



DECEMBER 2024

Messenger

First English Lutheran Church

Connected in Christ, we grow in faith, live with hope, and reach out to share God's love with others.

We Wait with Hope

I'm writing this on November 27th as I ponder the month ahead. There will be four Advent sermons, one Christmas Eve sermon, five worship bulletins, and five children's sermons. The sanctuary and church will be decorated, the banners hung, the visitors welcomed, the Advent and Christmas music sung by the choir and the people. The children will sing and gather in their costumes around the manger. There will be Silent Night with candles, pews filled to capacity, and joy. The Savior will be born again in our hearts. God is with us.

Each year we reenact the beauty of Christ's first coming. Our hearts are touched, and our faith increases. "Jesus did this for *me*," we remember. "How amazing that Jesus would take on our flesh, our limitations, and our struggles so that he could put us right with God!"

Even as we treasure his first coming to earth, we also long for his second coming when the Kingdom of God will be established among us. What will it be like to live in a new heaven and a new earth? How amazing will it be to dwell in God's perfect justice, peace, joy and love?

Quite honestly, it's as impossible for us to imagine his Second Coming as it was for people to imagine his First Coming over 2000 years ago when he was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger.

Fortunately, we're not left entirely clueless about his return. The Apostle John recorded his vision of this future in Revelation 21:2-5a.

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new."

We wait with hope as we long for Christ's return. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen and amen.

God's peace and joy be yours this season,
Pastor Cheryl



About FELC...

First English Lutheran Church, ELCA

440 Garfield St, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 715-423-2840 www.felwisrapids.org

Office Hours: 8am-3:30pm M - Th, Closed Fridays

Sunday Worship is at 9:30am w/Communion & FB Live, then YouTube @ 11:15am

~ Every Sunday We Celebrate the Resurrection ~



The Staff at FELC...

Pastor Cheryl Davis	715-818-5690	pastorcheryl@felwr.org
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Musicians	Dave Mueller & Tammy Parszewski	715-423-2840 fel@felwr.org

Services are televised Sunday at 11am from the previous Sunday on W.R. Community Media & Charter 985, Solarus Ch 3. For bad weather and church closings tune to TV Channel 7 WSAW.

Birthday & Anniversary...

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/1 Wayne Worth
12/2 Tom Surendonk
12/3 Barb DeMunck
12/6 Eric Wangen
12/7 Marjorie Hamann
12/8 Daryl Marti
John Chambers
12/9 Cindi Kester
12/13 Trish Michau
Chris Klopotek
12/14 Chuck Zeman
12/16 Sue McGrath
12/18 Craig Lambert
Ellaina Zelin
12/19 Dennis Herzberg
12/21 Audrey Bonney
Geoffrey Andersen
12/24 Craig Brooks
Aaron Krueger
Nikki Ross
12/26 Lou Berg
Tari Jahns

12/27 Phyllis Pfeil
Steven Humphrey

12/30 Vicki Herzberg

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARYS

12/9 Ken & Sue McGrath
12/10 Ralph & Sylvia Lau
12/16 Jim & Lori Walloch
12/20 John & Mary Krutzik



DECEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8am Confirmation 9:30a Worship Advent 1 NO SS or Confirmation New Member Sunday	2 Pastor Off	3 7am Yoga 3pm GLOW	4 10am Bible Zoom 2:45pm River Run 4pm Confirmation 7pm Choir	5 7am Yoga	6 8am Bible Zoom Pastor works @ home Office Closed	7 R. Wangen Funeral V- 9-11:30am S- 11:30am
8 8a Confirmation 9:30a Worship w/SS Advent 2 Special Music 11am Mtg w/Pastor regarding Sermon	9 Pastor Off	10 7am Yoga 3pm GLOW	11 10am Bible Zoom 10:30am SHINE 1pm Quilters 1:45pm Wellington 4pm Confirmation 7pm Choir	12 7am Yoga	13 8am Bible Zoom Pastor works @ home Office Closed	14
15 8am Confirmation 9:30am Worship w/SS Advent 3 SS Kids Sing 10:45am Conf families p/u-sort food baskets	16 Pastor Off	17 7am Yoga 3pm GLOW 4pm Confirmation 6pm Council	18 10am Bible Zoom 2:45pm River Run 7pm Choir	19 7am Yoga 5:15pm Christ Ed	20 8am Bible Zoom Pastor works @ home Office Closed	21 Winter Begins!
22 9:30am Worship Advent 4 NO SS or Confirmation	23 Pastor Off	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Worship at 1 & 4pm	25 Office Closed Merry Christmas	26 7am Yoga	27 8am Bible Zoom Pastor works @ home Office Closed	28
29 9:30am Worship NO SS or Confirmation	30 Pastor Off	31 Office Closed New Years Eve				

Writer's Corner...

Cold December, Warm Hearts

By Horace Davis

In cold December our hearts become warmer. Isn't that ironic? We talk about feeling miserable in the cold, yet this is perhaps the month when we are at our most high in spirits, generosity, love AND FELLOWSHIP.. This is the time of the year when even the most 'Bah Humbugged' shows spirits of kindness and generosity. We give more to the beggar on the streets, when we would avoid a relative, we send a Christmas Card or Christmas Letter. We greet each other – including strangers - with a cheery smile and a Happy Holiday/Merry Christmas. And, during December (some might have even started long before) we start the preparations for the Christmas dinner, we decorate the Christmas tree, buy presents, wrap them, and wait patiently for the morning when they will be opened. Like the song Jingle Bells, there are "children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile." December is heart-warming after all. But there is more to it. There is another heart-warming December that we observe. Remembering that this is the month we acknowledge that Jesus, our Savior and Lord, was born, we prepare for and celebrate it on December 25 each year. We remember too, the promise Jesus made that he would come again and receive us unto himself. So, we also prepare and wait in anticipation for his coming again...the Second Advent. Joseph E McCabe reminds us that "Advent is the season [festival] of expectation. No other time of the year so focuses our human expectations." I offer therefore, that it is apt and worthy that we keep in mind always and use those four words of Advent as guidelines for living.

Hope- The dawn of a new beginning; renewed Optimism and Faith

Peace- Symbolizing Tranquility and Serenity _ the basis of Faith and a Testimony of God's Grace.

Joy- Infusing the hearts of all with Jubilation and Gladness.

Love- The sense of Compassion and Devotion infusing our hearts with unconditional Love and Grace. God is Love, and we are to "love our neighbors as ourselves."

We remember too that God's love was extended to us (still is) when He came in human form as the baby Jesus. He came to take us out of the darkness and gloom of our lives, to renew our joy and gladness, to help us fulfill our hopes for the future, and to spread peace in the world. The teachings of Jesus still direct our footsteps should we care to listen and follow. McCabe again reminds us that 'Christmas is the power of God in action.' One other thing. The Christmas celebration does not end at midnight on December 25. It continues all year long, and until he comes again. Then too, there will be a new kind of celebration.

So, think about it, There is hope and peace and joy and love in cold December. Yes, cold December does bring warmth to our hearts, our homes, and to our relationships.





Coloring
Page...



Nativity Word Scramble

STBALE _____

HEEPS _____

NLGEA _____

TSAR _____

GAMREN _____

JHPOES _____

OENYDH _____

EUSSJ _____

SHNGI _____

YMAR _____

Word Search

H	A	L	Y	V	E	L	A	B
O	B	L	E	S	S	O	A	R
L	A	G	I	F	T	V	S	A
Y	E	G	F	P	S	E	B	T
J	O	Y	A	T	A	E	B	S

JOY, LOVE, GIFT, HOLY, BLESS, STAR

Help Mary & Joseph find the way to Bethlehem.

Bethlehem

Color the Christmas ornament & then cut it out to hang.

... and you shall call his name **Jesus** for he will save his people from their sins.
Matthew 1:21, ESV

Merry
Christmas

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Community Outreach...

They say it takes a village to raise up, well we have a great village here at First English Lutheran Church! So many things happened here this past year, in 2024, both at church and in the community!

We gathered 3-XL boxes, and then some, of hygiene items for **The Family Radio's - Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive**. Toilet paper, paper towels, sanitary napkins, shampoo & conditioner, hand, body, dish, & laundry soaps, brooms & mops, cleaning sprays, etc. were collected. **Thank you all!**



FNM– Focus Neighborhood Meal - We provided one sit down meal in the spring and one in the fall via funding from our budget this year! Thank you to all FELC members who helped!

Worship in the Park, We went back to Robinson Park this year and a good time was had by all! Thanks for those of you who participated, cooked, brought food, and helped with set-up & clean-up!

GWOH's - God's Work, Our Hands Sunday, this year was on Sunday, September 8th. We helped Howe, Washington, and Mead Elementary Schools with painting and cleaning projects inside and out, cleaned up a few congregants yards before winter, packed 166 LWR school kits, 131 LWR Health Kits, and 143 Quilts. Lunch was made and desserts were donated! **THANK YOU ALL!**



LWR Semi Loading - With FELC's 143 quilts , 166 school kits, and 131 health kits, plus we are an in-gathering place for all churches in Central Wisconsin to bring their quilts and kits - the FELC youth and their attending parents loaded 1,163 boxes into the semi-trailer. **Thank you!**

GLOW God Lights Our Way - The first year with Vicki was a success! With word of mouth, and the children's excitement, this year's attendance has more than doubled. Rhonda took over. Thank you to all the volunteers who help guide and teach the children - this could not happen without you!

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes, by Samaritan's Purse. This year we collected **102** OCC Shoeboxes, plus fulfilled a match opportunity and was able to order 25 boxes online as well for a grand total of 127 boxes! They will be sent out to children in countries that otherwise might not receive a present. They can also receive the book, The Greatest Gift and can participate in a 12 lesson discipleship course - The Greatest Journey. So, thank you all for bringing in a shoebox and showing a child the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior! The drop-off location gathered a total of 1,830 shoeboxes from 15 churches!



Stuff the School Bus - From July thru August 3rd we collect school supplies along with the United Way of South Wood and Adams Counties. The supplies are collected, taken down to Lunch by the River and stuffed into an actual school bus, and then given out at Stuff the Desk at Lincoln at a later date in August to students who might not otherwise be able to get school supplies. If your family is in need of this help you must register for school supplies at the United Way in your area.

This Christmas season we have several projects going...

Christmas Food Baskets - we will be offering 27 food baskets to families of Howe Elementary School, and FELC.

The Agape Christmas Tree - as this tree gets decorated each week in December money is raised for our Agape Fund here at FELC. This fund helps local people in need.

Charlie Brown Christmas Tree - families from FELC, that could use a little help, will receive gifts from our Charlie Brown Tree. Watch for tags on the CBCT on Sunday 12/8

Thank you all who have volunteered your time, talents, monetary gifts, prayers, etc. Without you we would not be able to do all of these generous things for others.

Happenings...



Welcome to our church!

Help us welcome our new members on **Sunday, December 1st** during Worship and then brunch to follow at coffee hour.

You are welcome here!



The OCC Shoebox Dedication was very successful!

An anonymous donor matched up to 25 boxes over 50 boxes! Another anonymous donor brought in 50 boxes! In total we brought in 127 boxes!!! Congratulations FELC on one of our biggest OCC Shoebox years! Very generous - **THANK YOU!**



Poinsettias at the Altar

To honor or remember our loved ones at Christmas.

Put in your Wunrow's order by 12/11/24

Or bring in your own by 12/23/24

In memory ___ or in honor ___ of

Name: _____

From: _____

___red, ___white @ \$21.00/each - Wunrow's

___bringing in my own.

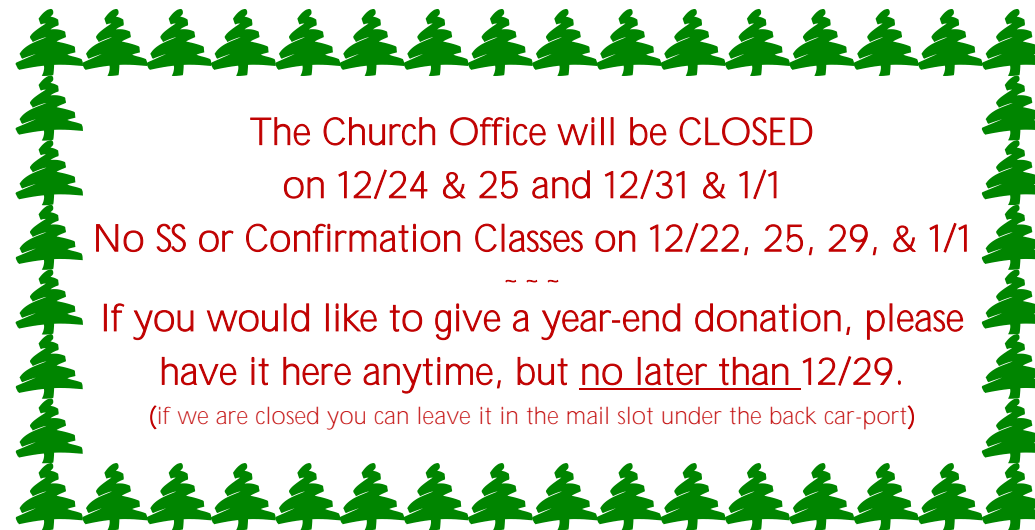
Thank you - Merry Christmas!



Christian Symbols



ADVENT COLORS — One of the season's symbolic colors is blue, representing hope. During Advent, we wait in hope to celebrate again God's coming in human form. We also look forward in hope to Christ's coming in glory at the end of the age. Purple symbolizes the royalty of Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and the penitence with which we receive him. Some congregations also use pink or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the Christ Child.



The Church Office will be CLOSED
on 12/24 & 25 and 12/31 & 1/1

No SS or Confirmation Classes on 12/22, 25, 29, & 1/1

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If you would like to give a year-end donation, please
have it here anytime, but no later than 12/29.

(if we are closed you can leave it in the mail slot under the back car-port)



Budget Meeting

Sunday, January 19th after Worship

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26th after Worship

Your Voice Matters ~ Join in the Sanctuary

Walking With Those Who Grieve

The holiday season can be difficult for people who are grieving a death or deep loss. As Christians, we do well to be aware that not everyone feels wholehearted joy this time of year. How can we support them?

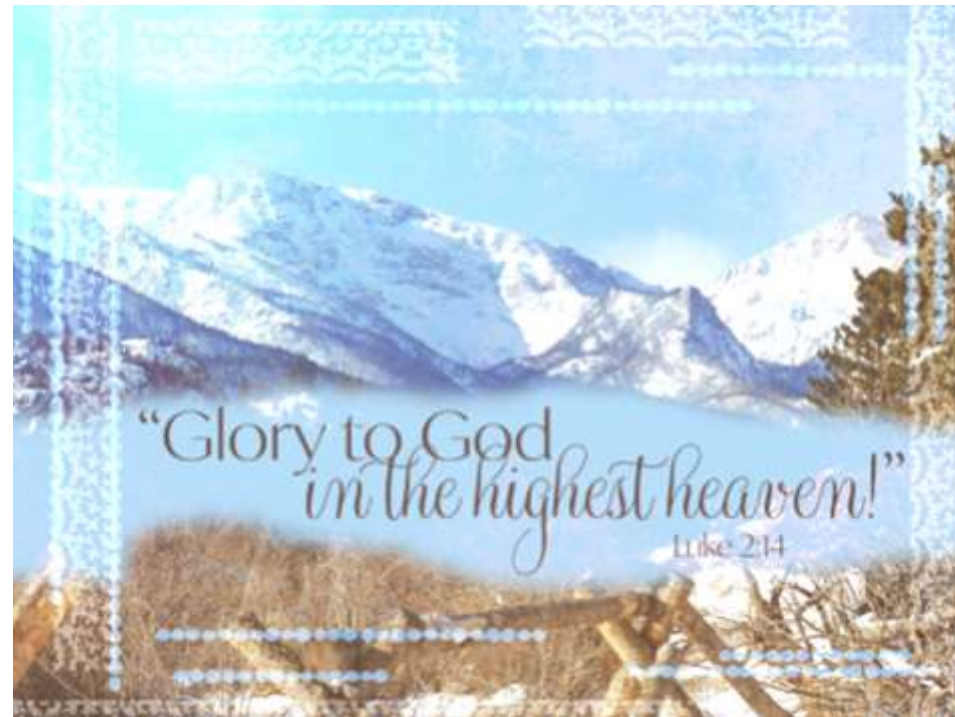
Grief counselor Alan Wolfelt explains that walking alongside — “companioning” — one who grieves “is not about assessing, analyzing, fixing or resolving another’s grief. Instead, it is about being totally present to the mourner, even being a temporary guardian of [his or] her soul.”

Among Wolfelt’s 11 tenets for “companioning the bereaved”:

- It’s about being present to another person’s pain, not taking it away.
- It’s about listening with the heart, not analyzing with the head.
- It’s about walking alongside, not leading.

More tips are available at www.centerforloss.com

May God bless you as you share the love of the Christ Child, his caring parents and his compassionate heavenly Father, with people who are hurting.



Celebrate the Light

Bursting through December nights
that could be long and cold,
our Christmas lights bring warmth and joy
with colors soft or bold.

Cascading from the rooftops,
and from trees both small and tall,
the lights cry out, "We have good news!
We want to shout to all.

"You've seen the darkness earth can hold,
the sorrow, war and fear;
but God has sent his Son for all,
to show his Love is here.

"The darkness can't put out God's Light.
Christ's with us day by day,
illuminating paths so we
can follow in his way."

Light homes and streets and candles.
Make your world shine clear and bright.
God's love surrounds and blesses us.
Come, celebrate God's Light!

~ Peggy Ferrell



This Winter...



Tune to TV Channel 7 WSAW





*First English Lutheran Church's
Christmas Eve Worship*

*With Holy Communion
Tuesday, December 24th, 2024
1:00pm & 4:00pm*

*All are welcome
here!*



A Very Merry Christmas

& A Happy New Year

Love from the FELC Staff