



# THE VOICE

Making disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation of the world.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH / DECEMBER 2021



## *Shop Gifts of Hope December 4 and 5*

BROWSE THE DIGITAL CATALOG AT:  
[HTTPS://ONLINE.FLIPBUILDER.COM/ZBFU/NVZT/](https://online.flipbuilder.com/ZBFU/NVZT/)

Shop in-person or online for amazing holiday gifts that give back to your community and world at the Gifts of Hope Alternative Hope Market on December 4 and 5. The market is a wonderful opportunity for you to purchase a gift for a friend or loved one that gives again to others in need. There are tangible gifts, such as hot pads, jewelry, embroidered towels, palm crosses or Fair Trade products and that are made locally or globally. Purchase a non-tangible gift and then give a card telling the story of the gift.

This year's market sees the return of favorites from last year like Mission Marketplace, Fair Trade, ELCA Good Gifts, Empowered by Light, Matt Talbot Kitchen and Gotta Be Me and eight new partners debuting like Water Comes to Life (Kenya), Every Child Counts (Tanzania), Dimensions Education Program, Centerpointe, Lincoln Literacy, PFLAG, Support for Haiti and AMMPARO. This year's collaborations with local, regional and international groups reflect First Lutheran's commitment to welcoming all and striving for peace and justice in the world.

The Gifts of Hope market is an in-person and online, interactive experience. Browse the Gifts of Hope  
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## Dimensions Kids Discovering Each New Season

BY MICHELLE ZIMMER; [DIMENSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM](#)

We know the seasons are changing as the classroom cubbies and hooks start filling up all the cold weather gear. We go outside every day, and many times more than once. For teachers this means making sure that each child has on what they need to keep them warm. This takes incredibly dedicated and patient teachers! Not only are they helping children get all that gear on (and off), but also teaching them to do it themselves! It makes it all worthwhile when you hear those squeals of joy as children are



*Four toddlers are reading books in a new cozy area after lunch. They sit close to each other while independently observing pictures and words in their own books.*

discovering what each new season might bring and especially when that first snow falls!

## Shop Gifts of Hope December 4 and 5 (cont)

(cont from page 1) [digital catalog](#) and learn the purpose and work of each organization and the stories behind each gift by watching the videos and visiting the websites of the non-profits featured. Perhaps you will want to be involved as a volunteer or offer support in other ways throughout the year. There's options for every budget and interest. 100% of each gift is donated to the programs.

Prepare your shopping list and shop online starting at 8:00 am on Saturday, December 4, and ending at 10:00 pm on Sunday, December 5. Or, shop in-person at the market on Sunday, December 5, from 9:00 am-Noon at First Lutheran where you can hear the stories behind each program first hand.

Thank you for participating in this year's Gifts of Hope by purchasing gifts and taking the time to educate yourself and others about these life-giving groups. Please share the [digital catalog](#) with your family and friends and invite them to also give gifts that give twice this holiday season.

[www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)

### Adult Forum

Sundays; 9:30-10:30 am; Chapel & Zoom

Info: [connie.kisling@gmail.com](mailto:connie.kisling@gmail.com)

Recordings at <https://vimeo.com/flclincoln>

December 5 – *Intergenerational Faith Formation Event* – "Advent" is the word of the month.

December 12 – *The Call Process*; Pastor Erin Heidelberg.

December 19 – *Awareness of Christianity in Other Places (Like Brazil)* – Fabianne Tavares Gondim, First Lutheran member. (This session will not be recorded.)

December 26 – *The Music of Christmas* – Priscilla & Patrick Hayden-Roy, First Lutheran members. Ever wonder why we sing music at Christmastime or where those carols come from? Learn where the tradition of carols started and sing a few of your favorites.

**Bible Studies** - Tuesdays 5:45 pm and Wednesdays 10:45 am; Zoom & In-Person

See the article on page 5 for our special Advent Bible Study series.

Info: [pastorsusanna@flclincoln.org](mailto:pastorsusanna@flclincoln.org)

**Coffee Talk** - Mondays; 1:30 pm; In-Person; New Day Coffee (4131 Pioneer Woods)

Info: [sharon@flclincoln.org](mailto:sharon@flclincoln.org)

**A Few Good Men Bible Study** - Tuesdays; 7:00 am; Zoom

Info: [rockwell@windstream.net](mailto:rockwell@windstream.net)

**Faith to Go!** - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays; 6:30 am; Zoom

Info: [tlbeermann@hotmail.com](mailto:tlbeermann@hotmail.com)

**Gather and Gab** - Thursdays; 8:00 pm; Zoom

Info: [sharon@flclincoln.org](mailto:sharon@flclincoln.org)

**Saturday with the Guys** - 2nd Saturday; 8:00 am; Zoom

Info: [jim.kisling@gmail.com](mailto:jim.kisling@gmail.com)

**Women's Bible Study Circles** - Varying times and dates

Info: [cyndi@flclincoln.org](mailto:cyndi@flclincoln.org)

## *Intergenerational Gathering to Explore "Advent"*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5; 9:30 AM; ACTIVITY CENTER

INFO: [SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

Advent is a season of waiting and hoping. Join us for conversation on Advent traditions you have participated in and how you and your family get ready for Jesus' birth. We will also make Advent crafts together. Please join us as all ages - from our youngest to our oldest - are welcome!

### *FaithTrek: What is Advent?*

SUNDAYS; 9:30-10:30 AM

INFO: LINDSEY BOYLE; [BOYLE.LINDSEY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BOYLE.LINDSEY@GMAIL.COM)

All kids and families, ages 3- 5th grade, are invited to FaithTrek on Sundays in December when we will answer the question, "What is Advent?" The month will begin with the intergenerational gathering on December 5 in the Activity Center. On December 12 and 19 we will meet in the Upper Room for more Advent learning and exploring! We will not meet on December 26 or January 2, but plan to join us when we reconvene on January 9.

### *Middle & High School Learning*

SUNDAYS; 9:30-10:30 AM

INFO: [SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

Middle and high school youth will meet on December 5 in the Activity Center for the intergenerational gathering. On December 12 and 19 we will explore, "Advent", our word of the month. We will meet in the Youth Room, which is located on the Blue Level Room #1 (bottom floor). We will not meet on December 26 and January 2 so you can enjoy the holiday season with family.

### *Confirmation: Dinner + Learning*

DECEMBER 1 & 15; 6:00 PM

INFO: [SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

During the month of December, we will explore and have conversations about, "Who is the Holy Spirit?". Our time together will be abbreviated as we will attend the Advent mid-week worship services as a group.

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## *The Good and The Bad of the Pandemic*



During November's intergenerational gathering, the participants of all ages shared their negatives and positives of living through the pandemic.

Here are a few of the negatives that were shared:

- Couldn't eat in restaurants.
- No hugs.
- My uncle died.
- Shortage of food items and essentials in grocery stores.
- Missed in-person worship.
- Fear of friends or family getting severely ill.
- Not able to gather with extended family for holidays and special events.
- Less travel.
- Couldn't play soccer with friends.
- Divided people. (cont on page 6)



## *Holden Evening Prayer Advent Mid-Week Worship*

This Advent season we will explore God's ongoing work of renewing all things, particularly our stories, our days, our spirits and our ways through weekly devotions, Bible studies, hands-on activities and Sunday and mid-week worship. God is actually up to something from morning to night each day of every season of the year in our lives. He is renewing, redeeming, refreshing, reenergizing, reinventing - to make all things new with us and through us!

Join us for mid-week worship with Holden Evening Prayer each Wednesday in Advent in the Chapel and hear from fellow First Lutheran family about God's renewing work in their own lives. The weekly evening worship service will also be livestreamed to our [Facebook page](#). Advent devotions will also be emailed weekly on Sundays.

## *A Blue Christmas Service*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19; 4:00 PM; CHAPEL  
INFO: [PASTORERIN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:PASTORERIN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

The holiday season is hard for those whose hearts are hurting. You are not alone. Blue Christmas is a gentle, contemplative service for those who are carrying pain or loss during this season of celebration. Join us for a time of reflective prayer, listening to the comforting words of scripture and praying for God's presence in our lives.

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## *Celebrate the Birth of Jesus at Christmas Worship*

Christmas Eve - Join us for worship on this holy night. At 3:30, 5:30 and 7:30 pm we will present Carols, Communion and Candlelight with organ, bells, brass, children and adult choirs and all the traditional Christmas carols you have come to love! Our Christmas Eve Reflective Service in the Chapel at 9:30 pm with string instruments, guitar and piano will end with candle lighting and Silent Night. The 5:30 pm Christmas Eve service will also be livestreamed to our [Facebook page](#).

Christmas Day - Our Christmas morning worship at 10:00 am in the Chapel will be a simple morning prayer service with scripture, prayers and a brief homily. We will not have 5:30 pm worship on this day.

Sunday, December 26- Join us as we continue celebrating Christmas with readings, carols and Holy Communion during our regular worship times.

## *A Season of Joyful Waiting: Advent Bible Studies*

TUESDAYS; DECEMBER 7, 14 & 21; 5:45 PM; UPPER ROOM/ZOOM

WEDNESDAYS; DECEMBER 8, 15 & 22; 10:45 AM; BLUE 3/ZOOM

During the season of Advent, we are offering two different bible studies to deepen your spiritual life for the three weeks leading up to Christmas. On Tuesday evenings we will visit the two nativity stories and then the genealogies of Jesus (full of hidden gems). On Wednesday mornings we will dive into scriptural reflections focusing on our Advent theme - "Making All Things New". You are welcome to join us at anytime during the three-week period. Both studies will be available on Zoom. Contact [Cyndi](#) for the links to join online.

## *Advent-to-Go Boxes Arrive on Doorsteps of Families*

It began with a parent's concern during First Lutheran's member-to-member Care Call outreach a couple of months ago: "...I have attended church at least weekly all of my life and, thus, this time away from in-person services makes me feel worried about our child's spiritual development. We have devotions, read Bible stories and pray, but I still worry. We look forward to the time when our child can be vaccinated so we can come back to church in a more normal way."

That's it. That's how Advent-to-Go began at First Lutheran Church.

As an expression of the congregation's care for the needs of young families and children, volunteers gathered resources for observing Advent at home. They assembled and personally delivered pizza boxes filled with Advent supplies to the homes of families with infants and young children. One volunteer drove 115 miles in one day to the front doors of member homes in Waverly, Hickman, Bennet, Palmyra, as well as all over Lincoln. In addition, thick mailer packets surprised families of 3rd-5th graders. A total of 60 households, many with more than one child, received an Advent-to-Go surprise.



Every household received devotional materials and supplies for making a paper Advent wreath and candles, a playlist of Advent and Christmas music, a nativity set, art supplies for Advent-related projects and special messages from Pastor Erin and Pastor Susanna. Boxes for infants-7 year olds also contained Fair Trade Advent calendars, shakers for the toddler percussion section during Advent music time, a board book or Advent booklet, art projects and a Funfetti cupcake or cookie mix + streamers for celebrating Jesus' birthday.

This is an example of member-to-member care. A sign of God's gracious love among us.

## *Parking Lot Family Christmas Caroling*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12; 4:00 PM; PARKING LOT

Come and sing along to your favorite Christmas carols from our parking lot or the safety of your car as our Master of Ceremony, Jeff Gruenke, and Becca Simley leads us in joyful holiday singing! It is a perfect holiday activity to enjoy as a family and with your friends! Help us fill the parking lot with song and cheerful holiday spirit! [Click here](#) to check out the fun that was had at last year's parking lot caroling!

[www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)



## December Worship Music

INFO: MASKAO BACON; [MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

Our worship music schedule in December includes:

December 5 - Duos (8:15 am & 10:45 am)

December 12 - Chorister Orff Ensemble, Treble Vocal Ensemble (8:15 am) / Adult Choir (10:45 am)

December 19 - Spirit Ringers, String Ensemble, Adult Choir (10:45 am)

December 24 - Children's Choirs & Strings (3:30 pm) / Brass, Spirit Ringers (5:30 pm) / Brass, Adult Choir (7:30 pm) / Strings, Guitar and Piano (9:30 pm)

There will be no rehearsal for the Adult and Children's Choirs December 29 - January 5.



## Wanted: Chrismons

Chrismons are the beautiful white and gold ornaments made in the shapes of

Christian symbols that adorned our Sanctuary Christmas trees in the 60's and 70's. We have been unable to locate those original Chrismons, but are hoping that some of you may still have some. They were also given to children at their baptism. If you have Chrismons you would be willing to donate or loan to the 150th Anniversary Committee, contact [judybatterman@gmail.com](mailto:judybatterman@gmail.com).

[www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)

## Give Poinsettias in Honor or Memory of a Loved One

INFO: [CYNDI@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:CYNDI@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

First Lutheran will be decorating with poinsettias for Christmas worship services and would welcome your contribution of a plant to honor your loved ones and to make it possible. Please contact Cyndi or fill out the form found in the worship bulletins. Each poinsettia is \$9. The deadline is Sunday, December 19. You may take the poinsettia home after the 7:30 pm Christmas Eve worship service.

## The Good and The Bad of the Pandemic (cont)

(cont from page 3) Here are some of the positives:

- Explored more parks and trails by staying outdoors.
- I found out I didn't miss some of the things I was doing.
- Heard great speakers, attended workshops and classes and other congregations via Zoom.
- Selfless medical personnel.
- Learned new computer skills.
- More time with my kids.
- Less busy.
- Got to spend more time at home and enjoy our surroundings.
- Slower pace of life.
- More family time.
- Focused on reading the Bible, prayer and journaling each day.
- Working from home.
- Learned to ride a bike!

What would your positive and negatives be?

## *Lovingkindness Meditation*

INFO: [MICHELLE MAINQUIST; DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM](mailto:MICHELLE.MAINQUIST@DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM)

This meditation helps us to feel kindness toward ourselves and toward others. This may be especially helpful when we are feeling stressed or impatient, including during the holidays.

Set aside about 15 minutes. Sit comfortably. Relax your body. Soften your heart. Let go of all plans and thoughts. Breathe gently and recite the following phrases toward yourself.

May I be filled with lovingkindness.

May I be safe from inner and outer dangers.

May I be well in body and mind.

May I be at ease and happy.

Repeat as many times as you like. Allow the feelings to permeate your body and mind. Repeat this practice daily for several weeks. When you feel you have established lovingkindness feelings toward yourself, focus the practice on others. Meditate on yourself for 5-10 minutes, then choose someone you feel kindness toward and meditate on the words. Eventually you may want to add others into the mediation, including those who are difficult for you, even your enemies.

## *Care Call Joys and Concerns Have Been Heard*

INFO: [PASTORERIN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:PASTORERIN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

We are grateful for the team who conducted member-to-member Care Calls over the last few months. We are also grateful for the conversations so many of you had with these Care Callers! Thank you for your heartfelt comments, responses, questions and encouragement. What happens now? Know that your pastors and Congregation Council have received the information gathered during these conversations. They are taking those responses seriously, praying about them and discerning where God is leading us in ministry in light of these conversations.

[Read a Summary Report of the Care Calls](#)



### *Meet Our Newest Members*

Let's offer our warmest welcome to our newest members who joined First Lutheran on November 21: Joshua Starkey, Bill and Diane Herrmann, Betty Wilken and Jim Overcash. We welcome them as fellow members of the Body of Christ and into the mission we share. Claimed at the font, united at Christ's table, and strengthened by Christ's word, we go together to proclaim the good news and do the work of God's kingdom. Welcome to First Lutheran Church!

You can learn more about our new members by [clicking here](#).

[www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)

## *High School & Middle School Youth Group*

DECEMBER 5 AND 19; 6:00-8:00 PM  
INFO: [SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG](mailto:SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG)

December 5: Escape Room designed by Jenna Troutman

December 19: Accompaniment Trip Prep and Christmas Party

In November we continued our preparation for next summer's accompaniment trip when we looked at God's boundless love in creation. We read Psalm 104:1 – 34 and discovered this poetic rendition of the Genesis creation stories and then read *Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood and Cheng-Khee Chee. If you would like to listen to the story, visit <https://youtu.be/Oitq-Uk43mE> or you can find the book in our children's library on the blue level under the stairs. We also shared a creation litany together and wrote our own litany before closing in prayer.

## *Memorial Gifts Given to First Lutheran Endowment Fund*

VISIT [WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/ENDOWMENT](http://WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/ENDOWMENT)

Thank you to the following individuals for their donations to the First Lutheran Endowment Fund as All Saints Day and Veterans Day Remembrances: Judy Bailey, Linda Bogenreif, Phyllis Frickel, Tiara and Jason Kuhlmann, Terry and Cindy Lander, Jan Wigodsky, Jane Zatechka, Lana Peterson, Donice Kasapar, Megan Morrow, Greg, and Kristi Fisher and boys and Cherie Johnson.

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## *150th Anniversary Celebration is Back On*

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2022  
INFO: JUDY BAILEY; [JKBAILEY47@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JKBAILEY47@GMAIL.COM)

It's time to save the date of April 24, 2022, on your calendar for First Lutheran's 150th Anniversary Celebration! You may remember back to how our original celebration was so rudely interrupted in April 2020 by the pandemic. But, we are now looking forward and planning to celebrate our past and think about our future as we are armed with a new pastor and a new appreciation of what it means to be church. Details about the day and its events will be forthcoming, as well as other learning events leading up to the day!



## *Year End Reports and Giving*

- End-of-the-year reports are due from Committee Chairs and staff to [cyndi@flclincoln.org](mailto:cyndi@flclincoln.org) by noon Friday, December 17.
- Bios and photos are due to [cyndi@flclincoln.org](mailto:cyndi@flclincoln.org) from all nominees for Congregational Council, Nominating Committee, delegates to Synod Assembly and the Endowment Board by noon Friday, December 17.
- 2022 offering envelopes will be available for pickup at the church starting Saturday, December 18.
- Gifts to be included in 2021, must be in the church office by 4:00 pm on Friday, December 31.

## *500 Can Challenge Met Goal and Beyond*



The Nebraska Thrivent Chapter held a "500 Can Challenge" during November. If First Lutheran could collect 500 food items for the Lincoln Food Pantry, Thrivent would give an additional \$500 to the Pantry. First Lutheran not only met the 500 goal, but exceeded it with 840 total food items! The shelves at the Food Pantry will now be fuller because of your generosity! Thank you!

## *Noisy Offering to Support Platte Basin Timelapse*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15; DURING WORSHIP  
INFO: [WWW.PLATTEBASINTIMELAPSE.COM](http://WWW.PLATTEBASINTIMELAPSE.COM)

Our Noisy Offering in December will be given to the Platte Basin Timelapse, a project supported by Michael Forsberg.

Michael shares: "It was my pleasure to be the Adult Forum speaker at First Lutheran on October 31 and especially because YOU asked me! You are very kind to offer this funding opportunity in my name and I greatly appreciate First Lutheran's passionate, committed and generous efforts to our community and our shared world. The source I would like to identify as the recipient of the Noisy Offering will be familiar: Platte Basin Timelapse (PBT) which is a partnership with the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and now anchored in the School of Natural Resources on East Campus. PBT is dedicated to educating students and the public about where our water comes from, documents a watershed in motion that aids in scientific research and is building an increasingly diverse community through innovative multimedia storytelling."

November's Noisy Offering of \$55.76 was given to the Lutheran Food Pantry. Thank you for your generosity!

## *Sponsoring One Refugee Family Turns Into Three*

INFO: TRISH FLURY; [TRISHLINC@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:TRISHLINC@HOTMAIL.COM) OR BETTINA ROUNDEY; [BKROUNDEY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BKROUNDEY@GMAIL.COM)

First Lutheran's Welcoming Refugees project began as an idea in September. Many of us were haunted by national news stories of the horror playing out as Afghanistan fell to the Taliban. We pledged to help an Afghan family. A refugee planning team was formed in October and they took a leap of faith in deciding to sponsor two families, one as soon as possible and the second later. Now, as November comes to a close, we are simultaneously supporting three families who are all close-knit members of an extended family.

Thanks to the support of our generous congregation, we have fully furnished one apartment with the household items gathered. We partnered with Lincoln Family Services to furnish a second apartment. *(cont on page 10)*

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## *Sponsoring One Refugee Family Turns Into Three (cont)*

(cont from page 9) Both of those families have now moved to their apartments. The third family continues in temporary housing at a local hotel, with plans to rally the First Lutheran moving crew again in early December.

We can be proud of the work we've come together to do. However, we know these families will need our ongoing support for successful resettlement. We feel a relief that they are now in safe housing and so do they. Still, they feel anxiety that the apartments of the other relatives are not nearby. Possessions, ideas, and methods we take for granted are so unfamiliar to them and feel so strange. They will continue to need our hands, our hearts and our prayers.

In short, our plan to sponsor one Afghan family turned into two, then three – though they are really three units of one family. When First Lutheran's Refugee Coordinators, Trish Flury and Bettina Roundey, first went to the hotel lobby to meet our sponsored family, two twentysomething Afghan men got off the elevator. They were confused and wondered, "Which one is 'ours'?" It turns out that both were. There's a saying, "People plan, God laughs." God may not be laughing at the evolution of our plan – or even surprised – but we imagine his smile at our progress. We trust that he is guiding us on this journey.

## *A Double Donation to the Lutheran Food Pnatry*

INFO: [MARK WEMHOFF; MARKWEMHOFF@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MARKWEMHOFF@GMAIL.COM)  
VISIT [WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/STEWARDSHIP](http://WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/STEWARDSHIP)

Because so many members made the commitment to share their gifts and resources to the ministry of First Lutheran Church for 2022, it helped us achieve our stewardship goal by October 30. As a result, we were able to double our \$500 donation to the Lutheran Food Pantry, for a total of \$1000!

If you haven't completed your 2022 Discipleship Plan or Pledge, it's never too late! You can conveniently [do it online!](#)



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*Each person is a unique creation of God and, through grace, is a child of God. The people of First Lutheran Church welcome all because God welcomes all, without regard for race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status, physical or mental challenges, imprisonment, addictions, socio-economic circumstances, or anything else that too often divides us. First Lutheran Church is a spiritual community that celebrates the gifts of God that can empower us to engage in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we work and live. Our unity is in Christ.*

The Voice is a monthly publication of First Lutheran Church - 1551 S. 70th Street - Lincoln, NE 68506 - 402.488.0919 - [www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)