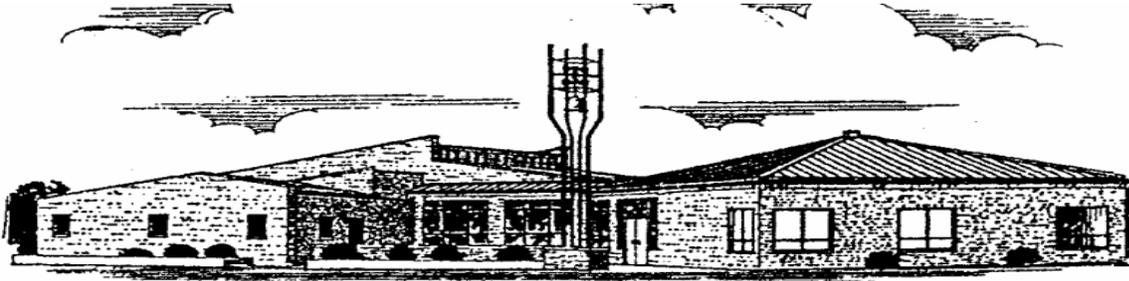


# DISCOVER FIRST



Empowered by the Holy Spirit, We Worship,  
Reach Out, Share the Gospel and Serve

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**December 2018**

First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
287 West Main Street, Xenia, OH 45385  
372-7421

Interim Pastor Tim Swanson

E-Mail Address: [firstluthxenia@sbcglobal.net](mailto:firstluthxenia@sbcglobal.net)  
Web Site: <http://www.firstlutheranxenia.com>

Worship with us on Sunday morning at 9:30am

Children's & Adult Sunday School (Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> only)  
All classes resume January 6<sup>th</sup>

Church Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:00am-2:00pm

# Advent Message

## From the Pastor



### *"Advent" by Pastor Tim*

Advent, the harmony of time,  
Squeezing through the cracks of our restlessness,  
Infiltrating the deep cells of worries for tomorrow,  
The penetrating Light of God's timelessness,  
Whispering a gracious calmness.

The world hushes for a moment's peace  
Of self-awareness cast against the skies beyond-ness  
Welcoming us to greet the dawn of God.

The horizon east fringed by a trace of golden orange  
Separating our time from a fading light blue growing darker.  
Suspended as if in time lies the moon so dark  
With a trace of light outlining its remnant  
Against the black heavens.

Alone by its side glares the lonely bright Light  
Of early morning...a star...a planet...the hope of Life beyond.  
The morning star offering peace at the morning's greeting  
Is for the moment to see, feel and remember.  
Time standing still long enough to capture  
The horizon of God's grace.

We clear our eyes, the day begins,  
And Life arises again set to the demands  
Of another agenda wanting from each of us  
What it can have or take.

Will it reflect the Light of that morning calmness  
Or be lost amidst the scorching heat of Life's demands,  
Only to welcome the night peace again  
Where time loses itself in sleep.

Where have the years gone  
And to what do we seek tomorrow?  
With shortness grows longingness for depth beyond time.  
Do we welcome the advent of the morning star today  
More than yesterday and tomorrow more than today?

So will our time be governed by the welcome Light today  
More than yesterday and less than tomorrow?  
O blessed Light that calms our restless todays  
Putting each new day in its proper Light.  
COME so much quicker that my life may be more like the child  
You blessed this holy night and be more and more at peace.

These reflections came from a ride to church on a very early first Sunday in Advent. It is a poetic expression of what I witnessed that morning.

Advent is the beginning of the church year which not only sets our hearts properly for the celebration of the birth of Christ but also to his second coming; the advent of our God. It is the vision of his coming again grounded in the promise of the death and resurrection of our Lord that gives the church, the baptized, our VISION of where we are heading as a people. It is our focus just on the morning star lying under the moon that advent morning that draws our attention towards the new day promised in the horizons crack of dawn. The days demands can distract us from that promise and the church can seem to be overwhelmed with its side issues that can get us off track causing all kinds of unwanted problems. We need to remember why we are called by the Holy Spirit to be the church by centering our focus on the Vision of Gods' promise. When we do this, we can be at peace within the church through the most difficult times because we have beheld a glimpse of the glory of God that will be revealed at the coming of our Lord again.

Let us live the advent promise each day of the coming year.

*Pastor Tim*

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**THE GIVING TREE**

decorated with handmade ornaments will soon be making its appearance in the Narthex of First Lutheran. Through this tree we are able to reach out to others during the Christmas season, specifically to families living at the American Red Cross Emergency Housing Shelter.

Please take the "wanted items" list off the ornament hanging on the tree, leave the ornament along with your name and phone number written on the back. For those ornaments with a child's request printed on them, please be sure to get **both** the clothing item as well as the toy listed. If you are unable to go shopping please consider donating money and **Jenny Napier** and **Jane Cross** will purchase items for the children. See Jenny or Jane if you have questions. **Children's gifts will need to be at the church by Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.**



**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> following worship**

On the agenda: approving the 2019 budget, election of council members to serve 2019-2010, appointment of Memorial Committee member and other information items as needed.

**FISH SUNDAY DECEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>**



Since 1994 the first Sunday of each month has been designated as FISH Sunday here at First Lutheran. Please bring an item or two to church on Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> OR any Sunday this month. Any items you bring in will be greatly appreciated. Monetary donations are also accepted, you can use one of the pew envelopes and mark "For Food Pantry."**Thank you!**

Our first Sunday of the month food donation continues to collect food for the Xenia Hunger Backpack Cuisine Program. For December we've been asked to bring individual oatmeal boxes of 8-10 single servings. Our donations are always appreciated.

This is an ongoing addition to our FISH Sunday requests for food for the Food Pantry. Please place your donations into the box in the narthex marked for the "Backpack Cuisine Program".

Requested items include:

Pop top pan microwave ChefBoyardee 7.5oz single servings  
pop top cans of tuna 3oz  
individual oatmeal box of 8-10 single servings  
squeezeable jam/jelly 20oz  
cans of vegetables 8.5 oz  
gold fish and animal cracker snack paks  
cereal bars and granola bars box 8-10 single servings

Non-refrigerated puddings 3.5oz  
Dinty Moore beef stew 7.5oz  
10 pack fruit juices 5-8 oz  
pop top cans of fruit 8-9 oz  
pop top cans of chicken 4.5 oz  
peanut butter 18oz containers  
Cheesy Mac 2-3 oz single servings



## **SPICE OF LIFE**

Mark your calendar, we will be meeting at **Noon on Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**. (Please note that this is a change from the regularly scheduled day.) All seniors in the congregation, 55 and older, are invited to attend for friendship, fellowship and food. Carl Elliott. & Barbara McKown are in charge. One the menu: On the menu: pork tenderloin, au gratin potatoes, green beans, & rolls. You are invited to bring salad or dessert. No gift exchange this year, instead please bring in a canned good item for the FISH Pantry. Also, we will be entertained by Jennifer Jauss, Jullie & Neil Hoelle's daughter. Maybe even a Christmas Carol sing along.



### **A Note From Our Financial Secretary**

The church's last regular offering deposit for 2018 will be made on Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup>. So that is the last deposit that will be reflected on the 2018 Statement of Contributions. Any questions can be directed to Linda Blanton our Financial Secretary. . Any contribution received after December 30<sup>th</sup> will be credited to your 2019 statement.

## **CHRISTMAS SPECIAL APPEAL**

Annually we have a special appeal during the holidays. The organization to benefit is familiar to us, and depends on the generous support of the community to exist and do their good work. This year our church council approved the **Bridges of Hope** for our donations. All donations must be received by Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup> to count for 2018. Please make checks out to First Lutheran, with "Christmas Appeal" on the giving envelope.



**Lee Snell** says **THANK YOU** to the congregation for all the cards, calls and prayers he received during his recent surgery. All were so much appreciated!

## Outreach Opportunities through the Congregation...



**The Caring Place** needs a few volunteers to work on Thursday evenings on a **regular or perhaps a rotating basis**. If you are interested in this ministry please contact the church office.



We continue to collect items for the **FVPC** here in Xenia. The following items are needed and appreciated: soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant, lotion, combs & brushes, razors (like Bic), envelopes, lined writing tablets, pens & pencils, paperback books, coloring books & children's books. A donation basket is in the narthex.



Call Evie in the church office, 372-7421, if you would like to order a 6½" foil wrapped poinsettia plant for our Christmas Eve worship service. Orders must be in no later than December 16<sup>th</sup>. \$10.00 per plant.

## Opportunity in the Community...

The "Musica Chamber Choir" a Dayton Adult Chamber Choir with members from all over Dayton, including Jon Hoelle, a tenor, (Neil & Julie's son) will present their Christmas program on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm at the Lutheran Church of our Savior, 155 E. Thruston Blvd. Dayton. Tickets are \$15.00 a person and can be purchase at the Musica website or at the door the day of the program.



The Children's Sunday School class meets December 2<sup>nd</sup> and then takes a break until January 6<sup>th</sup>. Adult Sunday School Class concludes its session on Isaiah on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, after which there will be a short break. The class will resume January 6, 2019 with a new topic, still to be determined. Keep your eye on the bulletin as well as the next newsletter for updates.



## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

### December 2<sup>nd</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent)

Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Psalm 25:1-10  
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13  
Luke 21:-25-36

### December 9<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent)

Malachi 3:1-4, 8-13  
Psalmody Luke 1:68-79  
Philippians 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6

### December 16<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent)

Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Psalmody Isaiah 12:2-6  
Philippians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18

### December 23<sup>rd</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent)

Micah 5:2-51  
Psalmody Luke 1:46b-55  
Hebrews 10:5-50  
Luke 1:39-45

**December 31<sup>st</sup>** (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Christmas)  
Lessons and Carols



**C H R I S T M A S**

## **Progressive Dinner** Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>

The evening will begin at 5:00pm with appetizers at Adele Lerch's home. Followed by dinner at the Baldwin's home. The meal will be catered by Christopher's Restaurant. On the menu: Chicken Francese (breaded chicken breast in a white wine lemon sauce) red potatoes, green beans & tossed salad. Dessert will conclude the evening at the Nagel's home.

The cost for the evening is \$16.00 per person.

Due to parking limitations we will be van & carpooling. Plan to be at the church at 4:40pm to arrive at the first home "on time".

Please sign up on the kiosk and indicate if you would be willing to bring an appetizer or dessert.



## Christmas Season Schedule

*You and your family are welcome to come to all of these activities  
taking place at First during the Christmas season*

During the season of Advent we are using the communion setting entitled, Mass of the Nativity. Written by our own music director, Dr. Jim Will, the music is a celebration of expectancy and joy befitting the moods of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Come and worship with us on the Sundays of Advent. (December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.)

**Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> following worship** is the Congregational Meeting. On the agenda: approving the 2019 budget, election of council members to serve 2019-2020, appointment of Memorial Committee member and other information items as needed.



Join Us for  
Caroling

**Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 12:30pm** the congregation is invited to go along with our Church Choir as they go Christmas Caroling to our homebound members.



Christmas  
Eve  
Worship

**Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>** worship at 7:30pm

## News in the Parish...

✚✚ Continue to keep **our First Lutheran Disciples** in your prayers: Russ Kiser, Judy Williams, Meredith Skeens, Linda Blanton, Jean Akers, Betty Peppo, Barb Taylor and Kathy Teague

✚✚ Remember our **homebound members** in your prayers... Dottie Ripp, Marge Lovett & John Paul Saraga



# Annual Meeting

JANUARY 27<sup>th</sup>

## FOLLOWING WORSHIP

On the agenda: Presentation of reports from the Pastor and Church Council on our various ministries, and other business as needed

An updated directory will be available. Please give Evie a call in the church office if you know of any changes (address, phone, email, etc) that need to be made to the 'old' 2018 church directory.



**FIRST AND FRIENDS BOOK CLUB** is taking a hiatus during December.

The book for January is "The Orphans#8" written by Kim van Alkemade.

We will resume on Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.



## BROWN BAG LUNCH

### Bible Study

Bring a simple brown bag lunch with you. We meet for an hour from noon to 1pm at the church every Thursday. BRING A FRIEND! You don't need any special Bible knowledge. This is an informal, fun, and inspirational discussion time that will lift your spirits and give you new insights into your faith. Upper Room devotional booklets will be provided at no cost to all participants. Our topics are different every week so ANYTIME is the right time to come! Questions? Contact Facilitator Adele Lerch or call the church office, 372-7421. We will be gathering December 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, taking a break on the 27<sup>th</sup> and return to our regular schedule on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### Christmas Cantata



**Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**, during our morning worship service at 9:30am

Our Choir is presenting... "Bethlehem's Child" by Victor C. Johnson and Lloyd Larson



## ADULT BIBLE STUDY

With Pastor Tim

Thursdays at 3:00pm and 7:00pm

Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> 3:00pm-Study only  
Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm Taize and 7:45pm Study  
(hopefully the session ends at 8:30pm but Pastor will stay with anyone who would like to continue  
in any form of discussion following this time.)

Advent includes the study of the prophets who anticipate the day of the Lord when God will act decisively on behalf of the people; the prelude to the birth of Jesus who fulfills those promises long ago and who promises to come again; and the present beginnings of a new church year.

December 6<sup>th</sup>, the Age of the Prophets and Quest for Truth: the development of the human capacity to acknowledge God and discern the will of God for the future and its impact on creation and humankind.

December 13<sup>th</sup>, The Coming of Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life: the fullness of God comes to mankind to unveil the will of God that shows and brings us to the height of what it means to be human making God's will our own

December 20<sup>th</sup>, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and "Who is Christ for us Today?": at the apex of what should have been human life and civilization, the world experienced the most violent of centuries that unleashed greater destructive powers and the rise of secularism or what Bonhoeffer called the "World Come of Age". He called for the church to be not isolated from this world but living fully within as a religion-less Christianity; a valid question for us to live today as we anticipate the coming of Christ again.

### **Oesterlen Services for Youth...**

Greetings! It is the time of year when the world prepares for celebrating the birth of Christ, the greatest gift of all. It has been quite a year at Oesterlen. Celebrations are held many times a year for youth who have successfully graduated the residential program. There are celebrations with the students that have completed their GED. Celebrations occur when a child has taken important steps in therapy.

Your gifts have made these celebrations grand and are like gold, frankincense and myrrh in the way the youth use and appreciate them. Ministry in the lives of children is an eternal job. It is a serious responsibility and the need is never saturated. God continues to inspire people like you to pray for our youth and staff throughout the year. God continues to stir individuals, congregations and corporations to take up the cause of support the troubled youth in today's society.

"What makes Oesterlen Services for Youth, Inc. unique?" Christ is what makes this place unique! His love shines through our staff. It can be seen shining through administrators, therapists, supervisors, youth workers and support staff. From those who work directly with the children to those who work "behind the scenes" to those who support Oesterlen, we are all the body of Christ to the children and families that we serve.

Below is a partial Annual Wish List for all of the youth that Oesterlen serves. Please see the complete list posted on the kiosk in the narthex.

### **2018 OESTERLEN WISH LIST**

grooming aids ... stick deodorant (2.6 oz or larger-gender neutral), body lotion (plastic containers), bar soap, toothpaste (6.4 oz), toothbrushes, (soft bristle, adult size) bath towels & wash cloths, shower shoes, hair brushes

school supplies ... pens, pencils, markers, lined notebook paper, pocket folders, single subject lined notebooks without spirals, three ring binders, 1" & 2" with folder pockets, glue sticks, small 2019 pocket calendars

art supplies... construction paper; sketch pads, drawing paper, craft kits, colored pencils, permanent and non-permanent markers

games/toys... decks of playing cards

gift certificates ... for fast food or pizza reward parties (i.e. McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, Wendy's, Donato's (\$5, \$10 or \$20)

gift cards ... for individually selected items from, Wal Mart or Meijer

Bath towels and wash clothes, boxers (sz 28-44) sweatpants (S-XLarge though medium is most often needed), t-shirts or sweat-shirts (adults sz S-5XL)

Life Skills programing: Gardening, Wood Shop and The Farm... flower/vegetable seeds; gift cards for Lowe's, Home Depot, Rural King or Tractor Supply Company, wood working tools, wood and supplies

Bath towels and wash clothes, boxers (sz 28-44) sweatpants (S - XLarge), t-shirts or sweat-shirts (adults sz M-5XL)