

First Hearts

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Of the Faith Life

Well, most of you know that I did not grow up in the Lutheran Church. I grew up in a church within a denomination where Baptism and the Lord's Supper were only symbols. They were regarded as things that are representative somehow. Neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper was considered as God's activity among men but rather man's activity before God. Neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper – according to the teaching of the church where I grew up – did anything. They were just nice little rites.

In my early 20's I met a little Lutheran girl to whom I took a fancy. At the same time I was drawn by the teaching of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions – especially the Small Catechism of Martin Luther. After we were married I was confirmed into the Lutheran Church as an adult. My instruction paled in comparison to the six years of youth catechetical teaching that my wife received – half a day on Saturdays every Saturday during the school year. To say that she loved every minute she spent in youth confirmation classes would be a lie. But – now – she appreciates what she was given during those Saturday mornings in the late 50's and early 1960's at Trinity Lutheran in Memphis, Tennessee.

Through my twenties and thirties and forties, I lived as a sinner who was also a saint only through the grace of God alone by faith alone in Christ alone. After a series of life priority changes that I take no credit for – and while still being a sinner I began seminary instruction at the age of 54 in 2002. I loved most every minute of my three years in classes at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I served my vicarage year and was ordained in 2006. I had bought into the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church about 95% I would say – but according to the vow I took I had bought into the Lutheran Church by 100%. Sometimes we take vows before God and are disingenuous. Yet, He doesn't strike us down – like He probably should. He doesn't break a bent reed, so to speak. But – in the next four or five years – serving as a pastor within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod – I bought into the teachings of Confessional Lutheranism completely – 100%.

And so, I tell you all of this because you can probably relate to it in your faith life – especially those of you who have lived a life of many years. You have seen your faith grow. You have come to see the wisdom of God's Word. You have come to see how God works in your life through the Word and Sacraments. You have come to see how God is patient and loving and graceful with you – even in areas of unbelief God is working to strengthen your faith and trust in Him.

And finally to the point I am attempting to make, God is at work within our youth to do His will. And His work and will is that our confirmands live a life of faith and trust in the “Only One and True Living God” who has given His Only Begotten Son into the flesh and suffering and death for them. I hope that the Holy Spirit will continue to do His Work in the eight youth who were confirmed on November 4 which was – by the way – All Saints Day. Our eight youth joined all the saints in heaven at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb – at the Table of Our Lord – on November 4, 2018. It is my hope that they will remain at this Marriage Feast throughout their lives and into eternity. For you see, as baptized children of God, God put His Name on them and claimed them as his family. Now, having confirmed their baptismal vows with their own voices, they eat at the family table of God – the eternal Marriage Feast of the Lamb. What a great joy for me – as their pastor – to have taught them the basics of the Christian Faith in the pages of the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther whose foundation is the Holy Scriptures.

I would like to thank the eight students who were so faithful in their attendance at class. I would like to thank them for their willingness to learn and do their work. I would like to thank them for their attentiveness and good behavior in class. This is the best overall confirmation class that I have ever taught. I give much credit for this to our school and our teachers and staff – and their parents. I am very thankful that the Lord allowed me to be their pastor and teacher. To Trevor Anderson, Ayden Laing, Olivia Wolford, Jayda Turner, Sofia Weideman, Abby Sanderson, Denver Slifka, and Joshua Keyes go my thanks and appreciation and encouragement.

May the Son of the Only True and Living God be with “The 8 of 2018.” May you live in Word and Sacrament the rest of your temporal lives for then you

truly live in the Word Made Flesh, Jesus Christ Our Lord.
In Christ, Pastor Floyd Smithey

Worship This Month

I pledge allegiance to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the faith for which it stands, one Savior eternal with mercy and grace for all.

December 5 – 1st Sunday in Advent: *Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 19:28-40.*

December 10 – 2nd Sunday in Advent: *Malachi 3:1-7b; Philippians 1:2-11; Luke 3:1-14.*

December 16 – 3rd Sunday in Advent: *Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 7:18-28.*

December 23 – 4th Sunday in Advent: *Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45.*

December 24 – Christmas Eve: *Isaiah 7:10-14; 1 John 4:7-16; John 1:1-14.*

December 25 – Christmas Day: *Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-14.*

December 30 – 1st Sunday after Christmas: *Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40.*

MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, December 5 and 12 and 19 with a Soup Supper before hand at 5:30 p.m. Please join us!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE will be at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 24.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE will be at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 25.

Prayer List

OUR PRAYER LIST SHOULD INCLUDE:

Serving Our Country: Brett Anthonijs, Robert Boatman, Isaac Davis, Chad Kaiser, Adam Smith, Jeff Stone, Neil Whitehead

Other Prayer Requests:

MEMBERS WITH SICKNESS OR BURDENS:

Brion Bissell (needs kidney) Pastor & Mary Schmidt

Margot Bridges (homebound) Carl Testerman (stroke)
 Gene Franklin the Varner family
 Gladys Frankenberg (homebound) Don & Carolyn Weaver
 Karla Hood Kris Weaver
 Mike & Mary Jones Harold & Katherine Whitaker (homebound)
 Don & Sandy Linde Mary Ann Wheat
 Sharon Mueller Marilyn Wing (homebound)

NON-MEMBERS WITH SICKNESS OR BURDENS:

Jonathan Campbell (Diane Baum's co-worker's brother) fighting infection after an appendectomy to remove his ruptured appendix
 Steven Dew (Carolyn Weaver's friend)
 Bill Flynn (Sharon Mueller's brother), whose cancer has returned
 Ken Hamilton (father of Anna Marie Hamilton, UT student from Alabama)
 Judy Hamrick (Shirley Watson's neighbor) with a tumor that is growing
 JoAnn Harbaugh (Kathleen Holliday's mother)
 Cheryl Hooks (Diane Baum's friend) undergoing months of chemotherapy after removal of part of her colon and intestines due to cancer
 Helen Linderfelt (Lynda Graves' friend)
 Joyce Lipscomb (Rick Elmore's friend)
 Annette Lotivio (Marc Blais's friend) with pancreatic cancer
 Joanne Mattingly
 Joan Mincey (Shirley Watson's friend) with stage 4 COPD and breast cancer
 Karen Nall
 Tom O'Brien (Marissa Wilson's co-worker's husband) with prostate cancer
 Travis Parrott (the Wolford's son-in-law) needing a kidney transplant
 Tom Roberts (Sara's grandfather) with Alzheimer's
 Daniel Rule (the Slifkas' friend) suffering from RSD
 Kristy Shirk (Lynda Graves' friend) with cancer of the sinuses
 Ceci Steele
 Barbara Thornton (Janice Kaiser's relative)
 Sam and Alex Weaver

Other News and Happenings

STEWARDSHIP – Throughout his epistles and his preaching recorded in the Book of Acts, St. Paul refers, in one way or another, to thanksgiving and thankfulness nearly 50 times. Whether vertically toward God, or horizontally toward the neighbor, thanksgiving is a major theme within St. Paul's body of work.

What does this mean? It means thankfulness is intrinsic to the life of those baptized into Christ. In other words, giving thanks is what Christians do as they live out their lives in this world.

The problem is that we often forget this. Consider your average, run-of-the-mill, normal day. When you get home, and your parents, your spouse or your children ask about your day, what first comes to your mind? After 99 percent of things went right, went exactly as planned, were enjoyable and blessings, we tend to focus on and remember the 1 percent of things that went poorly, that didn't go as planned, and that were nuisances.

We remember the bad things. We focus on discontent. And we fail to give thanks in all circumstances for everything (Eph. 5:20) and to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

Thankfulness and contentment go together. We are content with things for which we are thankful. St. Paul could be content with having plenty or when in need because He gave thanks to the Lord for all things. He thanked the Lord for those who had prayed for him and listened to his proclamation of the Gospel. He gave thanks for their good works in and for the Church of Christ. He gave thanks for the grace of God in Christ Jesus and found that God's grace was sufficient for him.

So, give thanks for all things and in all circumstances dear brothers and sisters in Christ. For you have been saved from sin, death, and hell by the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You have been added to the very family of God in an adoption of grace through Holy Baptism. God is your Father. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is your brother.

Give thanks for these things. Make a list – every morning if you must. Say them out loud. Sing about them within the congregation of the saints. And remember this: God has given you these things so that you may be of service to those around you – your family, your neighbors, your brothers and sisters in Christ. For to whom much is given; much shall be required (Luke 12:48).

MISSION SERVE is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 1.

VOTERS' MEETING – The next voters' meeting will be held on Sunday, December 2 following Divine Worship in the sanctuary. We will be voting on our nominations for Synod President and Vice-Presidents. Please submit any recommendations using the forms in the back of the sanctuary. Information on

those currently serving can be found online:
lcms.org/about/leadership/president

NEED CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS? Or want to keep dry winter skin at bay? LEGS can help! We will be making and selling luxurious lotion candles and sugar scrubs, to help send our ladies to next year's national LWML convention. There will be Christmas scents available, as well as a subtle, fresh fragrance. Candles are \$10, and scrubs \$5 - or, bundle them for only \$13! We will be taking orders through December 2. Come check out our candle samples downstairs at the potluck today. Your order will help support a wonderful cause while checking items off your Christmas shopping list!

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT will be at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 2.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP MEETING is scheduled for 7:00 on Tuesday, December 4.

YOUTH GET-TOGETHER in the gym after worship on Sunday, December 9.

POINSETTIAS – It is time to order poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary for the 2018 Christmas season. The cost this year is \$11.00. Order forms may be found in the bulletin or on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Please have your order turned in to the church secretary by Monday, December 10.

DAY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING is 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 11.

BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 11.

55 ALIVE – We have a special treat in having Pastor Derek Roberts from Praise Lutheran in Maryville. He formerly served at First Lutheran Church and was campus pastor to LCMS students at the University of Tennessee. He will have a Christmas presentation on "A Sack of New Things". A delicious luncheon will be served at \$7.00/person. See you there!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES meeting and workday at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 15.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM and Live Nativity will be on Sunday, December 16, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

PECANS -- It's PECAN Time at First Lutheran Church! Youth Group is selling Atwell PECANS, Cashews and Pistachios to help fund their trips. Assorted nuts will be here in time for your Thanksgiving and Christmas desserts! Please see or call Shellia Byrd (865-300-8350) if you would like to order. High Quality Cashews and Atwell PECANS and the YOUTH REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

Mammoth Atwell Pecan Halves (1 lb.) \$ 12.00 per bag
 Atwell Medium Pecan Pieces (1 lb.) \$ 12.00 per bag
 Roasted & Salted Cashews (1 lb.) \$ 10.00 per bag
 Roasted Salted Pistachios in Shell (1 lb.) \$ 9.00 per bag

BUY GROCERIES AND SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL – It's as easy as linking your shopper card online or speaking to the cashier.

Kroger: (Kroger.com/account/communityrewards) code PN664

Food City: (foodcity.com/schoolbucks) code 40424

Ingles: (ingles-markets.com/toolsforschools-link) code 11634

Amazon: (smile.amazon.com) code 62-0553429

School News and Happenings

CALENDAR

- 4 – ECE closing at 5:30
- 7 – No UniDay: Theme is red & green
- 9 – K-2nd grade choir sings at FLC
- 14 – Christmas program at 6:00 p.m.
- 18 – 3-8 field trip to The Lion, The Witch, & the Wardrobe
- 19 – Geography Bee for 5th - 8th grades
- 20 – FREE dress day & Christmas parties
- 20 – End of 2nd quarter grading period
- 20 – Awards Assembly at 2:00 p.m.
- 21 - 1/4 – Christmas Break (ECE closed 12/21 - 26, 31, & 1/1)

NEWS FROM FIRST LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Dear Friends,

Each day before school begins, the staff gathers together for devotions and prayer. Some days it feels like we need just *one* more cup of coffee, and other days laughter replaces the yawns. But no matter our mood as we arrive in the room, it means a great deal to all of us to start our day focused on Christ. Sometimes during this time, God is not so subtle, and the devotions that are shared seem to hit right at the heart of the challenges we are facing. It

might be a reminder to turn our worries over to God or to forgive those who have wronged us.

This morning our devotion was about holiday traditions. It reminded us that a preoccupation with tradition and doing things “just so” can interrupt the joy of the holiday season and distract from the true message which is the birth of our Savior. I thought about how my holiday traditions have changed over the years. Thanks to my husband, red cabbage is now a Thanksgiving staple. Traditions are wonderful, but new traditions are just as special because they represent the new love and new people who have come into our lives.

Later in the day, I along with other staff members, was reflecting on our school's purpose and future. I realized later how easy it is for us to get caught up in tradition. It is far too easy to say, ‘we can't do that,’ or ‘it has never been done that way’.

I have been active at this school since 2000, and I have seen many things change over that time. Some were even long held traditions which some people might have thought would never end. New traditions have also begun. The school has been around for nearly 150 years, and I am confident there are traditions which have been lost that no one even remembers. In all that time, people came and went guided by God's hand to serve First Lutheran in their own way, and over time traditions have changed.

Even with all those small changes, First Lutheran School has remained as a mission in this community, serving students and their families by providing a loving, Christ-centered environment where students can grow in mind, body, and faith. First Lutheran has become a tradition in and of itself. Though the details may change, our heart and our core values remain the same: serving God and serving our students.

So this Christmas when you are hotly debating whether to serve turkey or ham, or trying to decide if you should open presents Christmas Eve or Christmas morning, remember the traditions that are truly important: worshipping our Savior and serving our Lord.

In His Service

Jessie Irwin, Interim Principal

Birthdays and Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 – Carla Poore
- 3 – Vicki Broyles
- 4 – Diane Baum, Mary Jones
- 6 – Cheryl Denton, Rebecca Keyes
- 8 – Zach Blais, Mark Daniels
- 12 – Pastor Schulz, Madison Slomski, Justin Turner
- 17 – Robert Boatman
- 19 – Howard Rash, Nelson Tower
- 24 – Stephanie Daniels
- 25 – Rosina Kraus
- 26 – Janice Kaiser, Doc Sternberg, Marissa Whitehead
- 28 – Gloria Schulz
- 30 – Rose Broyles, Margaret Ortstadt
- 31 – Carlyle Roth

ANNIVERSARIES

- 16 – Chuck & Diane Baum
- 27 – Ed & JoAnn nNiedens
- 28 – Brion & Ann Marie Bissell

DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER IS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

Floyd P. Smithey, Associate Pastor; Ceci Steele, Editor.
Worship Services are held Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School and Adult Bible Classes are
held on Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

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December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00 Mission Serve
2 ADVENT 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 6:00 Advent By Candlelight	3 6:00 New Testament Books	4 7:00 Board of Stewardship	5 8:30 <i>School Chapel</i> 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 5:30 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship Service 7:15 Choir Rehearsal	6 12:00 55 Alive	7 6:00 Youth in Christmas Parade	8 German Saturday School Christmas Party
9 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 12:00 Youth Get-Together	10 6:00 New Testament Books	11 6:00 <i>Day School Board</i> 7:00 Board of Elders	12 8:30 <i>School Chapel</i> 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 5:30 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship Service 7:15 Choir Rehearsal	13 12:00 55 Alive	14 6:00 <i>Christmas Program</i>	15 9:00 Workday
16 MITEBOX SUNDAY 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 5:30 SS Christmas Program 6:00 Live Nativity	17 6:00 New Testament Books	18	19 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 5:30 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship Service 7:15 Choir Rehearsal	20	21 DEADLINE FOR JAN. NEWSLETTER 6:00-10:00 Parents Night Out <i>NO SCHOOL / NO ECE</i>	22
23 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 6:30 Worship Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:30 Worship Service	26 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 6:30 Worship Service 7:15 Choir Rehearsal	27	28 <i>NO SCHOOL / NO ECE</i>	29
30 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 6:00 New Testament Books					