



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

521 N. 8TH STREET

MANITOWOC WI 54220 USA

MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2023

It's Christmas

*It's Christmas, oh, the joy of it,
It makes us want to sing;
We want to praise our God above,
And make the rafters ring!*

*He gave to us a wondrous gift,
So precious and unique;
It turned the whole world up-side down,
A treasure all do seek!*

*Now can we even thank our God,
For giving us His son;
Now can we show Him that we care,
Give praise for what He's done!*

*Oh, God of power, God of might,
We're worthy not, of Thee;
But thru the merits of your son,
From sin you've set us free!*

*We thank you God, for this Thy gift,
We have been truly blessed;
It's Christmas, and our Savior reigns,
He put our fears to rest!*

*Elaine Kestly
2005*



Merry Christmas from the Staff at First Lutheran Church!

Highlights From FLC's Council Meeting November 14, 2023



Pastor's Report:

- Burbey is reviewing and revising our accounting practices. We have contracted with them to provide ongoing accounting support beginning in January.

Old Business:

- Most of the new lighting has been installed and the project will be completed in the coming weeks. What a difference the new lighting makes!
- A contract will be signed with Schaus Mechanical to purchase a new boiler. A smaller chemical feeder will be purchased separately which will reduce the overall cost of the project by several thousand dollars.
- Council attended a planning session facilitated by synod staff members on Saturday, November 11th. We learned about different ways to organize staff and committees within the church and had a great discussion about identity and purpose.

New Business:

- We had a lengthy discussion regarding the budget for 2024. Expenses have been significantly higher than income in 2023 and the congregation will need to make some difficult decisions at the congregational meeting in January to balance the budget. Please look for more information from the council regarding this situation.
- Our updated constitution was approved by the synod and will be voted on by the congregation at the congregational meeting in April.

Please Note: All are welcome to listen in at the church council meetings which are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30, except in July. If you have concerns, questions and comments, please reach out to our council president, Tyler Fellows, Pastor Andy or other council member. A complete copy of the minutes, once approved at the following month's meeting, will be available on the bulletin board in the Fireside Room or in the church office.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Greene
Council Secretary



WHO'S WHO



THE STAFF

Pastor Andy Wendle

Pastor Brian Staude
Visitation Pastor

Connie Dörner
Faith Formation Director

Stephanie Bowman
Contemp. Music Coord.

Rebecca Konik
Church Secretary

Brenda Leick
Church Secretary

Patricia Nickels
Bookkeeper

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pres.: Tyler Fellows 901-2273

V.P.: Yolanda VanHaren 860-5053

Treas: David Bowman 629-5487

Sec.: Patty Greene 246-4476

BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

Christian Education
Nichole Rabitz

Christian Fellowship
Karin Jaeger

Christian Outreach/Servanthood
Patty Greene, Conrad Sonneman
Teresa Laham

Christian Stewardship
David Bowman, Karin Jaeger,
Jean Olson

Congregational Care
Harry O'Connell

Finance
David Bowman, Nick Port

Music & Worship
Linda Jurgens, Lorene Jakel

Personnel
Yolanda Van Haren, Karin Jaeger

Property
Karyl Rommelfanger

Youth Ministries
Nichole Rabitz, Ned Jerabek



Missionaries in Japan
Rev. James & Carol Sack



Grace and Peace to you in the name of Immanuel, God with us!

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ' Matt. 3:1-3

John the Baptist. Perhaps there is no more polarizing or bold figure in the New Testament other than Jesus himself. He dressed and ate funny – camels hair and locusts. He called people names – a brood of vipers. And he pronounced judgment upon the status quo of the time – “even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees.”

How do we approach such a man? How do we call him our own? How do we learn and grow from him about what sort of savior we might come to expect to return to earth?

I think the key lies in the final line of the passage above – “prepare the way.” How do we use Advent as a time to “prepare the way?”

“Prepare the way” by coming to worship as much as you can. In worship we hear the prophet Isaiah’s bold claims and images for our life together. In worship we hear of what it means to look for the promised Messiah that might enter into our world for the salvation of the world. In worship we enact a remembering of who we are and whose we are. In worship we prepare our hearts, our minds, our whole lives to live the way of God in the world.

“Prepare the way” by giving. Give of yourself. Give of your time. Give of your heart. Can you serve at the food bank this month? Can you offer a young mother an afternoon off? How can you give of yourself so that you make a Godly connection to some other child of God in a surprising way? We often give gifts, things, stuff, but how can you give such that your heart and life returns to God and prepares the way for God to enter anew?

“Prepare the way” by dwelling deeply in God’s story. Come to Bible study if you can and are able. Is there a devotional resource you can use or pick up for this season setting the goal of at least using it for these four weeks? Read the birth narratives in Luke and Matthew. What is God saying, speaking to you through these powerful stories? How can you invite scripture to speak to you during this season?

“Prepare the way” by finding a new ritual to do in your home, something to focus your attention on God’s unfolding love in the world. Do you have an Advent wreath you can use? Can you make one as a family project? Could you make cookies for those on your street or those in your life? How can you invite the wonder, expectancy and joy of the season into your home anew?

In these ways, and more that you can find on your own, we can prepare for how God is seeking to enter into our lives and the life of the world. In this way we invite the words of John the Baptist to be more than a “resounding gong or clanging symbol.” By preparing the way in our hearts and lives we invite God’s love to create new pathways in which the kingdom of heaven may indeed draw near.

Blessings to you in all your preparations!

In Peace,

Pastor Andy

Living by Faith



SPECIAL Worship Updates:

Midweek Advent Worship:

Starting Wed. December 6, at 6pm and continuing each Wednesday evening of Advent in the chapel. We will be using the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer service.

Christmas Eve Worship:

Sunday Dec. 24, 2023 4pm & 7pm
(No Christmas Day service.)

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN CORDIALLY INVITE everyone TO 'COFFEE AT CHRISTMAS'

Join us after service on Dec. 3 for a festive start of the Holiday Season!!

There will be punch, goodies, coffee, and seasonal music. Please join us, relax and enjoy a little bit of Christmas with your First Lutheran family before your Christ-filled holiday times begin.

We hope to see you there!



Christmas
& New Year's



Hours

Church Office Will be closed on

Monday December 25 -Christmas Day

Tuesday December 26

Monday January 1st -New Years Day

THE GIVING TREE

*"A kind gesture can reach a wound that only
compassion can heal."*

Forty-eight names displayed on the GIVING TREE this year are all adopted!!! Overflowing bags of gifts have now surrounded the tree. They will be picked up by the Salvation Army on December 4th to be given to struggling Manitowoc County families.

THANK YOU for your generosity, kindness, and willingness to show compassion to others in our own neighborhood every year.

REMINDER: Gifts are to be returned to the Fireside Room by December 3rd. Any questions... contact Sandee O'Connell (920-242-0044) or email mromrso2@gmail.com.



POINSETTIAS & DOOR WREATHS



GOLD COLOR order

forms are now available for placing your Christmas Poinsettia orders through December 11, 2023. We also will be accepting sponsorships for our Door Wreaths.



Poinsettias are \$11.00
Door Wreaths can be sponsored for \$30.00

Make checks payable to: First Lutheran Church; Memo: Poinsettias and/or Door Wreaths.



Dec. 3	First	Isaiah 64:1-9
	Psalm	80:1-7, 17-19
	Second	1 Corinthians 1:3-9
	Gospel	Mark 13:24-37
Dec. 10	First	Isaiah 40:1-11
	Psalm	85:1-2, 8-13
	Second	2 Peter 3:8-15a
	Gospel	Mark 1:1-8
Dec. 17	First	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
	Psalm	126
	Second	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
	Gospel	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Dec. 24	First	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
	Psalm	Luke 1:46b-55
	Second	Romans 16:25-27
	Gospel	Luke 1:26-38
Dec. 31	First	Isaiah 61:10--62:3
	Psalm	148
	Second	Galatians 4:4-7
	Gospel	Luke 2:22-40

financial news

Year End Offerings

Please remember that any regular offerings and/or special gifts to First Lutheran must be **received on or postmarked by Dec. 29th..** In order to be credited in 2023 (for 2023 tax purposes). First Lutheran is able to receive your regular offerings and special gifts via stocks, and your IRA accounts. Please check with your financial/tax advisor for more details.



OFFERINGS

As of November 13, 2023

Regular Giving	\$257,538.57
Total Receipts	\$397,525.78
Total Expenses	\$398,968.82
2022	
2022 Reg Giving	\$234,886.11
2022 Total Receipts	\$286,786.37
2022 Total Expenses	\$310,250.23

-Patricia Nickels



FIRST LUTHERAN MINISTRIES*

- [] Rev. Sack Mission Fund \$40
- [] Altar Flowers \$25 vase/\$50 two vases
- [] Prayer Shawl Ministry \$25
- [] Radio Broadcast [Sunday on WOMT]

full sponsor= \$450 (1/2 sponsor= \$225)

*Monetary gifts of any amount are welcome. Your gift/sponsorships can be acknowledged in our weekly 'Life at First' insert - Deadline for announcements is 10AM Tuesday prior to the Sunday of choice. For more info call the office at 920-682-7742.

Sunday of Sponsorship: _____

Message: _____

Name & Phone: _____

Women's Zoom Bible Study



First & third Thursday from 9-10:30am

Led by Jenny Hanstedt Berger & Elizabeth Kocourek

This Bible Study group of women is an extension of the "Women's Intergenerational Bible Study" that Kristine Jacobson used to lead on Thursday mornings every other week in the lounge. Then the pandemic, then Kristine passed..... and, in the meantime a few members moved away. So Jennifer Hanstedt and I thought we would send out a zoom link to see if anyone wanted to try a zoom Bible study! And that's how it came to be.

We meet the first and third Thursday mornings from 9:00-10:30. We usually do a study from the Lutheran magazine "Gather". Last year we read the book, "The God Story" during Advent and discussed it, and we include time for prayer requests. I usually send the link to get on Zoom a day or two ahead of time. Some of the group are: Annette Brown, Jennifer (Hanstedt) Berger (Jen lives in Lake Geneva), Kathy Protsman (Michigan), Betsy Kocourek (myself), Clara Mikkelsen, Ann Lorentz (Milwaukee), May Schuh, Gail Zinkel. Not everyone can make it every time and not everyone gets the magazine. We just read the script, look up passages and discuss!

So if anyone would like to join they are more than welcome!

You can contact me (Betsy Kocourek) at Blitzfarmers@charter.net
Or text me at 920-860-0165

FAITH FORMATION UPDATE

Sunday School, Confirmation and High School Faith Formation

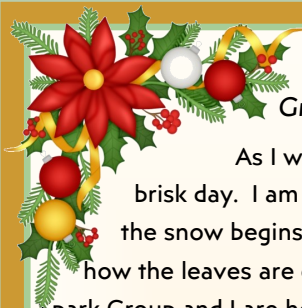
Connie Dorner, Faith Formation Director

First Lutheran Church 682-7742 ext:106 cdorner@flcmanitowoc.org

Cell phone: (920) 901-2584



Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



Greetings First Lutheran Family,

As I write this monthly letter, it is a sunny, brisk day. I am enjoying this mild weather before the snow begins to fall. Has anyone else noticed how the leaves are clinging on longer this season? The Spark Group and I are hopeful to do some raking and clean-up on the church property, it's a great way to burn some of their youthful energy!

November thus far has been a quiet month. Sunday school students continue to meet, and we will begin our rehearsals for our Christmas program this week. Pastor Andy and I have been enjoying our longer time to meet with our confirmation students each Sunday. I find this year's group to be kind and reflective with a healthy dose of fun and humor sprinkled in.

Currently, things will begin to get a bit busier with many events to look forward to. Our confirmation students will be busy with baking and decorating many festive cookies for the annual cookie walk fundraiser. They will also participate in two service projects in December. One will be with the Salvation Army to help sort toy donations and the other will be at The Crossing to help sort and package diapers – our teens will live out the mission of our church as we gather, grow and GO! And, the younger children and I will plant our paperwhite bulbs for the sanctuary soon. They are the perfect flower for Advent as we have the anticipation of watching them sprout and bloom while we also anticipate the coming of the Christ child.

I wish you and your family a blessed Advent season filled with joy and peace and anticipation of His birth. May you each have a healthy and joyous Christmas!

Cheerfully in Christ,

Connie



Sunday School Christmas Program!

Rehearsals: December 3 and December 10
in the sanctuary

The Sunday School Christmas program will be on **Sunday, December 17th at 9:00 a.m.** I ask that all children be here by 8:30 on that morning so we can get everyone ready!



There will be a birthday party for Jesus following church service on that day!

PLEASE, Sunday School attendance is important as we prepare for this program.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Congratulations to these young people who celebrate their birthdays in December!

Amiyah Rodriguez	Dec. 4
Melodie Hoefner	Dec. 6
Olivia Hoefner	Dec. 26



Baptismal Anniversaries

Blessings to the following babies, Sunday School Students & Youth who are celebrating their Baptismal birthdays in December.

Natalie Baryenbruch	12/19/21
Dawson Disch	12/10/06
Samantha Leick	12/06/15
Emily Michaelson	12/09/07



IMPORTANT DATES



Confirmation Class

- ♦ Sun, Dec. 3rd 4 – 5:30 pm
- ♦ Mon, Dec. 4 Confirmation Service night
6 – 8pm at Salvation Army (for those who signed up to help)
- ♦ Sun, Dec. 10 4 – 5:30 pm Service project at The Crossing
- ♦ Sun, Dec. 17 4 – 5:30 pm

Youth Group/Spark Times

- ♦ Wed., Dec. 6 Youth Group 6:30 – 7:30pm
- ♦ Sun., Dec. 10 Youth Group 6:00 – 7:00pm**
(We will meet at this time just for this evening due to our Confirmation class service event on this night).
- ♦ Wed., Dec. 13 Spark Christmas Party 4 – 5:15pm
- ♦ Wed., Dec. 20 Youth Group Christmas Party
6:30 – 7:30pm



For
to us
a child
is born,
to us
a son
is given.



Isaiah 9:6

CREATED
TO BE

ELCA Youth Gathering Class

Our next Youth Gathering Class, "Created to Be..." will take place on Sunday, December 3 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. Connie will provide dinner.

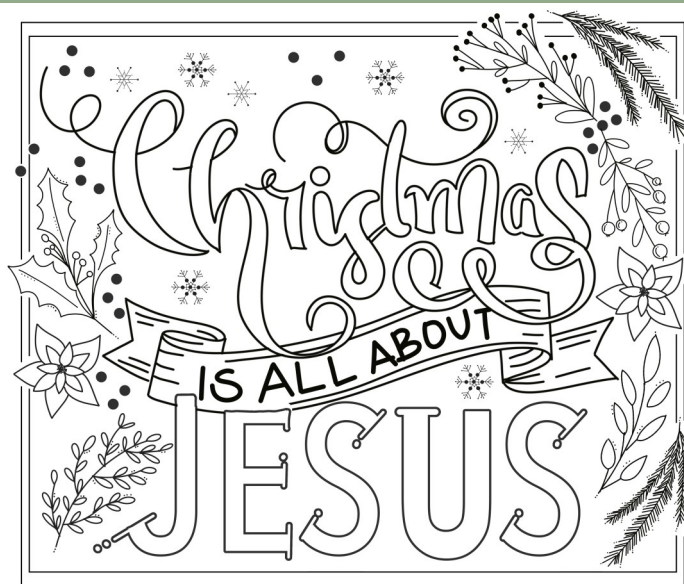
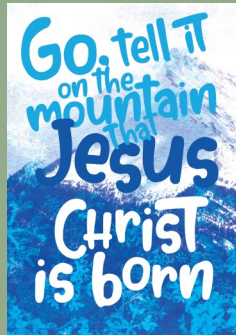


Confirmation Class October 29, 2023

The Christmas Story

V B K R A C W U J Z A L P G I W T
M L B E T H L E H E M N P H M C F
T C O N V S O V Y E Y V T L M W Y
E Q R H S V C F P I W E Y P A C M
U N G L T M S F C E N S U S N D B
Y I C L A A F R S A C P Y O U C B
E G M H B G M A K J C Q A O E Z L
Y G R R L I Y N R O O E N D L I J
Z O A Y E S R K S S S M G D J V E
X L R F Q Z R I H E B A E M V R S
E D N Z H Y H N E P A N L H N A U
U R S T A R R C P H B G I F I S S
Y K U P T O T E H I Y E J Z A V Z
P R O P H E T N E U M R J X M E F
J X E P N P Q S R S H Y V D A T U
C J U Z G Z C E D P X E B M R O Z
G C I Y X S U V C R D S U S Y D B

Myrrh	gold	Frankincense	census
Bethlehem	stable	manger	shepherd
star	prophet	angel	Joseph
Mary	Magi	Jesus	baby
Immanuel			



**WITH
RESPECT,
HONOR AND
GRATITUDE...**

THANK YOU VETERANS

Thank you for your service to our country!

God bless you--- and thank you for serving your country when America needed you.

Aimee Augustine	United States Army	1986-1992
Brenda Augustine	United States Army	1986-2010
James Brown	United States Navy	1968-1974
David Denis	United States Air Force	2005-present
David C. Herman	United States Army	1986-1996
Rod Hiller	United States Air Force	1966-1968
Ron Hinz	United States Navy	1966-1970
Michael Kohlbeck	United States Army	1960-1962
Ralph Kramer	United States Army	mid 1960's
Carol Kron	United States Army	Vietnam
Paul Marquardt	United States Army	1945-1947
Robert Michels	United States Marine Corps	1964-1992
Barry Morrison	United States Army	1965-66
Eric Olson	United States Air Force	1990-2011
Memphys Seizert	United States Army	2022-present
Sterling Seizert	United States Army	2008-2020
John Sonneman	United States Army	1999-2022
Robert Teske	United States Air Force	1956-1962
Jerome Van Haren	United States Army	1971-1974
Dennis Van Laningham	United States Army	1969-1991
Erik Van Laningham	United States Army	2000-2006
Michael Valleskey	United States Army Reserve	1970-1978
Scott Willems	United States Air Force/ National Guard	1995-2000

(If your name is not on this list but should be, please contact FLC office with your military information.)



The Numbers Are In!

FLC made 411 quilts; 212 personal care kits; 200 school kits; 50 baby care kits and 3 fabric kits—all in 98 boxes along with 62 from St. Paul's, Calvary and Good Shepherd—that's a total of 160 boxes that were loaded on the truck in 15 minutes! Thank you everyone who took part in mission kits and quilts; the confirmation students & parents assembled kits on Sun. Oct. 15, the Jacobson's and Rob Michaelson, and to the volunteer drivers for Peter's Pantry truck. *Congratulations everyone for another year of being "God's hands" to meet LWR needs!*

Now another year of collection begins! ~Mary Ann Peaslee



Holy Communion Delivery

First Lutheran's congregation members that are homebound or unable to drive to church have the opportunity to receive communion in their homes once a month. We will also deliver communion on a short term basis for those unable to attend services. This service is not just for the long term homebound.

Simply call the church office (920-682-7742)



Hope House Manitowoc County

Hope House
1000 S. 35th St.,
Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920)686-1436
hopehousemc.org

**First Lutheran's Host
week is Dec 3-9**



Cedar Crest Treats

A special thank you to Cedar Crest ice cream who called to ask if we could use a donation of ice cream. With 12 children in the house, absolutely yes! And we all know that adults need ice cream just as much. Thank you for your donation. (There's only a few left!)



Small But Mighty Team

We are a shelter that operates with a small but mighty team of employees. Our shelter is able to serve homeless families in Manitowoc County due to the gift of time from our dedicated, passionate and amazing volunteers. Hope House is supported by an interfaith network of congregations and volunteers, and these volunteers provide more than 2,200 of hours of service to Hope House each year. Three hour shifts available from 5-8 pm, or on the week-ends during the day.



OUR WISH LIST for our Guests...

- Toilet bowl cleaner Laundry detergent
- Disinfectant spray (Lysol, Microban)
- Baby Wipes Adult body wash
- Women's deodorant
- 13-gallon garbage bags
- **WalMart Gift Cards**
- **Kwik Trip Gas Cards** (\$10 or \$20 increments. Guests use these to get to appointments, interviews and look at housing)



Thank you for the continued support of donations!
Follow us on Facebook Learn more about us at
[Hope House \(hopehousemc.org\)](http://Hope House (hopehousemc.org))



Hope House is a United Way Funds Recipient



FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION

Next collection: January 7, 2024



Stop by and pick up some Black Cloth bags printed with "First Lutheran Church - Gather, Grow, Go..." (part of our mission statement) that are available in the lobby near the office, to use to bring back your donations on First Sunday. And remember that if you wish to have your donations picked up, just call or leave a message for Harry at 920-242-2489.

NEW Pantry needs: Cereal, peanut butter and jelly, all canned fruits and veggies (except green beans), pastas and sauces, rice, packaged sides (like rice or noodle type dishes), crackers, canned or pouched meats, any of the easy to eat items that can be accessed if you don't have a home (we put these in the blessing box), fruit cups, instant oatmeal, canned soups, mac and cheese, dressing for salads, flour, sugar (brown and granulated), cake mixes & frosting (nice for a family to be able to choose for an upcoming BD), boxed stuffing (like Stove-Top), canned or bottled gravy, instant mashed potatoes.



Thank you for your continued support!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 9-10:3 Grief Support	2 COOKIE WALK 9-11am 
3 9am Worship Trad—HC Handbell Choir 10:10 Sunday School 10:15-Adult Ed 10:15-Fellowship Christmas Coffee 4-5:3—Confirm. Classes 5:30-7p—ELCA Youth Gathering Grp	4 1p Snip n’Sew 10a Pastor Txt Study 6p Handbells	5 9:3 Staff Mtg 9:3a Snip n’ Sew 6p Bd Music/Worship 	6 9:3a Bible Study 5-Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6p Advent Worship 6:3– 7:3 YG	7 	8	9
10 9am Worship CC—HC 10:10 Sunday School 10:15-Adult Ed 10:15-Fellowship Coffee 4-5:3—Confirm. Classes 5:3–6:3 YG*	11 10a Pastor Txt Study 6p Handbells	12 6p Exec. Comm. 6:3p Council Messenger Deadline for January	13 9:3a Bible Study 4-5:15 SPARK* 5-Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6p Advent Worship	14	15 9-10:3 Grief Support 	16
17 9am Worship Trad—HC Sunday School Program Birthday Party for Jesus 10:15-Adult Ed 10:15-Fellowship Coffee 4-5:3—Confirm. Classes	18 10a Pastor Txt Study 6p Handbells	19 9:3 Staff Christmas Party 	20 9a RUTH 9:3a Bible Study 4-5:15 SPARK* 5-Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:3– 7:3 YG 6p Advent	21	22	23
24  9am Worship Trad—HC 4pm & 7pm Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day 	26 Closed	27 	28	29	30
31 9am Worship Trad—HC Hymn Sing	<div>Key: T= Traditional CC= Cross Current Contemporary HC= Holy Communion FB= Facebook</div> <div>Please note: changes may arise after printing. Always check the weekly “Life @ First” announce- ments , Emails, etc. –for updates, can- celations, etc.</div>					

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

521 N. 8th Street
Manitowoc WI 54220

Phone: 920-682-7742

Web: FLCmanitowoc.org

E-Mail: Office@flcmanitowoc.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



December Messenger 2023

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Manitowoc, WI 54220
Permit No. 93



To:

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Pastor Andy Wendle



Sunday services at 9am

WOMT 1240AM/107.9FM, womtradio.com
YouTube, Facebook Live www.facebook.com/FLCManty521

Holy Communion – Every Sunday

10:10 Sunday School (Sept.-May)

Church Office Hours

Mon-Thurs: 10:00-3:00

Friday: 9:00-12noon

920-682-7742

Email: Office@flcmanitowoc.org

Web: FLCmanitowoc.org

Our God-given mission is to...

*Gather in the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit,*

Grow in faith and love,

Go out to serve and invite others to faith in Christ.



Sunday December 24, 2023

9am – 4th Sunday in Advent

Candlelight Services

4pm & 7pm