



THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF STEPHEN, MN

December 2024



CHURCH CONTACT INFO

573 STEPHEN AVE IN STEPHEN

Phone: 218-478-3895 | **Email:** firstl@wiktel.com | **Mail:** PO Box 72, Stephen, MN 56757

Web: www.flcstephen.com | **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/flcstephen

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

DARLENE BATES, SECRETARY

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 am–12 pm

PASTOR'S CONTACT INFO

REV. BROTHER JEFF BROWN

Phone: 218-230-6583 | **Email:** flcpastor@wiktel.com | **Days:** Sun–Thurs (off Fridays)

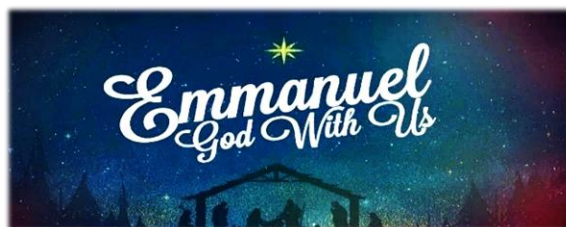
FROM OUR PASTOR

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ~John 1:5

December blessings, First Lutheran Church! Advent is here! Advent is a season of preparation. Of course, it's the time of year that we purchase many gifts, decorate in all sorts of ways, and grow more and more excited as Christmas draws close.

It definitely is an exciting time. Advent is a season of preparation, but it's greatest meaning is perhaps not found in ways we might expect. We're preparing to live the fact that Jesus to come into the manger of our souls. Advent teaches us to prepare for the reality we're already in – heaven and earth have come together in Jesus, and God is not distant from you! God is here – Emmanuel, the great Hebrew title applied to Jesus, means "God with us." God goes "with" you in the manger of your soul.

*How is God "with" you
in your life right now?*



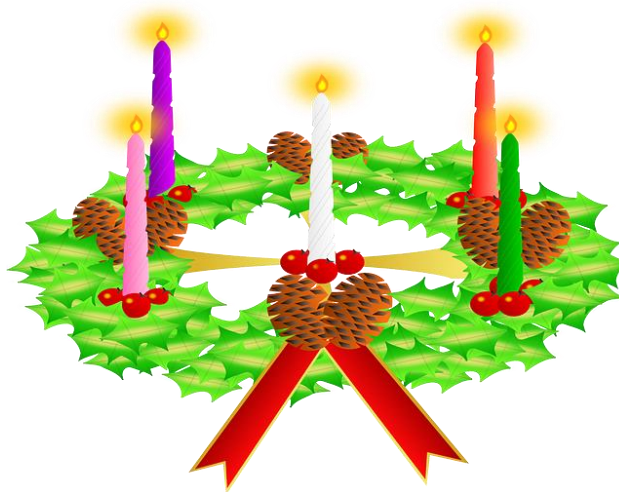
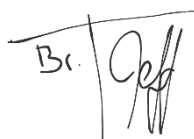
No matter what your preparations look like this year, know this truth – God is with you. As we put up holiday lights, enjoy the fragrances and feelings of the season, and prepare for all our family celebrations this month, God is with you. And where God is, you can count on there being light shining. The light of Christ (Emmanuel) shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not, cannot, and never will overcome the light of Jesus. Rejoice, rejoice!

Two special invitations this month:

- + **December 8th:** Wednesday School Christmas Program – 5:00 pm
- + **December 24th:** Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service – 4:00 pm

Peace and everything good to you
as we celebrate Emmanuel!

Your pastor,
Brother Jeff



OUR NEW PICNIC TABLE AND TODDLER FLOWERS!

Our Community Music Park was completed in May 2022. At least we thought it was complete. Watching families visit the park and feedback from the community made us realize we forgot the littlest kids. We needed toddler instruments.

Thanks to a grant from the Robert C. and Mona Rae Johnson Foundation, we were able to buy 2 toddler flowers for our park. The park was made even better with a children's picnic table donated by the Szczepanski family in memory of Stacy.

Encourage your friends and family to use the park. It is available year-round so put on your snow boots and get the kids out of the house to make noise!



OUR NEW DIGITAL SIGN!



When Pastor Mike Schendel retired, the council thought it would be appropriate to honor him for his years of service to FLC. It was decided to upgrade our exterior sign in his honor. The council chose a digital sign which is installed and looks amazing! Now we can update service times, publicize special events, honor and memorialize members and spread our good news and deeds. We have so much going on at our church and our digital sign in one more way to share. **Thank you to everyone for your donations to the sign fund and honoring Pastor Mike!** We do have the Schendel Family Fund open with funds to be used for future projects. We can look back with thanks on the 36 years to FLC and we look forward to the future with our new digital sign.

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

November 3, 2024

Members Present: Jeff Nelson, Sharon Kotts, Kris Ann Pietruszewski, Whitney Weisenberger, Debbie Benson, Betsy Jensen, Brian Hendricks, Jeanne Hendricks, Krissy McMahon, and Pat Heggen.

Also in attendance: Darlene Bates and Pastor Jeff.

President Jeff called the meeting to order.

President Jeff gave devotions.

Secretary's report: Melanie sent out the Secretary's Report last week for review in an email. An error was noted in the September 1, 2024 offering. The correct total was \$5,584. A motion was made by Kris Ann to accept the October minutes with the change noted, motion seconded by Pat. All in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer's report: Darlene presented October's treasurer's report. Betsy made a motion to accept October's treasurer's report. Kris Ann seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Offerings for October

October 6th \$2,323

October 13th \$1,270

October 20th \$2,572

October 27th \$980

October Vanco \$845

October Loose Change-\$157.00 Peoples church

Membership changes: None

Committee reports

Deacons:

-Brother Jeff will be gone January 5th. Deacons will work on coverage. No other time off at this time.

Trustees:

-Pat will call Thief River Glass again about the handicapped door, as they still have not come.

-The new electronic sign is up and looks great! Some trim work will need to be done later.

Parish Education:

-Wednesday school kids sing on 11-17-24

-Bibles will be presented to 2nd graders on 11-17-24

-The Christmas Program will be December 8th at 5 pm

Stewardship:

- Stewardship Sundays November 10th and 17th

-Stewardship will be doing something special for Advent-more to come on this.

Pastor's Report:

-Brother Jeff discussed November Stewardship. Each Sunday will be a different focus on ways we are able to give. Bulletin inserts will be available, with one being a Time and Talent survey.

-Brother Jeff has been asked to continue to help in Kennedy. A meeting is scheduled for 11-6-24. He will hopefully know more at that time.

-Brother Jeff will look into a messaging system to alert members in case service cancellations are necessary due to storms or other emergencies.

-Mission statement discussed. We will present our choice at the annual meeting. "Welcome like Jesus, Love like Jesus, Serve like Jesus."

Old Business:

-nothing

New Business:

-Parsonage Dirt was spread out in the back (thanks Jeff)

-Parsonage Downspouts will be done by Phil Rogus

-Window well covers are on

-President Jeff will contact Jeromy about doing snow removal at the parsonage. Brother Jeff will clear the snow by the parsonage entry door.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be on December 8th at 10:30 am

Minutes recorded by Sharon Kotts (in absence of council secretary, Melanie McGlynn)

CHURCH NOTES

Pre-filled Communion Cups are available for members who are unable to attend live church services. Grape juice and wafers in single serving disposable cups. Please contact the church office to pick up a supply.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the coats, hats, mittens, and snow pants that were collected for Love in Action. Many people have already been blessed due to your generous donations. Please know how much your outreach is appreciated! We are so grateful. God Bless you all!

Sincerely,

Linda Haugen, Love in Action

HARVEST FESTIVAL DONATION

Thank you for your generous donation. 32 Head Start children infant to 5 years old will be blessed to receive new bedding. Your generosity and continued honoring of Stacy means the world to us at Head Start.

Beth Budziszewski

QUILTERS

We would like to thank those who bought quilts and those who donated Thrivent dollars to us. Quilters do not receive funds from FLC. All money is used to buy supplies to make quilts. Six were purchased. Quilts will go to Peoples Church, Bemidji; Rescue Mission in Grand Forks; women's/children's shelter, Thief River Falls and individuals in need in nursing homes.

Thank you!

The Quilters

FOOD SHELF

A BIG thanks to FLC food shelf donors! We received fifty pounds of food for the THANKSGIVING APPEAL! That’s fifteen pounds more than the 2023 appeal! As we end this year of giving, we hope you will prayerfully continue to help meet the needs of those facing food insecurity. Questions may be directed to Jane Smidt, FLC coordinator (218)478-2456 or Food Shelf Director Karen Gunderson in Argyle at (218)686-1535. FLC’s year-end report will be available at the annual congregational meeting in January.

THE MARTHA/RUTH CIRCLE will meet on Monday, December 9th at 6:30 pm at the church. Bible study will be from the “Gather” magazine. Hostess is the group.

LOOSE CHANGE: Loose Change Sunday is the 3rd Sunday of each month. December’s Loose Change will be for ELCA Good Gifts.

MEMORIALS		
<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Given by</i>	<i>Fund</i>
Dina Satterlund	Robert & Dianne Dammann	Technology
Dorothy Woinarowicz	Mike & Cheri Douglas	Undesignated

CHURCH FINANCIALS UPDATE

Weekly Sunday offerings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Plate</u>	<u>Electronic</u>	<u>Loose Change</u>
Oct 27	\$980.00	\$155.00	
Nov 3	\$3,057.51	\$305.00	
Nov 10	\$1,565.00	\$230.00	\$143.41
Nov 17	\$2,830.78	\$155.00	\$1,205.00 (Peoples Church)
Nov 24	\$1,505.50	\$155.00	

Current balances of Funds available for donations:


Technology Fund	\$-15,575.11
Schendel Family Fund	\$9,798.25
Undesignated	\$2,474.36
Altar Fund	\$250.00
Education Fund	\$680.00

2024 BUDGET : \$162,752.95

CURRENTLY BEHIND: \$24,400.00

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Also available on the church website: www.flcstephen.com. Click on the Calendar tab.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 9 am Worship w/Holy Communion	2	3	4 12 pm Wednesday Prayer (Fb) 6 pm Wednesday School 6:30 pm 7 th Grade Confirmation 7:30 pm 9 th Grade Confirmation	5	6 Pastor's sabbath	7
8 9 am Worship 10:30 am Council <u>5 pm Wed School</u> <u>Christmas Program</u>	9	10	11 12 pm Wednesday Prayer (Fb) 5 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm 8 th Grade Confirmation	12	13 Pastor's sabbath	14
15 9 am Worship w/Holy Communion	16 Quilting 6:30 pm Martha/Ruth Circle	17	18 12 pm Wednesday Prayer (Fb) 6:30 pm <u>Confirmation</u> <u>Christmas Party – all grades</u>	19	20 Pastor's sabbath	21
22 9 am Worship	23	24 Christmas Eve <u>4 pm Worship</u>	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Church offices closed 	26	27 Pastor's sabbath	28
29 9 am Worship w/Holy Communion	30	31	<i>Happy New Year! God bless you in 2025!</i>			

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

12/2 Garrit Winge
 12/2 Rachel Anderson
 12/3 Aase Hamnes
 12/3 Renee Jensen
 12/4 Greta Weberg
 12/5 Whitney Weisenberger
 12/6 Nancy Gajeski
 12/9 Chad Korynta
 12/9 Aiden Sundby
 12/9 Josh Sundby
 12/10 Mike Douglas
 12/13 Sharon Kotts

BIRTHDAYS *(continued)*

12/15 Ingrid Bazey
 12/15 Logan Swendseid
 12/16 Brayden Benson
 12/16 Beau Halfmann
 12/16 Holly Jensen
 12/16 Jody Paulson
 12/16 Grant Woinarowicz
 12/19 John Peterson
 12/20 Eileen Opp
 12/21 Bowen Anderson
 12/22 Paige Halfmann
 12/28 Oakley Rost
 12/30 Todd Nelson

ANNIVERSARIES

12/16 Travis & DeAnn Weiland
 12/27 Brian & Betsy Jensen
 12/27 Carly & Isaac Black
 12/28 John & Shawna Peterson

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First Lutheran Church
PO Box 72
Stephen, MN 56757

**PERMIT NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
STEPHEN, MN 56757
NO. 1**

HOSPICE of the RED RIVER VALLEY needs volunteers in your area.

Companionship volunteers provide comfort, play cards, visit, read to and offer socializing to our patients on Hospice. We provide the 2-hour training and cover costs of the TB test and background checks. You can fill out an application online or call the number below if you have any questions. Thank you!

Darcy Eszlinger, Volunteer Coordinator, Green Team

2860 10th Ave. N. #400

Grand Forks, ND 58203

(701)356-150 or (800)237-4629