



Come
and see

JOHN 1:46

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

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
WEBSITE: firstlutherantopeka.org
1234 SW Fairlawn Road, Topeka, KS 66604
Church office: (785) 272-5302 CDO office: (785) 272-5999

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

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

WE WELCOME all who worship with us today! We extend a special greeting to our visitors and invite you to worship with us again soon. Please make yourselves known to our pastor and people.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION: Lutheran Christians believe that in the sacrament of Holy Communion, by the power of God's Word and Holy Spirit, we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ, along with the bread and wine, for our forgiveness and salvation. If you share in this belief, you are welcome to participate with us. Non-communing children and adults may come forward to receive a blessing. White grape juice is available, as well as gluten free wafers. If you desire to receive communion at your pew, please alert an usher during the prelude. Communion is done by intinction.

GREETINGS PARENTS: Sunday School for children Pre-K through 5th grade takes place during our worship service. Children will be invited up for a children's sermon with the pastor, after which any who would like are invited to attend Sunday school. This will include a Bible reading, story, craft, and more. The teachers will bring the students back to worship in time for communion with your family. Should you prefer your child to remain in the sanctuary during worship, we have Children's Bibles in the pews and worship activity bags just outside the sanctuary. Faith Formation for our middle school and high school students will take place during the week at our youth group times.

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.

WHEELCHAIR available in the north entranceway or in the church office.
EARPHONES for the hearing impaired and **LARGE PRINT BULLETINS.**



THE CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

HOLY COMMUNION, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING FOUR

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

JANUARY 13 & 14, 2024

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 “*Highland Cathedral*”

(C. Callahan, 1951-2023)

Prelude and Postlude today are played in memory of Charles Callahan who passed away December 25, 2023. He was well known as an award-winning composer, organist, choral conductor, pianist, and teacher with over 300 works in print. Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labors.

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

CHIMES

Please turn and face the cross as it is carried in.

520 GATHERING SONG “*Dearest Jesus, at Your Word*”

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, creator of darkness and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters.

C: **Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God, our rock and refuge,

C: **we pour out our hearts before you. We have known you but have not always loved you. We have wounded one another and sinned against you. We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit dwelling in each of us. Remember your covenant. Renew your creation. Restore us, that we might proclaim your good news to all. Amen.**

P: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. God has spoken: The time of grace is now. In Jesus, the reign of God has come near. By the authority of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are God’s beloved.

C: **Amen.**

GREETING

P: Siblings in Christ, beloved children of God: grace, mercy, and peace be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Congregation shall sit.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD

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

NOISY OFFERING and CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. ²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALMODY "Lord, You Have Searched Me" Based on Psalm 139

See Bulletin Page 12

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.

¹²All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh."

¹⁷But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint John the 1st chapter.

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

GOSPEL: John 1:43-51

In John's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip's friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to "Come and see."

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Congregation shall sit.

SERMON

737 HYMN OF THE DAY “He Comes to Us as One Unknown”

Stanza 1. & 2. ALL 3. Women 4. Men *Interlude - Please Stand* 5. ALL

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: As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: Encourage the ministry and mission of the church, God of truth. Let the leaders of your church be trustworthy and accountable stewards, that all its resources and outreach bring hope and healing to communities. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Delight in the goodness of your creation, God of fig trees and fertile soil. Heal areas of the world harmed by human greed. Restore those recovering from natural disaster. Protect our forests and waterways and all the creatures that live in them. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Call the leaders of every neighborhood and nation to serve faithfully, God of wisdom. Give them visions of justice and unity. Lead them to action that promotes equitable partnership and uplifts those on the margins of society. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Hold in your care any who suffer and struggle, God of compassion. You who know our inner hearts, be present with any who are oppressed, victims of racism or cultural bias, and all who long for respite or restoration especially Laura, Stephen, Richard, Cherie, Ruth, Alice, Dean, Donna, and Rob 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). Surround them with your unwavering presence. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

A: We lift up in prayer our siblings in Christ across the Central States Synod, especially the people and ministry of Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bel-Nor, MO; St. John Lutheran Church, Bendena, KS; St. John Lutheran Church, Lancaster, KS; and Hope Local KC, Shawnee, KS. May God continue to lead people in working together for the sake of the Gospel. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Give this congregation the anticipation and excitement of Samuel, so inspired and empowered to do your work in the world, God of unity. Make us faithful as we build communities of inclusion and mutual care. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Trusting God who raised Jesus and will also raise us in spirit and truth, we remember all who have died and are at peace among the saints. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

P: Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

PEACE

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

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

Peace be with you. **R:** Peace be with you.

Congregation shall sit.

CHOIR ANTHEM “Here I Am, Lord”

(Schutte, arr. Schrader)

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Blessed are you, Holy One,

C: for all good things come from you. In bread and cup you open heaven to us. Meet us at this table, that we receive what we seek and follow your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,

heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table of mercy and joy.

Congregation shall sit.

COMMUNION SONG "Lamb of God"

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Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY *“Theme of Gustav Holst ‘Thaxted’”*

(C. Callahan, 1951-2023)

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

Congregation: Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Giver of every gift, Christ’s body is our food, and we are Christ’s body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

SENDING

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

BLESSING

P: God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, † bless you and remain with you always.

C: **Amen.**

880 SENDING SONG *“O God beyond All Praising”*

DISMISSAL

A: Called by the spirit,

C: **We serve Christ, sharing God’s love with all.**

A: Go in peace. You are God’s beloved.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *“Rejoicing”*

(Callahan)

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THE ALTAR FLOWERS *are given by Kathy Couch in honor of Stephen’s Birthday!*

THE ETERNAL CANDLE FOR JANUARY *is given by JoAnn Stanley in memory of Dena Rodell.*

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

Laura Haefke (Stormont-Vail Hospital), Stephen Blank (home), Richard Price (home), Cherie McGinnis (home), Ruth Denno (Lexington Park Rehab), Alice Purdy (home), Dean Johnson (home), Donna Kruger (Lexington Park Rehab), Rob Peterson (home), Carren Reed (home), Allyn Lockner (Brewster Health Care), Kathy Cheatham (home), Vera Pearce (home), Verla Buch (Presbyterian Manor), Blake Hopper (home), Richard Carlson (Cindy Lear's cousin), Steve Holloman (neighbor friend of Chris & Cindy Lear), Aneka Lilya (LaDonna Little's sister-in-law), Frank Phillips (Bonnie's son), Barbara Aubert (friend of Nancy Vaughn), Janine Wagner (Donna Kruger's sister), Manny Ramos (Shirley Perry's nephew), Leuita Meyer (Verla Buch's sister-in-law), Don Kaphingst (Margaret Stewart's brother), Heidi Mark (Bill & Joyce's daughter), Loren Johannes (friend of Erv & Ann Sanders), Jayne Cool (friend of the Lubers), Anita Freeman (neighbor friend of Nancy & Ken Sherbert), Robert Jones (friend of Sylvia Levings), June Fisher (friend of Marvin Wingert), Gloria & Dennis Lyon (Barb Collins' aunt & uncle), Charline Matheny (friend of Patti Klein), Cheryl Koch (Kathy's sister-in-law), Linda Falchek (friend of Wendy Sanders), Linda Meyer (Verla Buch's sister-in-law), Drew Hartz (Steve & Kathy Couch's son-in-law), Dan Fraleigh (Sherrie Petersen's brother-in-law), Velda Jacobs (Eileen Caspers' aunt), Lenette Kottas (Eileen Caspers' mother), John Browne (Penny & Marvin Boleski's brother-in-law), Katelynn Herring (Jeanie Schuler's great-niece).

✠ 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, January 14

SECOND EPIPHANY

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:10 a.m. – Pre-K thru 5th Grade Sunday School
2:30 p.m. – Cub Scout Leaders (114)

Monday, January 15

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

NO CDO

1:00 p.m. – Staff Meeting
6:30 p.m. – Church Council Meeting (202)
7:00 p.m. – Boy Scout Troop 175 (PH)

Tuesday, January 16

6:00 p.m. – Cub Scout Den Meetings
7:00 p.m. – Adult Learning Committee (Z)

Wednesday, January 17

9:00 a.m. – What-Sew-Ever
6:00 p.m. – Confirmation Class

Thursday, January 18

5:30 p.m. – Endowment Fund Committee
6:15 p.m. – Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m. – CDO Board
7:00 p.m. – Vocal Choir Rehearsal

Friday, January 19

Pastor Jenny's Day Off
10:00 a.m. – Coffee & Lectionary (202)

Saturday, January 20

5:00 p.m. – Worship Service (Chapel)

Sunday, January 21

THIRD EPIPHANY

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:10 a.m. – Pre-K thru 5th Grade Sunday School

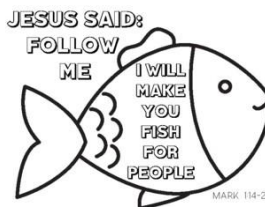
LESSONS JANUARY 20 & 21

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalms 62:5-12

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20



LORD, You Have Searched Me 139B

E^b A^b/E^b E^b B^b/D B^b7 E^b B^b7

1 LORD, you have searched me, and you know where I take
 2 If I the wings of morn - ing take and far a -
 3 All that I am I owe to you; you knit me,

E^b F7 B^b E^b B^b E^b

rest and where I go. LORD, you know all that
 way my dwell - ing make, if I should sink in
 LORD, with - in the womb. I give my Mak - er

B^b7 B^b7/D E^b A^b E^b E^b/B^b B^b7 E^b

I have planned, and all my ways are in your hand.
 deep - est sea, your right hand keeps its hold on me.
 thank - ful praise, whose won - drous works my soul a - maze.

4 When I was formed within the earth,
 you knew my frame before my birth.
 My life in all your perfect plan
 was known before my days began.

5 Search me, O God, my heart discern;
 try me, my inmost thoughts to learn;
 and lead me, if in sin I stray,
 to choose the everlasting way.

Words: *Psalter*, 1912; rev. Marie J. Post, 1986, © 1987 Faith Alive Christian Resources
 Music (FEDERAL STREET 8.8.8.8): Henry K. Oliver, 1832, P.D.

LAY MINISTERS 1/14	2nd EPIPHANY	10:00 a.m.
Assisting Minister	Jeff Montague	
Lectors	Ben & Thomas Einck	
Acolyte	Lucas Jackson	
Communion Assistants	Kathy Couch, Linda Harold	
Greeters	Byron & Sara Welch, Lea Welch	
Ushers	Bill & Phyllis Buch	
Council Member	Lea Welch	
Sunday School Leaders	Lydia Peterson, Bob Wollin	
Coffee Host	Bob Wollin	
Bus Driver & Host/Hostess	Chris & Cindy Lear	
Saturday Lector	Karen Wollin	
Altar Guild Setup/Clean up	Nancy Vaughn, Pat Drake, Karen Wollin, Nancy Besta, Karon Gambrill	
Tech Team	John Hanna, Stephen Blank	
Stephen Minister on Call	Dick Schaeffer	

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT WEEK

LAY MINISTERS 1/21	3rd EPIPHANY	10:00 a.m.
Assisting Minister	Steve Couch	
Lector	Joyce Koenig	
Acolyte	Abram Crawford	
Communion Assistants	Matt & Lyn Lemke	
Greeters	Nancy Besta, Brenda Sanders, Keira Witherspoon, Carolyn Olson	
Ushers	Denny & Darlene Payne	
Council Member	Jenn Betz	
Sunday School Leaders	Marsha Serk, Holly Serk	
Coffee Host	Dana Nelsen	
Bus Driver & Host/Hostess	Randy Debenham, Barb Collins	
Saturday Lector	Tina Lewis	
Altar Guild Setup/Clean up	Karen Wollin, Dana Nelsen, Nancy Besta, Karon Gambrill	
Tech Team	Austin Jackson, John Hanna	
Stephen Minister on Call	Lowell Chellberg	



PARISH NOTICES

PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING US HAVE FRESH FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR IN 2024.

OPEN 2024 DATES FOR BOTH VASES (unless indicated otherwise) ARE:

3/31, 4/14 (one vase), 4/21 (one vase), 4/28, 6/30 (one vase), 7/14 (one vase), 7/28, 8/18,
8/25 (one vase), 12/29.

Please call the church office at (785) 272-5302 or Jeanie Schuler 785-845-7964 if you have questions.

**ANNUAL
MEETING**



CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

~~VERY IMPORTANT~~

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

JANUARY 28, 2024

Immediately following worship in the sanctuary.



MARGARET WORRELL and HELEN NUNEMAKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Endowment Committee is pleased to announce that \$750 scholarships will be available from the Margaret Worrell and Helen Nunemaker Memorial Funds for the Spring 2024 academic term, and will be awarded to qualified applicants, and previous scholarship recipients may apply.

These scholarships are for members of First Lutheran for the purpose of pursuing undergraduate, graduate, technical, or such other training which enables members of this congregation to grow in education, Christian faith, and service to God's people.

APPLICATION DEADLINE is January 28, 2024, and application information is available from the Church Office or from any member of the Endowment Committee: Char Taggart, Bob Wollin, Erv Sanders, Diane Dukat, or Bill Barker.

WANTED: COFFEE HOSTS

If you're enjoying coffee after the Sunday service, please consider being a host. If we want to keep this hospitality going, we're going to need volunteers. It's very simple, pick up a "jug" of OJ, arrive at the church a tad before the 10:00 a.m. service and get the coffee brewing. Set out the creamer, sugar, and stir sticks. Duck out of service a tad before the end and start to fill a few cups of coffee and juice. All supplies provided, except the OJ (you can be reimbursed for that). Please sign up on the clipboard lying on the coffee service table. **Contact Parish Life Chair Jeff Montague** (in church directory) with any questions or for more detailed instructions. One person can certainly handle the duties, but two is more fun, so recruit a helper.



**HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS
FIRST LUTHERAN WILL BE HOLDING IT'S FIRST
PRE-BOWL SUPER PARTY AND CHILI COOK-OFF
WHEN: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4
WHERE: PARISH HALL
TIME: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING OUR SERVICE
DRESS: COME ADORNED IN YOUR FAVORITE TEAM
WHAT TO BRING: YOUR FAVORITE GAME SNACK**



CHILI COOK-OFF
ARE YOU GAME ENOUGH TO PARTICIPATE?
WE WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:
VISUAL, AROMA, TASTE, TEXTURE, SPICE LEVEL
PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED

If you are interested in participating in the Chili Cook-Off, please complete the form below or call/email Kathy Couch at 570-449-5021 or couch1093@gmail.com

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Faith, Seen and Unseen

“Follow me,” says Jesus to Philip. Then “Come and see,” says Philip to Nathanael. Early in the Gospel of John and in Jesus’ public ministry, the movement is already spreading. This transmission of faith from person to person is something like a fire jumping from one twig to another.

Sometimes, though, it can feel as if the spark just isn’t catching—not much transmission is happening any longer. Many people lament that their children, grandchildren, or other loved ones have abandoned the Christian faith. But have they truly? Maybe, similar to Nathanael, they have not yet personally encountered Jesus. Nathanael questions and doubts the words of the witness Philip until he experiences for himself that Jesus is the Son of God. Just as the message of the good news can spread like fire from twig to twig, so can faith ignite—or reignite—when one has a life-changing encounter with Jesus. There is no miracle for pastors or others to perform; we are simply called to prepare the way, to welcome all of God’s children, and to accompany people no matter where they are on their faith journey.

To change metaphors, sometimes faith flows like an underground stream. In some limestone terrains, a stream of water might disappear from the surface and reappear farther along in a different kind of terrain. The fact that the stream can’t be seen doesn’t mean it has stopped flowing. Likewise, faith is sometimes difficult to identify, but that doesn’t mean it’s not flowing in and through someone’s life. Visible signs of Jesus at work in a person are not always where or in the form we expect to see them. They can be in Sunday worship or in daily acts of kindness, compassion, grace, and love for ourselves and for others. Only Jesus knows what is in our hearts—already burning, deeply flowing, or yet to spark.

Cover: Unknown person reaching out. Copyright © Andrea Matone/age fotostock/Superstock. Used by permission.

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