



The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
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Thursday, January 20th, 2022

This Sunday

Third Sunday after Epiphany - This year throughout the standard Sundays after Christmas and before Ash Wednesday, we hear from Luke's gospel about the early days of Jesus' ministry. Major themes are the power of God's Spirit in Jesus and the availability of the good news of forgiveness for the whole world. Even though the Roman governor Pontius Pilate sentences Jesus to death, Luke mostly accepts the authority of the Roman Empire.

Connections with the Liturgy - Every Sunday is modeled after the first reading from Nehemiah: the community gathers on the holy day; the scriptures are read; God is praised; and the people call out "Amen!" and later give food to those in need. Although in Nehemiah the assembly goes home for a meal, Christians remain in the body that Paul describes, sharing in the joy of the bread and wine of salvation.

Life on the Earth - In the gospel, Jesus proclaims "the year of the Lord's favor" which refers to the festival of Jubilees in Leviticus 25. One of the directives behind this early Biblical law was that even the earth needed a rest and was not to be cultivated one year in fifty. Although it is unlikely that this ever literally was enacted, the festival of Jubilees articulated the sense that the people cannot be free unless they can free also the earth from overuse.

In Our Prayers - Mike Robinson who is now under hospice care.

Worship and COVID Update - With increased hospitalizations and higher test positivity rates we continue to encourage face coverings and distancing between family groups during worship. These practices, along with a well-ventilated facility and quality air filters, ensures that worshipping together will continue to be a safer indoor setting.

2021 Contribution Statements - We are no longer printing and distributing yearly contribution statements to every member, however, we are happy to forward you one by request. Please contact our contributions clerk, Muriel Bungert, in the Church Office.

2022 Contribution Envelopes - For Sundays and holidays in 2022 are now available in the Narthex. If you give by cash or check they are a simple way to track your giving. If you do not see your name and would like a set, please inform the Church Office. We are also happy to mail a set to you.

New Member Update - Additional new member gatherings (*with sponsors*) will be held on Sundays, January 23rd, and February 6th and 13th following worship. We'll plan to formally receive new members on Transfiguration Sunday, February 27th.

The Coming Week

Dementia Friends - This week our church sponsors a one hour program to learn about dementia on Thursday at 9:30 AM. This "Dementia Friends" program, presented by Family Pathways will include: the difference between dementia and normal aging, 5 key messages, and how to better communicate with someone diagnosed with dementia. This program will be followed by a brunch meal, supported by Thrivent Financial. Registration has officially closed, but please contact the Church Office (320-358-4076) or Ilene Olson (320-358-4406) as we may still be able to accommodate extra people.

Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 30th - We gather annually to celebrate our ministry together and look forward to the future. Elections to the council and various committees will be conducted, reports received, and a budget for the upcoming year adopted. We also hope to discuss and adopt a plan to purchase a new church van/bus.

What Is Your Purpose? - Today Jesus announces his "purpose statement"—good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed. There is good reason for all of us to have a brief, personal purpose statement. For next week's annual meeting, take an index card and write your own personal purpose statement. How does it align with Jesus' purpose statement? Come ready to post your statement during and after worship next Sunday.

On the Horizon

Ministry Grants - Part of a committee or ministry that is eager to try something new? Our partners at the Saint Paul Area Synod have launched new grant program, and it's worth your time and effort to apply! The grants are meant for exploration and experimentation in evangelism, worship, and more. The funds are to be used to create a new ministry or enhance an existing one that will intentionally reach out to people who are not already connected to our church. For more information, see the information table outside the Church Office or visit the synod's website: spas-elca.org. The application deadline is Monday, February 14th.

On the Horizon (*Continued*)

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders - Registration is open for leaders, volunteers and church staff for this wonderful opportunity to hear from experts in a variety of areas related to congregational life and to hear experiences and perspectives from people in other congregations. This year's Tool Kit is on Saturday, February 26th from 8:30 AM - 12:15 PM at Prince of Peace in Burnsville. It will feature two rounds of workshops that cover a variety of areas related to congregational life: gift-oriented ministry; young adult ministry, leadership skills; storytelling, global partnerships and much more. There are even special sessions for congregational presidents/vice presidents and treasurers! There's no cost to attend. To view a full list of workshops and presenters, see the information table outside the Church Office or visit the synod's website: spas-elca.org.

All Creation Sings - This new, comprehensive song and prayer collection contains over 200 new hymns and songs that invite us to join our voices with God's whole creation. Similar to what "With One Voice" brought us a generation ago, we are looking forward to opening up the gifts of this new worship and hymnal supplement. A preview sampling of this resource has been re-scheduled for Sunday, February 27th at 7:00 PM. For all who attend, we're happy to share with you a copy of "All Creation Sings."

In Honor or Memory - You can purchase a copy of "All Creation Sings" in honor or memory of someone. The cost is \$15. A sign-up sheet, along with donation envelopes, is in the Narthex.

Ringers Wanted - We are looking for at least 6 more adult ringers for the bell choir! If you ever considered joining our group, now is your chance. The more hands we have, the easier it is. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:30 - 8:30 PM. Come try it out, we would love to have you!

Ongoing

Prayer List - Our prayer list for homebound members and those with ongoing needs will be migrating to our monthly newsletter beginning next week. Immediate prayer requests will continue to be listed in our weekly bulletin under the "This Sunday" heading.

Organist Position Open - Be one of our primary song leaders! We are seeking an organist to lead congregational singing twice a month for a single Sunday service, plus Christmas Eve and Holy Week. The organist also has first privileges for weddings, funerals or other worship services, and is a permanent member of the Worship and Music Committee. We will consider applicants available to play once a month. A full job description is available on the table outside the church office.

Power Point & Livestream Volunteer - Enhance our worship and keep us connected with others! We are in need of a couple more individuals to oversee our worship Power Point and Sunday Livestream. All the steps are lined out and easy to follow.

Livestream and FM Broadcast - A reminder that we continue to livestream over the internet and broadcast on 96.5 FM all of our church services. A link to all worship livestreams can be found at rushcityfirstlutheran.org

Special Offering Envelopes - If you give by envelope, once every two months there is an envelope designated as "Special Offering." These offerings support endeavors beyond the regular ministries of First Lutheran. January offerings support Rush City Food Shelf.

Pastoral Calls - You are welcome to contact the church office anytime for a pastoral visit. After hours emergency numbers are provided on the church's answering message. You can also use the "Count Me In" to request a pastoral visit.

Weekly Giving Report - Sunday Offerings last week: General Fund \$1,570 and Building Fund \$1,075. Sunday Offerings this month: General Fund \$4,649 and Building Fund \$2,380. (*Please note: These totals do not include electronic giving which will be included in the monthly Treasurer's Report.*)

Sunday, January 23rd

9:00 AM: Worship
10:00 AM: Coffee Fellowship
10:00 AM: Sunday School
10:00 AM: New Member Gathering (*with sponsors*)
10:30 AM: Praise Band Rehearsal

Monday, January 24th

1:00 - 5:00 PM: Office Hours

Tuesday, January 25th

Wednesday, January 26th

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Office Hours
9:00 AM: Quilters
11:00 AM: Staff Meeting
3:15 PM: W.A.S.P.
4:15 PM: 6th Grade Confirmation

5:00 PM: Family Meal

5:30 PM: 7th Grade Confirmation

6:30 PM: Senior Choir

7:30 PM: Bell Choir

Thursday, January 27th

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Office Hours

9:30 AM: Dementia Friends

1:00 PM: Rushseba Station Service

Friday, January 28th

Saturday, January 29th

Sunday, January 30th

9:00 AM: Worship
9:45 AM: Annual Meeting (*Youth Breakfast to follow*)
10:00 AM: Sunday School
10:30 AM: Christian Education Committee Meeting