



First Impressions

First Lutheran Church

January 2023

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 Every Sunday

Mid-week Worship

Wednesdays 7:00 p.m. during Advent & Lent



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



FLC Statistics for DECEMBER 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) |



| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Shane & Shawna Locke | Jan 7 |
| Steve & Becky Hackney | Jan 11 |
| Herm & Karen Arends | Jan 24 |



| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Aaron Doig | Jan 1 |
| Thomas Rasmussen..... | Jan 1 |
| Tim Aben | Jan 3 |
| Lydia Longden | Jan 4 |
| Elisa Hatter | Jan 6 |
| Sylvia VanLangevelde | Jan 6 |
| Becky Hackney..... | Jan 8 |
| Drew Kregel | Jan 10 |
| Grant Goff | Jan 15 |
| Blake DeWyse | Jan 15 |
| Kathy Spotts | Jan 16 |
| Vickie Yankee | Jan 16 |
| Tyson Vorce | Jan 17 |
| Jonah Longden | Jan 18 |
| Chuck Carr..... | Jan 21 |
| Justin Keiffer | Jan 22 |
| Chris Olson | Jan 23 |
| Pastor Sean Esterline | Jan 25 |
| Paul Yankee | Jan 25 |
| Amanda Ells | Jan 26 |
| Liz Latoszewski | Jan 28 |
| James Beal II | Jan 31 |
| Rhian Hackney..... | Jan 31 |

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.*

A New Day Dawns!

Greetings in the name of our Newborn Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

One year ago, on January 30th, I was installed as the “new” Pastor here at First Lutheran. (Not only did you get a new Pastor, you also got three new Sunday School students. What a deal!) Speaking for my family, we’re VERY glad to be here and have enjoyed this past year more than you can imagine! God has truly blessed us through you, the members of First Lutheran Church! Thank you!!

This just goes to show that (contrary to all those “Lutheran” jokes out there) not all change is bad, as a matter of fact, most change is good, at least where God is concerned. The Bible reminds us that “all things work together for good to those who love God.”—Romans 8:28 That means that just as a person cannot grow without changing, neither can a church grow without changing—and that shouldn’t scare us at all. (Maybe I’m just now noticing this because my girls are getting into the “double digit” age range. They change, daily! Right before my eyes!!)

If we, here at First Lutheran Church, are going to grow and do the work that God has given us to do, then there will be changes ahead. The “neat” thing about those changes is that, much like the growth of children, you can’t always predict how things will develop or turn out—and you can’t wait to see the results. In a way, we get to watch for miracles and see how God makes things turn out the way He wants. We just have to do our best to join together and get the saving message of the Gospel out to those who need it the most in our community. Now, while the previous statement seems simple enough, it is surprisingly complex and difficult to accomplish.

First, we need to determine what “the message” is. What does God expect us to tell the people around us? How can we “show” that message with our lives, and not just our lips?

Secondly, we need to determine just who our “community” is today and ask what can we do to help? What about couples (or individuals) who have kids and are working full time or holding down two jobs? How can we serve them? Does our community reach over to Vermontville or Eaton Rapids? Or only within a few miles of the church building itself? Also, how do we reach out to those of our members who haven’t worshiped with us in person for a while now?

Finally, who, in the congregation, is going to DO this? Is it just the Pastor or our Board of Outreach? (“They’re the ones with ‘training’ in this sort of thing.”) How about our Elders or our Praise Team or our Sunday School teachers? For that matter, is there any way that someone who is “afraid” to witness can still help us to spread the Good News of life and salvation?

By God’s grace and mercy, by studying the Scriptures and praying for guidance, we will discover the answers to these questions (and more!) and be able to “practice what we preach.” Please, bring your suggestions and concerns to the Pastor or the Elders. Help us all to join together as a congregation, a body of believers, and to reach out to those around us who need to hear the Good News of the birth of their Savior, Christ the Lord!

God’s blessings for a happy and prosperous New Year!

-Pastor Sean

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



**PLEASE JOIN US -
SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2023
10:00 A.M.**

For New Year's Day Worship Service.
ONE worship service on this day. No Bible study or Sunday School.



WEEKLY SUNDAY WORSHIP

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

Traditional worship at 8:30 a.m. every Sunday.
Traditional worship on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11:15 a.m.

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

All Sunday services now include communion.



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.



**A BIG Thank You to all who helped out with
the FLC Children's Christmas Program!**

**A BIG Thank You to all who provided gifts for our
adopted families for Christmas.**

You have made a difference to these families!



THANK YOU!

**The staff of First Lutheran Church and Preschool Daycare
would like to extend our appreciation
for the love and support you have shown us
through your generosity this Christmas.**

We are truly blessed to serve here at First Lutheran ♥



The staff of First Lutheran Church and FLPD wish you a very blessed New Year ♥

FLC COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.

FLC ELDERS MEETING

The next Board of Elders' Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 17, 6:30 p.m.

FLC ELISABETH GUILD

The Elisabeth Guild will be dining out at the Eaton Pub and Grille

Thursday, January 5, 1:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend (even the guys).

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

FLC COMMUNITY DINNER

Our next Community Dinner will be held on

Monday, January 16, 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.



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 OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

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.

LCMS Stewardship News for January

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?

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

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.