

December 2021

The Inn HOUSING THE HOLY ADVENT 2021

*“Make your ways known to me, Lord;
Teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth – teach it to me
because you are the God who saves me.
I put my hope in you all day long.”*

PSALM 25:4-5



During Advent and Christmas season we pray that God will make our hearts a stable, a house for the Holy. In a poem by John van de Laar in part he writes – “Perhaps, in this Advent waiting time, we can learn to let go, slow down, open up; perhaps we can begin to clear away some of the clutter, and open up a space within us for silence, for stillness, for hope, for the Holy. And maybe, just maybe, as we create this open space we will find more room in our lives for generosity, for laughter, for connection, for caring, for love, for life.”

We are creating space at First to make room for the holy. The barn doors in this picture will assist us in our journey though Advent to Christmas. May God’s path led us to the manger where we meet again the **holy** Jesus, our Christ.

Advent Breath Prayer

**Make of my heart a stable, a house for the holy,
A warm and sturdy place for hope to live and grow.**

In this moment we open the doors of our heart, Letting go of all we do not need.

Take a deep breath in...
and then breathe out regret...
and breathe in forgiveness...
and out again, inviting peace.

In this moment we open the doors of our hearts to the Spirit,
Inviting us to be more than we can ask or imagine.

Take a deep breath in...
and then breathe out fear...
and breathe in courage...
and our gain, inviting hope.

Pastor Julie

Baptized on November 14, 2021

Dax Laddie Eggert, son of Tyler & Nicole Eggert

CHRISTMAS SERVICES & TIMES

Christmas Eve – 4 pm – Livestream & In-person

Christmas Day – Pre-Recorded Only

1st Sunday of Christmas – 9 am – Livestream & In-person



NEEDED: MITTENS, HATS, SCARVES & SOCKS

FLCW will again have the Mitten Tree up during Advent. Please help fill the tree with *mittens, hats & scarves*. We are also requesting *socks* for children & teens. The last couple of years we have been donating these items to the KW Schools. Thank you for all your support!



Kenyon Senior Living

- Assisted Living Apartments Available
- November move-in \$700 discount
- New attached Northfield Clinic open
- Call 507-789-7131 for an appointment & tour



CHRISTMAS PLANT SLIP . . .

If you would like a plant in Church for Christmas in Honor/Memory of a loved one, please purchase your own and deliver to the church. In order to be listed in the bulletin, please fill out a SLIP and leave in the offering plate or bring to church office.

SLIP DEADLINE: DECEMBER 17

IN HONOR/MEMORY OF (circle one): _____

GIVEN BY: _____

December Youth Events

Sunday 12/12 Youth Christmas Shopping (during Sunday School)

We are accepting donations of new or gently used gifts and gift bags/gift wrapping supplies for the annual youth Sunday School Christmas Shopping. Donation boxes are in the Narthex in the Sunday School wing. Men's gifts needed. We would like donations by 12/5. Sunday School parents please email your child's shopping list to: smhildebrandt7@gmail.com by 12/5.

Saturday 12/18 Feed My Starving Children

Feed My Starving Children is a Christian non-profit organization that coordinates the packaging and distribution of food to people in developing nations. Sign-up to volunteer on December 18th at 11:30 AM to 1:15 PM in Eagan. Location: 990 Lone Oak Road, Suite 136, Eagan, MN 55121. Meet in Eagan by 11:30 am or meet at the church at 10:20 am. Let us know if you need a ride. Open to anyone (youth over the age of 5 and adults). If under 12, need an adult chaperone. Must be over the age of 5. Sign up on Feed My Starving Children Website-search for First Lutheran Church, Kenyon. Or e-mail: smhildebrandt7@gmail.com .

Sunday 12/19 Sunday School Christmas Pageant – 10 A.M. Includes games and treats.

Sunday 12/19 -- 4pm-6pm --- grades 7-12

Please join us for some holiday fun making gingerbread houses, decorating sugar cookies, snacks, and a movie.

ADDITIONAL OPTION: Following the activity at the church, youth have the option to go see the Lights at Bluff Valley. There you can:

**Enjoy the 1.5 mile drive through light tour with different themed areas that showcase 450 light displays and over 200 animated displays.

**Walk through a light maze.

If interested in this additional activity, please contact Sarah Van Epps at sarah.g.vanepps@gmail.com to ensure space.

Sunday 12/26 & Sunday 1/2 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

2022 National Youth Gathering - "Boundless- God Beyond Measure"

The gathering takes place July 24-28 in Minneapolis, MN. Youth currently in grades 8 - 12 are encouraged to attend! We will be attending with other area churches as well. Contact Sarah Van Epps for further information or to sign up: sarah.g.vanepps@gmail.com

Narthex – An Ancient Greek Word

If you were to list the rooms necessary for a church, the *narthex* would likely not top the list. In fact, the entry room would probably fall somewhere between the bathrooms and pastor's study on a ranking of importance. After all, what is its use but to house coats and signup sheets? Yet for Christians living between the years 100 and 300, the narthex was an absolute necessity for churches. In those days, when the worship service reached communion, the unbaptized and members needing to pay penance were expected to leave the sanctuary and watch the Sacrament from the narthex. Some congregations even kept the same groups in the narthex throughout the entirety of the service. And although the barrier was often only a waist-high wall, railing, or row of columns, the barrier was a physical reminder of the sin that the congregation believed separated them from those in the narthex. Even the name, narthex, is the Ancient Greek word for Giant Fennel, a reed plant that was used to whip people. When the occupants of the narthex were baptized or completed their penance, they could rejoin the congregation and receive communion.

More than simple history, the narthex is an object lesson in humanity's insistent desire to make the *inclusive* into *exclusive*. At the Last Supper, Christ served his body and blood to those around him, even Judas who just betrayed him to the Romans. In this, the first communion, Christ denies the idea that we can ever earn his blessing or gifts. Yet as the Church grew and the Apostles died away, Christians found ways to exclude people—even in an act that originally did just the opposite. We often create hoops for new people to jump through on their way to acceptance and love, designing an obstacle course with Jesus as the prize. But just as Christ fed Judas, we are called to rejoice with all those who enter our sanctuary and seek those who have not yet been sought. We are called to make places of exclusion and separation into places of welcome and fellowship.

As winter arrives and you find yourself spending more time in the narthex, taking off coats and brushing off boots, remember that it is not just an entryway with an ancient name but a place that we as Christians have reinvented for the sake of the Gospel. Where once was meant to conjure images of flogging, now is a place where we position greeters and post about upcoming events, maybe even hang a welcome sign. As Christmas approaches and we prepare to welcome visitors and new worshippers into the sanctuary, it is worth considering the things that can alienate visitors but how even sources of alienation can become sources of welcome. Things as minute as knowing the event calendar, the process for receiving communion, or even navigating the hymnal can make the difference between sitting with the congregation and standing in proverbial narthex.

Intern Pastor Al Aakre, Luther Seminary '23

First Lutheran Church Council Minutes, November 17, 2021 @ 7:45 pm

Welcome and Call to Order: Harris Haugen

Present: Harris Haugen, Pastor Julie Rogness, Carmen Nesseth, Jim Fontaine, Cindy Lewis, Sarah Hildebrandt, Ben Short and Sandy Doehling

Devotions: Cindy on Psalm 71 reflecting on birthdays and God's presence throughout our life.

Approval of Agenda: M/S Carmen/Cindy, Approved

Secretary's Report: M/S Harris/Jim, Approved

Treasurer's Report: M/S Carmen/Sandy, Approved

10/31/2021: Checking Account Balance \$6,471.28, Memorial Account Balance \$525

Pastor's Report: Worship: 4 Sunday Morning, 3 Wednesday Evening, 4 live streaming, Funeral : 2, Confirmation Sunday--5 students, Baptisms--2, Meetings: Council and EdYou, Phone calls and in person visits and nursing home visit, Sharing gift cards, Weekly meetings with Annette, Mentoring a seminary student, Confirmation, Creating Sunday School rotation curriculum, Pre-marital meetings, Helped with Sons of Norway Set up, Confirmation Rehearsal, Confirmation: SIFT and National Youth Gathering, Time away to help with parents – much appreciated. **Looking forward:** Thanksgiving Service at Gol – Nov 23rd at 7:00 pm (bars to share), Advent: The Inn – Housing the Holy, Speaking at the Tree Lighting Ceremony – 12/04.

Continuing Business:

1. Forsberg Donation - Harris proposed the memorial gift be dispersed equally among the following committees to utilize at their discretion: Endowment Fund, FLCW, Youth and Education, Property and Management Repair Fund and Tech Support. M/S Harris/Carmen, Approved.
2. Grose Donation - at the family's request to allocate the monies for the upcoming season, the council members made the thoughtful decision to invest in Christmas lights, a wreath and congregational favors/gifts.
3. Church Mutual Safety Proposal - Harris and Brad installed a sensor system at no charge to the church for notifications in the event of a water leak preventing pipes from freezing. Insurance premium will not be affected.

New Business:

1. Use of Kitchen - discussion ensued following the suggestion of a church member being present in the facility during an event held by a nonmember to ensure the kitchen is in order after each use. It was noted the next scheduled event by a nonmember will be held on Feb. 12, 2022 when the KWHS Choir hosts their annual Waffle Feed Fundraiser.
2. Christmas Eve Service will be in person and held in the sanctuary at 4:00 pm. Christmas Day Service will be pre recorded and available for viewing at your convenience. Sunday Morning Service on December 26th will be in person and live streamed at 9:00 am.

Committee Reports:

FLCW - FLCW minutes of the Nov. 2, 2021 meeting 6:30, Fellowship Hall. Cindy called the meeting to order. Jackie gave devotions. The Secretary read the minutes of the March 22, 2021 6:30 Zoom meeting. It was accepted and filed. The Treasurer's report was \$715.78 in checking on 2/22/2021 but the balance on 11/2/2021 was \$2,574.12. Old Business: With fewer meetings in the future, Cora Lee volunteered to keep the minutes and send them out after the meetings. New Business: Thank Offering Service will be on 11/14. Heidi will assist with the service, Sharon H and Sandy D. will assist with communion and Jackie and Cora Lee will be ushers. FLCW will serve coffee that day. Disbursements: \$700.00 will be carried over to 2022. We will disburse \$1800.00. After discussion and consensus, Cora Lee made a motion and Carey seconded the agreement of the disbursements. A copy will be filed after printing. Audit of the books: Kaia will be asked and Jackie/Cindy will find one other person to help her. Mitten Tree: Carey and Mary will get the tree set up early Dec. We will be invited to donate hats, mittens, and socks for the tree. They will be delivered to K-W Elementary School for those students. We had a discussion about funeral helpers. Jackie, Tammy, Candy, Cora Lee, and Cindy will meet to come up with suggestions and changes. Homebound Members: Carey and Mary will send cards and possibly provide treats for these folks. ??will get Staff gifts for Christmas. Coming Events: April 2022, Cannon River Conference at First. National Youth Conv. in Minneapolis, summer of 2022. Next meeting: to be determined, when needed. Adjournment with the Lord's Prayer. Respectfully submitted, Cora Lee Monroe.

Youth Representative - Ben announced the KW school referendum passed with great enthusiasm from staff and students. He wishes to thank those supporting the Boy Scouts with their popcorn sales and highlighted the KWHS play was well attended and made enjoyable with adult audience participation.

Worship/Evangelism - did not meet.

Property and Management - did not meet. They are reestablishing an ushers' list for the upcoming year.

Stewardship - did not meet, however, discussed the creative use of phone attendance for future meetings when members are unable to attend in person.

Youth and Education - Ed You Minutes 11-11-21. Members present: Julie, Erica, Nicole, Sarah H, Sarah V, Opening Prayer-Julie.

1.) RECAP/CURRENT EVENTS: a.) Pumpkin Painting 10/30--12 kids ages Pre-K to 6th grade--Painted mini pumpkins, Played games, bible verse/candy matching games, Gratitude pumpkins (in the sanctuary). Overall it was a fun event and we would love to do it again next year. b.) Gratitude Tree –Thank you Amy for cutting leaves! There is a tree in the sanctuary by the organ. Kids have written on pumpkins and leaves things that they are thankful or grateful for. Blank leaves and tape in the narthex for the congregation to add to the tree. c.) Operation Christmas Child boxes. Thank you Carmen for leading this! \$9 S&H donation. 24 boxes sent. d.) National Youth Gathering SEE BELOW.

2.) UPCOMING EVENTS: a.) Bibles to 3rd graders 11/21 - Harvey, Boe, Paige, Scarlet, Hayden, Henry. Erica & Anna to present during church service. b.) CHRISTMAS SHOPPING 12/12: Thank you Tammy Fletcher for sharing info from FLCW! Upstairs education wing hallway and rooms. Donation boxes in the Narthex and education wings. Mens gifts needed. Set-up to take place on Wednesday 12/8 during confirmation and Saturday 12/11 at 9 AM by Ed You. SH to email parents, get names for gifts, and write on labels. (Want names by 12/5). 25 cents per gift. Confirmation kids/older youth to help shop and wrap. Ed You to help wrap. Will also ask FLCW. Movie/games afterwards?- The Star (Netflix) in the sanctuary. c.) CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 12/19: During Sunday School (10 AM). Kids will dress up in costumes and parade around during coffee hour and in the sanctuary. Games/snacks. Feed My Starving Children on December 18. d.) NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING 2022: Interest meeting was held at Vang on 11/3. Sign-up is currently underway. \$150 by 11/20.

3.) SUNDAY SCHOOL 2021-2022: Will hand out Trader Joe's Advent Calendars on 11/21. Thank you Harris Haugen! Christmas Shopping & Christmas Pageant during Sunday School (photog). 2022 plans...Influencer curriculum (anti-bullying)...Display of helping hands or heart in February.

4.) OTHER TOPICS: Julie is hosting Rock Painting 11/16 at 6 PM (All are welcome including youth). We set out grab bags for kids in the narthex. Bibles are back in the pews. NEXT MEETING: Thursday 12/9/2021 at 6:00 PM. Church Council Meeting Wednesday 11/17/2021 at 7:45 PM--Sarah H.

Long Range Planning/Endowment/Personnel Committee/KAIC - The Personnel Committee is finalizing a job description for our custodian. KAIC meets monthly and all is going well. A paper survey will be available to offer feedback to assist our intern Al Aakre.

Next Meeting: December 15, 2021 @ 7:45 pm

Devotions: Carmen

Adjournment: M/S Carmen/Jim

Closing with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Doehling
Council Secretary

DECEMBER 2021



			1 6 Worship 6:30 Confirmation 6:30 Sr.Choir	2 7 AA	3	4
5 <i>Advent 2</i> 9 Worship 10 Sunday Sch 7 AA	6	7	8 6 Worship 6:30 Confirmation	9 1 Love Day 6 EdYou 6:30 Stewardship 6:30 Scouts-Den 7 AA	10	11
12 <i>Advent 3</i> 9 Worship 10 Sunday Sch Chr.Shopping 7 AA	13 11:30 Literary Guild	14	15 6 Worship 6:30 Confirmation 6:30 Sr.Choir 7:45 Council	16 5 Sons of Norway 6:30 Scouts-Den 7 AA	17	18 Feed My Starving Children
19 <i>Advent 4</i> 9 Worship 10 Sunday Sch Pageant 7 AA	20	21	22 <i>No Worship No Confirmation</i>	23 7 AA	24 <i>Chr Eve</i> 4 Chr Ev Worship	25 <i>Chr Day</i> <i>PRERECORDED WORSHIP</i>
26 <i>1st Sun of Christmas</i> 9 Worship 10 NO Sun-Sch 7 AA	27	28	29 <i>No Worship No Confirmation</i>	30	31	

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

309 Forest Street, Kenyon, MN 55946

WEBSITE: flckenyon.org

December Newsletter

~A VINTAGE CHRISTMAS VERSE~

**Joy attend you. Peace Divine
On your household fall
Heavenly blessings freely given
by the Lord of All**