

Join us in Ministry at First Lutheran

The author of Ephesians talks about individual Christians having various gifts. The gifts are for a purpose: "...to equip the saints for the *work of ministry*, for building up the body of Christ..." Christians believe that God's grace, God's forgiveness and love, come as free gifts. We neither earn nor deserve God's love. Yet we are recipients of that love. So we live in an environment of joy and peace.

We live, however, as more than recipients. We are called to be involved in God's activity of love and care for humankind and all of God's creation. We are dignified by being asked by God to participate in God's purpose of love and care. When we do participate, we receive a new dimension of grace, for we actually meet our living Lord in the needs of others.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

Matthew 25:35

Our Lord invites us to service, to ministry. One of the dimensions of that service is within the context of First Lutheran congregation. Please read the following material well, and consider your call to "Come join us in ministry at First Lutheran."

Minimal expectations of members

1. *Regular worship and participation on Holy Communion.*
Service times:
Sundays 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m.
Thursdays 5:30 p.m. (excluding Lent)
Communion is served the first and third Sundays and corresponding Thursdays of each month.
2. *Daily devotions.*
You may wish to use one of the alternative worship forms printed in the front of the hymnal (*Lutheran Book of Worship*) or the brief devotion and suggested scripture reading printed in the *Portals of Prayer* devotional booklet (complimentary copies are available at the church).
3. *Participation in adult Bible studies.*
We recommend the Bethel Bible Series or its equivalent (new Bethel studies will begin each January, March, and September.)
4. *Financial support of our congregational ministries.*
All giving is through "free will" offerings. There are no assessments or dues.

However, members are encouraged to give weekly, preferably a regular percentage of their income. A *tithe* (ten percent of income) is encouraged. Some give more; many give less. It is understood that giving to charities outside the congregation should be included in one's concept of tithing.

5. *Participation in at least one congregational activity beyond worship.*
6. *Participation in support of community, national, and international charitable causes.*

Opportunities to serve

If you wish to know more about any of the areas listed below or would like to participate, please call the church office at 682-7742 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays).

Worship

Lay readers are needed to share the first and second lessons two Sundays a month. **Cantors** are also enlisted to lead worship. **Greeters** provide assistance and a "welcoming" hand before each service.

Altar guild members aid worship through preparation for communion and baptismal services. They change altar cloths for each church season, arrange flowers for Sunday and special services, deliver flowers to shut-ins, and care for liturgical garments and paraments. Meetings are held monthly.

Choirs lead and enhance worship. Rehearsal times are:

Cherub Choir (grades 1-4)	6 p.m. Wednesdays
Carol Choir (grades 5-8)	6 p.m. Wednesdays
Resurrection Trinity Choir (grades 9-12)	7 p.m. Wednesdays
Chancel Choir (post high school)	7:45 p.m. Wednesdays
New Creation Choir (guitars)	7 p.m. Wednesdays
Handbell Choirs	6:30 p.m. Mondays

Ushers greet visitors, distribute bulletins, and direct communion services. Each four-person team (post-confirmation age) serves for a one-month period four times a year.

Sound System volunteers operate the system that controls volume, radio broadcasts, and worship leaders' microphones.

Teaching

At least forty volunteers teach preschools (ages 3-5), Sunday School (grades 1-6), Sunday confirmation classes (combined grades 7-9), and high school youth. Volunteers also teach seventh, eighth, and ninth grade confirmation classes on

Wednesday evenings. Class sizes range from 10 to 20. Many classes have team teachers. A large number of volunteers also lead summer Vacation Bible School.

Study Opportunities

Both the guidance to serve others in a way pleasing to God, and the motivation and power to serve, are enhanced through study of scripture and dialogue with fellow Christians. New studies can be designed to fit members' needs and interests. Current studies include:

- **Bethel Bible Series.** Nearly 100 members of First Lutheran now participate in this excellent overview of the Bible. Students attend three seven-week sessions each year for a two-year period. The cost is \$6.00 per session. New classes begin each January, March and September. (Lay teachers who lead the group studies have completed an intense two-year period of training. New Bethel teacher trainees will be recruited in the future so that members will continually have access to the study.)
- **Circle Studies (First Lutheran Church Women).** Four circles meet monthly for study and mutual support:
 - Elizabeth 9 a.m., second Tuesday
 - Mary/Martha 9 a.m. second Tuesday
 - Naomi 1:30 p.m., second Monday
 - Hannah 7:30 p.m., second Tuesday
- **Contemporary Literature Group.** Members meet monthly (Sept. through May) in homes to discuss classic or current literature from a Christian perspective. Learning and sociability are blended in this popular group.
- **Men's Breakfast Bible Study.** This support and study group currently meets at Toby's Diner on the first and third Saturdays at 7:15 a.m. to discuss the scripture texts for the coming Sundays.
- **Talking With the Text.** Worshippers meet between services in the lounge to share insights and reflections on the Bible readings from that Sunday's services.
- **Thursday Luncheon Study.** A dozen or so members use the noon break to gather outside the kitchen area for soup, sandwiches, and Bible study. A wide variety of topics often elicit lively discussion. The cost of the meal is \$3.
- **Occasional Studies.** The Adult Education Committee offers a varied menu of sessions addressing communication, parenting, and social awareness. These are often done in three- or four-week series.
- **Library.** Individual study is enhanced by a multitude of classics and current offerings in Christian literature. Books may be checked out weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. as well as Sunday mornings.
- **Retreats.** See Fellowship Events.

Service Through Fellowship

For Christians, *life together* refreshes us for service to others. Fellowship

opportunities include:

- **Rally Day Picnic.** Held the first Sunday following Labor Day at Silver Creek Park, this event brings together members of all ages for food, fellowship, and fun in one of Manitowoc's finest settings.
- **Advent Workshop and Potluck.** Held the afternoon and early evening of the first Sunday in Advent. This event includes pre-Christmas family projects (advent calendar, crèche, etc.), a meal, and the singing of Christmas carols.
- **Mission Salad Luncheon.** A Sunday noon salad potluck held in late May or early June. Proceeds go to mission work.
- **Sunday Coffee and Fellowship.** Held in the downstairs kitchen area and Fireside Room between services (September through May). One can help facilitate this important catalyst for fellowship by signing up on the "Brew Crew" poster outside the downstairs kitchen.
- **Men's Baseball Team.** Young (and less young) men represent First Lutheran in the city's "under 35" league. All are welcome to participate or support the team from the stands.
- **Other.** Cooks and servers, decorators and planners are needed for many occasional events. Volunteers are also needed to host funeral receptions in the Fireside Room. Sign up by calling the church office, by filling out a time and talent sheet, or by simply telling a pastor or church leader of your interest.

High School Youth Activities

High school youth activities are planned by a Youth Ministry Committee consisting of youth and adults. In addition to fellowship activities (such as a progressive dinner, movie and pizza night, and caroling for shut-ins at Christmas time), youth participate in:

- **Study between services.** This often informal encounter is held in the youth room (lower level, turn right off parking lot entrance) between services.
- **Bible Study.** Held from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. on the second and fourth Sunday evenings of the month (September through May), this study engages young people in dialogue with scripture and current life issues.
- **Retreats.** A fall weekend at Crossways retreat center helps to bring young people together in a supportive and caring fellowship. Other retreats occur as requested.
- **Conferences.** Youth attend ELCA synodical, regional, and national youth gatherings as well as the Lutheran Youth Encounter-sponsored Senior High Congress in Chicago. At these events, relationships with Christ and peers are nurtured through music, speakers, workshops, small-group discussions, fun, and fellowship.
- **Camp.** Youth are encouraged to grow in faith, leadership, and the development of their gifts through Youth Enrichment Training and other summer camping programs at Crossways camps and through Lutheran Summer Music

Camp.

- **Easter Sunday Breakfast.** As a service to the congregation, senior high youth cook and serve Easter breakfast for the congregation. Other youth service opportunities include teaching Sunday School and/or Vacation Bible School, work as a reader, cantor, Junior Deacon, Church Council representative, etc.

Council, Boards, Committees, Organizations

Each year well over 300 volunteers plan and oversee the "work of ministry" at First Lutheran through the following organizational structure:

- **Church Council**

The 15-member council oversees and coordinates all congregational activity. Its purpose is to provide vision in accord with the church mission statement and to seek and respond to input from the congregation. Most council members are selected because of active involvement on boards or committees (each board must have at least one council member as a liaison). The Executive Committee is elected from the council. Its officers also serve as the congregational officers. Meets at 7 p.m., third Tuesday.

- **Board of Deacons**

Twenty adult and four youth deacons minister to the spiritual needs of our members. They serve as liturgical assistants, make Saturday hospital visits, contact visitors who have worshiped at First Lutheran, and serve as shepherds to new members. This board oversees the Prayer Committee which distributes prayer requests. Meets at 7 p.m., first Thursday.

- **Board of Stewardship**

This nine-member board encourages members to respond to the Gospel through the gift of their time, abilities, and financial resources. Their work involves year-round education supplemented by an annual spring *Time and Talent* emphasis and a fall pledge drive. Two members serve as coordinators of volunteers and report to this board. Meets at 7 p.m., first Tuesday.

- **Board of Property**

This six-member board oversees short- and long-term maintenance and improvement of our facilities. The custodians work closely with this committee. Meets at 7 p.m., first Monday.

MEMORIAL FURNISHINGS COMMITTEE. This nine-member committee regularly updates a list of appropriate memorial gifts and makes suggestions for the utilization of special monetary gifts (memorials, funerals, etc.). Reports annually to the Board of Property and the congregation.

- **Board of Music and Worship**

This nine-member board oversees all aspects of congregational worship, seeking constantly to enhance worship. It coordinates choirs and organists, and arranges for lay readers, cantors, and temple talks. The board monitors the sound system and the quality of our radio broadcast (10:30 a.m. Sundays on WOMT).

Representatives of ushers, banner makers, lay readers, greeters, organists, Altar Guild, and Deacons report to this board. Meets at 7:30 p.m., second Monday.

- **Board of Christian Servanthood**

This board promotes and helps to carry out our Christian mission through service to the congregation, the community, and the world. Examples of service in these areas include:

Service to the congregation

CHAPEL COMMUNION. Held twice yearly for those unable to attend regular worship services.

BREW CREW. Preparation of coffee for fellowship between services.

RIDES TO CHURCH.

Service to the community

FOOD PANTRY. Canned goods and other nonperishable food items for distribution through the Salvation Army may be dropped off in either of two receptacles at the church.

MEALS ON WHEELS. Members deliver meals to the homebound four weeks each year.

SUNDAY SUPPER. We participate with other congregations to offer a monthly meal (as well as a ride if necessary) to those in need.

PETER'S PANTRY. We participate in this community effort to provide perishable food to the needy.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY. As a covenant congregation, we contribute financial and human resources annually. A good number of homes in our area have been refurbished through this effort.

Service to the world

MISSIONARY FOR A DAY. A three-Sunday drive is conducted during Lent to raise funds to help support Jim and Carol Sack, our missionaries in Japan.

WORLD HUNGER APPEAL. Held annually at Thanksgiving

THIRD WORLD CRAFTS. Three times a year, a congregational sale provides an outlet for items made in Third World countries.

MISSION '90 SUPPORT. Financial and other support is provided to two ministries which are linked with First Lutheran: 1) St. Thomas congregation in Bealeton, VA, 2) the Western Diocese of the ELC of South Africa. We are also connected with a partner congregation of our East Central Wisconsin Synod, Bethel Lutheran Church of Oconto Falls.

The Board of Christian Servanthood welcomes new projects. Meets at 6:30 p.m., first Tuesday.

- **Board of Personnel**

This board plans for and oversees all non-volunteer personnel needs of the church. It serves as an advocate for staff and as a liaison between congregation and staff. Meets at 7 p.m., first Tuesday.

- **Board of Christian Education**

This board exists to plan, supervise, coordinate, and evaluate educational programs that witness to Christ and equip the baptized for the work of ministry. The purpose of Christian education is to help individuals in the community of faith integrate the Gospel into the way they live. The Board of Christian Education meets at 7 p.m., first Tuesday.

Various committees and positions enable the board to do its work. These include:

ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE. Plans and promotes all adult education opportunities at First Lutheran. These include Sunday forums and occasional weekly offerings. A Bethel Bible Steering Committee reports to this committee.

SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITTEE. This committee is responsible for the operation of the Sunday School from preschool to grade six. The committee has responsibility for curriculum, staff, students, equipment, attendance, and activities.

First Lutheran offers the following Sunday School opportunities (September through May):

Three-, four- and five-year-olds: Class and chapel service held during the 8:30 a.m. Sunday worship service.

Grades one through six: Class held Sundays from 9:30-10:20 a.m.

CONFIRMATION MINISTRY COMMITTEE. This committee coordinates and oversees the confirmation program and aids the volunteer confirmation coordinator in developing the philosophy and planning the program. In all grades, study is supplemented with retreats, youth rallies, and musical events. Ninth grade classes begin with a meal provided by parents.

First Lutheran offers the following confirmation times (September through May):

Grades seven and eight: 6:30-7:45 p.m., Wednesdays; optional class

9:30-10:20 a.m. Sunday mornings

Grade nine: 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesdays

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE. VBS is held for a week each June (8:30 a.m.-12 noon). Highlights for four-year-olds through sixth graders are worship, study, play, special projects, an activity center, and a fellowship night for parents.

LIBRARY. This approximately 15-member committee is responsible for processing new books, some repairs, and for the scheduling of librarians to staff the library on Sunday mornings. Our church library contains a fine collection of books for check-out Sunday mornings or weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Video cassettes and audio tapes may be checked out on Sunday mornings.

CAMP AMBASSADOR. Promotes church camping and the many programs offered by Crossways Camping Ministries. A Church Camp Sunday is held early in the new year to encourage young people to register for summer camp. Hundreds of our members have participated in confirmation and family camping, as well as retreats.

NURSERY. Provides child care during the 8:30 a.m. worship service and other selected times.

CRADLE ROLL. Provides books and pamphlets to parents of newborn infants.

- **Board of Christian Fellowship**

This board initiates and coordinates congregational fellowship events. It is responsible for the Rally Day picnic, Holy Hill fellowship events, church family nights, receptions, and similar special events. The Contemporary Literature group, fellowship group (presently inactive), and baseball team report to this board. Meets as scheduled.

- **Board of Finance**

This board manages church funds, prepares the congregational budget, maintains financial records, and makes recommendations to the Church Council. The board works with the bookkeeper and oversees four three-person counting teams which meet at Associated Bank one Monday each month. This board meets as scheduled.

Additional Organizations

- **ELCA Women of First Lutheran.** This organization supports the mission of our church. It is governed by a five-person coordinating committee. Some of its activities include a salad luncheon, mission projects (making quilts, layettes, and sewing kits; collecting soap and clothing for Lutheran World Relief; rummage sales). This group often arranges a mother-daughter banquet and women's retreat. In addition, four circles meet monthly for Bible study and fellowship.
- **Endowment Trust Fund Committee.** This committee establishes new ministries and stewardship opportunities additional to the general operation of the congregation. Members are elected at the April congregational meeting to serve rotating three-year terms.
- **Pastoral Care Committee.** With the assistance of the pastors, this committee monitors worship attendance, communion participation, and the financial giving of members. Its purpose is to aid in the care of members by identifying early patterns of inactivity.
- **Nominating Committee.** This six-person committee is comprised of two council members and four congregational members who are elected at the January congregational meeting. The Nominating Committee recruits members for Church Council, the Endowment Trust Fund Committee, as well as delegates for various assemblies and church-wide organizations.
- **Auditing Committee.** This committee is appointed annually by the Church Council to audit the fiscal records of the congregation. It reports its findings at the January congregational meeting. The committee also regularly reviews existing insurance coverage.