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*The next
Property
meeting will be
February 5th
6:30 Pm.*



“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.”

*I do not give to you as the world gives. Jesus encouraged His disciples.
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.*

John 14:27

As we begin 2025 each of us are blessed to hear these words from Jesus, for present and future challenges. And with gratitude for many blessings and opportunities you and yours anticipate in the coming year and beyond. As we celebrate Christ's birth, God's self entering the human story, we're reminded that new beginnings are always possible. God works in unimagined ways for our good.

What dreams might God be placing on your heart for this year and the years ahead? Our Lord welcomes our prayers for all the good we hope for and support through difficulties which draw upon our reserves of hope and grace.

With the promise of peace Jesus reminded His disciples, God provides for us in ways the world cannot. We have observed in the narrative of Jesus coming into the world that Mary and Joseph trusted and received peace and protection the world would and could not provide. The Father utilizing the good nature and amazement of shepherds for example. Also moved the wisemen from the east to journey long and far seeking the realization of a hope and vision with worldwide implications.

In the context of Jesus promise of peace, on the night when He was arrested, His own disciples ran and hid to avoid the violent actions worldly powers inflicted upon Jesus. Yet their trust in God possibilities revived and they drew near the danger to witness Jesus' trials and death. They waited for the promised power of the Holy Spirit. After it indwelt them at Pentecost, they openly spoke about Jesus who had been crucified, died and buried. They announced, “He is risen. Receive the gift of faith, believe He is the Messiah sent to reveal God's love and save you from sin, and your sins are forgiven.”

More good news first announced to lowly shepherds by an angel terrified by the glory of the Lord which shone around them: “Do not be afraid; behold I bring you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host, praising God and saying, Luke 2:9-15

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those He favors.”

May you and yours be curious like the shepherds who: “when the angels had left them and returned to heaven, said to one another, “Let us go now and seek this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made know to us.”

Please note, like the shepherds, you are favored by God. You know this because the good news of Jesus had been proclaimed to you and yours. This Good News gives peace, from God, nothing in the world can so comprehensively and reliably. Our joys are more complete and sustained when we give praise and thanks to God for them. Especially when we have utilized, with gratitude, the talents and resources our Lord has provided for our lives.

Chances are God will not ask more of you than Mary and Joseph, yet just the same you will be provided all you need when you seek and give honor to the light and life of all people – God Emmanuel, come to be central in your life.



New Year's blessing

The eighth day of Christmas,
the eighth day of Creation,
the Next New Day,

New Year's Day.

May every day be a new year's day for you:
a chance to forgive and be forgiven,
to start again.

May you take courage to begin anew. ...
As you let go of the year past,

may you ... in your free fall find yourself held
by an eternal love that has come ages to be
with you,

and will carry you all the way to the end. ...
Every day may you trust your belovedness,
your freedom from having to prove yourself,
and receive the grace that is given to you.

May this year be a year of grace and hope.

—Steve Garnaas-Holmes, unfoldinglight.net

Food Pantry Donations

The Food Pantry would like us to emphasize a specific item each month. Remember, you may bring any item you wish, but spreading this among the contributing congregations keeps a steady supply of their most basic needs coming each month.

For the months December & January

**Elbow Macaroni , Canned Green beans & Spaghetti Sauce
are requested.**

There is a basket located in the Narthex for you to place
your donations in.

Let's start this New Year with prayer!

Chihoni News!!

The December IHP Update calls 2024 “The Year of Patience.” And the year certainly has been an exercise in patience. But Christmas Eve day brought an answer to prayer: the team in Chihoni received the long-awaited plot and block numbers for the hospital building, along with final documents to sign. The Chihoni Village Council must now add its signature to the building permit and title deed, which will be forwarded to the Dodoma City Council. Then, IHP construction manager Selemani Shabani was told, the building permit should be issued within seven working days.

If all works as planned, groundbreaking will be in late January or early February. As Dr. Charles Powell says in the

Update:

“2025 will be a year of action. I am looking forward to attending the official groundbreaking for Chihoni Medical Center. This event will be complete with government officials and media coverage. Pomp and ceremony have a very special place in Tanzania, it indicates approval and support, so this is very important to both us as an organization and to the project and its well-being. It seems like it’s been such a long time. The pandemic had kept us from visiting for a number of years. We look forward to the return of guests and volunteers on a small scale in 2025, with an accelerating volunteer schedule in 2026. These are exciting times!”



These concrete blocks will soon become a new Chihoni Medical Center.

For the entire Update, go to <https://www.ihptz.org/> and click on IHP Monthly Update.

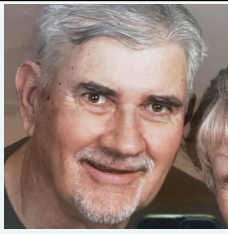
**A BIG
Thanks!**

Thanks to our beautiful singers. Christmas Eve was made special by the dedicated folks who gave up early Sunday mornings to rehearse. They get a break now, and will re-group to prepare for Easter. Stay tuned and plan to join us?

Christian symbol

NOAH’S ARK — The image of an ark, or boat — often shown with pairs of animals — recalls the story of Noah and the “Great Flood” in Genesis. The floodwaters represent God’s judgment on sin, while the ark reminds us of his gracious power to save and redeem. In this account, Christians see a foreshadowing of our baptism into Christ: “And baptism, which [God’s rescue of Noah and his family] prefigured, now saves you ...” (1 Peter 3:21, NRSV).





Donald Thompson
(former First Lutheran
Youth pastor)
Dec. 27th, 1945 -
Dec. 9th, 2024

The Rev. Donald R. Thompson, known to many as Don, was born on December 27, 1945, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Earl and Ann Thompson.

In 1971, after prayerful consideration, Don answered a call to serve as Minister of Youth and Christian Education at First Lutheran Church in Newton, Iowa. In 1975, he moved with his growing family to Phoenix, Arizona, where he joined the staff of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. There, he expanded the church's youth and Christian education programs, launched a thriving singles' ministry, developed and taught a curriculum for adults with

intellectual and developmental disabilities, and played a key role in resettling Vietnamese refugee families—a testament to his deep sense of generosity and global compassion. Despite battling Parkinson's Disease in his later years, Don remained steadfast in his love for life, family, and faith. He cherished time with his loved ones, finding solace in worship and the beauty of the desert landscape he worked so tirelessly to protect.

Don passed peacefully with his beloved wife Linda by his side on Monday, December 9, 2024. He is survived by Linda, his loving partner of 56 years; his four sons, Nathan, Moses, Micah, and Isaac, along with their spouses and his six grandchildren. His legacy of energetic service, inclusive love, and compassionate leadership will forever inspire those who knew him.

If you know anyone in need. Free Smoke and CO Alarms

The Newton Fire Department recently received 275 free Smoke/CO alarms from the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau. We'll be installing these alarms at no cost in homes until they're gone, with the goal of completing installations by March 1.

Why it matters:

Smoke alarms provide early fire detection, increasing your chance of escaping safely.

These alarms also detect carbon monoxide (CO), a dangerous, odorless gas.



Each alarm includes a 10-year sealed battery, so you won't need to replace batteries every six months.

Take action: If your home needs new Smoke/CO alarms, contact Fire Marshal Jacob Halferty at the Fire Department to get yours!

Stephen Ministry 2025



My family and I went to the Jasper County Historical Museum on Christmas day, featuring specially decorated Christmas trees. I was pleased to see that 1st Lutheran's tree included a Stephen Ministry ornament. I am grateful for 1st's support in this ministry I love.

As we approach this new year, perhaps you are looking for a way to share your gift of Compassion, Listening, Caring and sharing the Love of Christ. If so you may be interested in joining our team of Stephen Ministers. The training is around 50 hours, once trained you are matched up with a care receiver, meeting about once a week. To learn more you can visit the Stephen Ministry web site <http://stephenministries.org>. You may also talk to Pastor or me, Maria DeRush 760-608-0642 about the ministry.

As enjoyable as this ministry is, we could use more Ministers.

On Jan. 15, 6:30pm our monthly training will be on "Ministering to People Experiencing Challenges Related to Aging" I am inviting anyone interested in this topic to join us, there is a reading that goes with it. Please let me know if you are interested. Blessings,

Maria DeRush

Bible Quiz

When 12-year-old Jesus stayed at the Jerusalem temple as Joseph and Mary started traveling home, after how many days did his parents find him?

- A. 1 day
- B. 2 days
- C. 3 days
- D. 7 days

Answer on pg. 2



Julie Trusler 01/03
Jorgen Rose 01/07
Mark Monroe 01/08
Richard Klopping 01/16
Garrett Cantu 01/25
Lee Swenson 01/31

Giving Made Easy

First Lutheran has generated a QR Code to make giving even easier.



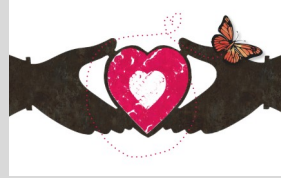
On your iPhone or Android phone or tablet, open the built-in camera app. Point the camera at the QR code. Tap the banner that appears on your Android phone or tablet. Follow the instructions on the screen to finish.

*All previous forms of giving are still available.
This is just 1 more option.*

MLK on what really matters

Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he “tried to give his life serving others” and “tried to love somebody.” Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.” Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the “reordered priorities” of Jesus, who wants us to “be first in love.”

As Jesus showed, “everybody can serve,” King said. Your background or status doesn’t matter, as long as you have “a heart full of grace” and “a soul generated by love.”



Giving your best



Like the Magi, we can respond with our best gifts — our industry, our devotion, our very lives. We disciples are Christ’s tangible presence in the world. That same Child whose light brought such joy to the Magi now, through us, offers his mercy to every person.

Through us, every day, Christ feeds multitudes; he heals, teaches and guides countless people. Through individual volunteers and major institutions, through simple acts of kindness or worldwide coordinated efforts, the world can encounter, through the Christian community, the enduring, tangible presence of Christ.

—Michael Simone

Special Dates

- **New Year’s Day,**
January 1, 2025
- **Dorcas 9:00 am**
January 2nd, 2025
- **Epiphany,**
January 6, 2025
- **Baptism of the Lord,**
January 12, 2025
- **Lois Cr. 9:30am**
- **Stephen Min. 6:30 pm**
January 15th, 2025
- **Council Meeting 7:00**
January 16th, 2025
- **Bury the Altar begins**
01/19-03/05
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day,**
January 20, 2025
- **Week of Prayer for**
Christian Unity,
January 18-25, 2025

A HUGE CATCH

Make a catch of fish to show what happens when Jesus calls his first disciples.

What you need:

- Cardboard egg carton
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrush
- Darning needle
- Fishing twine
- Scissors
- Googly eyes or buttons
- Glue



What you do:

1. From the egg carton, cut out the 12 cups. From the lid, cut out two fish tails.
2. On a protected surface, turn the cups upside down. Paint the outside of each cup and both sides of the tails. Let dry.
3. Thread the needle with an arm’s length of twine. Tie a knot at the end.
4. Thread the needle through the end of the tail. Tie another knot an inch from the tail.
5. Thread the needle through one upside-down cup. Pull the twine through until the cup rests on the knot.
6. Continue tying knots an inch above each cup and threading on another cup until you’ve strung six cups. Tie a knot above the last cup and leave a long string to hang the fish. (You can make two fish with each egg carton.)
7. Add googly eyes or buttons to the last cup to make a face.




Bury the Altar

January 19th
through
March 5th



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2 Dorcas 9:00 am	3	4
5 Worship Service 9:30 am Evening Confirmation	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Worship Service 9:30 am Evening Confirmation	13	14	15 Lois Cr. 9:30 Am Stephen Ministry Meeting 6:30pm	16 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	17	18
19 Worship Service 9:30 am Bury the Altar begins 1/19-3/5 Evening Confirmation	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Worship Service 9:30 am Evening Confirmation	27	28	29	30	31	

Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor Hoover's Hours:
Monday & Tuesday
9:00Am- - 12:00 pm

Meetings with Pastor Hoover by Appointment.

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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**Watch Past and Live
services !**

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