



FIRST LUTHERAN

GOOD NEWS!

DEC. 2023 & JAN. 2024

All of this and more on the web at www.FirstLutheranOnalaska.org

SEE ALSO...

-  facebook.com/1stlu
-  instagram.com/1stlu
-  twitter.com/1stlu
-  youtube.com/1stlu
-  1stlu.org/cal
- [#faithalive365](https://faithalive365)

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Christmas at First Lutheran

- Dec* **2 Road to Bethlehem:**
Drive-thru Advent experience at Sugar Creek Bible Camp.
- 6 Choir practice begins for Christmas Eve:**
Signup at 1stlu.org/choir.
- 8 Parents' Night Out:**
4:45-8pm.
- 10 Gifts for the Christmas Giving Tree are due**
- 15 Cookie Decorating:**
Time TBD.
- 17 Caroling: NEW TIME**
4:30-7pm. 4:30pm: in sanctuary for a Christmas hymn sing with treats. 5pm: load buses & spread Christmas cheer around town. Return around 6pm for a potluck feast!
- 20 OWLs Christmas Potluck: Noon.**
Sunday School Christmas Program:
During 6:15pm worship.
- 21 Blue Christmas Worship:**
6:15pm worship, with a light meal & conversation before.
- 24 Sunday, Christmas Eve Worship Times:**
2pm, 4pm, 6pm and 11pm. All will be candlelight and all will be with Holy Communion. *There will be no 8am nor 10:30am services.*
- 25 Christmas Day Worship Time:**
One service at 10am, with Holy Communion.
- 31 1st Sunday After Christmas:**
Two services: 8 & 10:30am.
Birthday Party for Jesus:
For Sunday School, 9:15am.
- Jan* **1 New Years Day:**
Office closed.

OFFICE CLOSURES

The office will be closed at the following times in the coming months...

- Closed Christmas day, Monday, Dec. 25
- Closed New Years day, Monday, Jan. 1
- Closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 15

SNOW BIRDS

Are you heading out? Please let us know if you'll be spending the winter somewhere else. If we know your seasonal address, we can keep in touch by sending you the monthly newsletter. *Call or email the office with your winter address: 608.783.2236, office@firstlu.org.*

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

A baptism preparation session will be **Saturday, Feb. 3, at 10am** in the narthex for anyone who is considering or has scheduled a baptism. *To register or ask questions call the church office at 608.783.3326 by Sunday, Jan. 28. Min. attendance required: 2 families.*

NEW-MEMBER SOCIAL

By choosing to become a member, individuals and families commit to being part of a shared mission. People who would like to become members of First Lutheran are invited to a social at David Reay's on **Thursday, Apr. 20, 6pm**, where you will get to know more about First and the staff in a relaxed atmosphere. *To register your family or ask questions, call our church office at 608.783.2236 or email office@firstlu.org.*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

If you have received a birthday postcard from First in the last several months and still have it, bring it into church Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm and pick up a small gift.

WE CELEBRATE THE GIFT OF HOLY BAPTISM

- Carmela Rae Stewart
- Sophia Charlotte Hand

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILY & FRIENDS OF:

- Linda Jensen

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

Thank you for the following memorials:

In memory of JoAnn Briggs

- Undesignated: Mary Sween

In memory of Jay Holthaus

- Music Fund: Bev Fuhrman
- First Lutheran Foundation: Berniece Crogan, Elizabeth Mac Ewen, Mary Sween, Ardie Van Riper

HOSPITAL REMINDERS

For Gundersen: be sure to alert the hospital of your church affiliation when they ask, and they will release your name to us when we call.

For Mayo/Franciscan Healthcare: it is important that you or a family member contact us at the church office: 608.783.2236. Mayo no longer lets churches know who is a patient at their hospital.

LATEX- & NUT-FREE CAMPUS

A reminder to all members that First Lutheran is a latex- and nut-free campus. Please do not bring food containing nuts or nut butters/oils/extracts of any kind onto the church campus. This is for the safety of all of our members. Thanks!

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Cancellations will be posted in the following ways...

- Website
- Facebook page
- Text message

(update the office with your cell number and provider or at 1stlu.org/directory). First intends to 'make the call' by 5pm so everyone knows what to expect.

First Lutheran Church
410 Main St.
Onalaska, Wisconsin 54650
608.783.2236
Fax: 608.783.3741

office@firstlu.org
www.FirstLutheranOnalaska.org

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

In-person, indoors & outdoors, and live streamed at 1stlu.org/live
Sunday 8:00 & 10:30AM
Wednesday 6:15 PM

SUBMITTING NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

To have your announcement in the newsletter, send it to newsletter@firstlu.org, or give it to Andy in the office. **Deadline for the newsletter is noon on the 15th of the preceding month.**

To have your announcement in the weekly announcements pages handed out each weekend, send it to announcements@firstlu.org, or give it to Andy in the office. **Deadline for the weekly announcements is noon each Wednesday.**

First Lutheran is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)



Christmas Caroling!

Sunday, Dec. 17, 4:30pm

Meet at church, where we will all load on a bus and go around town spreading Christmas cheer! Then come back to church for a yummy meal and fellowship!

Please RSVP at 1stlu.org/next

Blue Christmas

Thursday, Dec. 21 at 6:15pm

This worship is a safe and sacred space to share anguish, to plead with God to remember us, to pray for justice and restoration. Service will include music, prayers, candlelight and reflection on what God is up to amidst our blue feelings around Christmas. Invite a friend or neighbor who may find it difficult to worship this time of year.

Christmas Flowers for the Sanctuary

If you would like to give a rose in honor or memory of loved ones to decorate for our Christmas Eve services, you may do so by filling out the form and return it to the church office. Cost is \$5 per rose.

Order deadline is Sunday, Dec. 17.

Please print clearly

Your name and phone number:

I would like a rose in **memory** of:

I would like a rose in **honor** of:

BRRR! SAVE THE DATE FOR SUGAR

CREEK'S WINTER FUN DAYS

JANUARY 14 & FEBRUARY 4

1:00-4:00 PM



Bell Ringers Needed!

RegisterToRing.com



“

*If you can't pay
CASH,
you can't afford it.*

New year resolution: change your future by joining a Financial Peace University class at First. Learn to pay off debt fast, save more money, and build lasting wealth.
CLASS STARTS ON SUN., JAN. 21 • Sign up today at 1stlu.org/next



Choose a Good Gifts ornament
from the giving tree in the narthex,
then go to ELCA.org/GoodGifts
and make your donation

2023 SMALL GROUPS

Weekly Groups:

Coffee with Pastor Karyn

Courageous Men

Knitters

Parent Share

Quilters

Monthly Groups:

Dorcas Circle

Drawing from the Well

Elizabeth Circle

Grief Support Group

OWLs
(Older, Wiser Lutherans)

READINGS FOR DEC. 2023

Sunday, Dec. 3 2023: Isaiah 64: 1-9

Wednesday, Dec. 6 2023: Jeremiah 33:14-18

Sunday, Dec. 10 2023: Isaiah 40: 1-11

Wednesday, Dec. 13 2023: Isaiah 40:1-11

Sunday, Dec. 17 2023: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

Wednesday, Dec. 20 2023: Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

Sunday, Dec. 24 2023, Christmas Eve: Luke 1: 26-38, 2:1-7, 8-20

Monday, Dec. 25 2023, Christmas Day: John 1:1-14

Wednesday, Dec. 27 2023: Luke 1:5-13 [14-25], 57-80

Sunday, Dec. 31 2023: Luke 2:22-40

Above are the tentative readings scheduled for Dec. 2023. Readings used during worship are determined by the pastors on a weekly basis, and, therefore, are subject to change.

READINGS FOR JAN. 2024

Wednesday, Jan. 3 2024: Mark 1:1-20

Sunday, Jan. 7 2024: Mark 1:4-11

Wednesday, Jan. 10 2024: Mark 2:1-22

Sunday, Jan. 14 2024: John 1:43-51

Wednesday, Jan. 17 2024: Mark 4:1-34

Sunday, Jan. 21 2024: Mark 1:14-20

Wednesday, Jan. 24 2024: Mark 5:1-20

Sunday, Jan. 28 2024: Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday, Jan. 31 2024: Mark 5:21-43

Above are the tentative readings scheduled for Jan. 2024. Readings used during worship are determined by the pastors on a weekly basis, and, therefore, are subject to change.

You can also view this list online and subscribe to receive them as an email at 1stlu.org/readings.



The OWLs (our Older Wiser Lutherans at First, for anyone 55+) will fly to Yesterdays Youth on **Monday, Dec. 4**. The bus will leave the church at 8am. Fellowship begins at 9:00 am. Morning program will be "Revisiting Marquette and Joliet's 1673 expedition to the Mississippi" by Michael Douglas. Delicious lunch and afternoon music, with selections from North Crawford School musical Newsies. \$15/ person includes meal. *RSVP to Brian at (630-816-5917) or owls@firstlu.org.*

And don't miss the social event of the season, the almost world-famous OWLs Christmas Party will take place in the Narthex on **Wednesday, Dec. 20, at noon**. The theme for this year's voluntary gift exchange is "Bells".

The OWLs are a group at First that welcomes anyone, First Lutheran members or not, who are 55+. For information or to ask questions, contact Brian Narveson at owls@firstlu.org. A reminder for all potlucks that First Lutheran is a nut-free campus. Please do not bring food containing nuts or nut butters/oils/extracts of any kind onto the church campus. This is for the safety of all of our members. Thanks!



Ideas for December...

Pray for one another.

Sit together at worship.

Send a card to your faith web saying "Merry Christmas!"

Exchange your holiday food or cookie recipe.

Pick a tag from the giving tree and work together to find a gift for a local child/family.

Attend the Nativity Experience together, at the Franciscan Spiritual Center, Saturday, Dec. 16.

Volunteer together! Ring bells for the Salvation Army! Sign up at registertoring.com.

Attend the Onalaska Season of Lights parade together! Sunday, Dec. 3, 5pm.

Caring Conversation Questions

What is the best Christmas gift you've received?

Do you open presents on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning?

Is there a holiday movie you watch every year?

SERVE & GIVE

GO AND DO LIKEWISE LUKE 10:37

SUNSHINE TEAM

The Sunshine Team meets at First Lutheran on the **first Thursday of the month at 9:30am** to help with various jobs. NEXT: Jan. 4. (Not meeting in Dec.) Help make First Lutheran look nice! Refreshments are supplied to replenish your reserves! Dues are free! *Questions? Contact Dan at dan@firstlu.org.*

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

The next event the choir will rehearse for is Christmas Eve. Practice begins **Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 7pm** in the sanctuary. All are welcome... there is no audition and no formal training required. Full schedule and sign-up at 1stlu.org/choir. *For more info contact Todd Saner at todd@firstlu.org.*

FRIENDS OF THE WARMING CENTER

The Warming Center opened Nov. 1 for unhoused people, and the area ELCA churches have agreed to provide evening meals the **3rd and 4th Friday of each month, November–April**. Prepare the meal in your kitchen and drop it off at the Warming Center ready to be served. Other people serve the meal; you just prepare it. You are welcome to use the Hunger Task Force for meal ingredients. *More info and reg at 1stlu.org/warm.*

NEWSLETTER ASSEMBLY

It's a relaxing way to volunteer! **Monday, Jan. 29, at 10am**, to assemble the February newsletter. See you there!



If you know of someone who needs a caregiver, speak with Pastor Karyn (karyn@firstlu.org) or call the church office (608.783.2236).

WINTER ITEMS FOR TEEN CLOTHES CLOSET

In October we had 58 shoppers! Over 796 items taken. FTCC needs the following items (and ONLY these items right now):

- Teen style winter coats (L/XL/2XL/3XL)
- Winter boots, hoodies (L/XL/2XL/3XL)
- Athletic pants (L/XL/2XL/3XL).

Other than those items, the teen clothes closet is full and is not accepting donations of other items right now.

Last but not least: Our First Teen Clothes Closet has been chosen for Altra's Impact Award! Thank you to Altra Federal Credit Union for the \$7,500 award, and a big thank you to all that work to bring this impactful ministry to our neighbors!

peer

ministry leadership

Peer Ministry is an amazing opportunity for our young adults here at First Lutheran. It trains and equips them to have the skills to deal with the tough situations that confront our youth in today's world. They learn how to welcome those who are hurting, listen with empathy, and communicate in clear ways. Peer Ministry grows leaders who can continue to help and serve in their everyday life.

Meetings start Wed., Jan. 10.

More info: 1stlu.org/peermin

Questions?

Contact jason@firstlu.org.

Parents' Night Out

NEXT: Friday, Dec. 8

Reg opens at 4:45pm, Dinner at 5:30pm,
games & activities until 8pm

Ages: birth to 12 are welcome

COST: Free will donation

RSVP & VOLUNTEER at 1stlu.org/next

UPCOMING CONFIRMATION EVENTS

Sundays, 9:15am

Gr 6 & 7 Confirmation Classes

No classes on Dec. 24 & 31

Wednesdays, 7:00pm

Gr 8 & 9 Small Groups

No small groups Dec. 27 & Jan. 3

More info:

1stlu.org/confirm



wanted: **GINGERBREAD**

candy

At the next *Parents' Night Out*,
the kids will make gingerbread houses,
and donations of candy to decorate the
houses are requested. Drop donations in
the office on or before Dec. 8.



Questions? Connect with Evan Nelson or any F.L.Y. member

Sunday School

No Sunday School on Dec. 24

FAITH BUILDING BLOCKS

Grade 2: What's Fair,

in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, Jan. 7:

parents/guardians only

Sundays, Jan. 21 & 28:

parents/guardians with children

Sunday, Feb. 4: Faith Building

Block lifted up in worship

Throughout the year each age group has a special "Faith Building Block" session in which parents or special adults are asked to attend class with their child. Most sessions last for four weeks. The first class consists of parents/guardians connecting with a pastor and other parents in Fellowship Hall.

Weeks two and three classes are for the child and their parents/guardians to attend together, sharing in conversation and growing together in faith.

The fourth and final week, children will have a presence in worship in celebration of the Faith Building Block they have learned about.

New registrations welcome any time of the year!

Questions? Head to
1stlu.org/sunschool

weekly events for

DECEMBER/JANUARY

at First Lutheran

SUNDAYS

8:00am Worship

9:15am Gr 6 & 7 Confirmation Classes - Fireside Rm

9:15am Parent Share - Upper Rm

9:15am Sunday School

10:30am Worship

MONDAYS

7:00pm Bible Matters - Narthex

TUESDAYS

9:00am Quilters - Fireside Rm

10:30am Staff Meeting

3:30pm Knitters & Crocheters - Narthex

5:00pm Bells Practice - Choir Rm

WEDNESDAYS

6:00am Courageous Men - Fireside Rm

6:30am Coffee w/ Pastor Karyn - Narthex

5:30pm Confirmation Dinner

6:15pm Worship

7:00pm Confirmation Small Groups

THURSDAYS

7:00pm Women of the House

FRIDAYS

7:00pm AA - Fireside Rm (*Fellowship Hall 1st Friday*)

Christmas Giving Tree



Help make Christmas special for area kids and families by buying NEW items for them. We are again partnering with La Crosse County Human Services, and have a list of people and items they or their social worker have requested. Make certain tags are attached to the outside of the wrapped gift. If you purchase gift cards, please wrap them in a box.

**Gifts should all be turned in to
First Lutheran by Sunday, Dec. 10.**

Questions? Email bridget@firstlu.org

CALENDAR KEY

CR = Choir Room

FBB = Faith Building Block

FH = Fellowship Hall

FS = Fireside Room

LG = Lounge

MR = Mary Room

NX = Narthex

SN = Sanctuary

TR = Thomas Room

UR = Upper Room

*Events subject to change; up-to-date
information at 1stlu.org/cal*

*Subscribe to our Google calendar at
1stlu.org/calsub*

*Use the QR Codes to quickly add
these events to the calendar of your
smart phone or tablet.*

*Tips: focus the code, hold the device
still, try various distances, & use
good lighting. Need a scanning app?
Try www.scan.me.*

facebook

Share your Faith Alive moments!
Tag them #faithalive365
and like us at facebook.com/1stlu

DECEMBER AT FIRST LUTHERAN *see also weekly events on opposite page*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>NOVEMBER</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30</p>	27 6p The Gospel of Mark - NX 7p Bible Matters - NX	28 10a Assemble Mini-Newsletter - NX	29	30 9:30a Sunshine Team 7p Women of the House - House	1 7p AA - FH	2 10a Baptismal Preparation - NX
3 Pastor Karyn's First Sunday Back	4 8a OWLs Fly to Yesterday's Youth @ Sugar Creek 7p Bible Matters - NX	5	6 10a Springbrook Worship 7p Choir Practice for Christmas Eve - SN	7 7p Women of the House - House	8 4:45p Parent's Night Out - FH 7p AA - FS	9 9:30a Drawing from the Well
10 Christmas Giving Tree Gifts Due 9:15a Sunday School Christmas Program Run Thru - SN	11 7p Bible Matters - NX	12 10a Giving Tree Gift Drop off at Social Services building 1p Dorcas Circle - UR	13 10a Ona Terrace Worship 12p Finance Team Mtg 5:30p FLY Flight Crew 7p Choir Practice for Christmas Eve - SN	14 7p Women of the House - House	15 7p AA - FS	16
17 9:15a Sunday School Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal - SN 4:30p Caroling	18 1p Elizabeth Circle 7p Bible Matters - NX	19 5:15p Personnel Team Mtg 6:30p Property Management Team Mtg - NX 7p Vision & Leadership Team Mtg	20 10a Ona Terrace Worship 12p OWLs Potluck - NX 6:15p Worship & Christmas Program 7p Choir Practice for Christmas Eve - SN 7p Gr 8 & 9 Small Groups	21 10a Grief Support Group - UR 5:30p Blue Christmas Dinner 6:15p Blue Christmas Worship 7p Women of the House - House	22 7p AA - FS	23
24 Christmas Eve No Gr 6 & 7 Confirmation Classes No Sunday School 1:30p Choir Warm Up - CR 2p Christmas Eve Worship 4p Christmas Eve Worship 6p Christmas Eve Worship 11p Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas Day Office Closed 10a Christmas Worship 7p Bible Matters - NX	26	27 No Gr 8 & 9 Small Groups	28 7p Women of the House - House	29 7p AA - FS	30
31 No Gr 6 & 7 Confirmation Classes 9:15a Sunday School: Birthday Party for Jesus!	1 New Years Day (office closed) 7p Bible Matters - NX	2 12:30p Blood Drive - NX	3 No Gr 8 & 9 Small Groups 10a Springbrook Worship	4 9:30a Sunshine Team 7p Women of the House - House	5 7p AA - FH	6

JANUARY 2024 AT FIRST LUTHERAN *see also weekly events list*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 No Gr 6 & 7 Confirmation Classes 9:15a Sunday School: Birthday Party for Jesus!	1 New Years Day (office closed) 7p Bible Matters - NX	2 12:30p Blood Drive - NX	3 No Gr 8 & 9 Small Groups 10a Springbrook Worship	4 9:30a Sunshine Team 7p Women of the House - House	5 7p AA - FH	6
7 9:15a Gr 2 FBB: What's Fair (1st meeting, parents/guardians only) - FH	8 7p Bible Matters - NX	9 1p Dorcas Circle - UR	10 10a Ona Terrace Worship 12p Finance Team Mtg 5:30p FLY Flight Crew 7p Peer Ministry - House	11 7p Women of the House - House	12 7p AA - FS	13 9:30a Drawing from the Well
14 9:15a Sunday School: Winter Olympics & Sugar Creek Sunday	15 Deadline for Feb Newsletter Office Closed (Martin Luther King, Jr.D...) 1p Elizabeth Circle 7p Bible Matters - NX	16	17 10a Ona Terrace Worship 12p OWLs Potluck - NX 7p Peer Ministry - House	18 10a Grief Support Group - UR 7p Women of the House - House	19 7p AA - FS	20
21 9:15a Gr 2 FBB: What's Fair (2nd meeting, parents/guardians & child) - FH 11:45a Volunteer Appreciation Party - NX 12p Financial Peace University - FH or FS	22 7p Bible Matters - NX	23 7p Vision & Leadership Team Mtg	24 7p Peer Ministry - House	25 7p Women of the House - House	26 4:45p Parent's Night Out - FH 7p AA - FS	27
28 Annual Reports Available 9:15a Gr 2 FBB: What's Fair (3rd meeting, parents/guardians & child) - FH 12p Financial Peace University - FH or FS	29 10a Assemble Full Newsletter - NX 7p Bible Matters - NX	30	31 7p Peer Ministry - House	1 9:30a Sunshine Team 7p Women of the House - House	2 7p AA - FH	FEBRUARY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

STAFF DIRECTORY

Jason Stanton Senior Pastor 608.386.6431 jason@firstlu.org
Karyn Bodenschatz Associate Pastor 608.433.6002 karyn@firstlu.org

Bridget Crave Community Impact Director bridget@firstlu.org
Kathryn Pedretti Director of Hospitality kathryn@firstlu.org

YOUTH/EDUCATION STAFF

Cassie Carrell Nursery Coordinator nursery@firstlu.org

SUPPORT STAFF

Tamara Schonsberg Office Assistant 608.783.2236 office@firstlu.org
Andy Stutesman Director of Communications & Marketing andy@firstlu.org
Dan Hurley Director of Buildings & Grounds dan@firstlu.org
Diane Finnegan Bookkeeper diane@firstlu.org
Jerry Yushta Assistant Custodian
Rob Nelson Assistant Custodian

MUSIC STAFF

Gabriel Hicks Organist gabe@firstlu.org
Jim Knutson Bell Choir Director jim@firstlu.org
Todd Saner Senior Choir Director & Contemporary Music Coordinator todd@firstlu.org

PRESCHOOL STAFF

Melissa Rolbiecki Preschool Director 608.779.4504 preschool@firstlu.org
Amy Zimmer 4K Teacher amy@firstlu.org
Marci Leppert Preschool Assistant Teacher
Angie Strittmater Preschool Assistant Teacher

VISION & LEADERSHIP TEAM

Larry Schreiner President
Donna Bossman Secretary
Amanda Zieba
Meredith Hougen
Jason Witt
Michelle Renkas
Phyllis Bey



**FIRST
LUTHERAN**

410 Main Street
Onalaska, WI 54650
608.783.2236
www.FirstLutheranOnalaska.org

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Live streaming at 1stlu.org/live
Sundays 8am & 10:30am
Wednesday 6:15pm



Scan to download
this newsletter to
your smart phone
or tablet



Go green!
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to the newsletter
online



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

edition: Dec. 2023 & Jan. 2024

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

To stop delivery: email andy@firstlu.org or call office at 608.783.2236

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ONALASKA, WI
PERMIT #15



GOOD NEWS

DEC. 2023 & JAN. 2024

Why Wait?!

MEETING JESUS
RIGHT NOW

ALSO INSIDE
**CHRISTMAS
AT FIRST**

**FAITH WEB IDEAS
FOR DECEMBER**

**FINANCIAL PEACE
UNIVERSITY**

#faithalive365