

December 2022 Newsletter



Pastor Carlin's Page

The Gift of You

With Christmas bearing down upon us we will most certainly be thinking about the gifts we will receive. As an official cranky old man, I don't get any gifts and could care less about receiving any; my wife and I many years ago when finances were very tight made a decision to focus on our children when it came to Christmas giving. I guess at the present time we could rescind our previous decision, however, we still focus on our children and others and this brings us greater joy than any gift we could receive.

It is nice to receive a gift, but it is a greater blessing to give. Unfortunately, when it comes to Christmas giving our focus is generally on material goods and gifts. It appears that we have given more credence to the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh than we do to the gift of Christ born unto us that night.

Certainly, Christ is the greatest gift ever given. However, when it comes to giving do we look beyond material things we can offer to the more often needed gifts God has bestowed upon us? Sometimes material things are needed; our food pantry and clothing closet here at the church has truly been a blessing to many. Though, seldom do we venture to see the greater gifts each of us has to offer.

Matthew 25: 14-30 (ESV)
The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants^[c] and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents,^[d] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.^[e] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your

master.’²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

It goes without argument that Jesus is the greatest gift ever given. However, we often overlook the gift of ourselves. Why this is hubris you say! Pride comes before a fall! Yes, this is all true, but the gift of us is one we cannot overlook. God only made one of each of us and we all have a very special set of gifts God gave us to use for His purposes.

“The Parable of the Talents” is a reminder to us from Christ Himself of this very truth. We generally get all caught up in the guy who buries the talent. The focus, however, should be on the other two servants who doubled the master's money.

If we waste our lives and gifts then we are just like the wicked and evil servant. He did not use the gifts he had. They were each given the master's property according to their ability and this guy failed to use his ability. The other two lived up to their ability and used the gifts they had and were praised for their efforts.

At the end of the story the master takes the one talent from the wicked and slothful servant and gives it to the guy with ten. This goes against all our preconceived notions of fairness.

I hate to be the one to break it to you, but fairness is a concept that does not exist in reality. The parable itself makes this patently clear. They were given according to their abilities. Yes, some people have more God given ability than others. Some people are more attractive than others, better athletes, smarter, more driven and the list could go on into infinity. Every time I hear someone talking about fairness, I run the other way. The first rule of life is "Life ain't fair, get used to it." Besides who decides what is fair? What might be fair to me might not be fair to you. All we can do is use ourselves to the best of our ability.

I am certainly not the best pastor, preacher or theologian out there. Many are better speakers, more learned and especially better looking. However, this does not nullify the gifts and call God has placed on my life. I need to be the best pastor, husband, father, friend and person I can be according to my gifts. The same applies to each of you. Yes, Jesus Christ is the greatest gift ever; however, we are and have gifts that only we can bring to God's kingdom and the world.

May the gift of Christ shine on you this Christmas season and may the gift of you shine all year. Amen

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all

Pastor Carlin



2023 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Please plan to be in attendance at one of the services the weekend of December 10th & 11th.

Pastor will install the members at each service.

Welcome to ALL of the council members for 2023!!

MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST

Following all three services on the weekend of December 17 & 18, the Confirmation students will present the Moravian Love Feast in the fellowship hall.

Approximate times will be:

Sat., Dec. 17 @ 6:30 pm

Sun., Dec. 18 @ 9 am

Sun., Dec. 18 @ 11:30 am

Everyone is invited to continue to fellowship with each other at these times.

Handel's Messiah

The Christmas portion of Handel's MESSIAH will be performed on Sunday, December 4th at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 509 E Broadway in Streator, IL.

The concert will begin at 3 pm and will be performed by the Streator Community Chorus with soloists Laurel Beard, Kate Tombaugh, Roger Amm and Ian Greenlaw.

A prelude of Christmas music will be performed by the Streator Brass. The concert is free and open to the public. A freewill offering will be received.

All are welcome!

UPCOMING DECEMBER EVENTS

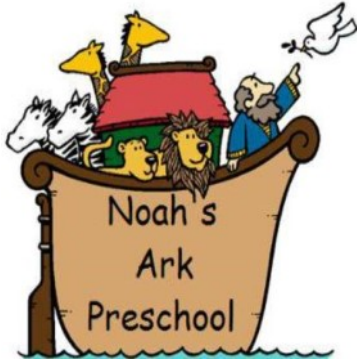
—ADVENT BIBLE STUDIES—

4 new Mayberry Bible Studies will be presented on the 4 Wednesday evenings during Advent. They will begin at 5:30 pm and end before 7. Potluck meals will be served EACH week beginning on November 30th.

Dec 3 & 10 from 9:30—11, the children will practice for the Children's Christmas Program which will be presented at the 8:00 service on Dec. 11th.

Dec. 17 & 18—Cantata at 5:30 & 8:00 services.

Dec. 18—Living Nativity @ 6 & 6:45 pm



December at Noah's Ark

We added a new student in November so we have 55 friends now! We have room for more students, so please tell your family and friends! We can enroll students at any time during the school year!

The 3-year-old classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:15-10:15 and 10:30-12:30.

The 4-year-old classes are held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:15-11:15 and 11:45-2:45.

The 3-year-old classroom is currently working on fall activities! This is perfect for the changing weather and season. They are continuing to focus on the 9 letters they have been working on since week 1 and adding 1 new letter each week! On our focus board they also have a number, shape and color for the week! The 3 year olds will create some thanksgiving artwork this next week! We sent home Progress Reports this past week so our parents can see what their child has been learning this past 9 weeks J

Our 4 year olds have been working fall activities also! We put together a fall sensory bin with corn, measuring cups, cupcake tins, and other objects for scooping! They have enjoyed using our different tweezers to pick up the corn and put it into small cups! Some friends have made the teachers different pies.

They are continuing to work on their letters also, and really focusing on knowing and recognizing the letters that make up their names!

We continue working in our calendar binders, inside they trace the number for the day, which is our date, and they chart what our weather is outside that day! This helps them see data and which has more (sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy or windy).

Our friends have been learning what we can be thankful for that God provides us each and everyday, and also learning more about the life of Moses and how God helped him and the Israelites live freely!

Thank you for your support here at Noah's Ark!

Breanne Immke

Director of Noah's Ark Preschool

Please contact me at pontiacnoahsark@gmail.com for any questions!

Check out our Facebook page too!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Nursery through adult meets at 9:15 each Sunday.

COMFORTING (QUILTING) LADIES: meets to "work" downstairs in the large Sunday School room on Thursdays from 9-11 am.

ANNA CIRCLE: Will meet on Thursday, December 1, 2022, @ 1 pm in the Munson Room. Our current Bible study is "Encouraging One Another". Visitors and new members are always welcome to join us for Bible study and fellowship on the first Thursday afternoon of each month. Questions—please call Lynnette @ 815/796-3216.

KNITWITS: *Knitwits has resumed on most Tuesdays from 9:30—11 am*

JOYFUL WOMEN: Is on hiatus again until sometime in 2023. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Sue Hiatt @ 815/844-7933 or Vicki Day @ 815/844-5420.

Please Note:

If you have submitted a name for the prayer list & would like them to receive a "Thinking of You" card, please provide the church office with a good address so that the volunteer coordinator can mail the card to the proper address.

Also, please update the office if/when the name on the prayer list can be removed (or any "address" changes).

Thank you.

~Beth Ray~





Food Pantry Needs

Thank you to all who have continued to generously donate food and supplies to the

Livingston Area Food Pantry during the coronavirus pandemic. The pantry has remained open with limited hours and drive-through pick ups to ensure the safety of the workers and clients. The mission and social committee continues to monetarily support the pantry, especially during these difficult times when so many are unemployed and money is tight. During the month of **December** we will collect (especially personals) **laundry soap, dish soap, bar soap, female hygiene products (sanitary napkins & tampons), toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels, COMPLETE pancake mix, & syrup.** And, as always, any food or “non-essential” item is appreciated. All donated items should be **NON-PERISHABLE & NOT OUTDATED**, please. The Pantry is **CURRENTLY** in need of **EVERYTHING** .

I realize the list is long. Please feel free to choose as few or as many items as you wish. Moreover, the pantry encourages us to purchase items inexpensively at Dollar Tree and Dollar General.

The church is open daily (M-F) from 8:00 am-3:30 pm. The grocery carts are located in the fellowship hall & by the ramp door, and I check them weekly to make deliveries to assist in feeding our community members. I truly appreciate the support members of First Lutheran have given to our pantry for so many years. Bless you all for your generous and giving hearts! ~~Chris Lauritzen~~



Questions?? Please contact Jessica Warren for updates.

December Birthdays

Rick Jones	12/1	Larry Olson	12/17
Grace Johnson	12/3	Henry Puryear	12/18
Bailey Diemer	12/4	Lynn Rich	12/18
Marilyn Pritchard	12/4	Jacob Bressner	12/20
Bill Abraham	12/5	Jaxsyn Taylor	12/21
Carol Ruther	12/6	Lori Gibson	12/23
Don Moore	12/10	Kori Harder	12/23
Bob Follmer	12/11	Kylen Krominga	12/24
Cole Rapp	12/12	Landyn Mehrkens	12/27
Ron Schneeman	12/12	Brenna Jordan	12/28
Carley Schneeman	12/14	Skylar Johnson	12/29
Bill Alvey	12/15	Patti Sawyer	12/29
Mary M. Jones	12/15	Tiffany Lucas	12/30



2022/2023 CONFIRMATION CLASS

There are 4 students in the 8th grade class and 5 students in the 7th grade class.

REMINDER—If you wish to make a contribution to the church and are uncomfortable/unable to attend in person, you may mail it or drop it off between 8 am & 3:30 pm

ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADULT BIBLE STUDY: Bible Study had returned at 9:30 am and 6 pm on Wednesdays.

During Advent, Mayberry Bible Study will occur on Wednesday evenings along with a potluck meal beginning at 5:30 pm and concluding before 7 pm (so that Pastor can have confirmation classes). This study will begin on November 30th.

Prayer Works



Please Pray for our Members & Friends:

Robbie Becker, Phyllis Bradley, Sharon Carr, Deb Follmer, Kerry Foster, Shelley Hodgson, Mary Ann Johnson, Carol Jones, Jim Jones, Jean Miller, Mike Muzzarelli, Durelle & Marilyn Pritchard, Rupert & Cindy Rodriguez, Cheryl Weber, Stephen Weber, Cindi Arnold, Pastor Gabe Baumgardner, Jonathan Becker, Charoletta Bergin, Windy Birch, Sam Carlson, Katy Edwards, Marsha Follet-Pauly, Patty Fox, Pauline Gibson, Mike Gillispie, Connie Griggs, Katherine Harding, Wolf Knappe, Joni Koch, Bill Liptak, Owen Lyons, Chris Miller, Jakob Miller, Rochelle Nolan, Stacy Nutgrass, Michael O'Shea, David Robinson, Chris Ross, Anita Sands, Gail Shaffer, Steve Shaffer, Kathy Telford, John Winchester & Pat & Jerry.

CHILDREN: Elliot Buchheit, Lucy McKinley, & Jalene Woolford.

Let us pray for the following members

*Evenglow Lodge:
Harley & Marian Mayer*

Evenglow Inn: Delores Schultz

The Pointe: Maurine Kalkwarf

*Good Samaritan (Goldwater Care?):
Judy L. Sykes*

*Homebound: Phyllis Bradley,
Stephen Weber, & Jim Jones*

HIPAA Laws...Because of the HIPAA Laws, if you would like the Pastor to visit you in the hospital, **you must call the church office** (or have the Chaplain at the hospital call the office).

Meetings in December

Mondays, Dec. 5 & 19 @ 9:15 am
Bible Study @ The Pointe

Mondays, Dec. 5 & 19 @ 6:30 pm
Euchre

Wednesdays @ 5:30 pm
Potluck w/Mayberry Bible Study

Wednesdays @ 7 pm
Confirmation

Thursdays @ 9 am
Comforting Ladies (Quilters)

Thursdays @ 6 pm
Choir

Thursday, Dec. 1 @ 1 pm
Anna Circle

Saturday/Sunday Dec. 10/11
2023 Council Member Installation

Sunday, Dec. 11
Children's Christmas Program @ 8 am

Tuesday, Dec. 13 @ 7 pm
Church Council

Saturday, Dec. 17 @ 5:30
Choir Cantata

Sunday, Dec. 18 @ 8 am
Choir Cantata

Sunday, Dec. 18 @ 2:30 pm
Pastor—Chapel @ Good Samaritan

Sunday, Dec. 18 @ 6 & 6:45 pm
Living Nativity

Saturday, Dec. 24 @ 4, 7 & 11 pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Sunday, Dec. 25 @ 9 am
Christmas Day Service

Monday,, Dec. 26
Christmas Observed—OFFICE CLOSED

Monday, Dec. 26 @ NOON
Newsletter Deadline

Friday, Dec. 30 @ 9:00 am
Newsletter Assembly

ANNA CIRCLE

Anna Circle will meet on Thursday, December 1, 2022, at 1 pm in the Munson Room. Our current Bible study is "Encouraging One Another". Visitors and new members are always welcome to join us on the first Thursday afternoon of each month for Bible study and fellowship.

If you have any questions, please call Lynnette at (815) 796-3216.

Comforting (Quilting) Ladies

The Comforting Ladies continues to meet on Thursday mornings .If you would like to be part of this ministry, please join us any Thurs. morning from 9-11 am in the large SS room.

JOYFUL WOMEN OF FIRST

Joyful Women of First Lutheran has concluded their most recent Bible study and will be on hiatus until sometime in 2023. Joyful Women is open to ALL adult women and friends of First Lutheran. We look forward to seeing everyone. If you have questions, please feel free to call Sue Hiatt @ 815/844-7933 or Vicki Day @ 815/844-5420.

KNITWITS UPDATE—FALL 2022

While we focus mostly on prayer shawls, we also provide mittens, hats, scarves in the winter, and baby blankets which are included in layettes that are given to new mothers in need in our community. Knitwits meets most Tuesdays from 9:30 to 11 am in the Munson room from fall through spring. All are welcome to join us, and while it helps if you have basic knitting and/or crocheting skills, we do our best to help beginners develop their skills.

Shawls: Shawls should be at least 60” long and about 24” wide. They need to be long enough to easily wrap around shoulders or be long enough to cover a person taking a nap. Triangle shaped shawls are pretty, but haven’t been as useful to our recipients.

Baby blankets: should be at least 40” x 40”

Hats, mittens, & scarves: There is a bag in the knitwits cabinet labeled for the mitten tree. When the tree goes up in December, we will place those items on it.

Yarn has been donated to us and is available for anyone wishing to make items for our ministry.

Please wash all items before donating them. Thank you.

Anyone may request that a prayer shawl be given. There are guidelines for how to document them and how to wrap them posted inside our cabinet.

Any questions, call Sue Hiatt @ 815/848-7935 (cell) or 815/844-7933 (home).

Thank you for sharing Christ’s love with others.



First Lutheran Church will be having a Living Nativity presentation on December 18th, at 6 & 6:45 pm. Anyone interested in helping in any way should contact Julie Rapp.

OUR TRIBUTE TO JESSE OURS

For the last two years First Lutheran Church has honored Jesse Ours with the Jesse's Ride for PTSD event. Although we are not having a Jesse's Ride event this year, that does not mean that we cannot honor Jesse, his service (& his sacrifice) by continuing our financial support of our local veterans and the Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc. (LMVFM) in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The generosity of our First Lutheran family and sponsorships provided a majority of the profits of our Jesse's Ride events. To that effort, we are sponsoring a sale of RADA cutlery. This cutlery company is based in the USA and shares 40% of the profit from our orders with Jesse's Ride at First Lutheran. Their products are good quality and would provide nice Christmas gifts. ☺ We will then divide the funds received from the sales between the Livingston County Veterans office for gift cards (that are used for urgent veterans needs locally), and the LMVFM in Fort Wayne, Indiana - an NALC mission organization.

To make a purchase of RADA cutlery, there are catalogs available in the Narthex of the church. There is a code on the front cover which indicates that the profit will be shared with Jesse's Ride. The Jesse's Ride web link for online ordering is:

<https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=5277177.b98beb>

This link is also available on the Jesse's Ride for PTSD Facebook page. If you have any difficulty placing your order, please give Beth (in the church office) a call for assistance. All orders are sent directly to the address you designate or to your home.

If you feel that you do not need any of the products that RADA offers, but would still like to make a donation, you may use the designated envelopes in the pews to support these two organizations. Please make checks out to: First Lutheran Church, with a designation in the "notes" of Jesse's Ride. Thank you.

Come join the fun every other Monday night



Mark your calendars for the first and third Mondays of the month. Spread the word. .

We will open doors at 6 pm, play begins at 6:30 pm. Cost is \$4/person

We want everyone who attends to feel safe and comfortable. Please do not attend if you do not feel well . If there are any questions, please direct them to Fred Shirley.

Dec 5 & 19

Jan 2 & 16, 2023

Feb 6 & 20

Mar 6 & 20

HOW TO WATCH OUR CHURCH SERVICES ONLINE:

YOUTUBE: www.firstlutheranyoutube.org

You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel by going to YouTube and searching for "Pontiac First Lutheran"

OUR CHURCH WEBSITE: <https://firstlutheranpontiac.org/live-stream/>

APPLE TV & ROKU: *Download an app called "Box Cast" and search for a channel called "Pontiac First Lutheran" Once you find it, make it one of your favorites and you can watch from your tv or phone!*

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pontiacfirstlutheran/>

Go to this link and request to be added to the group. Once you are added you will get notifications of our next service and see past services!

TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/FirstPontiac>

If you have the twitter app, search for "First Pontiac" and you can 'follow' us on Twitter!



First Lutheran Church
Worshiping Christ - Serving Our Neighbor





Christmas *Worship Schedule*

Sunday, December 4

Noah's Ark Christmas Programs

4:30 pm—T/Th AM & M/W/F AM classes

6:30 pm—T/Th Mids & M/W/F PM classes

Sunday, December 11

8:00 am—Children's Christmas Presentation

Saturday, December 17

5:30 pm—Choir's Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 18

8 am—Choir's Christmas Cantata

6:00 pm & 6:45 pm—Living Nativity w/Luminaria

Saturday, December 24

4:00 pm—Candlelight Service

7:00 pm—Candlelight Service

11:00 pm—Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 25 @ 9 am

Christmas Day Worship Service (ONLY Sunday Service this week)

Monday, December 26

Christmas Day Holiday OBSERVED—OFFICE CLOSED

Sunday, January 1 @ 9 am

New Year's Day Worship Service (ONLY Sunday Service this week)

Monday, January 2

New Year's Day Holiday OBSERVED—OFFICE CLOSED

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
311 W GROVE
PONTIAC, IL 61764**

Phone: 815-844-3695

Fax: 815-844-7580

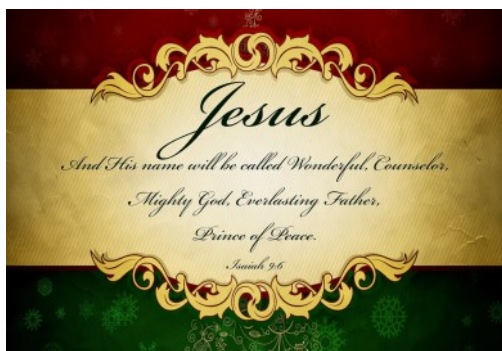
Email: info@firstlutheranpontiac.org

Pastor Carlin: carlinours@gmail.com

704/775-9823

www.firstlutheranpontiac.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**DECEMBER
2022**

“Worshiping Christ, Serving Our Neighbor”

Weekend Worship Schedule

Sat. 5:30 pm

Sun. 8:00 am

Sun. 10:30 am

Sunday School 9:15 am

Our Staff

Pastor: Carlin Ours
Office Admin: Beth Ray
Acct: Angel Hall
Custodian: DeAnn Dennis
Vol. Coord: Beth Ray
Choir Dir: Joseph Durbin

2022 Congregational Council:

Stewart Alvey, President	Jim Drengwittz
Michael Carlson, V. President	Brian Friedman
Jane Yate, Secretary	Mary Ann Johnson
Treasurer	Kori Mehrkens
Michelle Janssen, Fin. Secretary	Julie Rapp
Jeff Bressner	Cathy Robinson
	Fred Shirley