



# 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](mailto:FIRSTLUTHOFFICE@YAHOO.COM)  
WEB [FIRSTLUTHERANBP.COM](http://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](http://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*

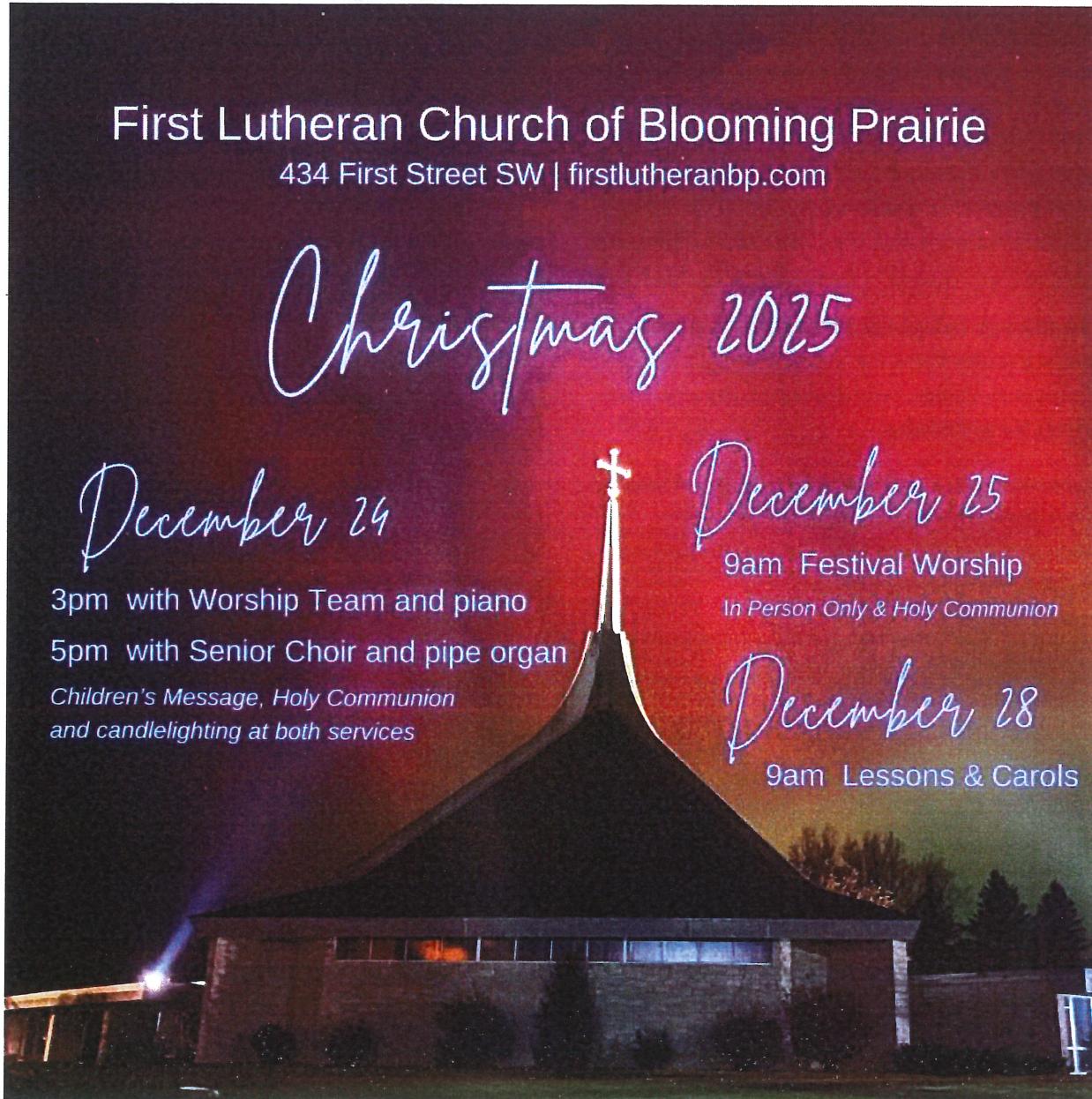
*December 25*

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.

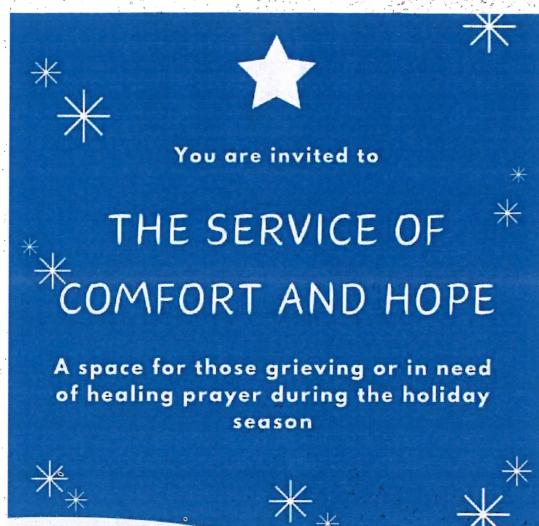
This Advent, I hope it brings you a time of peace, hopeful anticipation and joyful preparation for Jesus' birth.

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

Blessings,

*Diane Olson*

# CHURCH MINISTRIES



SUNDAY DECEMBER 21 10:30 AM

Fireside Room

## WOMEN'S BIBLE CIRCLE

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

## FLCW NEWS...ATTENTION QUILTERS

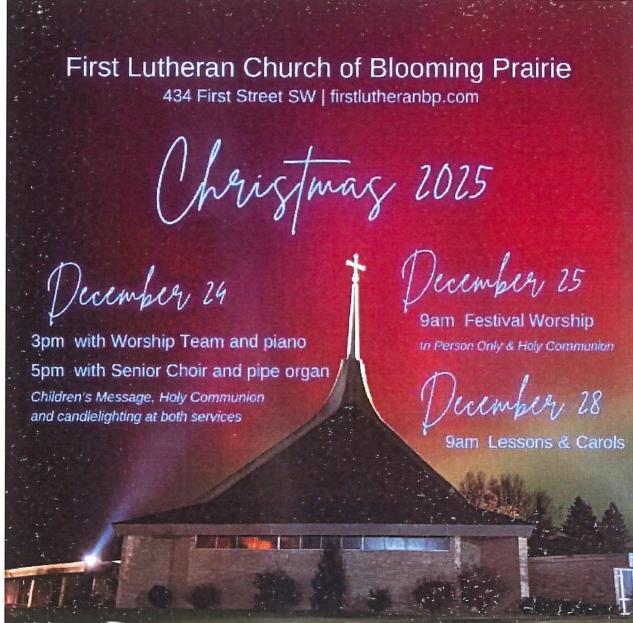
Quilting will begin Monday, January 5, 2026 @ 8:30am and continue every Monday through March. All women are invited to come and join in. No sewing skills are needed. We begin the day at 8:30am and continue until 3pm with coffee breaks, and "bring your own lunch". Materials for the quilts are always welcome 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 30<sup>th</sup>** 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](mailto:firstluthoffice@yahoo.com)).

# CHURCH MINISTRIES

## 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

### General Fund

Income YTD:	\$302,298.26
Expenditures YTD	<u>(\$295,549.96)</u>
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 Strenge

**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 Hagenberger, 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!**

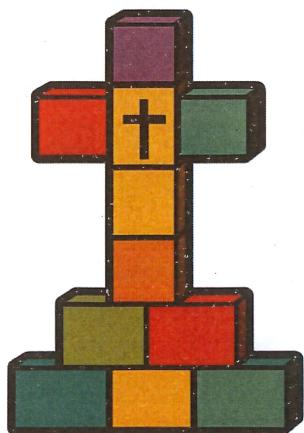
Don't forget to check out our bulletin boards for activities, dinners and fundraisers going on in our community and neighboring communities.

# 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



# vanco 101

## 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:

The screenshot shows the First Lutheran Church, Blooming Prairie Online Giving page. At the top, there are links for Sign Up, Log In, Basket, and language selection. The main content area features three donation tiles:

- GENERAL/OPERATING**: A tile with a steeple in the clouds. Text: "One-time OR recurrent gifts to this fund keep our ministry strong! Online giving is a quick, convenient, secure way to practice stewardship. Thank you for your generosity." Button: "Give now".
- THANKSGIVING OFFERING**: A tile with a fall foliage background. Text: "November 23, 2025. Gratitude Sunday. A one-time gift to the General Fund, in gratitude to God for the Thanksgiving holiday." Button: "Give now".
- LONG TERM MAINTENANCE**: A tile showing a roof. Text: "Long Term Maintenance Roof Replacement. Long Term Maintenance. One time OR recurrent gifts to this fund meets our commitment to keep our building a Welcome Place for years to come." Button: "Give now".

At the bottom left, there is a QR code with the text "First Lutheran Church Online Giving" and "Scan me to give". At the bottom right, there is footer text: "First Lutheran Church (507) 583-6621 434 1st St SW, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917", "© Vanco Terms Privacy", and "To get started, use our QR code or visit [firstlutheranbp.com/give](http://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

[www.bloomingprairie.com/firstlutheranchurch](http://www.bloomingprairie.com/firstlutheranchurch)

U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 5  
Blooming Prairie, MN  
Non Profit  
Organization

Give Now

administered by Vanco Payment Solutions

[firstlutheranbp.com](http://firstlutheranbp.com)

Simple, convenient and secure.

Consider automated giving as a one-time or recurring way to practice stewardship.

Click the blue button online to begin

## DECEMBER MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES



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](http://firstlutheranbp.com)



[facebook.com/firstlutheranbp](http://facebook.com/firstlutheranbp)

### Staff

Senior Pastor Rev. Heidi S. Heimgartner  
[pastorheidiheimgartner@hotmail.com](mailto:pastorheidiheimgartner@hotmail.com)

Associate Pastor Rev. Laurel Meester  
[ljmidthun@gmail.com](mailto:ljmidthun@gmail.com)

Director of Children's Ministry Tracy Madsen  
[tracymadsen03@gmail.com](mailto:tracymadsen03@gmail.com)

Admin. Secretary Danielle Hein  
[firstluthoffice@yahoo.com](mailto:firstluthoffice@yahoo.com)

Accompanists Betty Ingvaldson, Christine Butler, Karla Iacovino,

Worship Team Melissa Stoen  
[melissa.stoen@gmail.com](mailto: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 Hegel  
[lutherbp65@yahoo.com](mailto:lutherbp65@yahoo.com) 507.259.0243

Mailing Address: First Lutheran Church / PO Box 697 / Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS / UNSUBSCRIBE**  
phone 507.583.6621 email [firstluthoffice@yahoo.com](mailto:firstluthoffice@yahoo.com)