



Third Sunday of Advent December 14, 2025

Welcome to worship at First Lutheran Church.

We worship God using the form of worship which has been used by Christians throughout church history, which is commonly called "liturgical worship." Liturgy is defined as the "work of the people," which means that this is a participatory form of worship for all people, whether leading from the front, or singing and responding as a part of the congregation.

In worship, we come out of the chaos of the world to prepare ourselves to meet God, who is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Through confession/forgiveness, prayer, and proclamation of the Word of God, we are led to the center of our worship which is the celebration of Holy Communion (also called the Lord's Supper or Eucharist). It is in that act of eating and drinking the true body and blood of Jesus in the forms of bread and wine, that we make a sacred connection with God. As our worship concludes, we are sent back into the world, as people who have been changed by an encounter with God, to be light in the midst of the chaos and confusion of the world.

Are you having trouble hearing the sermon?

An assistive listening system is available in our sanctuary.

You may select a receiver from the basket in the rear of the sanctuary, near the sound booth; please return it following worship.

There are **printed** copies of the sermon available in the narthex near the bulletins

From SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #35821.

Additional music reprinted by permission under CCLI License #3104770 and One License A-735793

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 14, 2025 8:15 am & 10:45 am

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to worship, we are glad that God has brought us together today! If you are visiting us today, please fill out a card to receive more information about First Lutheran Church. The cards are in the narthex near the bulletins or from an usher or staff member.

NURSERY

Children 3 and under are invited to our staffed nursery.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Children up to 5th grade are invited to attend Children's Church. Meet the leader at the back of the sanctuary. The children meet in the chapel and will return to the service just before Holy Communion.

PRELUDE Come, Now, O God

The Chancel Choir

Please stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
And of the + Son,
And of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Let us make personal confession of our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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

Long-expected God, we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.

Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in Your timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.

You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

The sharing of the peace is a time for us to be reconciled with one another through the peace, love, and forgiveness of Christ.

The Peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

All Earth Is Hopeful



- 1 All earth is hope ful, the Sav ior comes at last!
- 2 Peo ple of Is rael, you heard the proph et tell:
- 3 Moun tains and val leys will have to be pre pared;



Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con - new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most



la bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how broth - er, whose birth beau - ty and grace ceived him, "God with us," our re here! near - ing, All God is in grace!



God's truth and jus-tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free. stores hope and cour-age to chil - dren of this earth. clear ev - 'ry gate-way, in haste, come out in haste!

ev-er sets us free.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The third candle we light during Advent is the candle of joy and sometimes called the "Shepherd's Candle". The shepherds were filled with joy and rejoiced; 1 Peter 1:8...Rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy...





BLESSING OF THE LECTOR

Let us pray.

Come to us, Lord Jesus, as our lector reads for us your holy word. Keep us attentive to the truth of the scriptures; turn us away from myths; And turn us in faith to you, our strength and our redeemer. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1 - 10

- The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.]]
 - ³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.
 ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear!
 Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."
 - Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
 then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
 For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert;
 the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water;
 the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
 - 8 A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people;

no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: James 5:7 – 10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2 - 11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written.

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ

Please be seated.

SERMON The Purpose of Christmas: Reconciliation Pastor Jeffrey Borgwardt

SILENT REFLECTION

Please stand.

They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Words and Music by **Peter Scholtes**



NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,* who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

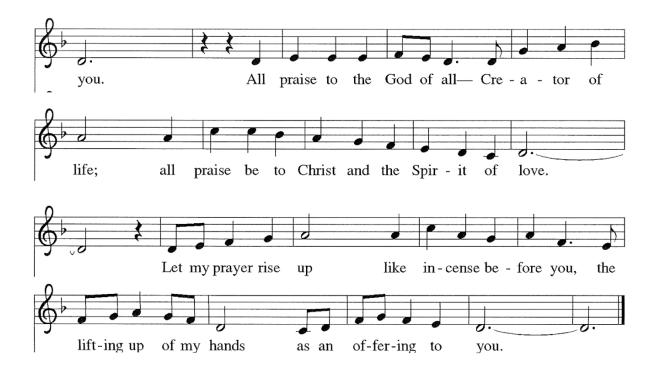
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN ELW 232

Let My Prayer Rise Up

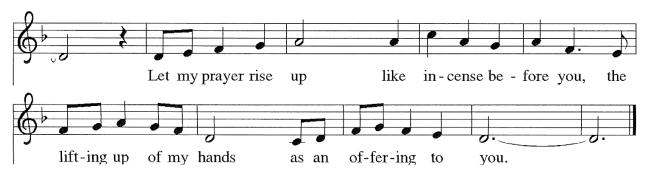




PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition ends with: Lord, in your mercy... Congregational response: Hear our prayer.

Receive our prayers...in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen



Please be seated.

OFFERING ANTHEM

Mary Did You Know?

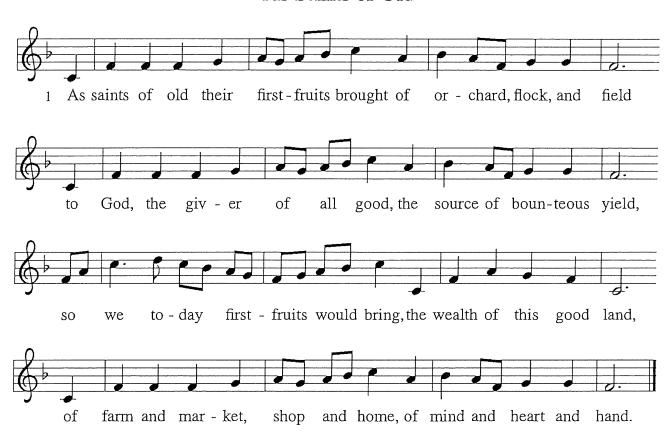
Ted Greene, Soloist

Please stand.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

As the gifts are presented, the congregation sings.

As Saints of Old



OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Nourishing God,

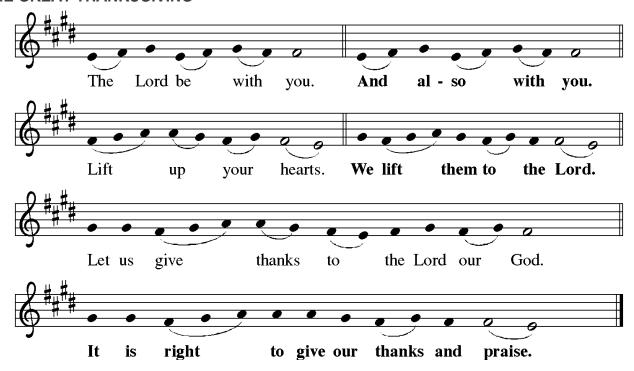
You are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,

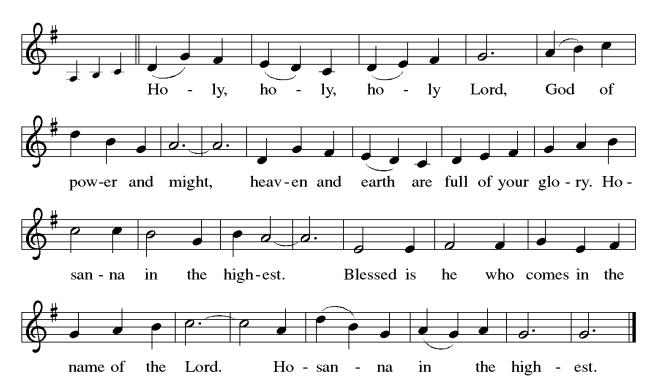
that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom.

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right...we praise your name and join in their unending hymn.



EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God. . .

Please be seated.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

All baptized Christians are welcome to commune. We teach that Holy Communion is a celebration of the real presence of Christ under forms of bread and wine. For those who prefer, cups in the center ring of the tray are filled with white grape juice. If you wish to receive a blessing, signal this by crossing your arms against your chest.

COMMUNION SONG

take a - way the



sins of the world,

Grant us You -

peace.

What Feast of Love



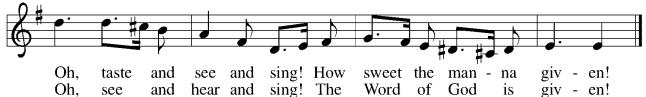
- 1 What feast of love is of fered here, what ban-quet come from heav en?
- What light of truth is of fered here, what cov e nant from heav en?
- 3 What wine of love is of fered here, what crim-son drink from heav en?



What food of ev - er - last-ing life, what gra - cious gift is giv - en? What hope of ev - er - last-ing life, what won-drous word is giv - en? What stream of ev - er - last-ing life, what pre - cious blood is giv - en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav - en. This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav - en. This, this is Christ the king, the sweet-est wine of heav - en.



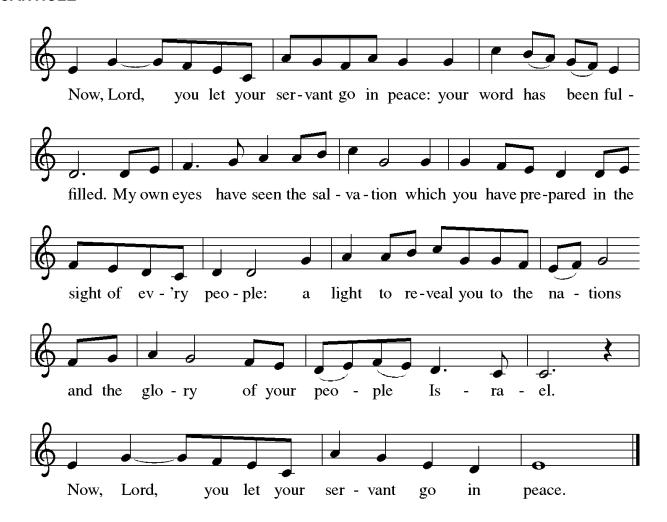
Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!



Please stand.

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in His grace. **Amen.**

CANTICLE



PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor, and give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW 253

He Came Down



- He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- he came down that we may have light; He came down that we may have light;
- He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;

he came down that we may have light;

he came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have joy;

hal-le-lu-jah for-ev-er-more.

Go in peace. We are formed and loved by Christ to live! Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK:

Monday, December 15	Tuesday, December 16	Wednesday, December 17	
9:30 am Staff Meeting	9:00 am Friendship Circle	10:00 am Quilters	
6:00 pm 3 B's for Men	11:15 am Stew Pot	5:00 – 6:00 pm Dinner for everyone	
6:00 pm Bunco	3:30 – 5:30 pm Success Center	5:45 pm Bell Choir	
	4:30 pm Fitness Class	5:45 pm Mentoring Plus	
	6:00 pm Book Club meets at Olive	6:00 pm Confirmation	
	Garden for Christmas Dinner.	7:00 pm Youth Group	
	6:30 pm Spiritual Journey	7:00 pm Choir	
	6:30 pm Family Improvement		
	Times vary for Scout meetings		
Thursday, December 18	Friday, December 19	Saturday, December 20	
3:30 – 5:30 pm Success Center		6:00 pm Staff & Council Christmas	
4:30 pm Fitness Class		Party	
Sunday, December 21	Volunteer Schedule December 14	Volunteer Schedule December 21	
8:15 am Worship with Holy	Lector:	Lector:	
Communion, and Children's	8:15 am: Ranette Carter	8:15 am: Danny Chandler	
Church.	10:45 am: Bill Anderson	10:45 am: Vivian McElligott	
9:30 am Bible Study & Advent	Communion:	Communion:	
Book Study	Set up: Carol & Ray Bird	Set up: Gloria Bero	
10:30 am Choir warm-up			
•	Clean Up: Teresa DeShazer & Randi	Clean Up: Eva Touchstone	
10:45 am Worship with Holy	Clean Up: Teresa DeShazer & Randi McRae	Clean Up: Eva Touchstone Offering Counters:	
10:45 am Worship with Holy Communion, and Children's	•		
·	McRae	Offering Counters:	
Communion, and Children's	McRae Offering Counters:	Offering Counters:	

Readings for in preparation for Sunday, December 21

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us this afternoon for a fun Christmas celebration!





On December 28th, the Sunday following Christmas, there will be worship at 9:30 am only.

Angel Tree Gift Giving – Bless a Family This Christmas!

The Christmas season is a time to share God's love, and once again we are excited to sponsor our **Annual Angel Tree Gift Giving**.

Today is the deadline to return it wrapped with the tag from the tree attached. Our team will ensure the gifts are delivered to the families in time for Christmas.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Renee Slegeir 903-736-8546.

Staff Christmas Love Offering

In the narthex you'll find a container where you may leave a token of appreciation for the staff.

If you need to write a check, make it out to "Ranette Carter" for easier distribution to the staff.

Thank you,
Ranette Carter,
Church Council Treasurer



IMPROVEMENT MEAL

One of the things that makes the Family Improvement class work so well for families is that we serve them a meal (cooking is not required). We need volunteers to help provide a meal. Those who are willing to help in this way, please contact the church office or Donna Louvier who is coordinating the meals (903-399-8553) or donnalouvier@gmail.com

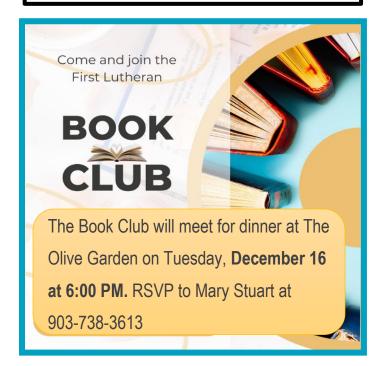


Bibles, Buddies & Beverages Men's Fellowship December 15 @ 6:00 pm FLC Fellowship Hall

Community Ministries

Serving With Love

Please remember to bring your donations for the Food Pantry.





FRIERIDSHIP

CIRCLE

December 16
9:30 am

POINSETTIAS
FOR THE
SANCTUARY

\$15 Suggested Donation

Sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

FINANICAL REPORT

Church Cash Flow Year to Date as of:

12/10/2025

Regular Church Offering: 2025				
Contributions:	\$	591,789		
Expenditures:	\$	480,679		
Difference:	\$	111,110		

Building Maintenance Fund Activity: 2025		
Contributions:	\$	94,771
Expenditures:	\$	38,476
Difference:	\$	56,295

Respectfully, Karen Smith

YEAR END GIVING

PLEASE HAVE ALL OFFERINGS IN BY DECEMBER 28TH
SO THEY MAY BE CREDITED ON YOUR 2025 GIVING STATEMENT.
THANK YOU!



First Lutheran T-Shirts for Sale

Would you like to have a shirt like these cool kids?
Sign-up sheet is in the narthex; payment envelope is there too.

Small – Extra Large \$20 2XL or larger \$22 We will take orders until January 4th.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please send all prayer requests and updates to the church office at: prayerchain@firstlutheran.us

FLC Members

Karen Smith is having back surgery.

Patty Lowe has pneumonia.

The family of Holland Caraway who died on November 25th

Tori Bullock needs prayer.

Lois Boldt has been admitted to hospice care.

Ed Bero is recovering from neck surgery.

Doris Bero is recovering from a viral infection.

David Smith is having a reoccurrence of B Cell Lymphoma.

Pray for the children and teens who attend our church and The Success Center.

Pray for church growth, numerically and spiritually.

Pray for wisdom and direction for our church leadership.

Pray for the homebound of our church and their caregivers.

Jane Bailey Robert Kohnfelder Durwin Sewell

Mary Ann Gamel Chuck & Paula Kaplan Bruno Schueler Patty Lowe Johnnie Owens Joseph Carlson

Albert Holmen

Family and Friends of FLC Members

Eva Touchstone's Sister-in-Law and Brother need healing.

Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

Those who are imprisoned.

The homeless

Members Serving in the Military

Eric Jenkins – Air Force, Ft. Meade, MD
Terrina Anderson – Army, Ft. Huachuca, Az
Hannah Perry – Army, San Antonio, Tx

GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 14, 2025

Keeping Watch

There's nothing quite like the first smell of springtime flowers emerging from the earth. The sensory explosion often catches us by surprise, reminding us that new life is surely coming soon, even though the world still seems to be slumbering and the buds we watch impatiently refuse to open. This third Sunday of Advent lifts the church and stirs our senses as we receive word, along with John the Baptizer, that Jesus is indeed the one we've been waiting for, the one who will turn buds into blooms. This is good news!

We might wonder, however, why we are hearing this news from John's perspective, out of all the voices in the growing community of Jesus-followers. Can we trust his word? After all, John is sitting behind bars at this time, caught in the gears of the world's injustice. John's unjust imprisonment reminds us that working for justice in the world can cause conflict with those in power. But while the world imprisons the innocent and strains to protect the corrupt and cruel, God sees such injustices and works to undo their power. This, too, is good news!

This third Sunday of Advent is sometimes called *Gaudete*, meaning "Rejoice." Cultivating joy amid the brokenness seen in the world is difficult, but God brings new beginnings where we have known only endings. New tendrils of life are emerging! Something new is coming! Let's share the good news as we wait and keep watch together.

Assisting In Worship Today

Celebrant: Jeffrey Borgwardt

Musicians: Donna Ashby, Pat Mueller

and The Chancel Choir

Live Stream: 8:15 am Deb Butts,

Eric Chandler, and Daniel Chandler

10:45 am: Diane Borgwardt

Lector:

8:15 am: Ranette Carter

10:45 am: Bill Anderson

Church Staff

Jeffrey E. Borgwardt, Pastor

Donna Ashby, Director of Music

John Parsons, Dir. of Youth and Family Min.

Tina Sewell, Secretary

Karen Smith, Bookkeeper

Alex Enich, Maintenance

2025 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Kyle Lybarger (President)

Beverly Bell (Vice-President)

Rachel Grundmann (Secretary)

Ranette Carter (Treasurer)

Jenn Belcourt (Relationship with God)

Johnny Davis (Relationship with Community)

Peri Topel (Relationship with One Another)

3901 Bill Owens Parkway

Longview, Texas 75605

903-295-7423

churchsecretary@firstlutheran.us

www.FirstLutheran.us

We receive gifts for the mission of the congregation and the Church in the world. An offering plate is available in the back of the sanctuary. If you prefer to give by credit card you may do so at www.firstlutheran.us/donate or by scanning the QR code below



FLC regularly supports the work of the following ministries of our denomination and community with financial, volunteer, and food offerings:

Longview Community Ministries

Newgate Mission

Living Water International

Lutheran World Relief

Lutheran Disaster Response

For more information on how to get involved contact the church office (903)295-7423.