

### Church Council Meeting

Monday, Dec. 11th, 2017  
at 7:00 PM.



### Stewardship Meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 13th, 2017  
at 6:30 PM.



### Poinsettia Orders

Poinsettia order forms for 2017 are now available in the weekly Bulletin Supplement or on the counter in the Narthex.  
Deadline: Sunday, December 17th.



### Worship Team Rehearsal

Monday, December 18th, 2017  
at 7:00 PM.



### Reminder...

THE DEADLINE FOR

Newsletter Submissions

IS WEDNESDAY, DEC. 20TH, 2017



## Usher Scheduler

An Usher Scheduler is needed to share the work load with Bob & Gloria Oscarson.  
If you are interested, please contact the Church Office.



## A Note From Pastor Glen

Blessed Advent to All!

Lots of changes this Christmas at First Lutheran. Different pastor, saying goodbye to a couple staff, also. Change is part of life.

The way people celebrate Christmas has changed over the centuries, too. Until the 4th century AD, Christmas was celebrated at various times of the year. So why not celebrate Christmas on Christ's birthday? The answer is simple: no one knows when it was. Christ was probably born in summer. Why? In the Bible Mary and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem for a census. Well, the Romans were no fools. No one traveled in the rainy winter season if they could help it. We think of Palestine as being a desert country, but it has driving rain at times in winter, and with temps not far above freezing.

So why is Christmas celebrated on December 25th, and not in July? Is there an important reason? Not exactly. You see, early in the 4th century after Christ, the Roman Empire had a civil war. Two halves of the great Roman Army were fighting each other. One of the generals who was trying for the throne was Constantine. Before a key battle Constantine had a dream. He saw a cross in the sky with the words: "by this sign you will conquer." He put the first two letters of Christ's name on his shield and won the battle. When Constantine became Emperor, he made the Roman Empire Christian. Big Roman festivals took place around December 21st, so the date for Christmas was moved permanently to December 25th, to replace festivals the Rome had celebrated earlier. It's been that date ever since.

Not only has the date of celebrating Christmas changed, but also many customs have. We think things like gift-giving and nativity scenes have been around forever, but it's not true. Gifts were first given to the poor at Christmastime around 800 years ago. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century was the first to arrange people and animals into a nativity scene. Traveling around Assisi singing songs about God, Francis was also the first Christmas caroler. The Christmas tree did not come indoors until the 16th century. Silent Night was composed in 1818 and wasn't translated into English until 1863. The first Christmas card dates back to England, around 1830. These are good changes, changes which enhanced the joy of the season.

The problem for me comes with other recent Christmas changes. I'm sad to see Christmas commercials in early October, two months earlier than in years past. Christmas is being transformed from a holiday of joy and giving into a holiday of getting ever more and better presents. Christmas is more and more a secular holiday, where Christians are less and less able to celebrate publicly its true meaning. Yet even so there is hope. When the children of Israel first heard the news of a savior, they were in bondage. Today we are free yet we feel the need of a savior, especially at Christmas time. I am thankful that the Lutheran church, and especially First Lutheran Church remembers the true meaning of Christmas.

But not all recent changes in Christmas are bad ones. In America these days there are signs of another Christmas change. People are realizing that enough is enough. Not long ago, on the radio was a program on how not to fall into the trap of doing too much and spending too much. And along with that wise advice came a suggestion: take the focus of Christmas off ourselves and make it others. I'm not talking about other people in our family. The program suggested that we make Christmas a time when we work and give to others outside our family. We could spend less time decorating and instead work for a food shelf or a soup kitchen. We could send a gift to a person's favorite charity in their honor. We can show our family how important giving is, by giving to others outside our family, those truly in need.

We can't do all at once. We need to discuss it with our family first or there will be problems. I'm not suggesting eliminating family presents entirely. What I'm suggesting is including special gifts and work for others as part of our Christmas tradition. I guarantee if we do this Christmas will be even merrier!

~ Pastor Glen

## W/ELCA Meeting



Sunday, December 3rd, 2017  
at 10:00 AM.

## Youth Ministry News

The Youth Mission Trip Youth will be serving a Pancake & Sausage Breakfast  
Sunday, December 3rd, 2017 during Coffee Fellowship.



Wednesday, December 6th, 2017: 5:30 PM Confirmation Class  
Wednesday, December 13th, 2017: 5:30 PM Confirmation Class  
Wednesday, November 20th, 2017: 5:30 PM Confirmation Class  
Wednesday, December 27th, 2017: NO Confirmation Class

Youth Bake Sale  
Sunday, December 10th, 2017.

\* Please have cookies to the church  
before 12 Noon on Saturday, December 9th, 2017.

No need to package as we are doing a "you pick your dozen" sale so you can pick as many of any kind that you want.



The new deadline for submitting recipes for the Youth Cookbook Fundraiser is Sunday, December 10th, 2017.

Cookbook Gift Certificates will be available that day.

## Ballots

If you haven't filled out your Ballot, please remember to fill out only ONE ballot per member & place in the box on the counter in the Narthex before Sunday, December 10th, 2017.



## Worship & Music Committee Meeting



Monday, December 11th, 2017  
at 6:00 PM

## Options for Women

Is in need of Baby Wipes!  
Purchase & donate unused packages of Baby Wipes and drop off in the bin in the Narthex by Sunday, December 31st, 2017.



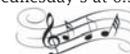
## Women's Bible Study

WEDNESDAY'S AT 1:30 PM.  
Women's Bible Study



## Senior Choir

Wednesday's at 6:30 PM.



## Bell Choir

Wednesdays at 7:30 PM.



## Ruth Circle

Dinner at the Grant House  
Thursday, December 7th, 2017  
at 6:00 PM.

Bible Study to follow at Shari Schlagel's.  
Please R.S.V.P. to Shari (320-358-3463) by Tuesday, December 5th, 2017 if you plan to attend.

Everyone is welcome!



## Finance Committee

Sunday, December 10th, 2017  
at 10:15 AM.

