



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

HOLIDAY PREVIEW & EDUCATION GUIDE

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE

-STILL THE WELCOME PLACE-

BUILDING HOURS AND OFFICE HOURS

M-THURS 8A-3P AND FRIDAY 8A-12P

PH 507.583.6621

EMAIL FIRSTLUTHOFFICE@YAHOO.COM

WEB FIRSTLUTHERANBP.COM

WINTER 2025

WORSHIP SUNDAYS @ 9AM

ALSO BY RADIO: KOWZ 100.9FM OR

VIDEO: [FACEBOOK.COM/FIRSTLUTHERANBP](https://facebook.com/FIRSTLUTHERANBP)

FULL ARCHIVE OF WORSHIP & EDUCATION
VIDEOS ON WEBSITE

First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie

434 First Street SW | firstlutheranbp.com

Christmas 2025

December 24

3pm with Worship Team and piano

5pm with Senior Choir and pipe organ

Children's Message, Holy Communion
and candlelighting at both services

December 25

9am Festival Worship

In Person Only & Holy Communion

December 28

9am Lessons & Carols



From The Senior Pastor

Build Up

*Therefore, encourage one another and **build up** each other, as indeed you are doing.*

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11

In this column, I want to focus my thoughts on our December 7 quarterly meeting.

Read the box above once more, please. It's small verse that says a lot. Within a hundred years of Jesus' life, the community has been tested *immensely*, but are building...in a society hostile or indifferent to their message... building up into a movement that eventually changed the globe.

Before our garden is planted, we get out the stakes for the tomatoes and peppers. It's late May/early June, and the plants we are going to set in the earth are barely six inches tall. Still, experience tells our family to have those stakes ready, because things change faster than you think—good weather, bad weather, *growth or damage*, can happen literally overnight. Gardeners are not staking plants for what they are *today*, but for what they're *going to be* in July & August.

Season after season, I see how **the church is often a lot more like a garden than it is a business.** Often, we invest in things not for what they *are*, but for what they're *becoming*.

I want our members to receive the Build Up theme of our 2025-26 Stewardship as an encouragement toward wise investment, facilitating growth upon a scaffolding the divine hand has laid.

Like many, I was part of the inaugural public concert in the BPHS Performing Arts Center in December. It was an unforgettable event for many reasons, but *especially* for the ways past, present and future intersected. All for the benefit of our community. It was one night that was decades—quite literally, *decades*—in the making.

At every quarterly meeting, there are the spreadsheets, line items, percentages of a budget. Fixed expenses have increased this time. Yet I pray also for a shared commitment **to building up**: to expecting God's presence in 2026.

Think about it. The youth event? Someone budgeted for it.

The new hearing loop? A family said yes.

Leadership on our council? People stepped up.

From the copy paper you're holding in your hands right now, to the photos you'll see on Facebook of students singing *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, it's all accomplished with the time, effort and dollars of volunteers and just a few dedicated staff. Even the community fund that helps families at Christmas exists because faithful people took responsibility in hopeful, practical ways...together and separately.

Therefore encourage one another and **build up** each other, as indeed you are doing. And trust that your part matters *more than you may realize*.



Thank you for the ways you participate, support and step forward. You strengthen what the Spirit is already doing in our congregation, and out in the world.

A blessed Advent and Merry Christmas to each of you. And, I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting January 25, 2026. Sure, it'll be the middle of winter--but we've got some gardening to admire!

Pastor Heidi

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Seasons Greetings!

As we reflect on the past year, we at First Lutheran have so much to be grateful for.

On behalf of our Church Council, we want to thank you all for your special gifts and talents that continue to make First Lutheran a great place to be and thrive!

Now that Advent is here, I think back to being a kid anticipating and preparing for the holiday moments—carols, cookie baking, making my “wish list” from the Sears Christmas Catalogue, and time with family and friends.

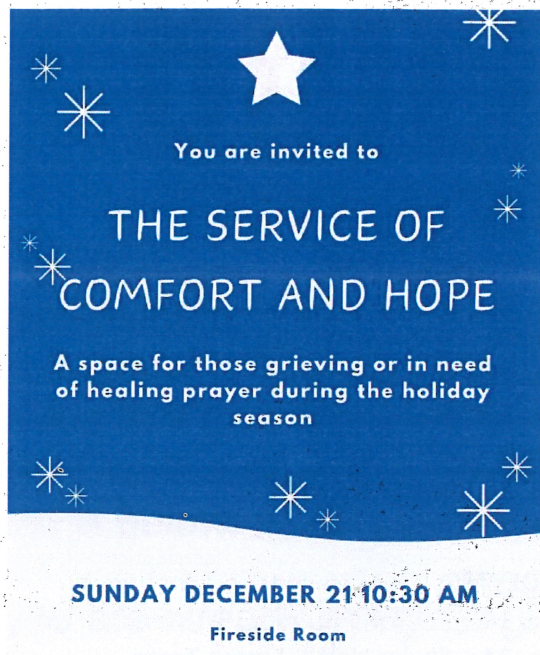
This Advent, I hope it brings you a time of peace, hopeful anticipation and joyful preparation for Jesus' birth.

We look forward to sharing this anticipation, joy and wonder with you all!

Blessings,

Diane Olson

CHURCH MINISTRIES



WOMEN'S BIBLE CIRCLE

will meet @ 9:30am on Dec. 17.

FLCW NEWS...ATTENTION QUILTERS

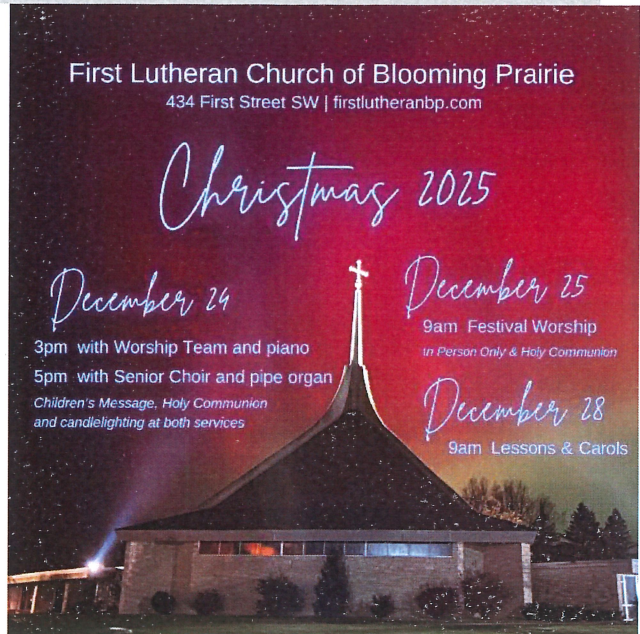
Quilting will begin Monday, January 5, 2026 @ 8:30am and continue every Monday through March. All women are invited to come and join in. **No sewing skills are needed.** We begin the day at 8:30am and continue until 3pm with coffee breaks, and "bring your own lunch". Materials for the quilts are always welcome including fabric pieces and sheets in good condition, even flannel sheets. Come and join in the fun and fellowship while providing service to others.

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR ALL COMMITTEES AND

BOARDS: Please make sure you know who is writing the annual report for your committee/board and have all reports to the church office by **Friday, January 9, 2026. The Annual Meeting will be Jan. 25 @ 10am.**

END-OF-YEAR OFFERINGS

Please note that your final offerings for this calendar year must be received in the church office no later than **Tuesday, December 30th** in order to be recorded in the calendar year 2025. Thank you for remembering the ministry of First Lutheran—all throughout the year.



Wednesday, December 24

3pm Worship Team with piano

5pm Senior Choir special music with pipe organ

Facebook Live. Radio pre-recorded

*both services with Children's Message, Candlelighting and Holy Communion

Thursday, December 25

9am Festival Worship In-person only with Holy Communion — No livestream radio or video.

All services on Christmas Eve & Day include Holy Communion

*Sunday, December 28th**

9am Lessons & Carols Service / dress is casual realtime Radio & Facebook Live

Please Remember: Winter church events, including worship, education, or meetings can be modified due to inclement weather. Decisions to cancel or postpone an event will be communicated via FlockNote, building signage, and Facebook.

TRAVEL SOUTH FOR THE WINTER?



If you do and would still like to receive your church mailings, please stop in, email, or call. (507.583.6621 or firstluthoffice@yahoo.com).

CHURCH MINISTRIES

2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

General Fund

Income YTD: \$302,298.26
Expenditures YTD (\$295,549.96)
Total: \$6,748.30

SERVICE LEADERS:

December

7-13 Laura Dale
14-20 Kaye Toquam
21-27 Joanne Sorenson
28-31 Bev Hoveland

January: Judy Bishop

February: Kaye Toquam

USHERS: December: Wayde Bishop, Larry Christianson, Doug Hillson, Matt Madsen

January: Tom Donnelly, Dwayne Gross, Linn Thoen, Matt Madsen, Scott Sherva

February: Rich Schwartz, Dwain Schultz, Mark Noble, Randy Klemmensen, David Streng

COMMUNION PREPARER: *(1st & 3rd Sundays)*

December 1 & 15 – Kaye Toquam

December: 24 @ 3pm Bev Hoveland
24 @ 5pm Kaye Toquam
25 @ 9am Mary Delzer

January: Joan Mast

February: Vikki Wacek

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Dec. 21-Cheri Krejci, Gwen Kubista, Greg Skillestad

Dec. 24 @ 3pm – Cindy Lindquist, Mark & Becky Noble

Dec. 24 @ 5pm –Holli Naatz, Barb Ruhter, Jennifer Milton

Dec. 25 @ 9am – Debb Bjornson, Pam Ingvalson, Suzi Burt

Jan. 4 – Bill Rinkenberger, Joanne Sorenson, Kaye Toquam

Jan. 18– Deb Wurst, Sadie Steele, Tammy Bordeaux

Feb. 1 – Barb Ruhter, Debb Bjornson, Judy Bishop

Feb. 15 – Ruth Earl, *looking for 2 volunteers*

LECTORS:

Dec. 21 – Pam Ingvalson

Dec. 24 @ 3pm – Mary Worke

Dec. 24 @ 5pm – Roger Sorenson

Dec. 28 – Jennifer Milton

Jan. 4 – Becky Noble

Jan. 11 – Jaclyn Schlichter

Jan. 18 – Roger Sorenson

Jan. 25 – Kaye Toquam

Feb. 1 – Mary Worke

Feb. 8 – Deb Wurst

Feb. 15 – Terri Zwiener

Feb. 22 – Ashley Boehnke

ACOLYTES:

Dec. 14 – Peyton Peterson, Trysten Perrigo

Dec. 21 – Skylar Valek, Emma Trom

Dec. 24@3pm – Maci Basness, Linkynn Doocy

Dec. 24@5pm –Raelynn Holdgrafer, Ethan Hullopeter

Dec. 28 – William Schultz, Cash Salinas

Jan. 4 – Paisley Wolf, Meredith Prestegard

Jan. 11 – Cora Stoen, Laila Ebeling

Jan. 18 – Chase Wangen, Max Wondra

Jan. 25 – Lyanne Hanenberger, Skylar Valek

Feb. 1 – Tucker Schneider, Kashton Witt

Feb. 8 – Emma Trom, Maci Basness

Feb. 15 – Peyton Peterson, Trysten Perrigo

Feb. 22 – Linkynn Doocy, Raelynn Holdgrafer

Coffee on Sundays is on a volunteer basis. The sign-up sheet is on the kitchen bulletin board. If no one has signed up you are welcome to make coffee, tend to it, and clean up afterwards.

We are also looking for volunteers to be communion servers, communion preparers, ushers or service group leaders. If you are interested, please call the church office and let us know (507.583.6621). If you have never done it before....that is okay! We will make sure you are given a short training so you feel comfortable.

USHERS: Extra help for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services is truly appreciated. *THANK YOU!*

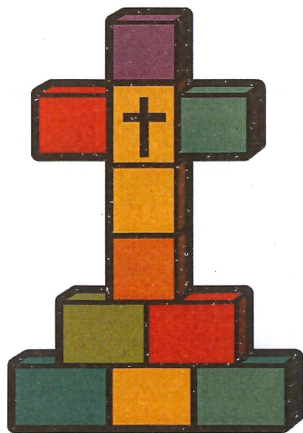
Don't forget to check out our bulletin boards for activities, dinners and fundraisers going on in our community and neighboring communities.

BUILD US UP

Build us up, Lord, build us up...ELW 670

Recurrent giving is a consistent and easy way to give to First Lutheran Church. It sustains the church each month! There are currently 49 households that give through Vanco. We are looking to increase that number this year. This is a great way to **Build Us Up!** *Sign Up* today! The QR code you need is below.

And if you are already a regular giver, *thank you!* We ask you to Build Us Up by *considering* adding \$5 OR 5% to your weekly giving. You may log into your Vanco account and make an increase of your choice at any time. Is it confusing? Call the church office on weekdays to request help editing a Vanco offering amount, designation, or frequency.



Watch for the Build Us Up tower in the narthex. The foundation blocks represent the current 49 households giving through Vanco. We will add more blocks to Build Us Up each time there is a new Vanco giver, and/or new volunteers.

Thank you and
SIGN UP! BUILD UP! PRAY UP!

your First Lutheran Church Stewardship Team

Deb Lindquist, Bri Masching, Stephanie Thorson, Whitnei Abel, Matt Madsen & chair, Ron Kubista





SECURE

Vanco is a PCI Level 1 service provider, which means your data is backed by the highest standard of security in the business. Another bonus is quick and free customer service through Vanco if there's an error (or a change of card).

ACCESSIBLE

With Vanco's online donation pages, First Lutheran givers can contribute from anywhere, on any device, making giving as easy and convenient as possible.

ESTABLISHED

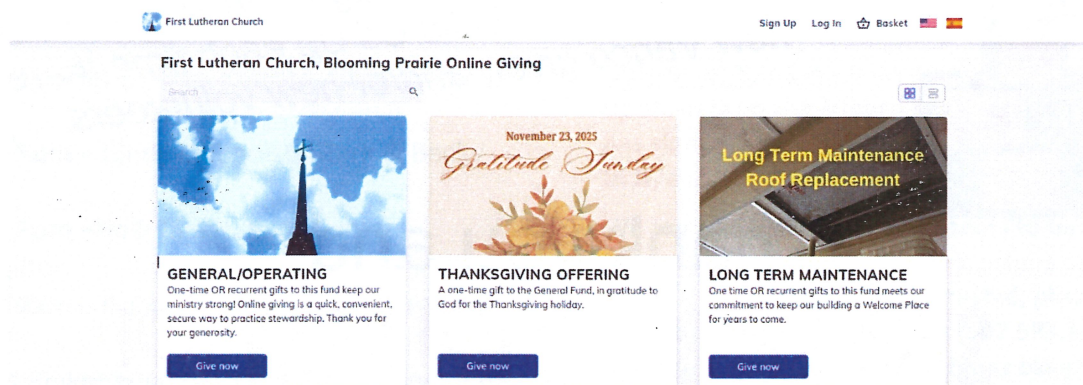
Vanco has been serving churches for over 20 years, with 25,000+ churches enrolled. First Lutheran has been working with Vanco (headquartered in Bloomington, MN) for 15+ years. We have never had a data breach in all that time.

VERSATILE

Givers have many donation options, such as major debit or credit cards including Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express and more. They can also use bank transfers or ACH. (Tip: using your bank routing number decreases the Merchant Service fee & makes your offering stretch farther!) You can choose one time or recurrent giving.

CONVENIENT

No more worries about forgotten checks at home or in the car, or visiting the ATM! Online giving ensures timely contributions *and* accurate quarterly statements. Tiles are updated to reflect our church's seasonal giving needs. Here's what our current giving page looks like:



First Lutheran Church (507) 583-6621 434 1st St SW, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

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To get started, use our QR code or visit firstlutheranbp.com/give

FROM YOUR VICE-PRESIDENT

Dear Church Family,

December seems to bring the comment "Where has the year gone?" It's already the middle of December and cold. This time of year means a very busy time when it can make us forget what Christmas is all about. The birth of Jesus Christ.

Our church provides us with many reminders such as activities our confirmation students are doing. Sunday school is actively preparing for their Christmas program, something to be enjoyed by all. A special thanks to all those that help with confirmation and Sunday school.

The Wednesday morning bible study is currently watching the series called "The Chosen", very interesting. Come and take part at 8am.

As we approach the end of December let us always remember why we celebrate Christmas.

God Bless,



Ron Kubista

Sunday School News! Hello December!! What a busy year it has been for all. On December 14th we had our Children's Christmas program. All of the students worked extremely hard on understanding their lines and practicing each week. You could see the growth of the children and the excitement they had. December is a time to spend with loved ones and cherish all those memories along the way. Along with singing carols, baking cookies, or just simply curling up on the couch with your favorite blanket and popcorn watching your favorite Christmas movie.

There will be no Sunday school on the 21, 28 and on January 4, this time we take for all of us to relax and spend time with family during this busy holiday season. **We will resume Sunday school on January 11, 2026, with 3rd grade bible milestone class on January 11 during Sunday school with parents.** We will not have Sunday school on January 18 and then on January 25th we will have third grade bible milestone during 9 AM worship.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year's!!

Tracy Madsen

From The Associate Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,



Dear Friends in Christ,

The next few months are exciting ones for our Youth! We are finishing up our Advent Faith Practices series before taking a brief break for

Christmas. It has been lovely to see the students take time to reflect on God's presence in their life. We will return to our regular confirmation schedule with lessons on the New Testament at 6:30pm on January 7, 2026!

Our most exciting youth event is also coming up in January. We will be SNOW TUBING on January 28. More details to come on that. February 18 is Ash Wednesday and confirmation students will once again be joining worship!

We are so excited for all the adventures the winter will bring knowing we are warm in the love of God!

Pastor Laurel



News from First Lutheran Cemetery: In September we had 14 trees removed from the cemetery as they were diseased and dying. We couldn't take a chance of any of them falling on headstones and doing damage. We will look at options for replacing them next spring or summer. Thank you!
Jennifer Wayne

The quarterly meeting took place on Dec 7, 2025 and we passed the 2026 budget. Additional copies are in the info rack in the narthex if you missed the meeting.

Holiday Preview & Ministry Guide

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DECEMBER MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

3, 10, 17 6:30PM MIDWEEK
ADVENT WORSHIP
CONFIRMATION FOLLOWS
14 BAKE SALE ALL MORNING
TEAM CHILDREN'S
PROGRAM WORSHIP
Worship 3 & 5pm Dec 24 & 9am Dec 25



21 10:30AM SERVICE
of COMFORT & HOPE

28 9AM SERVICE OF
LESSONS & CAROLS

30 2025 OFFERING DEADLINE

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH - THE WELCOME PLACE -

Sunday Schedule

Sunday Worship 9:00 am in person or on
KOWZ 100.9 FM & FB Live

In-person Education Hour 10:00 am – 10:50 am

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friday 8:00am – 12:00pm

Contact the Church Office 507.583.6621 phone

Emergency Phone Numbers

Pastor Heidi Heimgartner 507.583.2001 home
507.269.9056 cell

Pastor Laurel Meester 641.425.5921 cell

Gary Thorson 507.676.1050 cell

LATEST INFORMATION ON THE WEB @

firstlutheranbp.com



facebook.com/firstlutheranbp

Staff

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pastorheidheimgartner@hotmail.com

Associate Pastor Rev. Laurel Meester
ljmidthun@gmail.com

Director of Children's Ministry Tracy Madsen
tracymadsen03@gmail.com

Admin. Secretary Danielle Hein
firstluthoffice@yahoo.com

Accompanists Betty Ingvaldson, Christine
Butler, Karla Iacovino,

Worship Team Melissa Stoen
melissa.stoen@gmail.com
Tom Blome, Dustin Kremer,
Dennis Sauke, Jaclyn Schlichter,
Allyson Skillestad, Isaac Stoen,
and Pastor Laurel

Wedding Coordinator Holli Naatz

Custodians Gary Thorson, Wanda Edge

Visitation Pastor Rev. Dick Hegal
lutherbp65@yahoo.com 507.259.0243

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