

First Impressions

First Lutheran Church

December 2022

Rev. Sean Esterline

Pastor

Phone 812-431-1923 or 517-543-4360 ext. 222

sesterline@msn.com

Mark Gawura

Specific Ministries Pastor for Care Ministry

Phone 517-667-6853

mgawura@gmail.com

Daniel Longden

Specific Ministry Pastor for

Youth & Family Ministry

Phone 517-543-4360 ext. 229

daniellongden@gmail.com

Rebekah Simmons

Preschool/Daycare Director

517-543-3828

flpddirector@gmail.com

First Lutheran Church

550 E. Shepherd St., Charlotte, MI 48813

Phone 517-543-4360

Email: flcchurchoffice@gmail.com

web: firstlutherancharlotte.org

Amy Garnsay, Office Manager

517-543-4360 ext. 221

flcchurchoffice@gmail.com

Worship Times

Sundays 8:30 & 11:15 a.m.

Contemporary Worship 2nd & 4th Sundays @

11:15 a.m. with live worship team

Communion 1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays

Mid-week Worship

Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. during Advent & Lent



“That which we have seen and heard
concerning the Word
of Life, we proclaim to you.”



 *O come,*
O C O M E
Emmanuel

FLC Statistics for Nov. 2022

Confirmed Membership.....	251
Baptized Membership.....	317
Child Baptisms	(0)
Adult Baptisms	(0)
Jr. Confirmands	(0)
New Confirmed Members	(0)
New Baptized Members	(0)
Transfers Out (Confirmed)	(0)
Transfers Out (Baptized)	(0)
Releases (Confirmed)	(0)
Releases (Baptized)	(0)
Deaths.....	(0)
Weddings	(0)

DECEMBER Birthdays

Karl Glarner	Dec 2
Dick Greene (nm)	Dec 2
Rachel Wiley.....	Dec 3
Kristin Beal	Dec 6
Sara DeWyse.....	Dec 6
Richard Dietrich III	Dec 7
Leann Green	Dec 8
Brad Gingrich	Dec 10
Candy Wood	Dec 10
Nina Olsen.....	Dec 10
Mike Flynn	Dec 14
Judy Trausch	Dec 15
Pastor Jim Eggert.....	Dec 16
Ben Stoline	Dec 16
Rachel Miller.....	Dec 17
Sawyer Timm	Dec 17
Becky Livingston.....	Dec 18
Ashley Ells	Dec 19
Carol Glarner.....	Dec 22
Kathleen Dybas	Dec 23
Marilyn Danke.....	Dec 23
Leann Kregel.....	Dec 23
Shirley Lea	Dec 25
Sherri Trusty	Dec 27
Kameron Miller.....	Dec 28
Kale Kieffer.....	Dec 29
Dale Cook	Dec 30

DECEMBER Anniversaries

Allen & Colleen Ells.....	Dec 21
Karl & Carol Glarner	Dec 22
Michael & Traci Backus.....	Dec 27

Office Deadlines:

- Bulletin announcements are due no later than Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.
- Newsletter articles and information are due no later than the 15th day of the month.

If you have a birthday or anniversary this month and you do not see your name listed here, please let the church office know so we can update our records. Thank you.
Church office: 517-543-4360 ext. 221

EMERGENCIES!

If you have a pastoral emergency such as a hospitalization, death in the family, or are in need of urgent Christian counsel, please call Pastor Sean Esterline (812) 431-1923 OR Specific Ministry Pastor for Youth and Family Ministry, Daniel Longden at (248) 802-2392.

First Lutheran Phone Number is 517-543-4360:

Church Office (Amy) - extension 221

Pastor Esterline - extension 222

Pastor Daniel Longden - extension 229

Kitchen - extension 224

**If you call the church and do not get an answer, please leave a message.*

*Please do not leave **emergency** messages on these extensions as we may not access them in a timely manner.*



THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT EVER!

A few years ago I heard that someone actually tried to calculate how much it would cost to give the gifts named in the classic Christmas song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The grand total came to about \$15,000. Some items were affordable, like a partridge in a pear tree for \$34.99. Six turtledoves will run you somewhere around \$50. Six geese-a-laying will cost around \$150. But the price takes off when you add 11 pipers piping. That is \$1,000 right there. Then there are the 12 drummers drumming. With current union scale for musicians, they will run you another \$1,000. The price really soars when you get 12 lords-a-leaping. We are talking \$3,000 for them. Granted, I don't know where you'd find them all, but they're very expensive. Still, the real message of Christmas is not the gifts that we give to each other. It's a reminder of the gift that God has given to each of us. It is the only gift that truly keeps on giving, so I want to point out four things about it.

First, it's surprising. When Christmas rolls around, you often try to figure out if certain people have bought that gift you really wanted. Maybe you already know what they bought, because they didn't hide it very well. Or maybe you uncovered it by accident-or maybe not. But when the day comes and you open the present, you have to pretend you're surprised. But all along, you knew what it was. God's gift to us, though, was a complete surprise. It was not expected, and as you examine it more carefully, you realize how great a gift it actually was. Second, God's gift came to us in the humblest of wrappings. What would you think if you saw a gift under your Christmas tree that was wrapped in newspaper and tied up with string? At first, you would probably assume that a guy wrapped it. But think about God's gift to us. Jesus was not born in a palace of gold; He was born in a stable. He was clothed with rags. He was laid in a feeding trough. These things do not, in any way, diminish the story of Christ's birth. If anything, they help us realize the great sacrifice God made for us. God's gift to humanity, the ultimate gift of eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ, came in the simplest and humblest of wrappings. Third, we don't deserve this gift. At Christmas, we give gifts to those whom we care about, who have been kind to us over the past year, or who have given us a gift first. We don't give gifts to the person who has been slandering our name or to the angry neighbor who never has a kind word to say. God gave us His gift when we were His enemies. He didn't give this gift to us because we deserved it. In fact, it was just the opposite. The Bible tells us, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Fourth, the gift tells us something about the giver. When you want to give someone a gift, you start thinking about it ahead of time. Hopefully, you try to find what that person wants or needs. When God decided to give us the gift of eternal life, it wasn't something that He just thought of on the fly. Long before there was a town called Bethlehem, a garden called Eden, and a planet called Earth, a decision was made in eternity that God would send forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that are under the law. The Bible says that He was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). Make no mistake about it: this gift that God has given to us was the most sacrificial thing He possibly could have offered.

So Christmas isn't about those gifts that you are going to put under your tree. All of those things will be gone one day. All that will be left after this life is the human soul, and that will live forever. We will put so much stock in what we have, but this is all going to pass away. Life is about what happens beyond the grave. Life is about knowing the God who made you and who gave you the greatest gift you will ever receive. Life is about knowing Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas everyone!!

In Him,
-Pastor Esterline

BIBLE STUDIES AT FIRST LUTHERAN

Please join us for Bible Study . . .

- † Sunday Morning Bible Studies for Adults and Teens - 10:00 a.m.
- † Men's Monday Morning Bible Study - 7:00 a.m., Eaton Place Restaurant, Charlotte
- † Ladies Thursday Morning Bible Study - 9:30 a.m., FLC Library
- † JR Confirmation Classes - 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays (*recessed during Advent*)



WEEKLY SUNDAY WORSHIP

at 8:30 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.

Traditional worship with communion at 8:30 a.m. every Sunday.

**Traditional worship with communion
on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11:15 a.m.**

**Contemporary Worship with Live Band
and Communion at 11:15 a.m. on 2nd and 4th Sundays.**

MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP

Wednesdays, November 30 - December 21, 7:00 p.m.

(Midweek Advent Dinners served at 6:00 p.m. on these Wednesdays - all invited.)

FLC CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 11, One service at 10:00 a.m.

Worship with Communion will be included on this Sunday.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Saturday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.

"Festival of Carols"

CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP

Sunday, December 25,

ONE Worship Service with Communion at 9:00 a.m.



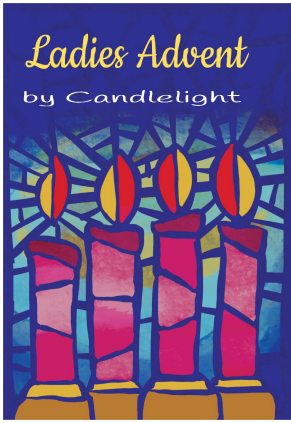
STREAMING AND ONLINE WORSHIP

If you are immune compromised and cannot attend in-person worship,
or if you are unable to attend for another reason, please join us for worship online by going to

<https://www.facebook.com/flcharlotte/live>

All worship services will be livestreamed.

The worship services will be available for viewing after the livestream has ended.



LADIES ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT

All ladies of First Lutheran and the community are invited to attend a special evening of music, devotions, fellowship, and refreshments -

Saturday, December 3, 6:00 p.m.

at First Lutheran Church

Please bring an appetizer or dessert if you are able.

Stacey will be setting up for Advent by Candlelight Friday, December 2, 6-7:00 p.m. and on Saturday, December 3, 10 a.m. - NOON, and will be arriving to prepare the event on Saturday, December 3, 4:00 p.m. please come help Stacey if you are able. Thank you.



PASTORAL GIFTS

The FLC Board of Elders asks you to consider giving a monetary gift to the members of our Pastoral Staff:

Pastor Esterline, Pastor Gawura, Pastor Longden, and their families this Christmas.

Gift envelopes are provided in your church mailbox as well as on the credenza in the narthex for you to use when making a monetary donation.

Please make checks out to First Lutheran and drop your envelope in the safe in the hallway.

We ask that monetary, pastoral gifts be submitted by Sunday, December 18.

Thank you for showing your love and support to our ministers this Christmas season ♥

LADIES ADVENT BRUNCH

All ladies are invited to attend.

Tuesday, December 6, 9:30 a.m.

St. Peter, St. Johns, MI

Please let Marj Huva know if you would like to ride the bus to the brunch.

THANK YOU!

A BIG Thank You to everyone who helped with the FLC Ham & Turkey Giveaway!

A BIG Thank You to everyone who helped decorate the church for Christmas!



FLC GIVING MITTEN/GIVING TREE

The Mitten/Giving Tree is located in the narthex. Please decorate the tree with hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and socks, of all sizes for the needy in our community.

Near the Giving Tree you will find easels holding tags that list items needed or wanted by our adopted families. Please take a tag or tags, purchase the item(s) listed, wrap your present(s), firmly secure the corresponding tag to each present, and place gifts under the giving tree by Sunday, December 11. Thank you ♥

FLC COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.

FLC ELDERS MEETING

The next Board of Elders' Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 20, 6:30 p.m.

FLC ELISABETH GUILD

The next Elisabeth Guild meeting will be held on Saturday, December 1, 1:30 p.m.

All ladies are welcome to attend.

For more information please call Marj 517-543-1615.

FLC COMMUNITY DINNER

Our next Community Dinner will be held on

Monday, December 19, 6:00 p.m.

This dinner is free to anyone in our community or congregation regardless of need. Helpers are needed please. Questions?
Please contact George Hatter at 517-213-1939.



LCMS Stewardship News for December **ANXIETY VS. TRUST**

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, teaches those who follow Him that worrying about the necessities of life is idolatry: worshipping a false god. Worry and anxiety show what we care about. Our anxiety reveals what we love and what we're devoted to. It reveals what we trust in.

This is why our Lord begins this section with an overarching principle: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24).

But you say: "I must eat and drink. I must have clothing to wear and have a home in which to dwell." Yes, all these things you need. And Jesus says that your Father in heaven will ensure that you have them. He demonstrates this with a simple argument: your Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air, who neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. He clothes the lilies of the field, who neither toil nor spin but are arrayed more luxuriously than Solomon in all his glory. If, then, your Father in heaven feeds the birds, if He clothes the lilies, how will He not also feed and clothe you, when you are worth more than they are? (Matt 6:25–33).

Do you know that you are worth more than them? You are worth infinitely more. You are worth the price of the eternal Son of God. Did the Son of God come down from heaven and become a lily? Did he descend and take on the form of a bird? No! He came down from heaven and became a man: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone (Gen. 2:23). He is one of us, our brother. And what did He do when He became flesh to dwell among us? He gave His holy, precious blood, through His innocent suffering and death, that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.

God became man in Christ Jesus. He lived the life we failed to live, and He died the death we deserved. He was raised again on the third day overcoming sin and death ... for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification. So, if your Father in heaven has given His Son to die for us in order that we might live with Him eternally, how will He not also give us all things to support this body and life?

(Continued on next page . . .)

(Stewardship News continued . . .)

To be anxious about the necessities of life, to devote yourself to food and clothing, to care about these things and find security in them, is to serve another god. It is to deny that you will live forever because Jesus, the Son of God, is risen from the dead and lives and reigns for all eternity. It is to believe that the God who created you, redeemed you by the death and resurrection of His Son and sanctified you by His Spirit, will not keep His promise to sustain you in this life.

Jesus says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). God’s kingdom is His rule among us. His rule among us comes when our Father in heaven gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His Holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. This is what we ask God to do for us in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

Your Father in heaven knows what you need — food and clothing, house and home — and He promises to give it to you. Chief of the things you need is His grace and mercy in His Son, Jesus Christ. So, seek after that. And those who seek will find. And all the necessities of life, our Lord says, will be added to you.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



ELECTRONIC GIVING AVAILABLE

First Lutheran has an electronic giving option called Kindrid.

To utilize this option simply go to our website at www.firstlutherancharlotte.org look for the kindrid smart giving logo and click on it or go to the drop down menu on our website (three lines together at the top) and then click on “give.”

Thank you for your continued support to First Lutheran and your church family.

PLEASE HELP YOUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

Donations to Helping Hands Food Pantry are at an all time low. The food pantry is one of the main sources of help for struggling families for food and personal care items in our area. Donations from stores have all but ceased since the stores are unable to get enough supplies for themselves and no longer have a surplus to share. Donations from other agencies and USDA products have decreased by 50% or more.

Please consider donating to Helping Hands Food Bank to help struggling families. You may drop donations directly to the food bank at 621 Jefferson St., Charlotte. or you may leave donations in the collection box located in the FLC narthex. Donations need to be in-date and unopened. Donations of non-perishable food items and personal care items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, diapers, and cleaning supplies, are needed.

You may also send a monetary donation to:

Helping Hands Food Pantry - 621 Jefferson St., Charlotte, MI 48813.

For questions please call the food bank at 517-543-8737.

Thank you.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Please consider signing up to provide flowers to beautify our Sunday altar. Cost is currently \$20 per bouquet.. Please make checks payable to FLC Elisabeth Guild and place in Shirley Lea’s mailbox. You may take your flowers home with you following the 2nd worship service.

A sign-up sheet is located in the office hallway. When you sign up you may state a reason for your flowers (this will appear in the Sunday announcements) such as celebrating a birthday or anniversary, in loving memory of someone, in thanksgiving for blessings, etc. Thank you for helping make our altar beautiful.



USE OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH BUILDING

The First Lutheran Church fellowship hall, kitchen, and Pastor Olson Memorial Room, are available for use by members and outside groups for their private events, meetings, etc. To make a reservation please contact the church office 517-543-4360 ext. 221. Please do not make plans to use the facilities without making a reservation through the church office as someone may already have the space reserved.

A member of FLC must be present for the duration of any event/meeting held at First by an outside group. FLC is not available for for-profit events (Tupperware, Candlelight, craft sale, etc.). A deposit of \$150 is required for any use of the FLC facilities other than for non-profit or church events. A list of facility use rules and a cleaning check list can be obtained through the church office. Be sure to clean and secure the building after your event. Thank you.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THOSE IN NEED

Here is a list of ways you can help those in need in our community and congregation:

- ☞ **FLC Esther Fund.** This fund helps provide emergency housing to the homeless in our community. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please write “Esther Fund” and the amount you wish to contribute on your offering envelope.
- ☞ **FLC Good Samaritan Fund.** This fund helps members of First Lutheran who have a financial need. If you are a member struggling with a financial need, please contact the church office to apply for help. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please write “Good Samaritan Fund” and the amount you wish to contribute on your offering envelope.
- ☞ **Helping Hands Food Bank.** You may make donations at FLC or directly to the food bank: 621 Jefferson St., Charlotte. For questions please call the food bank at 517-543-8737.
- ☞ **Pregnancy Center for Eaton County.** The pregnancy center helps women in need and encourages those considering abortion to choose life instead. We are collecting donations of diapers (size newborn thru size four), wipes, sleepers (size newborn thru one year), receiving blankets, and maternity clothes (of all sizes). The center is also in need of monetary donations. Please send monetary donations directly to Pregnancy Center of Eaton County, PO Box 480, Charlotte, MI 48813. Volunteers are needed to help clean and organize at the pregnancy center (337 State St., Charlotte), and help greet clients, Thursdays from Noon - 3pm. Questions? Please contact Gina at 517-543-7077.
- ☞ **SIREN Eaton Shelter.**
Please make donations directly to the shelter:
520 Robinson St., Charlotte, MI. For questions please call the shelter at 517-543-0748.





WHAT WE BELIEVE

Scripture Alone

We believe that the Holy Scriptures in their entirety are the inspired and infallible Word of God and that they alone are the only source and norm of faith and life for the Christian. We believe that the Bible is complete and requires no additions from any other source and that it clearly reveals God's plan of salvation for mankind.

Faith Alone

We believe that man was originally created holy by God but later rebelled against God and is now, by his nature, spiritually dead and blind. Only when man is brought to faith by the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God is it possible for man to be saved. Faith is God's work - not man's work - and comes only by hearing the Word of God. Man is justified before God by faith alone and not by good deeds.

Grace Alone

We believe that we are saved by grace alone and that man cannot earn his way into God's favor. Grace is the undeserved love of God who sent His Son Jesus into the world to take our place under God's law and to suffer and die to pay the penalty for our sins. Whoever trusts in that redemptive act of Jesus Christ will not perish but have everlasting life.