Forget the presents. Ignore all the food. Enjoy friends and family, but don't let your joy stop there. During this time of year, there is only one reason to have true, lasting joy – God has taken on human flesh, forever.

God has taken on "flesh" in many ways throughout time. God walked in Eden (Gen. 3:8). He came to Moses in a burning bush (Exodus 3:6). He led the people of Israel out of Egypt as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21). He literally sat on top of the ark of the covenant between the two cherubim (1 Sam. 4:4). God has been taking on various forms of "flesh" ever since Eden, but they all pale in comparison to what Christ has done for us at Christmas. He took on OUR flesh.

He took on OUR flesh with all its weaknesses, our flesh with all its temptations, our flesh that is subject to pain, hunger, and tiredness. God took on all these limitations willingly. God could have stayed the way He was. He didn't have to take on our flesh, but He did have to take on our



flesh if He wanted to pay the price for our sin, to suffer the punishment we deserve, and to make peace between us and God. Jesus, the Son of God, had to take on flesh to save us; and He did. So Jesus is named "Immanuel" which means God with us; and **He is!**

It was not enough for Jesus just to take on human flesh. **He took on OUR human flesh so He could suffer, die, and rise from the dead.** Just as Jesus took on human flesh through His incarnation, so now you have taken on Christ's righteousness, holiness, and perfection through your baptism into Christ. In Christ's incarnation, we have truly been given the greatest gift of all time. His death and His resurrection have now become our death to sin and our resurrection to eternal life.



We have SO much to be thankful for at Christmas! Let's make sure we look past the lights, the trees, the gifts, and the food, and take great joy in what Christ has done for us by coming in our flesh to save us *from* all sins, and *from* death, and *for* life eternal in glory – *with* Him!

My dear fellow-blest by our gracious God, **rich blessings to you, this Christmas!** The best Gift this Christmas and always is Immanuel, God with us! He makes the difference, all the difference, for each of us, for eternity! So let's celebrate His birth, His life, His suffering and death and His rising again, this Christmas!

May Immanuel be with you in your celebrations with His love, His joy, His peace, this Christmas and always, just as He is with us, always!

With love for you in Jesus, *Pas+or and Shari*

Our 2024 Advent and Christmas Services

The Word Made Flesh!

Jesus came for us in the flesh

and revealed His divine nature to us
through physical substances we experience on earth!

In our services this Advent and Christmas and our daily devotions
we'll look in Scripture at material things
which will show us His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth ~ John 1:14



December 1 & 4 ~ *Bread of Life* ~ (John 6:35)

Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread,
To nourish and strengthen us in our faith and feed us with His Word of truth to fill our lives.

December 8 & 11 ~ *Salt of the Earth* ~ (Matthew 5:13)

Jesus calls us to flavor the earth and savor the good things
that come from Him through His birth!

December 15 & 18 (midday) ~ *Rock of Ages* ~ (Isaiah 51:1)

We give thanks that Jesus is our rock,
our solid foundation on which to build our life of joy!

December 18 (evening) ~ *What Child is This?* ~ (Children's Service)

Our Sunday School students and *His Kids!*
tell the Good News of Jesus' coming and birth in Word and Carols!

December 22 ~ *Light of the World* ~ (John 8:12)

We rejoice that Jesus brightens our lives through His birth,
dispelling the darkness of sin, bringing forgiveness to light!

~ (Advent Sunday Services begin at 8:15 and 11 a.m. ~
Wednesdays at 12:10 and 6:30 p.m.) ~

Christmas Eve ~ Born in a Manger!

We celebrate and ponder the humble birth of Jesus
As He rests in a manger bed of straw, even though He is the Son of God!

~ (Services begin at Noon, 5, 7,
and 11 p.m. with Holy Communion) ~

Christmas Day ~ Crowned with Glory!

We rejoice that the little Lord Jesus, asleep in the hay,
is King of Kings forever,
and that we are loved and forgiven members of the Kingdom of God
to life everlasting!

~ (Services with Holy Communion begin at 10 a.m.) ~



Rich Blessings as Together
We Celebrate Jesus ~ The Word Made Flesh!

Repenting of “yours” and “mine” — From your Board of Stewardship

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow

Thankfulness” (*LSB 788*) highlights both this gift and our response. *Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine, that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost.*

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those

who dwell therein.” There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.



Women of the Word

W.O.W. (Women of the Word) Bible study group will begin studying the Bible book of *Hosea* on **Tuesday, January 14, 2025**. We meet **every second and fourth Tuesday** at 7 p.m. at the church and we'd love to have you join us!

Following are the dates. Please flag your calendar:

- January 14 and 28
- February 11 and 25
- March 11 and 25
- April 8 and 22
- May 13

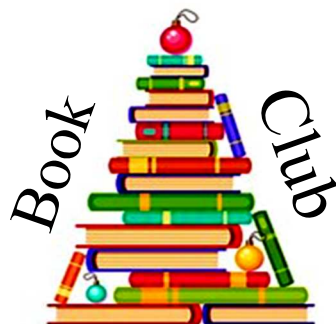


Human Care Committee distributes \$4,000 to community organizations

First Lutheran's Human Care Committee recently distributed \$800 checks to each of the following Helena-area organizations:

- Family Promise**
- Florence Crittenton Family Services**
- God's Love**
- Good Samaritan**
- Options Clinic**

All funds were from money raised at the Human Care Fall Garage Sale in September. Thank you all for helping with this event!



First Edition Book Club members will meet for lunch and discussion at **12:00 noon** on Saturday, December 7, at the home of Bridget Michel.

Members are reading — and will discuss — *The Last Green Valley* by Mark Sullivan. If you have not done so already, please RSVP to Bridget *immediately* at 406-438-6214.

The January luncheon and discussion is scheduled for **12:00 noon** on Saturday, January 4, at the home of Tammy Anderson. For the January meeting, the group will read — and discuss— *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon.

Please RSVP to Tammy at 406-459-8762 by Wednesday, January 1. *(Please note the change to meeting time!)*

Extra special Christmas cards

Starting Sunday, December 1, packages of 15 Christmas cards will be available in Ziegler Hall for \$5. Assortments contain both Christian and secular themes. Sending cards is becoming an “old tradition,” but what a lovely way to remind people in your life that you care for them. Many thanks to all of you who support this ministry for our youth at the church!

—Janice Larison
CARDS 4 KIDS



Cards shown are for illustrative purposes only. They are not actual card designs.



All members and friends of First Lutheran congregation are cordially invited to attend First Lutheran School's Christmas Program on Friday morning, December 20, beginning at 10 a.m.

The students and staff would love to have you join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ! We promise you will be blessed!



December/January Birthdays

December 1
Jaylyn Gardipee
Lindsay McCarthy
Rob Pentecost
December 2
Gideon Goodson
Michelle Martin
Scotty Rucker
December 3
Marissa Lebahn
Jacob Sparks
December 4
Dan Malaski
Sharon Malaski
December 5
Tammi Gozelanski
Pamela Koenig
December 6
Abigail Rose
December 7
Calvin Rucker
Jess Wareham
December 9
Patricia Jacobs
Megan Taylor
Thomas Taylor
December 10
Keith Newmeyer
December 11
Shannon Champagne
Dmitri Hindman
December 12
Ed Freiburg

December 14
Laura Bjerke
Howard Davis
Benjamin McIntosh
December 15
Dawn Poirer
Robert Wagner
December 16
Marilynn Petek
December 17
Megan Davis
Sydney Elvbakken
Peni Jo Jones
December 18
Jocelyn Brown
December 19
Karen Giulio
Richard Tramp
December 20
Joan Nicholls
Clara Schmeltzer
Jeff Sparing
December 21
Bruce Seiler
December 22
Joyce Burgett
December 24
Paul Baumann
December 26
David Goodson
December 27
Chantel Duty
December 28
Sandra Meek

December 29
Danielle Humphries
Raye Newmeyer
Jessie Antonick
Santee Riemann
December 30
Richard Bridegroom
Sabrina Brott
Donna Pare
Malachi Rickman
December 31
Cody Pate

January 1
Jennifer Charles
William Charles
Ben Gregory
Crystal Warsinski
January 2
Mark Miner
Savannah Morgan
January 4
Robert Veach III
January 7
Clarice Cook
Lauren Hoxie
Peter Jones
January 8
AJ Buhr
Landon Gilbert
Marlys Jarvis
Jason Mercer

January 9
Orin Bjerke
Nick Jorgensen
Bob Summerer
Marge Ulmer
January 10
David Gunderson
Jana Spaulding
January 11
Sean Clinch
January 12
Stephanie Giulio
Augustus Hanson
January 14
Crew Warren
January 15
Jacob Malaski
David Saulsbury
January 16
Matthew Bridegroom
January 17
Carol Barker
Trent Stefanik
Kodi Thompson-Hargis
January 18
Andre' Poirer
January 19
Cooper Brilz
Steven Leitzke
Bert Poor
January 20
Kylee Gardipee
January 21
Dan McGrane

January 22
Jaiden Elvbakken
Julia Hollatz
Connor Koenig
Audrey Mandera
Jinx McCormack
Jayden Nachtsheim
Lisa Peterson
January 23
Tara Mercer
January 24
Patricia Martin
January 26
Chas Gozelanski
Robin Sayler
January 28
Johanna Allen
Joni Veach
Ryan Veach
January 29
Susan Buhr
Lois Lebahn
January 30
Matthew Shields
January 31
Lauren Antonick
Brock Gardipee
Shilo Stefanik






Happenings at First Lutheran School





Director: Sue Taylor
 Get Set Teacher: Shannon Champagne
 Pre-Kindergarten Teacher: Lori Radtke
 After Care Providers: Melanie Middlebrook/Emily DuPre, Lillian Buhr
 Lunch Assistant: Jeannie Hubbard
 Pastor: Larry A. Miller


During this season of Thanksgiving, our students are all thankful for their moms and dads. Here are some of the other people and blessings that they are thankful for in their lives.


Pre K Class


Isaac: Going to school. I like playing with my friends. 


 **Daisy:** Everything in the whole world. I like all my friends.


Ryker: TOYS! I like them. They can move and zoom. 


 **Jacie:** Grandma and Grandpa. They miss me, and I love them.


Ainsley: Playing outside with all my friends. They're good friends! 

 **Trey:** My big pile of leaves. I will rake more after school.


Titus: Squishmallows! They are so soft with smiley faces. I hug them. 


 **Wyatt:** JESUS! He washed our sins away.


Raiden: My dog. He got hit by a car. He is dead. And for JESUS! 


 **Lochlan:** My family and GOD. My family gives me pizza and candy. GOD gives all that I need.


Get Set Class


 **Avram:** My dogs, my brother, and my other brother.


Colten: That I get to go home (at 3:00) every day. 


 **Colter:** For Santa and for Christmas!


Dean: For my Grandma, and for peanuts. 

 **Eli:** For my baby sister.

Isla: For turkey and fire trucks, and for my birthday. 

 **Lily:** For Avram, because he has a cute face.

Maelynn: For windows, and footsies, because they are cozy. 

 **Roland:** For my stuffed animals and my little teddy bear.



Merry Christmas from the students and staff at First Lutheran School!



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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH is a Congregation of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

THE MISSION of First Lutheran Church is
“Sharing God’s Word with Everyone, Everywhere!”

Tune in to “*The Lutheran Hour*” — Sundays at 8 a.m. on the Christian Satellite Network 91.1-FM
or listen on “*Family Talk*” on Sirius XM 131
“*Woman to Woman*” — Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on KMTX 105.3-FM

Women's Christmas Event



First Lutheran Church
Thursday,
December 12, 2024
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



- * Devotion
- * Carol Singing
- * Favors
- * Refreshments

Bring a sweet or savory snack to share.

Rides available upon request!
Leave contact information with the
church office, 442-5367.

Women of all ages are invited!

