

The Light

Spiritual Formation Ministries Resume in 2026

I am excited to share that Group Spiritual Direction, "renovaré" book studies, Individual Spiritual Direction, and Grief Care will resume in 2026.

A number of years ago, our former Spiritual Director Marcie Watson shared with me her dream that First Lutheran would support the training of Spiritual Directors, so that as a congregation we would have the ability to continue spiritual formation ministries. Since that time, a number of people have completed the three-year training, including two members of staff: Michael Beckmann and Sheila Anderson. Both of them have said they have interest and capacity to support some of the key spiritual formation ministries that have been so meaningful to the congregation over the years.

Beginning this month Michael Beckmann will start by leading a book study on spiritual formation. It will be in the same spirit as what participants have known as Renovaré, though my encouragement is that a new name be found that is understandable by anyone. Michael will also offer Group Spiritual Direction starting in February.

For those who may wonder, Michael will continue all his duties with Youth and Family Ministry, including ECHO Wednesdays, High School, and summer events. Upon completion of Spiritual Direction Training, he recognized his interests in offering adult spiritual formation, and that he had the capacity to do so.

Individual Spiritual Direction will be offered by Michael as well as by member Cindy Dunn, who received the same training in La Crosse, WI. Read more on the following two pages, and contact Michael or Sheila in the church office for scheduling details.

Finally, Sheila Anderson will also soon offer a Grief Care group; a guided offering for people experiencing loss and grief. This ministry is an extension of Sheila's work as Visitation Chaplain at First Lutheran.

We are fortunate as a congregation to have the gifts and abilities to support Spiritual Formation ministries in a way that continues a rich and deep tradition. We will continue to discern the Spirit's leading in how best to offer these important opportunities for spiritual formation.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Steve Knudson

Inside this Edition:

2 Why Spiritual Formation?	Annual Meeting Feb. 8	10 ELCA Bishop visits Luther College
3 Imagine Yourself in Formation	A Souper Collection	Lutheran Day on the Hill
Discover Your Hidden Wholeness	7 Be a Faith Mentor	11 Prayer & Worship Guide
4 Unwrapping Discovery Zone	Youth Summer Trip Mtg.	12 Organ Concert Feb. 1
VBS Daycamp 2026	High School Ministry	Feb. Monthly Luncheon
Summer Camperships	8 Guest Preachers Jan. 24-25	
5 Wednesday Echo Ministries	Embrace the Lutheran Life	
Youth Winter Lock-in	9 Men's Movie & Dinner	
6 Outreach Potluck	Ladies' Night Out	



First Lutheran
discover more : together

Why Spiritual Formation?

As we continue to imagine what Spiritual Formation looks like at First Lutheran, we are stepping forward with a renewed focus in three areas: Individual Spiritual Direction, Group Spiritual Direction, and Guided Book Studies centered in Spiritual Formation.

But before we get there, you may be asking, “What is Spiritual Formation and why would I participate?” Recently, a podcast episode was shared with me, explaining how spiritual direction had changed the hosts. They shared 8 ways, which are included below with an explanation.

If you’ve ever wondered about the Spiritual Formation ministries here at First Lutheran, and whether it’s for you, these thoughts may give you an imagination for what it looks like.

8 Ways Spiritual Direction Has Changed Me - from The Contemplative Life Podcast -

In a world that moves fast, expects quick answers, and rarely gives us time to pause, many people are rediscovering the gift of spiritual direction—a quiet intentional space to listen for God’s presence in everyday life. Whether in a one-on-one setting or in a small group, spiritual direction offers a gentle transformative way to tend your inner life.

The *Contemplative Life Podcast* shared their Top 8 ways spiritual direction has changed them and the people they work with. The hosts Chris & Christina Roberts are both spiritual directors with years of experience and wisdom.

Below are the 8 ways the hosts describe how spiritual direction has changed them—maybe you’ll see yourself in some of these experiences:

1. “I feel seen and heard.”

Spiritual direction creates a rare space where you can speak honestly and be fully received.

2. “I have a place for clunky communication.”

You don’t need polished words—just your honest self. It’s a space where talking through life’s messy pieces is welcome.

3. “The consistent rhythm helps me show up.”

Simply having spiritual direction on your calendar creates a holy habit. And each time, something meaningful emerges.

4. “I feel grounded in my faith while still exploring my questions.”

No one is trying to convince you of anything. Spiritual direction honors curiosity and mystery.

5. “I walk away with greater clarity.”

Not always answers—but clarity about the next faithful step or a deeper awareness of what God is stirring.

6. “I can revisit issues over & over without rushing.”

There’s no timeline or pressure. You’re invited to return to what matters, at the pace of grace.

7. “It helps me make bold choices aligned with who I am.”

Over time, people find themselves making decisions that reflect their authentic self and the season God is inviting them into.

8. “It gives my soul space to breathe and rest.”

In spiritual direction, the soul is gently tended—restored, renewed, and reminded of its belovedness.



Listen to the podcast episode mentioned above, and many more at thecontemplativelife.net

Imagine Yourself in Spiritual Formation

Not sure how to enter this kind of intentional growth?

Here are three ways First Lutheran offers for the congregation and friends to experience it:

Individual Reflection or Spiritual Direction (Monthly)

Imagine sitting quietly with a spiritual director, who listens deeply and asks gentle questions to help you notice God's work in your life. This is ideal if you:

- Want one-on-one guidance
- Are navigating a life transition or season of questioning
- Long for a consistent rhythm of reflection and discernment

First Lutheran has several trained spiritual directors on staff and in the congregation. Contact Michael or Sheila in the church office for more information or to set up a time. (contacts on the back page).

A Grace-Filled Invitation

Spiritual formation—through personal reflection, small group conversation, or a guided book study — creates space for God to meet you where you are. It's not about achieving perfection but about noticing God's presence, finding clarity, and learning to live more fully into the life God is calling you to. There's room for you. The only step you need to take is the first one.

Discover Your Hidden Wholeness

Have you ever felt pulled between who you are inside and how you show up in the world? Starting January 14, we'll explore *A Hidden Wholeness* by Parker Palmer in an 10-week discussion series. This book invites us to live more authentically, deepen our inner life, and grow in community, using stories, reflection, and practical exercises to notice God at work in our lives.

Join us for this journey of spiritual formation, sharing insights, reflecting on your experiences, and supporting one another in the ongoing work of faith and wholeness. There is no need to sign up in advance; you can just come to the first meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 10 a.m. Books will be available there for \$15, or you can pick one up from the church office. The group will meet weekly thereafter through March 25. If you have any questions, contact Michael Beckmann in the church office.

Group Reflection or Spiritual Direction (Monthly)

Picture a small circle of people, sharing openly while the group listens deeply. Everyone holds space for one another without fixing or advising, creating a safe environment for discovery. This works well if you:

- Enjoy learning from others' experiences
- Appreciate mutual encouragement and community
- Want to see God's movement in a variety of life stories

Group Spiritual Direction will meet monthly on the third Thursday, at either 9 a.m. or 6 p.m.

REGISTER
in advance at
firstlutherancr.org/GSD

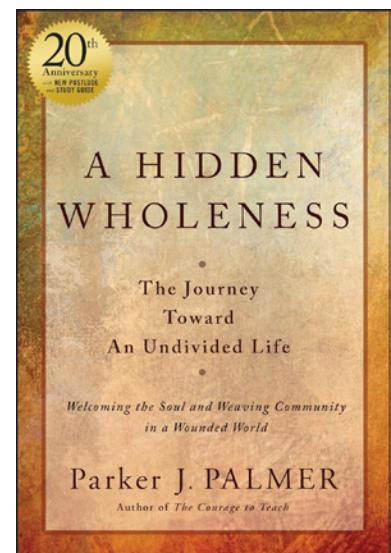


Spiritual Transformation Book Discussion (Weekly)

Or imagine exploring a thoughtfully chosen spiritual book with a small group. Together you read, reflect and discuss questions designed to stretch your thinking, challenge assumptions, and invite transformation. This option is great if you:

- Enjoy guided reflection and discussion
- Want a structured way to grow spiritually
- Like combining personal study with shared insights

For more information on the book study, *A Hidden Wholeness*, please see the schedule and times, below.



Unwrapping the Discovery Zone

Moving into 2026 we are so excited to also be moving into colorful new spaces! Four out of five of the main children's rooms are cleared for occupancy and we have been busy pulling together new designs and colors to show them off.

Cross the Finish Line Together

We need your help as we outfit these new spaces to best serve our children we have created an Amazon wishlist link of supplies for our Discovery Zen Room, Discovery Town (PreK room), and miscellaneous supplies.

What is a "Zen Room" you may ask? It is a sensory room that provides a special environment for children who thrive best with quieter space, non-traditional seating, and some other special activities. Find the list at firstlutherancr.org/wishlist

Get Involved Yourself!

Besides the physical supplies to outfit the spaces, the MOST important thing we need in the Discovery Zone is YOU! YOU are needed on Sundays and Wednesdays to lead our amazing children! We have youth leaders trained and ready who you would work alongside every week, and all resources and curriculum are planned out for you in advance. As we have learned through our Growing Young focus in 2024-25, there is simply no replacement when it comes to having adult mentors for both the children and the youth leaders! To get a zero-commitment preview, have a conversation with Pastor Katie about how you can make to biggest positive impact.

Many surprises are yet to come so be on the look out for our "grand opening" in the Spring!



Check out some of the items we need to finish out our new children's spaces by visiting firstlutherancr.org/wishlist

Mark your calendars for VBS and DayCamp in 2026!

Vacation Bible School and Daycamp will take place on July 13 – 16, 2026! Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys in "Rainforest Falls", kids will plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They'll explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms.

Summer 2026 Camperships

We invite your child to come along this summer for an exciting experience of living in Christian community with a camp counselor and other youth. The community of First Lutheran Church is committed to our children and youth attending camp, and so we offer Camperships for those attending a Christian camp this summer.

To ensure that everyone's registration forms get turned in on time and meet early registration deadlines, we ask that you register directly on the camp website and pay the full deposit amount. First Lutheran will work with the camp to get the campership amount to the camp in a timely fashion.

Visit firstlutherancr.org/campership to get started today!



Youth and Family Ministry is about creating space where young people and those who love them can grow in faith together—asking honest questions, building meaningful relationships, and discovering how God is already at work in their lives. From shared meals and worship to conversations that happen on the way to school or around the dinner table, we believe faith is formed best in community. Our hope is to partner with families as we nurture curiosity, encourage belonging, and help each young person know they are deeply loved by God and valued in this church.



ECHO Wednesdays

ECHO brings our whole church family together midweek for music, food, worship, and growth in faith.

Wednesday ECHO Ministries Weekly Schedule

5:00–5:30 PM – Junior Choir (Grades 1–4)
 5:35–6:05 PM – Youth Choir (Grades 5–8)
 NEW 5:15–6:15 PM - OPEN DOOR HOUR
 (open to all ages in the new youth space)
 5:15–6:15 PM – Community Meal all ages
 6:30–7:15 PM – ECHO Worship
 Youth Led- Adult Supported worship for
 children, youth, & adults together
 7:15–8:00 PM – Discovery Zone for kidz, Small Groups
 & Activities (Grade 1 through Adults)

Upcoming ECHO Calendar:

January 14 ECHO -Switch On: Identity
 January 21 ECHO - Switch On: Clarity
 January 28 ECHO - Switch On: Calling
 February 4 ECHO - Switch On: Brightness
 February 11 ECHO - Switch On: Shine
 February 18 Ash Wednesday - Mentor Meet & Greet

Winter Lock-In 2026

Get ready for an unforgettable night at the Youth Lock-In on Friday, January 23, in the brand-new Youth Space at First Lutheran! This lock-in of epic proportions is open to current 5th–8th graders and friends and will be four hours of food, fun and prizes you won't want to miss! The cost is \$5 per person; register online **BY January 21**. Bringing a friend? That's great — just be sure they register separately so we have parent/guardian permission from their family.

When: Friday, January 23, 7 - 10 p.m.

Who: Current 5th-8th Graders & Friends!

Where: First Lutheran Church in the
 NEW YOUTH SPACE!!!

What: A lock-in of epic proportions!
 Games, pizza, drinks, prizes!

Cost: \$5

Register: firstlutherancr.org/about/youth

January ECHO Series: Switch On

Epiphany is the season when we celebrate how Jesus reveals God's light to the world. This year, we're flipping the switch on our faith!



Switch On is all about noticing Jesus, turning on your awareness of God's presence, and letting God's light shine through your life. Each week, we'll explore how to see clearly, step into your purpose, and shine God's love in your school, friendships, and everyday world.



High school students are invited to be part of the fun by volunteering at the Youth Lock-In 2026! Help lead games, welcome middle schoolers, and make the night an awesome experience for everyone. All high school volunteers need to register in advance so we know you're coming and can assign roles—registration is required even though there's no cost. Thanks for sharing your time, energy, and leadership to make this a great night!

MORE Youth News on page 7! →

Annual Outreach Potluck

THIS Sunday, January 11, 2026 5-7 p.m.

Learn more about our global and local partnerships and ways we share Christ with the world at our annual Outreach Potluck at 5-7 p.m. Sunday, January 11, 2026. We'll hear an update from one of the local ministries partners of our church, and learn more about our hunger, housing & Hope team.

Bring a covered dish and everyone in your family to learn about all the many ways our church reaches out to help others. Enjoy some food, fellowship, and see how you can make a difference in people's lives!



Kathryn Franzenburg talks about refugee services at Catherine McAuley Center at a previous outreach potluck.

Open Small Group **Sisters' Acts II** **Group Begins** **New Study**

Women who are semi-early risers are invited to join the Tuesday morning Bible Study group that meets at 8:30 a.m. in the Room just off the Fellowship Center,

We are beginning a new year-long study called *Women of the Bible*. Books are only \$5 and you can begin at any Woman! For more information, feel free to contact Vicki Hughes at 319-471-3733.

Celebrate Ministry & Mission in 2025

Celebration Worship, Soup Lunch & Annual Meeting February 8

2025 was a souper year of progress on our building, outreach to our community, and deep, meaningful worship & studies. On Sunday, February 8 we will celebrate 2025 with one combined worship and a congregational lunch followed by our Annual Meeting. Worship will begin at 10 a.m. with a blended service of organ and band-led music. A soup lunch will immediately follow at 11 a.m., and we plan to start the meeting by 12 noon.

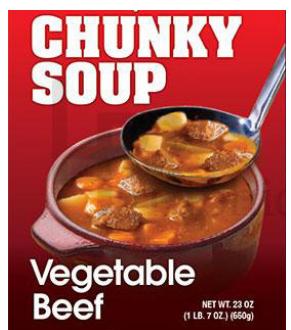
At the annual meeting we will hear highlights from building committee about our Renewing progress, and the council will present a look at our financial standing as a congregation, and propose a budget for 2025 that the congregation will vote on. Let's remember and reflect on an amazing year of ministry, and prepare for the opportunities before us in 2026!

A Souper Collection

Now through Souper Sunday, February 8, the Housing & Hope Team are encouraging donations of hearty, pop-top soups such as the Campbell's Chunky line that are easy to prepare for our unhoused neighbors.

For people relying on the emergency overflow shelter for a warm place to sleep, they sometimes need to decide between getting to a meal site for dinner, and getting to the emergency overflow shelter by the time they are required to sign in for the night.

Easy - open and easy - to - warm cans of soup can help people in desperate situations to not have to choose between a warm bed and a warm meal.



Hearty soups can be dropped off around weekend worship, or anytime the church is open during the week.

Join Us in Nurturing Spiritual Connections:

Be a Confirmation Faith Mentor



At First Lutheran, the approach of Lent heralds a time of reflection, growth, and fostering deeper connections within our congregation. This year, we're excited to continue the Confirmation Faith Mentors program—a wonderful opportunity for adults to engage meaningfully with our confirmation-aged youth.

The primary aim of this initiative is to establish enduring spiritual friendships between our young members and seasoned adults within our church family. We're enthusiastic about bringing together over 40 dedicated mentors to be part of this transformative experience.

Here's how you can get involved:

1. Connection Card: Fill out the Connection Card in worship at church and drop it into the collection box.
2. Online: Simply scan this QR Code to sign up conveniently using your smartphone; or visit firstlutherancr.org/mentor.
3. Sign-up Desk: Visit our new engagement center in the narthex where you can register in person and be a pivotal part of this enriching journey.



The Confirmation Faith Mentors program is an opportunity to make Lent a season of profound connections and growth within our community. Keep an eye on your communication channels—Michael will be reaching out shortly with more details.

We're excited about the prospect of fostering enduring bonds and enriching spiritual experiences within our church family. Let's make this Lent a season to remember by joining hands and nurturing these invaluable connections together.

Mentor Schedule:

February 18: Ash Wednesday Worship 6:30 p.m.

Meet and Greet to follow

February 25 - March 25: ECHO Worship 6:30 p.m.

Mentor Discussion 7:15 p.m.



Do you want your teen to experience an uplifting and faith-filled summer experience? Join us for a Youth Summer Trip Interest Meeting on Sunday, January 18 at 5 p.m. to share ideas and explore options for intermediate/middle & high school trips—possibly even two trips, depending on interest!

No commitment— just come hear what we are looking at for our Middle and High School Youth! Our regular High School Ministry Sunday Nights follows the meeting.

High School Sunday & Wednesday Nights!

High School Ministry is back on Sunday nights, January 18 & 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m. Sunday nights are a relaxed, welcoming space for high school youth to reconnect, build friendships, and engage in thoughtful conversation about faith and everyday life. Whether students have been involved before or are curious about checking it out, they are always welcome. Stay tuned to emails and our social media for updates on meeting locations!

DON'T FORGET! High school students are also invited to join a Wednesday night discussion group following ECHO Worship. After worship, we'll gather for meaningful conversation and reflection, creating space to ask questions, share perspectives, and grow together. Sunday nights and Wednesday discussions each offer a unique way to stay connected and engaged.

Pastors from Bethlehem Preach at First Lutheran January 24-25.

Jamil Zoughbi and Claudine Faltas have an amazing story of answering God's call to ministry. Coming from Bethlehem on the West Bank, the husband and wife team are now both answering God's call to ordained ministry, studying at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

Jamil and Claudine will preach on the weekend of January 24-25, each taking one of the services. There will be a special forum at 10:15 a.m. between services in the first level fellowship hall where they will share more about their journey and life for Palestinians in the West Bank.

Pastor Steve has known Jamils' parents, Michael and Carmen for more than 20 years, and the First Lutheran travel group to Israel were hosted by them in Bethlehem in 2022. During that visit, Pr Steve and members of the travel group met with Jamil and learned of his intention to study at Wartburg Seminary and pursue ordination in the ELCA at the invitation of the Upper New York synod. Once in Iowa, Jamil's wife, Claudine felt the call of God and is now also studying at Wartburg Seminary to become an ELCA pastor.

Jamil and Claudine also brought their two sons to live in Iowa, and recently, Jamil's mother Carmen also came to Wartburg to help the family. The Global Outreach Committee has been supporting the Zoughbi's as they set up their home at Wartburg Seminary.

In January of last year, Jamil and Claudine were featured in the magazine of the ELCA, *Living Lutheran*. You can read more about their journey from Palestine to Dubuque by visiting [LivingLutheran.org](https://www.livinglutheran.org) and searching for "Zoughbi" in the upper-right corner of the home page.



Carmen and Jamil (pictured with their sons) are Palestinian Christians now completing seminary training to become ELCA Pastors.

Embrace the Lutheran Life

As an online hub and print magazine *Living Lutheran* is your source for news, reflections and stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its local and global companions. They cover religious news and social issues, congregational life, global and domestic mission, family matters, spiritual practices and resources, and more.

As a print magazine they publish four quarterly issues per year, delivered to your home for just \$20. They are excited to have recently launched a new [LivingLutheran.org](https://www.livinglutheran.org) website! You can now register with a free digital membership for perks like a personalized dashboard that prioritizes the stories that interest you, access to members-only content and the ability to save and "like" articles — all with a welcoming, easy-to-access format.

Living Lutheran tells the stories of the ELCA, bonding us as a church across congregations, synods, states, regions and countries. Get informed, inspired and equipped with perspectives to deepen your faith and connect with the broader Lutheran community!

Find it all at [LivingLutheran.org](https://www.livinglutheran.org)



Men's Movie Night & Dinner

5-8 p.m. Sat. Jan. 24, 2026

Guys over 18 get inspired with a steak dinner and the movie "Alpha" about a young man in caveman times who tries to get home against overwhelming odds during winter with the help of a lone wolf.



We'll gather 5-8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. Jan. 24, 2026. **NEW LOCATION:** We will meet in the newly renovated Youth Room at First Lutheran to watch on the brand new 120" projector screen! Cost is \$25. This event is open to friends and family members. **Register Today at firstlutherancr.org/men** so we can be sure to prep enough food!



Come together online for a night of centering multiracial voices from across the ELCA as we observe the 2026 National Day of Racial Healing (NDORH) Jan. 20, 2026 from 6-8 p.m.

Presented by the ELCA in partnership with Augsburg Fortress, this free program will feature intentional storytelling through words and music and provide opportunities for deep listening, reflection and drawing closer together as fellow children of God.

The event will be taking place live with an in-person audience and simulcast out from Our Saviour's ELCA Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL. Mark your calendar for the evening of Tuesday, January 20, and tune in live at ELCA.org/NDORH.

Ladies' Night Out

Ladies Night Out is a monthly opportunity just to have some fun, enjoying the warmth and support of Christian love - one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. All the women and friends of First Lutheran, especially new members and visitors, are invited to gather once a month at a restaurant for food and fellowship. The locations vary, and a list is kept of restaurants suggested as places to go. Come join us!

On Monday, January 26, 2026 we will meet at 5:30 PM at El Viejo, 90 Twixt Town Road in Cedar Rapids. Kris Cleveland is this month's hostess; her phone number is (319) 899-3418. If you plan to come, please call her to make a reservation, or put your name, phone number and email address on the sign-up sheet in the narthex. We're looking forward to seeing you there!

Make MBH Housing more of a Home

Margaret Bock Housing is an Affordable Housing apartment building that is tied to the Ecumenical Community Center and is located directly across Third Avenue from our church building. This year the Ecumenical Center is aiming to provide better support to their residents and help make their individual units a more welcoming home.

If you can help to provide any of the below items for our neighbors, please contact housing liaison Angela Chirinos at AChirinos@HACAP.org or 319-560-9543.

Residents would appreciate:

- Head phones
- 2026 Calendars
- Clorox Wipes
- Rocking Chair
- Microwave
- Broom
- Coffee Cups
- Crockpot
- Swiffer mop
- Ground Coffee

Help our next door neighbors at Margaret Bock Housing with simple items to make a better home.



ELCA Bishop Yehiel Curry visiting Luther College

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop of our national organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will offer keynote remarks at Luther College's 2026 Martin Luther King Jr. Day lecture on Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, in the Center for Faith and Life Main Hall.

The theme of the day and Curry's talk is "Courage for the Common Good." Supported by the Williams Endowment Fund, the day begins with Curry's address at 10:30 a.m. Following an optional community lunch at noon for attendees, two sessions are planned for the afternoon at 1:15 p.m., a youth discussion with Curry, and a panel discussion with regional ELCA bishops for all others.

The event is open to the public, and admission to the morning program and the afternoon break-out sessions are free. Lunch tickets for adults are \$10, but free for youth who are registered for the youth session.

"Dr. King taught us that true courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to act despite it," Curry said. "As Lutherans, we believe that faith must be lived publicly, for the sake of others. Faith gives



us the courage to confront injustice, to stand with the vulnerable, and work for the common good."

Along with the opportunity to uplift and celebrate messages related to King's legacy, the program is also one of the first opportunities for congregations across the region to hear Curry, who was elected on July 30, 2025, as the ELCA's presiding bishop. He was officially installed into the position on Oct. 4, 2025.

"It is a joy and honor to welcome Bishop Curry to campus," said Melissa Bills, college pastor and director of College Ministries. "Luther College is deeply connected to its Lutheran identity, both as a faith tradition and an intellectual tradition. This event serves as a reminder that this Lutheran identity is a living identity that calls us into compassionate and courageous engagement with our world. It's exciting to bring people to campus for this event, and especially youth and young people."

To reserve seats for the day, go to the Luther College Ticket Office at tickets.luther.edu.

Lutheran Day on the Hill

Save the date for Thursday, February 26, and plan to join together with ELCA Lutherans from across the state for the annual Lutheran Day on the Hill! Event check-in begins at 8:00 a.m., and the event will start promptly at 9:00 a.m. More details including the agenda, speakers, and registration information will be shared soon.

This free event, sponsored by LSI and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA, is open to anyone who wants to learn more about citizen advocacy and engage with issues impacting our communities. We hope 2026 Lutheran Day on the Hill shines a light on the critical issues facing individuals and families across Iowa. Last year was a record-breaking year for attendance, and we hope you'll join us as we aim to beat it again! Updates and registration will soon be available at LSIowa.org.

Thank you for using your voice to amplify those of our neighbors.



Please include in your Prayers...

90+ Birthdays in January!

Clara Ackerman, celebrating 103 years on Jan 18!
Lois Basler, celebrating 95 years on Jan. 14.
Barbara Duenow, celebrating 95 years on Jan. 11.
Marilyn Duning, celebrating 94 years on Jan 18.
Geri Hauschild, celebrating 92 years on Jan. 1
Barbara Skogman, celebrating 91 years on Jan. 2
Gloria Larson, celebrating 91 years on Jan. 24.

... and early February:

Marian Torno, celebrating 90 years on Feb. 9.

50+ Wedding Anniversaries in January!

Sam & Carol Winkles celebrate 50 years on Jan. 3.

Steve and Pam Strauss celebrate 56 years on Jan. 7.

...and early February:

Duane and JoAnn Wood celebrate 60 years on Feb. 4.

Hospital/Surgical, etc. Prayers for Healing:

David Stortz	Maxine Kleiman	Beth Anderton
Pat Thompson	Grace Wolle	Dottie Loscavia
Donna Cross	Gary Duenow	Emily (Rustand) Vasquez

Our Sympathy to:

Family & friends on the death of Regina Spurgin.

Submit Your Prayer Requests to our First Lutheran Prayer Chain by calling the church office at (319) 365-1494, on our website at firstlutherancr.org/prayer, or on the Church App under the Contact button. Consider joining our Prayer chain to receive and pray over the concerns of fellow members each week.

Financial Summaries

Wrapping up the year-end financial summaries for our general fund and capital campaign takes a bit longer than the usual monthly snapshots, so they were not available as of printing time.

We encourage you to watch for our 2025 Annual reports coming out around Feb. 1, and join us for discussion at the annual meeting on Sunday, Feb. 8 (details on page 6).

WORSHIP GUIDE

Piano-led Traditional Worship: 5 p.m. Saturdays
Organ-led Traditional Worship: 9 a.m. Sundays
Band-Led Contemporary Worship: 11 a.m. Sundays
Sundays & Wednesdays - worship LIVE online
at firstlutherancr.org/live

Radio worship radio on Sunday mornings at
8:30 a.m. on KMRY 1450 AM or 93.1 FM, or
anytime at firstlutherancr.org/podcast

January 10&11 - 3rd Baptism of our Lord Sunday

Preaching: Pr. Katie Lowe Lancaster

Scripture: Acts 10:34-43; Mthw 3:13-17 NRSVue

Special Music: (9a) Adult Choir

Wednesday Echo Worship Weekly at 6:30 p.m.

see pg. 5 for details

January 17&18 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Preaching: Pr. Steve Knudson

Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:35-42 NRSVue

Special Music: (9a) Resonaré Ringers

January 24&25- 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Preaching: Special Guests - see pg. 8!

Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:10-18; Mthw 4:12-23 NRSVue

Special Music: (9a) Adult Choir; Handbell Ensemble; (11a) Youth Choir & Youth Handbells

Jan. 31/Feb. 1 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Preaching: Pr. Craig Brown

Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Mthw 5:1-12 NRSVue

Special Music: (5p) Junior Choir

(9a) Adult Choir

February 7&8 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Worship at 5p Sat., and one
combined Sunday service at 10 a.m.

Preaching: Pr. Steve Knudson

Scripture: 1 Cor. 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20 NRSVue

Special Music: (10a) Adult Choir; Resonaré Ringers
Worship followed by Soup lunch at 11 a.m. and the
Annual Meeting at 12 noon. See page 6 for details.

The next edition of *The Light* is scheduled
to publish on February 5, 2026

Change Service Requested

2026 Organists of Iowa Concert

Come together for our first concert event of 2026; the Annual Organists of Iowa Concert that features top organists from Iowa colleges and Universities.

This years' installment will take place on Sunday, February 1 at 3 p.m. and will feature Dr. Gregory Hand, professor of Organ at the University of Iowa in Iowa City.

Dr. Hand is in high-demand as both an instructor and performer. He has given recitals and masterclasses in the United States, France, Spain, Germany and Brazil, and served on the jury for national and international organ competitions.

The concert is free and open to the public. A reception and refreshments will follow the performance.



February Monthly Luncheon

Join us for an excellent meal and insights into our community at the First Lutheran Monthly luncheon next month on Thursday, February 12 at 12 noon.

In addition to a great lunch prepared on-site by our own Ms. Ruth Ehrhardt, we will get to hear an update on the work of Trees Forever in Cedar Rapids. Trees Forever is a local non-profit that advocates for environmental and water-quality issues and runs the ReLeaf Program which has the goal of planting 42,000 trees in Cedar Rapids to help the tree canopy of the city recover after the 2020 Derecho.

Cost for the lunch is just \$5 which you can pay at-the-door or when you RSVP online at firstlutherancr.org/lunch. You may also RSVP at the church or by calling the office.



General Voicemail / After-hours: Extension 100	
Rev. Dr. Steve Knudson	Senior Pastor extension 106 stevek@firstlutherancr.org
Rev. Craig Brown	Lead Pastor for Outreach extension 105 craigb@firstlutherancr.org
Rev. Katie Lowe Lancaster	Lead Pastor for Discipleship extension 113 katelli@firstlutherancr.org
Sheila Anderson	Visitation Chaplain extension 135 sheilaa@firstlutherancr.org
Michael Beckmann	Dir. of Youth & Family Ministries extension 112 michaelb@firstlutherancr.org
Brett Wolgast	Cantor extension 111 brettw@firstlutherancr.org
Marita Wolgast	Dir. of Traditional Worship extension 110 maritaw@firstlutherancr.org
Tanya Rosenkranz Malloy	Junior & Youth Choir Director extension 132 tanyar@firstlutherancr.org
Joel Reeves	Dir. of Contemp. Worship Music extension 109 joelr@firstlutherancr.org
Bob Koenig	Director of Support Services extension 108 bobk@firstlutherancr.org
Maddy Newhouse	Minsitry Engagement Coordinator extension 103 maddyn@firstlutherancr.org
Megan Roling	Office Administrator extension 103 meganr@firstlutherancr.org
William Mittelsteadt	Director of Communications extension 115 willm@firstlutherancr.org
Ruth Ehrhardt	Food Service Coordinator extension 131 ruthe@firstlutherancr.org
Rich Hillyer	Custodians extension 116 richh@firstlutherancr.org
Ernie Decious	ernied@firstlutherancr.org
Todd Cornell	toddc@firstlutherancr.org
Jacob Bartels, Avery Karkosh, Kraig Wilford	Worship Production Team
Jenna Ackman	Childcare Coordinator