



SHARING THE LIGHT

The mission of First Lutheran Church is to grow together in Christ through Prayer, Worship, and Education and to spread the love of Christ to our community.

December 2020 Publication of **FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**



Christmas Memories – Christmas Possibilities

While serving as a chaplain at a Lutheran nursing home, a lot of people told me their memories about Christmas. Here are a few snippets.

One of our residents told me about how, when she was a girl, candles burned on Christmas trees instead of strings of tiny light bulbs. One Christmas her brother got too

close to the candles on their Christmas tree and his hair caught on fire. Fortunately he wasn't hurt, but the incident resulted in an unforgettable Christmas memory – and probably the world's worst bad hair day.

Another resident told me about the way she and her husband surprised their kids on Christmas. Not only would they have presents ready for them to open on Christmas morning – they also brought in, set up, and decorated the Christmas tree all in one night, while their kids slept peacefully on Christmas Eve! What a look of surprise and delight was on their children's faces when they came down the stairs on Christmas Day.

A retired Navy sailor remembered Christmases in foreign ports far away from home. The ships he served on would always invite displaced, refugee children to come on board and join the sailors for Christmas. Hundreds of children, who had nothing, were given tours of the ship, presents to open, and a delicious Christmas dinner to enjoy while sitting next to the sailors. Those sailors had a different kind of family than their own on Christmas, and I am sure those kids never forgot such a Christmas for the rest of their lives.

Christmas is full of memories for each of us – precious memories that we wouldn't trade for anything. But we shouldn't forget that Christmas is also full of possibilities. Christmas is not just for children, and it's not a thing of the past. Because of Who was born on this day Christmas always holds the promise of newer and just-as-wonderful experiences yet to come. People often forget that the original Christmas story was one of hardship and loss.

The writer Luke reminds us that the country where Jesus was born had lost its independence and was being run by foreigners. Mary and Joseph had to leave their hometown at the most inconvenient time imaginable. Jesus' birth took place in harsh surroundings, where it was cold, where animals were living, and where his parents' dignity must have suffered a terrible blow.

Yet we know that it was in that difficult setting that God chose to be born. It was there that new hope burst upon the world. It was there that angels sang and shepherds and wise men came with joy on their faces and in their hearts. It was in that cold and dark setting that what the angel said to Mary came true: "With God nothing is impossible." God became Emanuel – God with us, now and forever!

At this time of a pandemic and all kinds of other problems, we need to be reminded that this Christmas – like the first Christmas – is full of undreamed-of possibilities, just as it brings back many unforgettable memories. May those undreamed-of possibilities be yours this Christmas and throughout the coming year!



Amen!

Pastor Kenneth Frese



**First Lutheran Church
SONshine House Preschool**



Dear Members.

What a blessing it is to be in the month of December. This month is special as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. As we continue to navigate through these unprecedented times, the power of prayer and unity shall continue to uphold and uplift us. We are continuing to offer Zoom and In-person classes to our students at the Preschool.

Thank you to all the members who have donated supplies to the Preschool, and are continuing to do so. The supplies are, very much, appreciated and are put to good use in the making of the Winter Wonderland.

As I mentioned in the November Newsletter, we are planning to collect gifts for the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. There will be a Christmas tree with paper ornaments in the Preschool. Each ornament will list something off of the wish list. This can be a toy, clothing, or bedsheets, etc. Each item may be selected from the Children's Hospital wish list. You may bring in the requested items and leave them in the Donation Bin, which you shall find right next to the Christmas tree.

I hope and pray that you can join forces with us in helping our Preschool donate as many gifts as possible for this cause. On December 23rd, 2020, I shall deliver all the donated items to the Children's Hospital.

In His Name,
Elvia Ibanez
SONshine house Preschool Director
eisonshinehousepreschool@gmail.com



December 2020

Gatherings:

Board of Directors, Sunday, December 13, 11:00 a.m.

Major Leaguers is cancelled until further notice.

Saturday Prayer Group, 9:00-10:00 a.m. This group is, currently, meeting via the telephone. Let Jo Tschopp know if you want to participate.

December Birthdays



Dave Lassanske

December 11

Patricia Caballero

December 15

Erich Armbrust

December 20

Betty Nelson

December 24

Judy Gunther

December 28

Sharon Corey

December 28

Not receiving email special announcements and/or prayer requests??

If you are currently not receiving emails and would like to be included please share your email address with Church Administrator at firstlutherantc@gmail.com or call: (626) 287-0968 and leave a message.

Pastoral Care:

Pastor Kenneth Frese at: (310) 398-3741 or

Board of Directors Chairman, Judy Gunther at: (626) 833-5613.

Electronic Newsletter: Let the Church Administrator know your email address if you would prefer to receive your monthly newsletter via email at: firstlutherantc@gmail.com.

Burn the Mortgage!

Thanks to generous donors the *principal only* gifts during November totaled \$1651.91 giving us a loan balance of \$183,063.60. Gifts large or small bring closer the date that we will no longer have a monthly mortgage payment of \$5028. If you are planning a year-end financial gift consider designating it for debt reduction. The holidays for Thanksgiving and Christmas remind us of the countless blessings we have received from our loving God.



Mission Development Team

The Mission Development Team continues to seek ways to reach out to our neighbors. A prayer request mailbox has been installed on the corner of Noel and Broadway. It is being checked consistently for prayer requests. As we continue to experience the effects of the COVID pandemic we want to be a resource of comfort and care for others. Another project that continues to evolve is the placement of positive encouraging signs on the church property. Many neighbors are using the property for walking, exercising, and family time for their children. We continue to post the weekly preschool chapel services on the church's website and on Facebook, we also send them to all the preschool families via an app which reaches them. We hope many of you will plan to attend the rock-painting event on December 5. In the planning stages is an effort to let the neighborhood know about our Christmas services and activities perhaps with flyers and door-hangers. Thanksgiving and Christmas are such special times to contemplate the wonder of God's gifts and love for us and we want to share those gifts with others. Let Jo Tschopp know if you would like to join us at: (626) 355-9433

Friends in Deed

We thank SONshine House Preschool for joining us this month by collecting food for Friends in Deed Food Pantry. For those of you who have a surplus collection of plastic grocery bags at home you can donate them to the Pantry. The volunteers at the Pantry will be filling them with a variety of food items to be given to those in need. Don't forget to put into your shopping cart some items that will be a blessing to others. The ushers will show you where to put them



Tuesday Bible Study

Does God condone war, why did King David kill thousands of men in the wars he conducted? These are questions we wrestle with even today. This group will be taking a break to attend the Advent Worship services and resume gathering in January 2021. Contact Oscar Tschopp for further information at: (626) 355-9433.



Saturday Prayer Group

This group remains connected via a telephone conference call each Saturday from 9:00a.m. to 10:00 a.m. We focus on the needs of our congregation, individuals, our neighborhood, our nation and the challenges worldwide. Join us as we expect God to hear us by calling at: (626) 355-9433

Matthew 18:19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.



God Has a Positive Answer.

You say...

It's impossible.
I'm too tired!
Nobody really loves me.
I can't go on.

I can't figure things out.
I can't do it.
I'm not able.
It's not worth it.
I can't forgive myself.

I can't manage.

I'm afraid.

I'm always worried and frustrated.

I'm not smart enough.
I feel all alone.

God says...

All things are possible.
I will give you rest.
I love you.
My grace is sufficient.

I will direct your steps.
You can do all things.
I am able.
It will be worth it.
I forgive you.

I will supply all your needs.

I have not given you a spirit of fear.

Cast all your care on ME.

I give you wisdom.
I will never leave you or forsake you.

Bible verses

Luke 18:27
Matthew 11:28-30
John 3:16 and John 3:34
II Corinthians 12:9 and
Psalm 91:15
Proverbs 3:5-6
Philippians 4:13
II Corinthians 9:8
Romans 8:28
I John 1:9 and Romans
8:1
Philippians 4:19
II Timothy 1:7
I Peter 5:7
I Corinthians 1:30
Hebrews 13.5

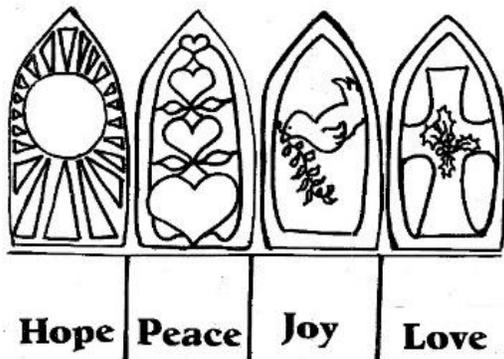
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE AT FIRST LUTHERAN

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2, 9, AND 16
MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES

12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Worship service

THURSDAY DECEMBER 24
CHRISTMAS EVE: LUNCH & WORSHIP

12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Advent Service



Mission Development Team presents:

First Lutheran



First Lutheran Church Rocks on December 5 from 2 to 4 p.m.!

Location: First Lutheran Church, 9123 Broadway, Temple City

Free admission and materials: This event and the materials have been funded through a generous grant from Thrivent Financial (thrivent.com).

Provided: Rocks, paints, brushes, clear coating, basic instructions, tables, chairs

Fun for all ages: This activity is fun for families, seniors and kids. Children under 12 years old must attend with a parent or guardian.

COVID precautions: We'll be set up to paint rocks with social distanced seating following COVID-19 guidelines. **Every attendee including children must wear a face mask.**



Borchard Prayer Letter

Papua New Guinea

November 2020

Dear Praying Friends,

Translation Office/House in the Ipili Area

Ipili translator Pastor Mandita was in the Ipili area from the end of June until October. During that time he made a lot of progress on building the translation office/house. The outside walls, the floor, and the roof were completed. The house has five rooms and one of the rooms has been enclosed. Work still needs to be done to finish the inside of the house.



We in the Ipili team praise the Lord that so much has been accomplished on the house! During the work Mandita fell and injured himself. *Please pray for healing, and that the pain he is having will go away.*

We are also pleased that several Ipili people gave money to help with the building of the house.



Progress and Current Work

I have finished the first advisor check of Exodus chapters 29-34, and now I am working on the first advisor check of chapters 35-40. Margret has finished the Melanesian Pidgin back-translation of chapters 35-40. Now that Mandita is back at the translation center, I'm hoping that he, Margret and I will be able to sit down together virtually over the internet to work on the team check of Exodus chapters 10-14. If the technology works well I should be able to see the changes that Mandita types into the translation in real time. I will be able to ask questions, and hear their answers just as if we were sitting down together at Ukarumpa. ***Please pray that this will all work out well so that we can make good progress on the translation.*** Margret is wanting to go out to the Ipili area to resolve an issue with her family's land. I'm hoping that she will be able to wait until we have worked together on the translation.

Change in Ipili Support Team

Maria and Mikko Vuorma have been the support team for the Ipili since late last year. They hope to go on furlough to their home country of Finland this month. Our former support team Terry and Cyndi Cirre have recently been able to return to Papua New Guinea after their extended furlough here in the USA so they are taking over the support team responsibilities. ***Mandita, Margret, and I are thankful for all the help that the Vuormas have given to the Ipili project, and we are glad that the Cirres are able to take on the support team role.*** Terry has also resumed his role as the regional director for the languages in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Looking to the Next Three Years - And Beyond

My permit to work in Papua New Guinea has been renewed which will allow me to work there until the end of October 2023. My current plan is to retire at that point. The Ipili team hopes to finish Exodus and Daniel, and to record those books, and well as to record the completed book of Ruth. We hope to also get a literacy program started. We had planned to have three Ipili people attend a course this year to learn how to develop a literacy program, but that course had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus. What does the Lord have in mind for the future? We don't know. With the construction of the building in the Ipili area there is now a base for the work there. If more translation is to be done beyond the books listed above someone else will need to join the team to advise and facilitate the work. There is also a real need for encouraging Ipili people to listen to and read God's Word in their language. ***Please pray for someone to take over as the advisor and facilitator for the Ipili work.***

Your Partner in Bible Translation,

Janet

Correspondence

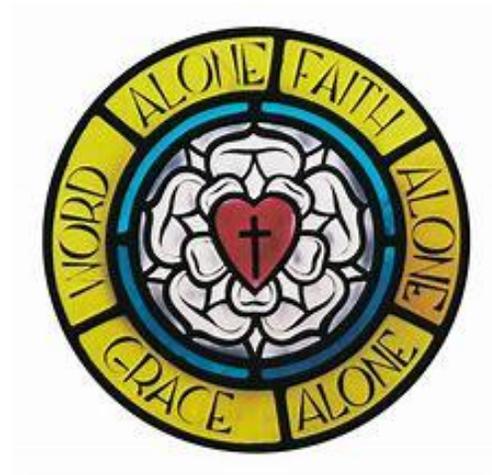
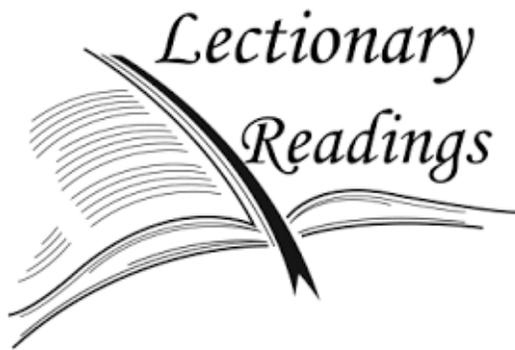
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Contributions

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Designate: *Borchard Ministry*



**Lutheran Bible
Translators**



Reading the Lectionaries

Here are the lectionaries for December as they travel to various books of the Old Testament, Psalms, Epistles, and the Gospel.

	<u>First/Old Testament</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
December 6	Isaiah 40:1–11	Psalm 85	2 Peter 3:8–14	Mark 1:1–8
December 13	Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11	Psalm 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16–24	John 1:6–8, 19–28
December 20	2 Samuel 7:1–11	Psalm 89:1–5 (19–29)	Romans 16:25–27	Luke 1:26–38
December 27	Isaiah 61:10–62:3	Psalm 111	Galatians 4:4–7	Luke 2:22–40

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

9123 Broadway
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DATED MATERIAL

December, 2020

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E-Mail: firstlutherantc@gmail.com

Website: <https://firstlutherantc.org>

Rev. Kenneth Frese, Pastor

Elvia Ibanez, Preschool Director

8:30 a.m. TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

Holy Communion every 1st & 3rd Sundays only

9:45 a.m. SUNDAY SCHOOL/BIBLE STUDY

Every Sunday