

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CHIMES

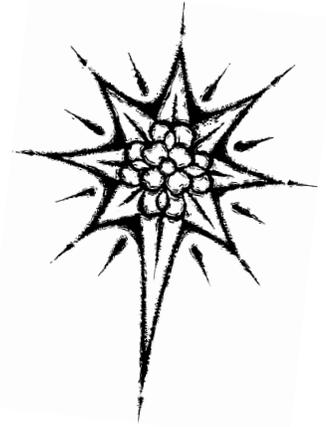
December 2020
Volume 59, Issue 12
www.firstgeneseo.org

Sharing Christ's Love

WORSHIP WITH US THIS WEEKEND!

Worship livestreamed on Facebook
Sundays at 8:15 a.m.

Come and Rejoice at the Birth of our Savior



Sunday, December 6

8:15 a.m. — *“Stations of the Nativity”*

Faithtime Kids will present a virtual Christmas Program

Christmas Eve, December 24

7 p.m. — *Christmas Eve Livestream Worship*

Christmas Day, December 25

10 a.m. — *Christmas Day Video Message*

11 a.m. — *Free Christmas Dinner*

Sunday, December 27

9:30 a.m. — *Christmas Lessons & Carols*

Christmas Dinner

Our First Lutheran family will once again provide a warm Christmas dinner for neighbors and members. This year we will be offering delivery and curbside pick-up for meals and will not be able to provide dine-in meals. Deliveries will be made within the Geneseo and Atkinson communities.

The menu will include roasted turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, green bean casserole, sage dressing, and festive cookies. Reservations are recommended by calling Marlee Stiener at (309) 441-5194 or Janet Larson (309) 507-2997. ***Deadline for reservations is Wednesday, December 23.*** Volunteers are needed to prepare food on December 23 as well as to package or deliver meals on Christmas Day from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call or email Janet Larson at jslarson6931@gmail.com if you are able to volunteer.

Let's work together to provide a little joy and fellowship.

Light

One hallmark of this time of year is the growing darkness. One seems to be not able to avoid it. Every year, it all begins when the leaves start dropping and the trees are stripped bare by the winds and weather of Fall. We then fall back for daylight savings and as a result end up waking up in the dark, sometimes leaving for work in the dark, and then coming home in the dark. This is a dark time of year and we cannot avoid it.

On top of that, obviously, we have had quite a year. 2020 has been overwhelming. It has been a year of increasing anxiety and fear in every sector of life and a year of trauma and suffering all of us have never seen. We have been tired of the news, exhausted of the time we are living, we have been stripped of energy, and like the trees, have been laid bare as plans have been cancelled yet again.

And yet, it is here in this time of growing darkness, that the Light, Jesus Christ, still shines. The gospel of John proclaims on Christmas Day, what we already know inside to be true; ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.** (John 1:1-5)

Nothing can overcome God's Light. Not this time. Not this virus. Not these divisions. Nothing can overcome God's peace. Nothing can separate us from God's love. No single person, or group, can ever take God's joy from the world. No one, dare I say with hope, is able to ever even avoid, the Light, Jesus

Christ. Every single darkness has already been overcome. Every single darkness will be overcome. This is the hope of the world.

With the Light of Christ shining brightly still, even now, which we believe to be given to us in Baptism, we can be strengthened for such a time as this. Our work in the darkness, is to continue sharing our inner light, hope, peace, joy, and love which can help to make the world a little brighter. All of this we do, because Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, is still shining in the darkness, and the Light will not be snuffed out.

If you look closely at our world, in the midst of darkness, we can still see the Light of Christ shining like stars in a dark winter night. We have seen the stars shining at night in our world as healthcare workers, nurses and doctors, work in an ever anxious, fearful, and exhausted way to help heal the world. We have seen the stars shining in the night as medical research scientists, virologists, and doctors from all over the world use their God-given light to race toward a vaccine at a speed that is unimaginable. We have seen the world come together on this vaccine. We have seen the stars shining in the night as tired and exhausted teachers, find new ways to educate. We have seen the stars shining in the night as our children and grandchildren still make us smile. We have seen the stars shining in the night as parents at their wits end, still manage to find the time, to be present. We have seen this moment in history, and in hope, we will see a way through. If we look closely, we can see rather clearly the stars shining in the darkness when hope, peace, love, and joy are shared amongst us.

—Continues on page 3

As we move through this time of darkness this Advent, may we prepare to see the Light of Christ shining through what we do to help, heal, and restore. May we prepare to see the Light of Christ coming to heal our relationships which have been broken and strained. May we prepare ourselves and embrace even a long dark winter and keep our focus always on Christ's Light shining still in our world and inside of each one of us, which is still leading us to help and serve our neighbors in need making us all radiate from within, of which no darkness can overcome. Amen.

—Pastor Matt

December 6, 2020 – Advent 2

This day's texts include Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 1:1-8.

December 13, 2020 – Advent 3/Healing Service

This day's texts include Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 and John 1:6-8, 19-28.

December 20, 2020 – Advent 4

This day's texts include 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 and Luke 1:26-38.

December 24, 2020 – Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve

This day's text include Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2:1-14-20.

December 25, 2020 – Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Day Video Message

This day's text include Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2:1-14-20.

December 27, 2020 – Christmas Lessons & Carols at 9:30 a.m.

This day's texts include Isaiah 61:10—62:3 and Luke 2:22-40.

FIRST WORSHIP & MUSIC

Please keep the following Lifelines petitions in your prayers:

World and Community: For our leaders: President Donald J. Trump and Governor J.B. Pritzker. For health care workers. For all who work for peace and justice. For those serving our country in the military, especially Josh Francis, Jakob Gradert, Brian Hanshaw, Jason Kinnard, Geoffrey Lindesmith, Taylor McKean, Jessica Ruggles, Brandon Sandoval, Brian Sandoval, Christopher Unrath, Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

Church: For our bishops: Rev. Elizabeth Eaton and Rev. Jeff Clements. For our partners in ministry: Pastor Daniel Meiyen and the people of Osupuko Parish in Tanzania, Rev. Raja Socrates, Bishop of the Arcot Lutheran Synod, India. For missionaries who share the Gospel around the world. For Catherine Nelson, seminary student. For Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. For our pastors, parish staff, Preschool staff and Church Council (names listed on pg. 8).

Health and Wellbeing: For all who are fighting COVID-19, Michele _____ (*Jodi Martin's friend*), Dick & Diane Anderson (*Kathy Nelson's longtime friends*), Sherri Anderson-Craggs (*Kathy Nelson's friend*), Lila Becker, Rainer Fronz (*Steve Weber's nephew*), Tricia Fuelling, Gary Gesme, Nancy Markham, Peggy Schram (*Doris Swanson's daughter*), Rollin Setterdahl, Ron Spittler (*Sherry Dickens' nephew*), Candace VanderSchaaf (*Sherry Dickens' longtime friend*), and Gerald VanDeWoestyne (*Maurice Nelson's friend and former classmate*).

Joys: On the baptism of Brynn Louise Rexroth, daughter of Craig & Michelle Rexroth.

Thanksgiving: For the safety and return stateside of Raul Falcon (*friend of Ted & LaNell Carpenter*), upon the completion of tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, now stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Jason Allison gives thanks to First Lutheran for all the prayers and support for his dad, David Allison.

Sorrows: On the death of David Allison, brother-in-law of Barb Burghrave.

If you wish to submit a prayer request, please contact the church office at 944-3196 or by e-mail prayer@firstgeneseo.org. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or are admitted to the hospital, please call the church office. In the event of an after-hours emergency please contact Pastor Matt at 703-505-9517.

FIRST PRAYER

FIRST MINISTRIES



Advent Reflections: *I Wonder as I Wander*

Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace – the names of the four candles lit during Advent. But do these words mean anything to us and to the world today? Join us each Tuesday in Advent for a short Zoom service from 6:30-6:55 p.m. followed by a small group discussion at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 1

Advent Midweek 1
Zoom Worship at 6:30 p.m.
Small Group at 7:00 p.m.

I WONDER ABOUT HOPE

Romans 12:1-12

Tuesday, December 8

Advent Midweek 2
Zoom Worship at 6:30 p.m.
Small Group at 7:00 p.m.

I WONDER ABOUT LOVE

Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday, December 15

Advent Midweek 3
Zoom Worship at 6:30 p.m.
Small Group at 7:00 p.m.

I WONDER ABOUT JOY

John 15:7-11

Tuesday, December 22

Advent Midweek 4
Zoom Worship at 6:30 p.m.
Small Group at 7:00 p.m.

I WONDER ABOUT PEACE

Luke 1:67-79

Council Highlights for November 16, 2020

Congregation Council met via Zoom on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 for a special meeting to discuss the Tier 1 mitigation for our region. In-person worship and activities that cannot comply with mitigation guidelines (*over 25 people*) are suspended until mitigation is lifted. *Congregation Council met via Zoom on Monday, November 16, 2020.

Old Business

- PPP loan has received forgiveness. Finance Ministry is working on a budget surplus continuing resolution to address the additional surplus from these funds in 2020.
- Nominating Committee has finished their work, with a full slate of nominees. Officers for 2021 were discussed.

New Business

- Two requests from Social Ministry were approved: \$500 for Foster Hope and \$750 for Jul Gott.
- Request from Abbey Cathelyn for professional development was approved.
- Amendments to bring our Constitution in line with the Model Constitution from

the ELCA will be brought to Council in December, to be voted on by the Congregation in January. An amendment to the provision regarding term limits for officers will also be proposed.

- The format for the Annual Meeting on January 24, 2021 was discussed. A virtual meeting is allowed; provision must be made for simultaneous aural communication, and for a written ballot.

October Financial Report

General Fund Offering:

October actual	\$34,510
October budget	\$32,833
YTD actual	\$395,396
YTD budget	\$382,833

Net Income Over Expenses:

October actual	\$6,174 surplus
October budget	\$3,788 deficit
YTD actual	\$30,529 surplus
YTD budget	\$10,531 deficit

*Tier 3 mitigation was announced on November 17, effective November 20, which suspends all in-person activities.

Faithtime Kids

Last month, Faithtime Kids helped pack LWR School and Personal Care Kits. We also collaborated with Social Ministry to make cards for our Veterans. We finished up our "Illumination of a Psalm" artwork and you can find them posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Room. **Please Note:** Faithtime Kids will not meet during December while we're under Tier 3 mitigation.

**FIRST
MINISTRIES**



Confirmation (7th & 8th graders)

Confirmation Class continues to meet each Wednesday on Zoom. We will finish our unit on the Small Catechism this month. Here's our schedule:

December 2 — Communion

December 16 — Christmas Party

December 9 — Confession and Forgiveness

December 23 & 30 — No Class *Christmas Break*

Children and Family Outreach

from Abbey Cathelyn, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

As we dive into the holiday season, it seems that our lives all get a little more hectic. It is easy to get lost in the material side of Christmas and forget all about the sweet baby born in the manger that was a gift sent from God to save us from sin. This year, more than ever, it is important for us to shift our focus to what really matters. Julie Barsington, from the website "*Happy Home Fairy*" writes about how the "noise" of the holiday season can soon begin to interfere with our ability to truly experience the gift of his presence. She discusses the importance of narrowing her focus to two things:

1. Do things that celebrate Jesus

2. Do things that share his love

As I began to plan the season, these two things nailed it on the head of what I wanted Youth & Family Ministry to accomplish this year. With that being said...

Get ready! We are going to hold a drive through!

Birthday Party for Jesus! ~ Saturday, December 5 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Birthdays are huge for children. Unfortunately, some families in our community may not have the resources to have a celebration for their children with cake, balloons, and other party items.

Drive through the south parking lot on December 5 from 2-4 p.m. to donate birthday party items for the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry and someone will be there to receive them from your car. We will have goodie bags in exchange for the birthday kit donations! We are going to celebrate the reason for the season and spread some joy to families in our community!

What do I donate? ~ Each kit will contain:

Box of Birthday cake mix (*any flavor*)

Package of birthday candles

Can of frosting (*any flavor or kind*)

Package of balloons

Sprinkles (*any kind*)

Birthday gift bags to pack kits in

Gender neutral birthday party plates, hats, and napkins

Please consider donating any of these items! ~ What if I can't come to the drive through?

A birthday box will be in the Fellowship Room from December 5-12 to drop off your donated items. Kits will be packed and dropped off at the Food Pantry before Christmas. If you have further questions, please contact Abbey Cathelyn, Director of Youth & Family Ministry at youth@firstgeneseo.org or 944-3196.

FIRST MINISTRIES

Angel Tree

Our Christmas tradition continues here at First with the support of an “*Angel Tree*” which will provide Christmas gifts for Allure, Hillcrest Nursing Home, and our Food Pantry family.

Social Ministry invites you to choose an angel from the angel tree display located on the bulletin board between the double glass doors at the South entrance. The angel tags are requests or suggestions for needs to give the residents some Christmas cheer! Gifts should be in bags with the angel tags attached and under the tree in the Fellowship Room near the kitchen by *Sunday, December 13* in order to allow time for delivery.

Thanks for all the blessings you share with others!

First Lutheran Preschool

Merry Christmas! All preschool children will be busy creating and wrapping gifts for their families this month. The 3-year-olds will focus on the color green and the shape of the star. We’ll also learn about the symbols we see in the Christmas Story. The 4-year-olds will be learning about Christmas traditions in countries around the world. We’ll talk about a Christmas custom of each country and how that custom compares with ours. We will learn about the people, the food, games and crafts of each country.

- **Christmas Break** - No school from December 21, 2020-January 1, 2021. Preschool will resume on Monday, January 4, 2021.

Stewardship 2021

“Beginning a Culture of Generosity”

The Stewardship Ministry team thanks the congregation for 2021 commitments received! As of November 23, we have received 48 commitments, totaling \$164,312.00. If you haven’t turned in your 2021 commitment yet, it’s not too late! Drop it by the church office or e-mail the information to Deb Spence, financials@firstgeneseo.org.

Luminaries

Faithtime Kids were planning to make paper bag luminaries to place outside for the Geneseo Christmas Walk. First Lutheran is on the lighted parade route so it would be wonderful to have some of our own luminaries lighting up the parking lot. Since we are not meeting in person this month, all children and their families are invited to pick up a paper bag luminary kit to make at home. You will be provided with the bag, sand, light and instructions. Kits will be available for pick up at the Drive Through Birthday Bash on Saturday, December 5 from 2-4. Please drop the luminary back off on December 12 (*Christmas Walk Day*) any time before 3 p.m. There will be a tub located under the overhang in the parking lot.

Children’s Bibles Available

Thanks to a generous donor, we have a supply of Spark Story Bibles and Spark NRSV Bibles available to anyone in the congregation who has a child in their life who might benefit. If you have a grandchild, a neighbor, or a friend who would appreciate this gift, please contact Abbey Cathelyn (youth@firstgeneseo.org) to reserve your copy. Story Bibles are appropriate for preschool children and early readers. NRSV Bibles are appropriate for children in upper elementary and middle school.

Christmas Gifts for Children Served by LSSI

This year has been especially challenging for so many of LSSI's clients. First Lutheran has been invited to be part of an effort to provide a Christmas gift to each child served by our programs, as well as ensure that they have essential items such as coats and boots during the winter. In past years, we have gathered wish lists and asked you to shop for the items. This year, we are trying something new – you are invited to join others in the area and donate online through *Just Giving*. LSSI has set a goal to raise \$4,410 to meet the needs of 294 children served by LSSI's programs in Moline, Galesburg, and Canton. Here's how:

1. Visit <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ChristmasLSSIMGC>
2. Click on the "donate" button
3. Make a secure gift to brighten a child's Christmas!

Thank You

To My Church Family,
Pastor Matt and Pastor Laura, I want to thank you for the patriotic bag filled with special gifts. I am honored to be remembered as a veteran. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

—Roger Carton

Thank You!

A big thank you to our First Lutheran family and friends who so kindly gave of their time to help us deliver gift bags to our First Lutheran Veterans for Veteran's Day! Thank you Norm & Judy Carbenier, Glen & Janet Anderson, Abbey & Kane Cathelyn, Margi Ficken, Mike Steiner, and Brian Burghgrave! We couldn't have delivered all our gift bags in a timely manner without your good help.

Thank you First Lutheran for *Sharing Christ's Love* by honoring our First Lutheran Veteran's service and sacrifice to our country.

Veteran's Brunch Committee
Maurie & Brenda, Jodi, Marlee, Nancy & Barb

Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry

The Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry is collecting *juice, beans, canned carrots, pickles, flour, hand soap, disinfecting wipes, all-purpose cleaner, razors, and Kleenex* to share with those in our community. Donations may be left in the basket by the church office.

Please Note — With the recent increase of Illinois COVID cases, specifically in Henry County, we are no longer taking clothing or household donations. Our main concern is the safety of our volunteers, clients, and staff. We will continue to take food donations on Mondays from 9-12 and 1-4. We ask you to leave only food donations in the carts located outside both our front and back doors. Monetary donations may be made on our website at: geneseofoodpantry.org or mailed to: 620 W Main Street, Geneseo, 61254. We will continue to offer curbside food pick up every Tuesday from 9-11:30 a.m. to our clients. If you or your family need assistance please reach out to us at 944-3165. We will re-evaluate our policies when the COVID cases in Henry County decrease. We continue to pray for everyone's safety.

*Thank you for your support throughout the year.
We ask God to bless you and our families during 2021!*



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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*On behalf of the Pastors,
President, Council and Staff
of First Lutheran Church
we wish everyone a
Merry Christmas and
a blessed New Year!*

STAFF DIRECTORY

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Rev. Matt Kamprath
mkamprath@firstgeneseo.org

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Staff Musician

COUNCIL

Cathy Runty—*President*
Johanna Hager—*Vice-President*
Jodi Barnhart—*Secretary*
Gary Gesme—*Treasurer*

Anne Calder, Lance Camp,
Kathy Heller, Jill Laingen,
Cheryl Saint Vincent, Linda Sheley,
Mike Slaymaker, Patty Turner

Meeting Schedule:

Cabinet — Monday, December 14
Council — Monday, December 21

PRESCHOOL STAFF

Misty Slaymaker, *Director*
Margi Ficken
preschool@firstgeneseo.org

**NEXT CHIMES DEADLINE:
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8**

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Wednesday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday
Office Closed
Closed for Lunch ~ Noon-1 p.m.

STAFF SCHEDULE

Rev. Laura Kamprath
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Rev. Matt Kamprath
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

Morgan Sarber
Monday-Thursday

Mary Jo Brummet
Monday-Thursday

Abbey Cathelyn
Monday-Wednesday

Sherry Dickens
Monday-Thursday, select hours