First Evangelical Lutheran Church
1200 4th Avenue
Worthington, MN 56187
(507) 376-6148
Fax: (507) 376-6149
Email: felcwgtn@gmail.com
Website: felcwgtn.org

January 2026 Evangel

OFFICE HOURS: Monday—Thursday
8:00 am—12:00 pm
1:00—4:30 pm
Friday
8:00 am—12:00 pm
Church will be locked over the noon hour.

WORSHIP: 6:00 pm—Wednesday
9:30 am—Sunday

COMMUNION: Wednesday
First & Third Sunday

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 8:45 am (Sept–May)

MISSION STATEMENT

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, WORTHINGTON, MN

God has called us, the baptized members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Worthington, Minnesota, to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples of all people.

Living out our Mission

In obedience, we commit ourselves to the Lord's ministry rooted in a fertile agricultural prairie of God's creation. Relying on the promise of the Holy Spirit, and through Word and Sacraments, we will grow toward wholeness through worship, learning, service, witness, support, and fellowship.

Adopted 5-31-87

CONGREGATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT – Matt Russell
(507) 360-5835
VICE PRESIDENT – Lonnie Myrom
(507) 329-3849
SECRETARY – Carrie Adams
(507) 329-5625

CHURCH STAFF

Jeanette McCormick—Pastor
Natalie Zinnel—Administrative Secretary/ Co-Treasurer
Brenda Richards—Youth & Family Director
Todd Poppema—Custodian
Eric Parrish —Choir Director/Worship Planner
Lori Nienkerk—Choir Accompanist/ Organist/Pianist
Arlene Lowe—Co-Treasurer
Debbie Koob—Financial Secretary
Jim & Paula Laffrenzen—Parish Visitors

PASTOR JEANETTE'S ARTICLE

Dear First Lutheran

It's annual meeting month!

While most people don't get as excited for annual meetings compared to other church events, they are one of the few times during the year when we have the opportunity to all come together as a church family. We enjoy good food that our youth team serves as a fundraiser for youth programming. We have an opportunity for fellowship. Very importantly, we come together to give thanks for the many ways God has blessed First Lutheran since our last annual meeting. We rejoice over the numerous ways we've come together to serve God, each other and our community during the past year. And, we seek God's grace and guidance for the coming year.

I urge everyone to try to attend the annual meeting on January 25. The meeting will start immediately following the 9:30 am service. These meetings allow us to plan and prepare for the upcoming year and make necessary decisions about our shared life together. They allow for the thoughtful election of leaders and provide space for important decisions. We will have the opportunity to approve the budget and committee reports will be available. People will be elected to serve as delegates for our conference assembly (2 pm on February 15 at American Lutheran in Worthington). Other people will be elected to serve as delegates to the synod assembly (June 5-6 at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter).

One atypical piece of business that we need to accomplish is to vote on the 2025 Amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations. At the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, these changes were approved by the delegates at the Assembly. We have incorporated those changes into First's Constitution, which require congregational approval during our Annual Meeting (in accordance with ELCA guidance). As many of you remember, we worked diligently to update our Constitution over the past five years. If we approve the changes from the 2025 Churchwide Assembly at this upcoming annual meeting, no further action is needed. The proposed amendments are available both online (search 2025 Amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations) or at church.

Many of the changes are intended to create consistency in wording, create consistency in references (referring back consistently to the congregational Model Constitution instead of the synod constitution, etc.) and for the purpose of clarity. The proposed changes do allow both the congregation council and the congregation to elect representatives for synod assembly. The proposed changes also make it clear that an interim pastor is not always available in a synod to serve when a congregation needs such services. It creates more leeway for a full communion partner to serve as pastor. In my opinion, one section is reformatted to make it clear that both a currently rostered individual of the ELCA can serve a congregation or a candidate for the roster can be called by a congregation and subsequently ordained (with the authorization and oversight from the synod). The phrase "proclaiming God's love for the world" was re-instated in the constitution wording because it had been omitted with other previously approved changes.

A notable change is that currently, a special congregational meeting can be called with the written request of a previously specified number of voting members. Our current First Council currently states that 35 voting members can call a special meeting. The new Model Constitution recommends a fixed percentage of voting members be required to request a special congregational meeting. My assumption is that this (a percentage versus a fixed number) would better reflect the realities of congregations that often grow and shrink in membership. First's Council is recommending that 10 percent of voting members be required to call a special meeting.

Please read and pray about the proposed changes. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me. I can also give you the contact information for synod individuals who can address specific concerns.

Furthermore, we will be electing council members. We need to fill two positions. Please prayerfully consider serving in one of these positions. Many of our current congregation council members have served faithfully and well for many years. Please feel free to talk to current council members (Matt Russell, Lonnie Myrom, Adam Vosburgh, Denny Zierke, Kathy Summers, Carrie Adams and Rolf Mahlberg) about their experiences and the obligations of the position.

Gratefully,
Rev. Jeanette McCormick

Lessons and Themes for the Sundays in January 2026:

1/4/26: Jesus Says Come and See

Genesis 28:10-19
Psalm 66:1-5
John 1:35-51

1/11/26: Wedding at Cana

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 104:14-16
John 2:1-11

1/18/2026: Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Jeremiah 7:1-15
Psalm 127:1-2
John 2:13-25

1/25/2026: Nicodemus

Ezekiel 36:25-27
Psalm 139:13-18
John 3:1-21

The 2025 Annual Meeting of First Lutheran Church will be on Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 10:45 am in Centennial Hall.

Reminder of Winter Weather Protocol—If the schools are closed; the office will be closed. If there is an early out for the schools, there will be no after school programs and the office will also close. Notices will be posted through email, Facebook and the local radio stations. Thank you!

Praise the Lord

The following is the financial report for First Lutheran as of November, 2025:

General Fund:

Bal. 10/31/25:	($17,963.15)
Inc., November	$21,699.60
Exp., November	$25,553.28
Bal. 11/30/25:	($21,816.83)

(The amount shows behind budget.)

Grace Lutheran Reimbursement—$34,822.92

Building Fund:

Bal. 10/31/25:	$18,877.43
Inc., November	$65.00
Exp., November	$3,983.42
Bal. 11/30/25:	$14,959.01

Card Ministry meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Come join the fun. No experience necessary!

Check out our display in Centennial Hall to purchase a card for **$2 (NEW PRICE).** Funds will be designated to different groups as needed.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES: Your offering envelopes for 2026 are in your mail box. If you didn't get a box but would like envelopes, please contact the church office. Your envelope numbers have changed for the year, so please do not use them until after January 1. Thank you!

Servants

If for any reason you are unable to serve at the time indicated, please trade with someone else on the list or find a replacement and contact the church office so that the names can be listed correctly in the church bulletin. This is a temporary schedule for the month so it may change. Thank you.

Computer Assistant (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	Glenda Lais
1/11	9:30	Pam Fleming
1/18	9:30	Kathy Summers
1/25	9:30	Glenda Lais

Livestream (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	Debbie Koob
1/11	9:30	Ethan Nixon
1/18	9:30	Becca McGaughey
1/25	9:30	Erin Makela

Assisting Minister & Lector (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	Erin Makela
1/11	9:30	Cooper Scripture
1/18	9:30	Morgan Vosburgh
1/25	9:30	Paula Laffrenzen

Greeters (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	John & Nora Leinen
1/11	9:30	Diana White
1/18	9:30	Diane Sletten
1/25	9:30	John Kramer

Van Driver: (Van will be picking up members for the Sunday service only)

1/4	9:30	Larry Woodbury (360-2689)
1/11	9:30	Matt Russell (360-5835)
1/18	9:30	Daren Bauman (360-9275)
1/25	9:30	Midg White (360-3215)

Acolytes (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	Dyson Neugebauer
1/11	9:30	Olivia Gerdes
1/18	9:30	Lexi Parker
1/25	9:30	Braelynn Schroeder

Sound (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	Pat Demuth
1/11	9:30	Kevin Fleming
1/18	9:30	Paul Summers
1/25	9:30	Ethan Nixon

Coffee Servers (Contact Person: Church Office, 376-6148)

1/4	9:30	Rolf & Joan Mahlberg
1/11	9:30	Dale & Debbie Koob & Jane Benson
1/18	9:30	Larry & Norma Woodbury & Abbey Craun
1/25	9:30	Clinton & Alison Nixon Family

The office will be closed on Thursday, January 1, 2026 for the New Year's holiday.

Radio Broadcast: You can sponsor the broadcast in memory or in honor of a family member or an event in your life. The cost to sponsor a broadcast is $75.00. Please sign up on the sheet in Centennial Hall. Thank you.

First Lutheran Benefits from your Grocery Purchases. When you buy groceries at Fareway, with the Fareway Gift Card, First Lutheran receives 5% from the sale of the gift card. Get yours today! The cards are available in the church office. We have $25, $50 or $100 gift cards to sell. You pay the full price for the card and the church receives 5%. As of November 30, 2025, a total of $6,593.74 has been put into the general fund.

First Lutheran Benefits from your Grocery Purchases. When you buy groceries at Hy-Vee, with the Hy-Vee Gift Card, First Lutheran receives 5% from the sale of the gift card. Get yours today! The cards are available in the church office. We have $25, $50 or $100 gift cards to sell. You pay the full price for the card and the church receives 5%. **The card can also be used when you purchase gas.** As of November 30, 2025, a total of $59,165.25 has been put into the general fund.

A big thank you to the following volunteers for the Mobile Meals delivers in November: Todd Scripture, Joan & Rolf Mahlberg, Doug Christensen, Matt Russell, Jim & Paula Laffrenzen, Lynette Demuth, Pastor Jeanette McCormick, Linda Nelson, Judy Selberg and Kathy Craun from First Lutheran and Tony Stoeker from Grace Lutheran.

This is a much needed and appreciated service to our community.

Our next opportunity will be in April. I will have the exact dates a little closer to the time. Thanks for making my job easy.

Mary Ferguson
Mobile Meal Coordinator
First Lutheran Church

Gift Cards are available on communion Sunday mornings in Centennial Hall and in the office during the week.

At the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, new revisions to the model constitution were approved. They can be found online (google "2025 Amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations") or at church on the bulletin board off of Centennial Hall (please ask for assistance if you can not find them). We will be voting in regard to adopting these changes at our annual meeting in January, 2026. Please feel free to talk with Pr. Jeanette with any questions about the proposed changes.

DEATH & SYMPATHY: Sylvia LaVonne Jacobson died November 17, 2025 at the age of 84 years. Her funeral service was at Benson Funeral Home on November 20, 2025. We extend our Christian sympathy to her family.

DEATH & SYMPATHY: Dianne Janel Sanderson died November 20, 2025 at the age of 78 years. Her funeral service was at First Lutheran on November 28, 2025. We extend our Christian sympathy to her family.

January Birthdays

2	Kinsley Neugebauer	15	Julie Bauman	28	Kathy Craun
4	Jessica Frodermann	15	Brandon Berger	30	Hailey Como
5	Dyson Neugebauer	15	Shirley Frisch	31	Evalyn Gerdes
5	Cindy Russell	15	Jacob Livingston		
7	Ashlyn White	15	Nathan Russell		
8	Gage Wasmund	16	Mary Smith		
9	Kristina White	17	Jessica Anderson		
9	Ayden Schaffer	17	Rory Wietzema		
10	Carmen Kamm	18	Doris Selberg		
10	Alvin Kuehl	18	Joan Wachter		
10	Robin Livingston	18	Kent Wilkening		
11	Romi Dieter	19	Todd Wietzema		
11	Tonya Langland	20	Brianna Kraft		
11	Jeff Murray	21	Troy Olson		
13	Marlys Wasmund	21	Todd Scripture		

John Points Out Jesus

"There is the Lamb of God"

We celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25. But we don't know when he was born. Some scholars think it was in the spring, during lambing season. Why?

Shepherds usually kept their sheep in caves at night. But they departed from this practice during lambing season. Crowded caves made poor birthing places.

This would explain why the shepherds were spending the night in the fields. It would also explain why Joseph and Mary might seek shelter in a cave. They knew it would be empty at this time.

It would be fitting for Jesus to be born at the same time that lambs destined for sacrifice in the Temple were born. Jesus himself was destined to be the sacrificial "Lamb of God."

What place does sacrifice have in our life?

"Like a Lamb...he was put to death for the sins of our people." - *Isaiah 53:7-8*

Illustrated Daily Homilies by Mark Lick, SJ

January YOUTH NEWS

Happy New Year

I hope you all got to see the Christmas pageant. The kids did a wonderful job! I am so proud of them!

We are kicking off the new year with a bunch of fun activities! Stay tuned!

Sunday School resumes on January 4 at 8:45 am. Join us each Sunday this month!
KFC continues every Wednesday from 4:00-5:15 pm
Join us for supper every Wednesday!
Confirmation and Youth Group will be every Wednesday starting at 6:30 pm

First Friday Fun for *High Schoolers* begins on Friday January 2. — join us for an afternoon of bowling and pizza in Lakefield. Talk to Brenda for more information.

What: All Church Escape

Who: EVERYONE
When: Sunday, January 11
Time: 4:00 pm = Bible Escape Room Fun
5:15 pm = Dinner
RSVP no later than 11 am on January 11
Sponsored by Shetek through the Rhythms of Faith project.
Join us for food, fellowship and fun!

What: Lock-In

Who: 6th graders on up
BRING A FRIEND
When: Friday, January 16
Bring: white elephant gift
Optional: bring a snack to share
Pick up: Saturday morning at 8 am
Start time: TBD

Annual Meeting Fundraiser Brunch will be on January 25 after the 9:30 am service

Save the date:
February 4 - 507 @ the JBS Fieldhouse 6:30-8:00 pm (6th graders on up)
February 22 - Valentine's Dinner Fundraiser after church
March 15 - Gargoyles - 6th graders on up

There is a "pop machine" fridge outside of Brenda's office.
Save your pop tabs and bring them in to be taken to the Ronald McDonald House.

GRACIAS! THANK YOU! THANKS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE! WE APPRECIATE YOU! MANY THANKS! MUCHAS GRACIAS!

January 2026

THE CANEWS FROM SHETEK

14 Keeley Island Drive
Slayton, MN 56172
507-763-3567
camp@shetek.org
www.shetek.org

Shetek Lutheran Ministries Where Christ Renews and Empowers

Progress On New Cabin!

Join Us for a Winter Event

Wish List

- *Adding Machine*
- *Office Supplies – Dry Erase Markers, Paper*
- *Spark Bibles*
- *Board Games*
- *Extension cords and Power Strips*
- *Arts and Crafts Supplies*
- *Volunteers*

Upcoming Events

Hiking Club January 11
Quilt and Craft Retreat January 14-18
Hiking Club February 15
Register online at Shetek.org or Call 507-763-3567

We met our Phase 1 goal! Over $1,725,000 in gifts and pledges! Our challenge goal is $2,000,000 and with increased costs, our budget has changed for our different phases. More info on our website. *https://shetek.org/slm-master-plan/*

Help send kids to Camp...Become a Pelican Club or Timber Society member today. Pelican Club members support the ministry with a gift of $100 - $499 a year and Timber Society members give $500 or more a year. Thanks for your support!