



The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
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Thursday, November 30th, 2023

This Sunday

First Sunday of Advent - Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 sets the tone for the Advent season. God "advances" and comes to us—in the past in the history of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus, in the present in the word and sacrament of each Sunday and in the sufferings of our time, and in the future at the end of all things. Today Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open, crying out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

A Spiritual Practice for this Week - Disrupt Advent: make a surprising or ugly Advent wreath with household items. Incorporate the traditional theme words: hope, peace, joy, love. What does this wreath say for you about the meaning of Advent this year?

Sunday School - This Sunday we welcome kids back after Thanksgiving and we are starting our practice for our Christmas Program on December 17th! Sunday School for children K-5 normally follows Children's Word (*before the first reading*) during worship. Children return during the Peace to join their family for communion.

Advent Fair Today! - All children and families are invited to come together following worship to make an Advent wreath, make holiday mug cakes, and receive Advent-Christmas activity cards for the whole family to enjoy. This event will run concurrently with Coffee Fellowship.

Christmas Program Practice 10:45 AM - Following the Advent Fair, all children and youth who would like to be a part of this year's Christmas Program on December 17th are asked to stay for a half-hour rehearsal.

WELCA Annual Meeting Today - What is WELCA? It's an easy way to say Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This organization includes Lutheran women who gather in more than 4,500 locations in the U.S. and the Caribbean—including here at First Lutheran. They gather regularly for service, study, hospitality, fellowship and more! You may know of them through their quilting projects, funeral meals, fundraising for the church, and Bible Study circle. WELCA embraces all kinds of ministries that support their mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. There is a place for all women to give and receive support in this organization. Curious about what we do? Join us for our Annual Meeting at 10:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

Flowers on the Altar - Are placed by Jim & Elaine Waxberg in celebration of all their grandchildren.

Prayers - Duane Bengtson, Faith Michelson, Jan Goebel, Karen Guthmueller

Mission Trip - The kids kickoff their first fundraiser with Heggies Pizza until December 27th. An order form is now available in the narthex. Money is due to Amanda by December 27th. Delivery will be Wednesday January 10th. We thank you for all the youth support!

The Coming Week

Advent Supper Sandwich Bar - At the darkest time of year, coming together for a simple meal shared with others enlightens our spirits and feeds our souls. During Wednesdays in Advent beginning December 6th, everyone is invited to gather beginning at 5:00 PM for a sandwich bar supper (*serving ends at 5:30 PM*). The meal is free, but you can donate funds or food if you'd like (*see the sign-up sheets in the Narthex*). Donations benefit the Youth Mission Trip.

Wednesday Advent Services - As we prepare for Christmas, we gather for Advent worship beginning December 6th at 6:00 PM. The service is Holden Evening Prayer—a beautiful, quiet service of song, scripture and prayer led by members of the choir. Each week we will hear an Old Testament story about a forerunner of Jesus: Ruth the Moabite, David the Shepherd, and Job the Sufferer.

Christmas Caring Tree - As a caring community, every year members of our congregation and community organize and buy gifts for needy children in our community. Now through December 8th, the Christmas Caring Tree will be set up in the Rush City Library. Pick a tag from the tree, buy the gift, return it to the library unwrapped, and make a child happy!

W.A.S.P. - The kids are back! Snacks, Christmas ornament crafts and music start us back up after a great Thanksgiving break. The Wednesday After School Program is from 3:00 - 5:00 PM and is open to all elementary-aged children. Pickup available from CE Jacobson Elementary. Inquire at youth@rushcityfirstlutheran.org

Confirmation - As we work our way through the Old Testament, this coming week we hear the story of Ruth during Advent Evening Prayer at 6:00 PM. Confirmation is on Wednesdays from 5:00 - 6:30 PM and is our primary faith formation ministry for middle-school aged youth. Inquire at youth@rushcityfirstlutheran.org

High School Bible Study - All high schoolers are invited to a Bible Study with Pastor Nathan on Friday mornings at 7:00 AM. Right now we are beginning a study of Genesis, but you can join us anytime. Breakfast treats provided!

Next Sunday and Beyond

Second Sunday of Advent - The origin of Advent as a season of fasting to prepare for baptisms at Epiphany is evident on the second and third Sunday, which introduces the preaching and baptismal ministry of John the Baptist. The preaching of John the Baptist calls us to prepare for God—perhaps in many ways quite different from our preparing for Christmas. How do you make room for God's coming in your baptism—your calling to both listen to God deeply and do God's will in the world?

Christmas Eve Service Times - 4:00 PM and 9:00 PM. Both are full, festive and musical services with familiar carols, communion, and candlelight.

From Our Synod Partners

ELCA Good Gifts - As we read, watch, and hear about the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, we continue to pray for the gift of peace. We see the precious gift of life being taken from so many of God's children and the gift of family torn apart. The gift of safety which so many of us enjoy is not a gift in many lives today. But we have the ability to share God's gifts through the ELCA World Hunger program. The ELCA's Good Gifts efforts are a way to share twice this season. You can "gift" a family member by sharing a real gift with a person who has less both here and abroad. Look for information in ELCA Good Gifts Catalog (*on the information table outside the church office*) or at goodgifts.elca.org. If you make a gift, you are welcome to share with us what you bought for someone else.

Ongoing

Church Van - Would you like a safe and easy ride to worship? Please inform the church office by **8:00 AM Sunday morning** if you'd like a ride to church (*leave a message on the office phone*). The van is walker and wheelchair accessible - no steps necessary! Pickups begin at 8:30 AM and departure from church will begin at 10:30 AM.

Baptism & Membership - God's grace is a gift that is freely given to us. We don't earn a thing when it comes to God's love, and we only try to live in response to that gift. Please indicate on our "Count Me In" form or speak to Pastor Nathan if you are interested in baptism or becoming a member of the congregation.

Sunday Morning Greeters - Be a part of our hospitality and a welcoming face to others! All are welcome to sign-up to greet those coming to worship at the door. A sign-up sheet is outside the church office.

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

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. December offerings support the Rush City Backpack Program.

Livestream and FM UPDATE - This Sunday we begin testing our new and greatly improved livestream service. You can tune into our church's YouTube channel live or view the service later. Any feedback on the sound and video quality is appreciated. Thank you to several who assisted Matthew Mitchell in setting this up. FM transmission is currently suspended with no immediate plans to restore it.

Pastoral Calls - You are welcome to contact the church office anytime if you have a pastoral need, especially for a medical emergency or at the time of death. 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.

Income Report -	<u>Last Week</u>	<u>November Month-to-date *</u>	<u>October Income</u>
General Fund	\$ 3,074.00	\$14,194.00	\$22,986.79
Building Fund	\$ 90.00	\$ 2,520.00	\$ 8,461.31
<i>*Does not include electronic giving totals</i>			
Expense Report -	<u>Average Monthly Budget</u>	<u>November Beginning Balance</u>	<u>October Expenses</u>
General Fund	\$16,954.00	\$ 9,436.68	\$ 20,442.63
Building Fund	\$ 5,849.00	\$ 4,386.69	\$ 5,849.00

Sunday, December 3rd

9:00AM: Worship
 9:15 AM: Sunday School
 10 AM: Coffee Fellowship with Advent Fair
 10:30 AM: WELCA Meeting
 10:45 AM: Sunday School Christmas Program Practice

Monday, December 4th

7:00 PM: Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 6th

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Office Hours
 9:00 AM: Quilters
 1:00 PM: Everyday Connections Bible Study
 3:00 PM: W.A.S.P.
 5:00 PM: Advent Supper

5:30 PM: Backpack Program Food Packing
 6:00 PM: Advent Service
 6:30 PM: Senior Choir
 7:30 PM: Bell Choir

Thursday, December 7th

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Office Hours
 9:30 AM: Ruth Circle Meeting

Friday, December 8th

7:00 AM: High School Bible Study

Sunday, December 10th

9:00AM: Worship
 9:15 AM: Sunday School
 10 AM: Coffee Fellowship
 10:15 AM: Sunday School Christmas Program Practice