

JANUARY 2026

# First Things

First Lutheran Church (ELCA)  
*Chosen by Christ. Empowered to Serve.*

JANUARY



Sparkling winter sunshine, faces all aglow.  
Making resolutions, and angels in the snow.  
Steaming cups of cocoa, a year that's fresh and new.  
All of this is magic, unfolding just for you.

Hello, First Family,

Happy New Year! This is the final Calvin and Hobbes comic strip by cartoonist Bill Watterson. It was published on December 31, 1995. In the first panel, we see Calvin and Hobbes trekking through new-fallen snow. Hobbes is carrying a toboggan, and Calvin says, "Wow, it really snowed last night! Isn't it wonderful?"

In the next panel, we find Hobbes smiling and saying, "Everything familiar has disappeared! The world looks brand-new." Calvin then says, "A new year...a fresh, clean start!" This comic of a fresh snowfall is a wonderful illustration of the clean start and many possibilities that come with a new year.

As a new year begins, let us remember that in Christ we are given a new life day after day. Through the grace of God, we have an opportunity to begin again every day as a new creation, forgiven and loved by God. The Apostle Paul tells us that "we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

Continuing on in the comic, Hobbes says about the new snow, "It's like having a big white sheet of paper to draw on!" Calvin then says, "A day full of possibilities!" I believe that 2026 is full of possibilities. I would invite you to take a sheet of paper of your own. Write the possibilities you see for yourself, your family, First and the community in the year ahead. Add to the list when you think of more ideas. If and when you wish, share your list with your family and friends.

Working together as the body of Christ, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, there are many possibilities and much to explore in 2026. And so, as Calvin says to Hobbes as they go sliding down the hill, I say to you "...Let's go exploring!"

God's blessings,  
Pastor Matt



# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**First Lutheran will hold its Annual Meeting  
on Sunday, January 25 at 10:30am**  
(following the 9:30am worship service)

For those on committees, annual reports need to be submitted to the church office by noon on Monday, January 5. We are also in need of 2 new church council members starting in 2026 (3 year term), along with various delegates and committee members. Please contact a current council member if you are interested in any of the open positions, or for more information.



When necessary, weather cancellations will be communicated primarily through the local radio station, which is KKOK (FM95.7) and KMRS (AM1230).

We will however, strive to also have this information available on the church's Facebook page and website. If time allows, emails and text messages will be sent out to those with current email/cell phone information on file with the church office.

## — SENIORS on the MOVE —

**SAVE THIS DATE!** February 12, 2026 for a Valentine's Party from 2:00-4:00pm at First. Guest speakers/topics: "Expanding our Walls by Helping Others" with Sharon Ehlers & Emilie Brustuen and "Getting to Know Me" with Pastor Matt.

## — CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: DEC 17, 2025 —

### Committee Reports:

- printed minutes were given to the council from Worship & Music and Fusion Youth. Property Committee discussed projects for 2026 and the boiler system.

### Communications:

- preparing for the Minnesota Paid Leave Program requirements

### Old Business:

- First & Federated will be meeting to discuss pastor's salary for the 2026 year
- work is being done on a congregational survey for both First and Federated

### New Business:

- Annual Meeting date set for Sunday, January 25. All reports are due by January 5.
- Budget for 2026 was discussed and approved.
- 3 council positions are open starting in January.
- Bishop Dee Pederson will be at the council's January meeting.
- approved reimbursement of a Lay Leadership course expense

### Treasurer's Report:

- Printed financial reports were given to all council members.

Next month's council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 7:00pm. Devotions by Liz.

## NOVEMBER'S GIVING and EXPENSE

\$16,309.00 November giving

\$15,793.29 November expenses

\$186,683.31 Year-to-Date Giving

\$194,915.56 Year-to-Date Expenses

**Coffee Hour** is served in the fellowship hall following the worship service on Sunday mornings. The **GRACE Service Group** is on the schedule to serve coffee hour during the month of January. Those in the Grace Service Group are: Justin & Lori Anderson, Ryan & Summer Anderson, Ray & Robi Bowman, Judy Buro, Matt & Cari Burnett, LeAnn Dean, Kellie Hentges, Linda Holland, Craig & Katie Knochenmus, Gary & Corrine Knochenmus, Dave Nelson, Allyn & Hannah Plattner, and Chris & Bobbi Siegel. Please sign up on the bulletin board across from the church office.

**Lunch Bunch** meets on Wednesday, January 7 at 11:30am at Hudson Inn’s Gazebo. Order off the menu; pay your own way. All are welcome to join us for food and fellowship!

**Newsletter Deadline** for the February newsletter is noon on Thursday, January 22.

**Zipporah Bible Study** meets on Thursday, January 15 at 2:00pm in the church fellowship hall.

**Share & Care Quilters** meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 9:00am in the sewing room (lower level) to sew and put together quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Come and join the group! Sewing skills are NOT required as there are other talents needed.

**Pastoral Visit** If you or a family member are hospitalized and would like a pastoral visit, please contact the church office and a pastor will be contacted to visit you. Even though you may be asked your religious affiliation during check-in, the hospital staff can not share that information without you specifically requesting they contact your church.

**Stevens County Food Shelf** supplies a 5-day emergency or supplemental food package to residents of Stevens County. There is no fee for this service, but clients must provide proof of residency. The food shelf welcomes people’s donations of food to support our community. Monetary donations are also very helpful in purchasing food supplies. The Food Shelf is located on the corner of 7th Street and Iowa Ave., in Morris. Hours are: Mondays: 2:30pm - 3:30pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays: 5:30pm - 6:30pm; Wednesdays and Fridays: 10:30am - 11:30 am. You can reach the food shelf at 320.589.7436.

**Follow us** on Facebook at “Morris-First Lutheran Church.” Our worship services are live-streamed on Sundays at 9:30am. We also try to add current event photos and updates to Facebook.

**Social Hour at Legacy Living** is held the third Wednesday of each month at 2:30pm for residents and friends. First Lutheran is on the schedule to supply the treats/goodies for 2026 on January 21, May 20 and September 16. Donated treats are welcome....a batch of cookies or a cake; just something simple. All are welcome to join us anytime. If interested in helping out, contact Cheryl at 314-570-0700.

**Daily Grace** Need an on-the-go companion for your faith journey? Just go to the Women of the ELCA website ([www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)) and sign up for the “Daily Grace.” Reflect, pray, and prepare for the day.

**Let’s Sing!** The joint Federated/First Choir meets on Wednesdays at 7:00pm at Federated Church. For more information, please contact Alisande at 320-287-1726.

SUPPORT MISSIONARY for the DAY

- Dec 5 In loving memory of Dewey Solvie on his birthday
- Dec 6 In memory of Judy Bluth from Doug & Sharon Ehlers
- Dec 7 In memory of Judy Bluth from Jim & Marian Thraen
- Dec 8 In memory of Judy Bluth from Cheryl Higgins
- Dec 9 In memory of Judy Bluth from Jo Solvie
- Dec 10 In memory of Arden Granger from Jo Solvie
- Dec 11 In memory of Judy Bluth from Dick & Suzanne Smith
- Dec 12 In honor of Molly Nelson on her birthday from Grandma & Grandpa Ehlers
- Dec 13 In memory of Greg Staples on his birthday from Robert Staples and family
- Dec 16 In memory of Curtis Quisburg from Doug & Sharon Ehlers
- Dec 19 In memory of Zona Jacobson from her family

You can sponsor the missionaries of the ELCA for \$15 per day. You may give this in memory, or in honor of someone. Contact the church office for more information, or to sponsor at date.

- Dec 24 ELCA Lutheran Worship radio broadcast given in honor of the congregation of First Lutheran



### THRIVENT WATER FILTER BUILD

The Evangelism and Mission committee is inviting you to help us build water filters during coffee hour on Sunday, January 25. These filters are provided in a Thrivent Cause Kit, [Thrivent.com/causekit](https://www.thrivent.com/causekit). Each water filter that is built provides clean water to 12 people for 10 years. All materials are provided along with instructions for assembly. We just need you to show up to help. Thrivent partners with the Wine to Water ministries which is a non profit organization providing sustainable water solutions to communities around the world. You can check out Wine to Water, <https://www.wtw.org> for more information.

### BABY KITS for LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

We will also be packing 15 baby kits for Lutheran World Relief on January 25.

### STOREHOUSE MINISTRY, 25 Atlantic Ave., Hancock

A Wednesday afternoon shift has been added besides the Tuesday evening shift for bean packing. If you are interested in helping out., you can receive the schedule with sign up opportunities by calling 320 491-6765

### GIVING IDEAS

- Lutheran World Relief: Donations sent by Dec 25 will double with matchings funds (PO Box 17061 Baltimore MD 21298-9832) or online ([lwr.org/SaveFamilies25](https://lwr.org/SaveFamilies25))
- Lutheran Disaster Response (*envelopes on narthex table*)
- ELCA World Hunger (*envelopes on narthex table*) Bread for the World. Learn more at [bread.org](https://bread.org)

**THANK YOU** to those who supported our Olivewood Sales. With the help of a Thrivent grant, we were able to purchase Olivewood Christmas Bell Ornaments for the Sunday School Students at First Lutheran Church and Federated Church. Also, Thank you to everyone for remembering that Church Without Walls events and activities are scheduled all year long; some require you to sign up to participate. Think about joining with each other and participate together as a family or with friends! Contact the church office or a committee member if there are any questions.

### \$25 THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS DURING YOUR BIRTHDAY MONTH!

Thrivent is giving members an additional \$25 in their Choice Dollars account during their birthday month. These funds must be designated to an eligible non-profit by the end of your birthday month, or they will expire. Log in to your Thrivent account to direct the funds to an organization of your choice. You can search for First Lutheran Church if you choose, and direct the \$25 to the church. If you've directed the funds to First Lutheran, please let the office know what you would like the funds to go towards: Youth, Worship & Music, Property, Mission & Evangelism, or call the church office and ask about other possibilities. Undesignated funds will go in the General Fund.

### CHRISTMAS GREETING FROM MICHAEL & CARMEN ZOUGHBI

Christmas time is here, and everyone rejoices! Let us celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. Through His coming into the world, He gave us the promise of a new and abundant life. The shepherds received the joyful announcement of His birth, and a great multitude of angels sang, "Today the Savior is born!" Even the wise men from the East followed the star—foretold in prophecy—to Bethlehem, seeking the newborn King. They brought their gifts with gladness and worshiped Him.

The prophecy of Simeon the Elder was fulfilled when he held the child Jesus before his death, just as God had promised. Mary endured the difficulty of pregnancy, and Joseph carried the responsibility placed on him. Yet in the midst of this miracle, there was one who feared the birth of the Savior. King Herod, in anger and foolishness, ordered the killing of all the children in Bethlehem two years old and younger, thinking he could destroy the newborn King.

But the Child who was born carried no guilt—only the weight of humanity's sin—by His own choice to give us eternal life. God never promised that the world would be without trouble, for evil exists within it. Yet He promised to be with us through every hardship.

So, if you feel burdened or troubled in your life, I implore you: go to our Lord Jesus and ask Him for peace and comfort. He will give it to you. God bless you, and Merry Christmas!



## SR. HIGH FUSION SCHEDULE (Grades 9 - 12)

- Wed., January 7: 6:30 - 8:00pm: Bible Study at FAITH Lutheran with Amy
- Wed., January 14: 6:30-8:00pm Bible Study and Verse of the Year shirts at FAITH Lutheran
- Wed., January 21: Eric Samuel Timm in Alexandria. More details to follow. Check your email for sign-up and leave time.
- Wed., January 28: 6:30 - 8:00pm: Bible Study at FAITH Lutheran

## Fusion BIBLE and BREAKFAST: 7:15-8:00am | Morris at Faith Lutheran and Hancock at Alberts

- Fridays, January 9 & 16: Morris Group only
- Fridays, January 23 & 30: Hancock & Morris Groups

Please check out Fusion's updated website for more information at [www.fusion-ministry.com](http://www.fusion-ministry.com) Join us on social media Facebook@fusion56267 and Instagram@fusion56267 Email: fusionministry.connect@gmail.com



## What is Fusion? (grades 9-12)

Fusion is a youth group for students in grade 9th-12th and is also a part of the collaboration between the five churches. Fusion is a place where youth are welcomed and known. A place where they can learn and grow in faith, connect with leaders and other youth and participate in adventure and service all in the name of Jesus Christ.



## ELEMENT SCHEDULE (Grades 6-8)

- Wed., January 7: No Element; rest & reset
- Wed., January 14: 8: 6:30-8:00pm at FIRST LUTHERAN
- Wed., January 21: 6:30-8:00pm at FIRST LUTHERAN
- Wed., January 28: 6:30 - 8:00pm: at FIRST LUTHERAN
- January 23-24: Winter Retreat at Luther Crest 4pm to Friday to 4pm Saturday (weather permitting)

Please check out the updated website for more information at [www.fusion-ministry.com](http://www.fusion-ministry.com) Join us on social media Facebook@fusion56267 and Instagram@fusion56267 Email: fusionministry.connect@gmail.com

## What is Element? (grades 6-8)

Element is a joining of Confirmation and Jr High Fusion Youth: the best of both worlds. Learning the elements of their faith in a fun and engaging space! Element is a collaboration between the pastors of Faith Lutheran, First Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, Federated and St. Johns/Kongsvinger of Donnelly, and with the blessing of the various church councils. Our goal is teach the 6th-8th graders to learn and experience elements of a Christian life. To believe, know and experience God, connect with others, serve others in love, and live out their faith daily.



# JANUARY WORSHIP SERVANTS

SUNDAY, JAN 11 8:30am Sunday school 9:30am Worship HC	SUNDAY, JAN 25 8:30am Sunday school 9:30am Worship HC
<b>Ushers:</b> Bob Heck Al & Julie Monroe	<b>Ushers:</b> Al Harris Ward Voorhees Michael Bjorklund
<b>Lector:</b> Denise Odello	<b>Lector:</b> Amy Dougherty
<b>Acolytes:</b> Zach Huebner Braeden Huebner	<b>Acolytes:</b> Ashley Williamson Aubrey Williamson
<b>Communion Prep:</b> (silver tray/wafers) Kahla Gillespie	<b>Communion Prep:</b> (silver tray/wafers) Sharon Ehlers
<b>Communion Server:</b> Judy Buro	<b>Communion Server:</b> Doug Ehlers
<b>Video:</b> Mike Odello	<b>Video:</b> Tony Feuchtenberger
<b>TV slides:</b> Chance Buro	<b>TV slides:</b> Grant Anderson
<b>Nursery:</b> Bobbi Siegel	<b>Nursery:</b> Lindy Ekola
<b>Accompanist:</b>	<b>Accompanist:</b>

## HAPPY Birthday

- Jan 1: Grant Anderson, Owen Anderson, Brenda Boever, Peggy Jergenson  
Jan 3: Doug Ehlers, Jane Johnson, Julie Thymian  
Jan 4: Ashlyn Williamson  
Jan 5: Andrew Hutchings  
Jan 6: Ron Rosen  
Jan 9: Ryan S. Anderson, Neil Sueß  
Jan 10: Honor Knochenmus, Shiloh Knochenmus, J. Mark Nesvig  
Jan 11: Philip Ask, Jayce Plattner  
Jan 12: Doug Beyer, Aubrey Williamson  
Jan 13: Jazlynn Hilbrands  
Jan 14: Cheryl Higgins, Glen Gillespie, Tyler Schneider  
Jan 17: Jone Anderson  
Jan 19: Steve Just  
Jan 25: Adrienne Hilbrands  
Jan 27: Luella Anderson  
Jan 29: Gwyneth Hanson  
Jan 31: Jamis Burnett, Blaine Hills, Zoe Krosch

## HAPPY Anniversary!

- Jan 6: Greg & Naomi Fynboh  
Jan 15: Al & Lavonne Watson



Sunday, JANUARY 4  
FEDERATED CHURCH

8:30am Sunday school  
9:30am Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, JANUARY 11  
FIRST LUTHERAN

8:30am Sunday school  
9:30am Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, JANUARY 18  
FEDERATED CHURCH


8:30am Sunday school  
9:30am Worship

Sunday, JANUARY 25  
FIRST LUTHERAN

8:30am Sunday school  
9:30am Worship with Holy Communion  
10:30am Annual Meeting

Sunday, FEBRUARY 1  
FEDERATED CHURCH

8:30am Sunday school  
9:30am Worship with Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b> <i>Church office closed</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <b>8am</b> Men's Bible Study at Faith Lutheran
<b>4</b> <b>8:30am</b> Sunday school at Federated <b>9:30am</b> Worship at <b>FEDERATED</b> with Fellowship following	<b>5</b> <b>12pm</b> Annual Reports due	<b>6</b> <b>11am</b> Pastors' Text Study <b>12pm</b> Gatherings for at Old #1  <b>7pm</b> Council Meeting	<b>7</b> <b>11:30am</b> Lunch Bunch at Hudson Inn Gazebo <b>6:30-8:00pm</b> *No Element *Fusion at FAITH <b>7pm</b> Joint Choir at Federated	<b>8</b> <b>9am-12pm</b> Share & Care (quilting)	<b>9</b> <b>7:15-8:00am</b> Fusion Breakfast (Morris only)	<b>10</b> <b>8am</b> Men's Bible Study at Faith Lutheran
<b>11</b> <b>8:30am</b> Sunday school at First <b>9:30am</b> Worship at <b>FIRST</b> with Fellowship following	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>11am</b> Pastors' Text Study	<b>14</b> <b>6:30-8:00pm</b> *Element at FIRST *Fusion at FAITH <b>7pm</b> Joint Choir at Federated	<b>15</b> <b>2pm</b> Zipporah Bible Study in fellowship hall	<b>16</b> <b>7:15-8:00am</b> Fusion Breakfast (Morris only)	<b>17</b> <b>8am</b> Men's Bible Study at Faith Lutheran
<b>18</b> <b>8:30am</b> Sunday school at Federated <b>9:30am</b> Worship at <b>FEDERATED</b> with Fellowship following	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>11am</b> Pastors' Text Study	<b>21</b> <b>6:30-8:00pm</b> *Element at FIRST *Fusion at Eric Samual Timm in Alexandria <b>7pm</b> Joint Choir at Federated	<b>22</b> <b>9am-12pm</b> Share & Care (quilting)  <b>12pm</b> Newsletter Articles Due	<b>23</b> <b>7:15-8:00am</b> Fusion Breakfast (Morris & Hancock)  <i>Element Retreat at Luther Crest</i>	<b>24</b> <b>8am</b> Men's Bible Study at Faith Lutheran
<b>25</b> <b>8:30am</b> Sunday school at First <b>9:30am</b> Worship at <b>FIRST</b> with Fellowship following <b>10:30am</b> Annual Meeting at <b>FIRST</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>11am</b> Pastors' Text Study	<b>28</b> <b>6:30-8:00pm</b> *Element at FIRST *Fusion at FAITH <b>7pm</b> Joint Choir at Federated	<b>29</b> <b>9am-12pm</b> Share & Care (quilting)	<b>30</b> <b>7:15-8:00am</b> Fusion Breakfast (Morris & Hancock)	<b>31</b> <b>8am</b> Men's Bible Study at Faith Lutheran

*All worship services at FIRST are streamed live via Facebook (Morris-First Lutheran Church)  
 Services are also streamed live on YouTube at both FIRST or FEDERATED depending on where the service is held.  
 (First Lutheran Church - Morris MN) and (Federated Church of Morris)*

*Recorded services available on FIRST'S website at [www.flcmorris.org](http://www.flcmorris.org) and on FEDERATED'S website at [morrisfederated.org](http://morrisfederated.org)*

*Rita is available Monday through Thursday from 8am to 4pm and is in church office on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.  
 In the event of an emergency, she can be reached by phone call or text (320-287-2384) any day of the week.*





# WINTER

## WORD SEARCH



### WORD LIST

BOOTS  
CHILLY  
COAT  
COLD  
FEBRUARY  
FIREPLACE  
FLURRIES  
FREEZE  
FROST  
FROSTBITE  
HIBERNATE  
HOLIDAY  
HOT CHOCOLATE  
ICE SKATING  
ICICLE  
IGLOO  
JACKET  
MITTENS  
NEW YEAR  
PENGUIN  
SCARF  
SKIING  
SLEIGH  
SNOW  
SNOWFLAKE  
SNOWMAN  
SOLSTICE  
WINTER

Q	X	G	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	F	E	F
R	D	I	W	I	N	T	E	R	E	C	C	R
A	S	T	O	O	B	U	Q	O	T	I	T	E
E	D	S	N	O	W	M	A	N	A	R	H	E
Y	E	J	A	C	K	E	T	N	L	V	W	Z
O	P	Q	B	X	L	P	F	S	O	F	S	E
W	B	P	S	U	E	R	O	M	C	N	B	W
E	Q	C	J	N	A	L	D	F	O	N	B	G
N	V	M	G	C	S	A	R	W	H	E	N	H
A	N	U	S	T	U	O	F	X	C	I	Z	X
W	I	D	I	I	S	L	L	M	I	S	P	B
N	H	C	W	T	A	M	Z	K	T	S	B	D
D	E	X	B	K	C	I	S	E	O	N	S	E
H	B	I	E	P	I	T	S	T	H	O	B	P
C	T	R	E	N	C	T	N	A	F	W	T	S
E	S	N	C	X	E	E	A	N	R	K	A	E
A	O	T	A	M	L	N	G	R	O	F	O	I
C	H	F	L	J	S	S	Y	E	E	R	C	R
Q	Z	E	P	X	K	Y	K	B	Q	O	W	R
I	C	B	E	F	A	H	U	I	U	S	Y	U
C	H	R	R	N	T	Z	G	H	X	T	X	L
I	I	U	I	K	I	B	A	I	F	V	M	F
C	L	A	F	G	N	J	E	M	E	Y	Z	K
L	L	R	Q	I	G	L	O	O	Z	L	H	O
E	Y	Y	D	L	O	C	P	L	H	A	S	B



First Lutheran Church  
200 East 5th St  
Morris, MN 56267  
Address Service Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit #83  
Morris, MN

**First Lutheran Church, ELCA**

200 East 5th Street  
Morris, MN 56267  
Phone: 320-589-3242  
website: [www.flcmorris.org](http://www.flcmorris.org)  
email: [office@flcmorris.org](mailto:office@flcmorris.org)  
Facebook: Morris-First Lutheran Church

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**Worship Schedule**

**SEE SCHEDULE ON CALENDAR**

Broadcasted live via Facebook and  
YouTube; recorded services  
available on our website.

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**Televised Services:**

Tuesdays at 1:30pm  
MediaCom: Channel 8 or 117-2 (*digital*)

**STAFF**

Matt Orendorff, Pastor  
Rita Bye, Office Manager  
Wyatt Vavra, Custodian

**EMAIL**

[morrisfederatedpastor@gmail.com](mailto:morrisfederatedpastor@gmail.com)  
[office@flcmorris.org](mailto:office@flcmorris.org)

**CHURCH COUNCIL**

Allen Monroe, President  
J. Mark Nesvig, Vice President  
Naomi Fynboh, Treasurer  
Matt Hilbrands, Secretary  
Bob Dalager  
Elizabeth Harris  
Bob Heck

HAPPY  
*January*