

PREPARE
THE WAY OF
THE LORD

LUKE 3:4

Called by the Spirit, we serve Christ, sharing God's love with all.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

WEBSITE: firstlutherantopeka.org

1234 Fairlawn Road, Topeka, KS 66604

Church office: (785) 272-5302 CDO office: (785) 272-5999

Ministers
Senior Pastor
Coordinator of Stewardship and Outreach
Children's Day Out (CDO) Director
Caring for Kids 1st Director
Organist
Director of Music
Director of Handbell Choirs
Secretary
Assistant Secretary
Bookkeeper
Missionaries in Russia
Missionaries for Ripe For Harvest World Outreach

*All Members of First
Pastor Jenny Jackson
Pastor Bob Dealey
Julie Lamott
Julie Bradley
Jerry Anderson
Mark Fuller
Linda Anderson
LaDonna J. Little
Jill Loomans
Cindy Crawford
Rev. Bradn & Natasha Buerkle
Jim & Dawn Anderson*

A BRIEF WORD ABOUT WORSHIP PRECAUTIONS.

MASKS: A mask must be worn during the entire time in church, covering the mouth and nose. This is done to provide protection for others and for your own safety.

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING IS A HIGH PRIORITY AT ALL TIMES DURING IN-PERSON WORSHIP: All members are to maintain a 6-foot distance from other people/households at all times. This includes gathering in the parking lot, arriving or exiting through church doors, or standing in the fellowship areas. Ushers and greeters will be present to help with arrival, seating, communion, and departing church.



THE CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

AN ADVENT EUCHARIST

5:00 P.M. & 10:00 A.M.

DECEMBER 4 & 5, 2021

Before worship, talk to God. During worship, let God talk to you. After worship, talk to your fellow worshipper.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE “Freu Dich Sehr” (“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”)

(arr. K. T. Kosche)

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

CHIMES

CALL TO WORSHIP

A: We are called to wake from sleep,

C: to wake up and hear, to wake up and see.

A: What has the Lord to show to us?

C: A new life, a new world,

A: a different set of priorities,

C: freedom from the tyranny of desiring and acquiring.

A: Wake up, wake up! Hear the invitation that echoes down the centuries.

C: O Come, O Come Emmanuel, come into our lives today.

264 GATHERING SONG “Prepare the Royal Highway”

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God for whom we wait,

C: in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

P: God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, † your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

C: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE

A: As we journey down this Advent road, grant us the courage to make peace.

C: Peace in our hearts, Peace in our homes, Peace in our communities. Amen.

ADVENT HYMN “Light the Candle” Stanza 2 PEACE (*The second candle is lit.*) **See Bulletin Page 11**

A: We light this candle as a symbol of the peace of Jesus Christ.

C: Only His way can bring peace to our world.

A: We pray this peace will fill and cover the world.

C: Come Lord Jesus, Come!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Congregation shall sit.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

P: Amid much confusion, signs leading away from you, we seek your truth. Open our hearts to the wonders of your work and the wisdom of your Word.

C: Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scriptures read, sung, and preached.

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the LORD whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: **Philippians 1:3-11**

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

CELTIC ALLELUIA



P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the 21st chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: **Luke 3:1-6**

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'
⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Congregation shall sit.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

249 HYMN OF THE DAY "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

1. ALL in unison 2. Ladies 3. ALL in harmony 4. Men *Interlude-Please Stand* 5. ALL in unison

Congregation shall remain standing or sitting, as able.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

On the third day he rose again;

**he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,

**the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

A: You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill especially Carolyn, Diane, Michelle, Joyce, David, Kevin, Laura, Lois and Phil, as well as our homebound members, all unable to worship this weekend, and all family, friends and even enemies we name now, either out loud or in the silence of our hearts (pause). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

PEACE P: The peace of the Lord be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Peace be with you.

R: Peace be with you.

Brief word about peace: *As we practice Social Distancing, the sharing of the peace will take place as we remain in our pews: waving, bowing, blessing, or sharing the peace sign with our fellow worshipers.*

Congregation shall sit.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

CHOIR ANTHEM “Every Valley”

(S. Porterfield)

Brief word about offering: *Offering plates are available at the back of the worship space, on the bulletin table. To give online, please go to FirstLutheranTopeka.org and click on ‘contribute’.*

Please place attendance form in the offering plate.

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God of our waiting and watching,

C: we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. Amen.

ADVENT DIALOGUE AND PREFACE

Spoken Responsively

P: God is with us.

C: In this place and in our lives.

P: Let us give thanks to God.

C: In memory and in hope.

P: Blessings be to you, Creator God. Your ancient promise is our song of hope.

C: Sometimes we close our ears to the song of hope, but you never stop singing.

P: And then came the promise of a child.

C: In this child, the world would be changed, the world has been changed, we have been changed.

P: Now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

C: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

P: In hopeful anticipation, we give thanks to you, God of Creation, God of Abraham and Sarah, God of hope and deliverance, and God of us all. We join in praise and come together to sing the unending hymn of the saints of glory.

SANCTUS

Sung by Congregation

Lo, the Heav'nly host re-joices: "Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Ho-ly Lord!"

Lo, God's people join their voices: "God of hosts, by all a-dored,

Heav'n and earth pro-claim Your glory, Sing Your praise with one a-ccord!"

Blest is He who now draws near us in the name of God the King!

Blest is He who comes to cheer us - Let our welcome joyful ring:

"Hail! Hosanna! Hallelujah!" Highest praises echoing.

THE CONSECRATION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

P: Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

Congregation shall sit.

AGNUS DEI

(tune: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

Sung by Congregation

**O Lamb of God, You take away
The sin of all. Have mercy, Lord, we pray!
O Lamb of God, You take away
The sin of all. Have mercy, Lord, we pray!
O Lamb of God, our faith increase,
And grant us now Your gift of peace!**

Brief word about communion: *The process for receiving communion will be explained by the Pastor. For these services, wine or grape juice will not be distributed. Pastor will bring you communion in your pew. Hand sanitizer is available in the pews to use before receiving communion.*

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY

"Veni, Emmanuel"

Jubilation Ringers Bell Choir

(Plainsong / arr. M. Cowen)

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

C: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

C: Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

P: May the God of mercy keep you, the Holy Spirit cheer you, and Christ † in glory greet you, now and at the day of his coming.

C: Amen.

254 SENDING SONG “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Sung to the tune: “Hyfrydol”

Brief word about dismissal: *Since our fellowship space is small and we are practicing social distancing, we encourage you to enjoy conversation in the parking lot. May God go with you, sustain you, and renew your spirit.*

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Christ is PEACE.

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE “Prepare the Royal Highway”

(arr. P Manz)

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ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Paul & Carren Reed in memory of loved ones and to the Glory of God.

ETERNAL CANDLE FOR DECEMBER is given by JoAnn Stanley in memory of her parents,
Amy & Wilbur Carlson and her brother, Gary.



ADVENT

LIGHT THE CANDLE



Light the can-dle of LOVE to-day, the Giv-er of love is
 Light the can-dle of PEACE to-day, the Giv-er of peace is
 Light the can-dle of JOY to-day, the Giv-er of joy is
 Light the can-dle of HOPE to-day, the Giv-er of hope will



here! Wel-come the love we live and die for, but
 here! Wel-come the peace we fight and cry for, but
 here! Wel-come the joy we crave and pray for, but
 come! Wel-come the hope we long and wait for, but



on - ly Christ can give. Flick-er and flame and
 on - ly Christ can give. Flick-er and flame and
 on - ly Christ can give. Flick-er and flame and
 on - ly Christ can give. Flick-er and flame and



glow with love, light up the world a -
 glow with peace, light up the world a -
 glow with joy, light up the world a -
 glow with hope, light up the world a -



round you. Flick-er and flame and glow with love,
 round you. Flick-er and flame and glow with peace,
 round you. Flick-er and flame and glow with joy,
 round you. Flick-er and flame and glow with hope,



light up the world a - round you.
 light up the world a - round you.
 light up the world a - round you.
 light up the world a - round you.

RETURN TO BULLETIN PAGE 4

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH ARE REQUESTED FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

Carolyn Sandquist (home), Diane Dukat (home), Michelle Black (home), Joyce Koenig (home), David Schmidt (home), Kevin Eaton (home), Martha Donohoe (home), Laura Martin (home), Lois Lykins (home), Phil Engelhardt (home), Verla Buch (home), Blake Hopper (home), Monica Collins (friend of Barb Collins), Michael Kuner (friend of Mark Fuller), JoAnn Likness (friend of Barb Collins), Heidi Mark (Bill & Joyce's daughter), Richard Holliday (Marian Orton's son), Amanda Gill (friend of Trudi Myers), Drew Hartz (Steve & Kathy Couch's son-in-law), Mackenzie Lamott (CDO Director Julie's daughter), Sheila Mitchell (Shirley Brower's niece), Deloris Patton (Nancy & Charlie Vaughn's sister-in-law), Don Kaphingst (Margaret Stewart's brother), Linda Byrd (friend of Barb Collins), Newt Newstrom (Dawn Graham's father), William Durham (Trudi Myers' son-in-law), Tavia Shaker (friend of Lindsay Blank), Pat Grant (friend of Ron Bessler), Dan Fraleigh (Sherrie Petersen's brother-in-law), Velda Jacobs (Eileen Caspers' aunt), Lewis Sanders (Rachelle Witherspoon's father), Syndee Haake (daughter of friend of Nancy Vaughn), Blanche Stephansen (Ron Bessler's sister), Nicole Klein (Patti's God-daughter), Georgi Peterson (Rhonda Dealey's mother), Linda Boleski (Penny & Marvin Boleski's sister-in-law), Lawrence & Lenette Kottas (Eileen Caspers' parents), John Browne (Penny & Marvin Boleski's brother-in-law), Camille Baehni Engler (former member), Brennan Soukup (Julie Bender's cousin), C.A. & Mary Lou Brunkhorst (Ann Sanders' parents), Heather Roesch (Tracy's sister-in-law), Katelynn Herring (Jeanie Schuler's great niece), Linda Myers (Trudi's daughter-in-law), David Metzenthin (Bud's son).

LAY MINISTERS 12/5	10:00 a.m.
Assisting Minister	Jeff Montague
Lector / Acolyte	Alan Hageman / Allison Montague
Advent Candlelighters	Jackson Family
Greeters / Ushers	Barb Collins, Carolyn Olson / Kathy Couch, Bob Wollin
Council Member	LaVerne Engelhardt
Bus Driver & Host/Hostess	Chris & Cindy Lear
Saturday Lector	Krug Family
Altar Guild Setup/Clean up	Mo Krumins, Barb Collins, Nancy Besta, Karon Gambrill
Tech Team	

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT WEEK

LAY MINISTERS 12/12	10:00 a.m.
Assisting Minister	Robert Hanna
Lector	Kathy Koch
Acolyte	Matthew Keehn
Advent Candlelighters	Cheatham Family
Greeters / Ushers	JoAnn Stanley, Nancy Vaughn / Richard Price, Bryan Price
Council Member	Kim Rasmussen
Bus Driver & Host/Hostess	Alan Hageman & Leslie Malone
Saturday Lector	Ron Bessler
Altar Guild Setup/Clean up	Nancy Vaughn, Pat Drake, Barb Collins, Nancy Besta, Karon Gambrill
Tech Team	

✠ IN THE FIRST PLACE THIS WEEK ✠

Children's Day Out Preschool (CDO) schedule: M, T, W & T 9am-3pm Friday 9-11:30 am

Sunday, December 5 SECOND ADVENT

POINSETTIA ORDER DEADLINE

9:00 a.m. – Sunday School – Alpha Worship
10:00 a.m. – Worship Service
12:15 p.m. – Youth & Family Ministry (Library)
4:00 p.m. – Parish Life Committee (Zoom)
6:00 p.m. – Pastor Jenny at Arbor Court

Monday, December 6

1:00 p.m. – Staff Meeting
5:45 p.m. – Property Committee (NL)
6:00 p.m. – Altar Guild setting up Christmas Tree
6:30 p.m. – Finance Committee (202)
7:00 p.m. – Altar Guild Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Outreach Committee (Zoom)
7:00 p.m. – Boy Scouts Troop 175 (PH)

Tuesday, December 7

6:30 p.m. – Cub Scout Pack 175 (PH)

Wednesday, December 8

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

9:00 a.m. – What-Sew-Ever
6:00 p.m. – Den Meeting
6:30 p.m. – DTLN Steering Committee (Zoom)

Thursday, December 9

5:30 p.m. – Ministry Moving Forward Meeting (Zoom)
7:00 p.m. – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, December 10

Pastor Jenny's Day Off

Saturday, December 11

9:30 a.m. – Poinsettia Delivery
5:00 p.m. – Worship Service

Sunday, December 12 THIRD ADVENT

SAINT LUCIA VISITS

9:00-9:45 a.m. – Sunday School
10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

5:00-7:00 p.m.

DRIVE THRU LIVING NATIVITY

LESSONS DECEMBER 11 & 12

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

PARISH NOTICES

BLUE CHRISTMAS, A SERVICE OF HOPE AND HEALING

Blue Christmas, a service of hope and healing, will be held **THIS AFTERNOON, Sunday, December 5 at 3:00 p.m. at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (3725 SW Wanamaker Drive)**. The service is for those whose heart is heavy because of burdens this past year or years. Come, listen to the words of HOPE AND HEALING. We will have music, scripture readings, prayers, mediation, anointing, and the Lord's Supper to acknowledge the loss you are feeling and the assurance that God is at your side. Stephen Ministers will be assisting at the service and will be available after the service to listen if you would like to share your concerns. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Neil Buono or Mary Hume (parish nurse) at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church 785-271-0808.



SINCE THE DAYS when the Vikings were Christianized, *Saint Lucia* has been a favorite Christmas tradition among the Swedish families. She was a Sicilian saint, but the Swedes eagerly adopted her. According to legend, *Lucia* was a medieval saint who carried food and drink to hungry folk during a period of famine. Early in the morning, the modern Lucia, traditionally the oldest daughter of the family carries a tray of special buns and cookies to each one in the family as she sings the lovely old melody, “*Santa Lucia.*” *Lucia* wears a white robe with a crimson sash. On her head, she wears a crown of lighted candles, which dispels the blackness of the season of long nights. **First Lutheran will be visited by *Saint Lucia* during the worship service on December 12th.**

PLEASE BRING NON-PERISHIBLE FOOD ITEMS FOR DOORSTEP DURING DECEMBER.

DRIVE-THRU LIVING NATIVITY

DECEMBER 12, 2021

5:00-7:00 p.m.



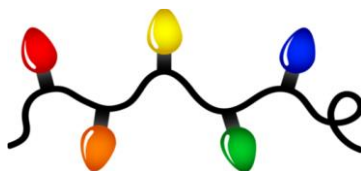
T-Minus 1 week 'til the Drive-Thru Living Nativity. It's not too late to help!!

Call or email Jeff Montague (785-249-4024 or jjmickey@hotmail.com) or

Bob Wollin (785-250-8670 or rj_wollin@sbcglobal.net).

Anyone willing to donate **FOOD** for the workers for the Drive-Thru Living Nativity please call **Darlene Payne** at 785-273-3519 or sign-up on the sheets in the Nave Lounge.

Be sure to watch **THE RED COUCH SHOW** (WIBW TV) on **Wednesday, December 8th at 4:00 p.m.** Eileen Caspers will be visiting with Ralph Hipp about the DTLN.



Did you know Tamales are Christmas food?

Come eat to find out why, ride in the bus to see the TARC lights, and gather around a fire to make s'mores!

Save the Date: December 19th at 5:30 p.m.

What: Tacos, Tamales, TARC Lights and S'MORES

Who: Youth and Families

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

It has been the custom at First Lutheran to provide a monetary gift to First's staff at Christmas. If you would like to make a contribution for the **STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFT**, please either mail in or drop off checks payable to "First Lutheran Church" and indicate "staff gift" in the memo line. You can also go to our website www.firstlutherantopeka.org and use the contribute tab. **Please have all contributions in by December 19th.** *Robert Hanna, Council President*



DOORSTEP

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

55TH ANNIVERSARY & HVAC SYSTEM

**MONDAY – FRIDAY, 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
1119 SW 10th Street, South Door (10th & Buchanan)
785-357-5341**



ANNUAL REPORTS DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 27th

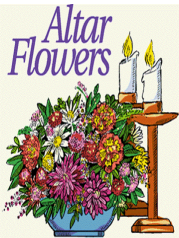
ALL Committees and Organizations may submit their annual reports to the church office by Monday, December 27th, so that the annual booklet of reports can be printed and collated for availability to the congregation by Sunday, January 23rd. Please email reports to the Church Secretary, LaDonna at 1stlutherantopeka@sbcglobal.net or mail a typed copy to the church office.

Thank you!



ETERNAL CANDLES can be found in both the main Worship Center and our beautiful Chapel. In **2022** you may **DONATE** both candles in remembrance or in honor of someone for the entire month. Please contact LaDonna, in the church office, (785) 272-5302 or email her at 1stlutherantopeka@sbcglobal.net to sign-up for a month and give information that will be included in the bulletin. **The cost will be \$20 for the month. Available months are: April, August, September, October, and November.**

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR 2022



Fresh flowers on our altar are a special way to enrich our worship space and to honor and memorialize special people in our lives. Please join in this beautiful practice by reserving your dates for 2022 now.

There is a chart of reserved dates and forms to complete in the hallway by the offices. You may complete the questionnaire and leave it there. For those who are not coming to the building at this time, please contact either LaDonna at the church office 785-272-5302 or Jeanie Schuler 785-845-7964 and we will gladly take your information over the phone.

For those with annual orders, the chart has been completed and we will call you to confirm your order information. **The altar flowers cost \$25 per vase plus tax.** Reservations may be made for one (\$25) or two vases (\$50). Pulpit flowers are also an option to recognize a special occasion for \$50 plus tax.

OPEN 2022 DATES FOR BOTH VASES (unless indicated otherwise) ARE:

1/2, 1/9, 1/16; 2/13 (one vase); 4/24; 5/1 (one vase), 5/15, 5/29; 6/5; 7/3, 7/10, 7/17, 7/31; 8/7, 8/28; 11/6 (one vase), 11/20 (one vase), 11/27; 12/11 (one vase).

Life in the Wilderness

The American Red Cross offers a training called Wilderness and Remote First Aid, during which participants learn skills to be used in case of emergencies such as low blood sugar, hypothermia, and burns when professional help is unavailable or far away. For someone experiencing a health crisis in a wilderness setting, a companion with remote first aid skills can be lifesaving.

When Luke introduces John the Baptist in today's gospel, readers are told that the word of God came to John in the wilderness. The wilderness mentioned here brings to mind a place that is remote, sparsely populated, and rugged. Yet there is a sense of another wilderness being illuminated here as well—the wilderness of a messy world where some have wealth and status while others experience food insecurity, injustice, and homelessness.

It is into this wilderness that John the Baptist proclaims that one is coming through whom “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6). Luke's intentional listing of all the authorities in power (vv. 1-2) indicates that he wants readers to know just how different John the Baptist and, more importantly, the one he proclaims are from the rulers of the day.

People were drawn to the message John proclaimed, yet throughout his ministry John was clear that it wasn't about him or his personal agenda but rather the work of God through him. He pointed to the Promised One and to the salvation Jesus offers. Like Jesus, John proclaimed a message that extended to the vulnerable and spoke of caring for our neighbors.

Similarly, as followers of Christ, we are commissioned to go into the wilderness, to bring good news to the little and the least, and to proclaim the work of God in our lives, through both our actions and our words. As we do, we bear witness to the promise that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the one who leads us from death to life.

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Tracks 1 and 2



Order Your
Poinsettias

Red poinsettias may be ordered now for the Chancel area for the Christmas Eve, December 24th worship services. Plants are **\$7.25** each and come in a 6½ inch pot with 5 to 6 blooms.

The *deadline to order* is **Sunday, December 5th**.

Poinsettias may be picked up after the 7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

Person donating poinsettia is responsible for picking it up.

Tear off and return to the church office or place in the offering plate.

Name _____

Number of poinsettias _____

Amount Enclosed _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

