



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.

January 2021 *Publication of* FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

A (Possible) Way Forward

Years ago, I attended a seminar led by a well-known church consultant. He had taught classes around the world on how to help churches grow and be spiritually healthy, and I only remember a couple of things he said (it was a long time ago). One thing I remember him saying is that what goes on in most churches is like hooking a horse up to each corner of a wagon and saying “giddyap”.

What he meant by this quip is that many churches don’t always plan and co-ordinate their activities well, so that as a result they go off in too many directions and don’t accomplish a lot. From my experience, I would also add that many churches spread their energies too thin by trying to do too much.

So I have a suggestion to make – a possible way forward for First Lutheran. I suggest that for the next couple of years your congregation focus a big part of your energy and attention on being the care and spiritual center for the church’s immediate neighborhood. This is not a new or radical idea. In the Book of Acts, Jesus tells his disciples that after they had received the Holy Spirit, they were to be witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection first in Judaea, then in Samaria, and then “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). In other words, they were to start serving and evangelizing right where they were, in their own backyard, before going anywhere else.

This has been an effective method for growing churches ever since. The word “parish” is not a word used only by Roman Catholics. Throughout history “parish” has referred to the area around a church that a congregation can effectively serve. It’s the radius around the church’s facility where members can easily care for each other and for the church’s neighbors. In that way, these unchurched people can experience God’s love and be open to hearing God’s Word. I am not suggesting that First Lutheran ignore its members who live outside of the neighborhood, but I am proposing that your congregation focus on its “parish” – its immediate neighborhood – for purposes of outreach and evangelism.

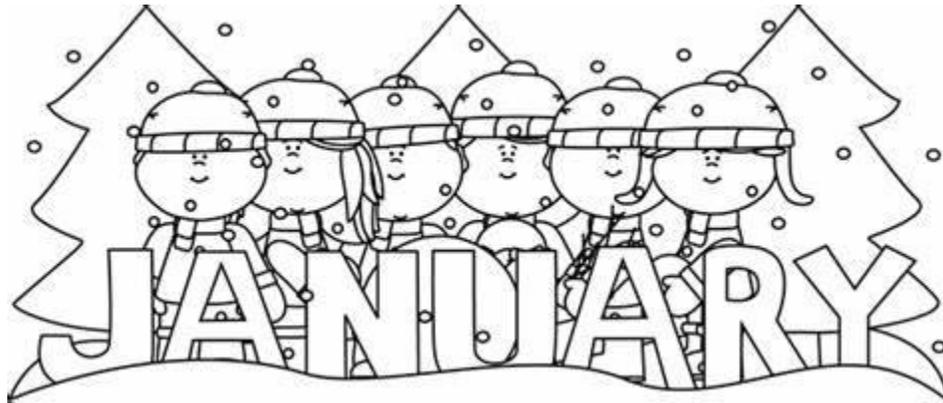
There are all kinds of ways to do this, and your Mission Development Team has already begun to try a few things out. I am sure that they and you can come up with a lot of great ideas in the future. But I am convinced that pursuing this strategy will bring new growth to First Lutheran – and new excitement, too, as the Holy Spirit offers fresh opportunities to bring the Gospel to our community!



Happy New Year!
Pastor Ken Frese



**First Lutheran Church
SONshine House Preschool**



Hello Members.

Happy 2021 to everyone! It is so blessed to be ringing in a new year. I continue to pray that we all welcome the new year with health. Through it all, we are continuing to navigate through the pandemic. We are starting the year more prepared than we were last year in March. We have learned to adapt and perfect online learning. We have the same recurring families joining us every month on Zoom. There has been a gaining interest for more families even when the school remains closed. We, currently, have a total of 10 families on campus with some other families interested in joining our preschool later this month. I am praying that we continue to gain more families for our school as the year progresses.

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



January 2021

Gatherings:

Mission Development Team, Sunday, January 3, 11:00 a.m.

Board of Directors, Sunday, January 17, 11:00 a.m.

Voters' Assembly meeting, Sunday, January 31, 11:00 a.m.

Major Leaguers is cancelled until further notice.

Tuesday Bible Class, every Tuesday 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in Fellowship Room

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



January Birthdays

Rachel Whitcher *January 8*

John Daly *January 9*

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!

Our mortgage loan is getting smaller! Since we began the campaign to retire the church mortgage, members and friends of the congregation have contributed \$30,026. Some gifts have been small, some large, and some members are contributing monthly beyond their regular giving. We thank God for all gifts. The loan balance stands at \$178,154. We pray that 2021 will be another year of blessings for our congregation, its ministry, and each member. We strongly feel that wiping out the monthly mortgage payments of \$5028 would enhance ministry.

Friends in Deed



Thanks to the people who have donated gifts of their time, money, and grocery items to the Pasadena Friends in Deed Food Pantry. We have not weighed the December collection, but the year's total at this point is 5005 pounds. The pantry helps the economically challenged, the disabled, senior citizens, the working poor, and the homeless. When I buy groceries, I know I am helping someone to better manage their limited monetary resources. The pantry exists because many people from the community contribute hours of volunteer time, donations of food items, and money. It is very easy for me to throw into my shopping cart items that are treasures for the needy. Let's focus on soups, stews, and other items that are nourishing and tasty on cold winter days.

Tuesday Bible Study

We will continue studying the life of King David, "the man after God's own heart." We will see David reach out to the grandson of King Saul as he keeps his vow to Prince Jonathan. Many of the stories about King David involve wars and more wars yet we learn of David's kindness and reliance upon God. We too have many battles to fight in our daily lives but we also can rely on God. Join us on Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon. We are less than ten participants; we wear masks and practice social distancing. All levels of Bible knowledge are welcome. For further information, contact Oscar Tschopp at: (626) 355-9433.



Mission Development Team



The Sunday before Christmas, seven members and friends of the congregation walked and distributed a packet with a message and a small gift to at least 160 residences in our defined neighborhood. Our defined neighborhood includes homes near the church. We are following Pastor Frese's Mission Proposal 2021, and hope to distribute packets monthly. The purpose of this endeavor is to let our neighbors know that we are a caring and loving group of people who want to reach out to others.

Two Thrivent Choice Grants of \$250 each were recently awarded to Jo Tschopp. The first grant will be used to fund a community chalk event in the spring. The second grant will be used to cover expenses involved in the monthly defined neighborhood outreach.

The Community Prayer Box is installed and being checked regularly. We have received a number of requests and have passed them on to the church prayer chain. The Little Free Library is another outreach into the neighborhood. Neighbors are taking books and are also contributing them. Those of us who are on site regularly have been visiting with some of the neighbors who use our grounds to exercise. One of the exercising ladies even joined us to paint rocks. Let Jo Tschopp know if you would like to join this amazing group of people wanting to serve God and their neighbors.

Saturday Prayer Group

This small, but mighty group of prayer warriors meets via a phone conference call on Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Our prayer concerns are for our nation, local governments, our congregation, our church members, and the challenges of COVID-19 around the world. Let Jo Tschopp know if you want to join us at: (626) 355-9433

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. Jeremiah 29:12



First Lutheran ROCKS!

The Mission Development Team has been hard at work, thinking of ways to encourage the community and invite people to our campus, despite the restrictions and dangers of COVID-19.

So we came up with First Lutheran ROCKS!, emulating the national Kindness Rocks project. This is a nationwide movement where people paint small, smooth river rocks with fun and inspirational messages, and then leave them around the community for others to discover and keep or share. (You can learn more at: www.thekindnessrocksproject.com.)

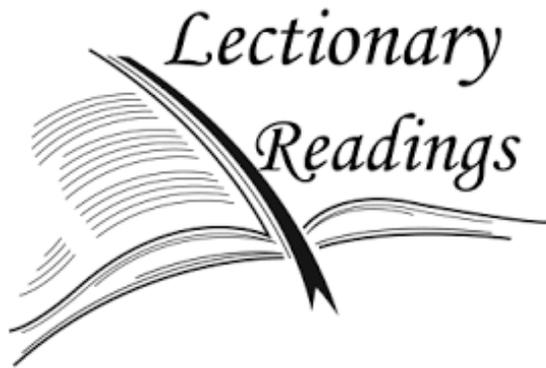
Our First Lutheran ROCKS! project has two goals:

- Paint rocks and leave them around town to encourage people during this stressful time.
- Hold outdoor, socially distanced rock painting sessions on our campus where the public can paint their own rocks and we will supply rocks, paint, brushes and other materials for free.

And we are blessed that Thrivent Financial has agreed to be our financial sponsor for such needs as rocks, painting materials and event refreshments!

First Lutheran does, truly, ROCK because of a group of our volunteers including Lily Liu (owner of Foothill Preparatory School that meets on our campus) created a batch of more than 100 lovely rocks to share and collect all over the community. Watch in the Sunday bulletins and on FLC's Facebook page for news about our upcoming rock painting sessions open to the community and join the fun! No artistic talent required.





Reading the Lectionaries

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

	<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>Psalms</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
January 3 (Epiphany)	Isaiah 60:1–6	Psalms 72:1–15, 18	Ephesians 3:1–12	Matthew 2:1–12
January 10	Genesis 1:1–5	Psalms 29	Romans 6:1–11	Mark 1:4–11
January 17	1 Samuel 3:1–20	Psalms 139:1–10	1 Corinthians 6:12–20	John 1:43–51
January 24	Jonah 3:1–5, 10	Psalms 62	1 Corinthians 7:29–35	Mark 1:14–20
January 31	Deuteronomy 18:15–20	Psalms 111	1 Corinthians 8:1–13	Mark 1:21–28

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

9123 Broadway
Temple City, CA 91780

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL

January, 2021

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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Temple City, CA 91780

Office Phone: (626) 287-0968

SONshine House Preschool: (626) 285-3380

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