



THE FIRST EDITION

JANUARY 2025

THIS ISSUE:

UPDATE FROM PASTOR LUKE
Page 2

GAUTEMALA TRIP 2025
Page 3

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY
MINISTRY UPDATE
Page 4

COLORADO BACKPACKING
Page 5

LETTER FROM BISHOP HASSANNALLY
Page 6

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS
Page 7

JANUARY CALENDAR
Page 8

CELEBRATING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON



Looking back at December, we celebrated the Advent and Christmas seasons well! Over 40 kids led an outstanding Christmas Program, telling the Christmas story beautifully and wearing amazing costumes. Over \$1,000 was raised for our youth programming with the bake sale and pancake breakfast. A small group came together for a meaningful winter solstice service that acknowledged the beauty of God's presence in the darkness of our lives. Dozens of middle and high school students celebrated their Christmas party with food, games, decorations, and a movie. Families came together and participated in the Deck the Falls Parade. Music ensembles provided joy in worship. And, most importantly, the Word of Immanuel, God with us, was proclaimed loud for all! Thank you for helping the First English family celebrate this season.



First English
Lutheran Church
Cannon Falls

511 W Belle St Cannon Falls MN 55009
507-263-3042 www.firstenglishchurch.com

CHURCH OFFICE

507-263-3042

Office Hours:

M-F, 9 am - 3:30 pm

E-Mail: info@firstenglishchurch.com

Website: www.firstenglishchurch.com

PASTOR: Luke Hollander
507-218-1311

lukeh@firstenglishchurch.com

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES:

Maddie Patterson

507-384-8317

maddiep@firstenglishchurch.com

TREASURER: Phyllis Althoff

phyllisalthoff@gmail.com

FIN. SEC./ADMIN. ASST.: Kathy Ehlers
507-263-3042

kathye@firstenglishchurch.com

ORGANIST: Deb Stark
651-258-4332 507-649-2733

debs@firstenglishchurch.com

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Jill Serres
507-649-0851

jserrres@mac.com

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Jane Peterson
507-263-4148

janerichard@mchsi.com

CHURCH COUNCIL

PRESIDENT Phil Jacobson
651-380-3262

pdjacobson85@gmail.com

VICE-PRESIDENT Dean Kautz
612-750-1868

dwkandmak@gmail.com

SECRETARY Diane Johnson
773-960-5382

dcjohnson1000@yahoo.com

MEMBERS

Phyllis Althoff	Brenda Deutsch
Julie Gergen	Scott Johnson
Jim Nelson	Bill Peterson
Robin Stewart	Amanda Thompson
Carna Visagie	

FOUNDATION BOARD

Barb Elias	Denise Holz
Tiffany Kiffmeyer	Elvena Schmutge
Emily Spicer	Kathy Swanson

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE
FOR UPDATES!**

www.firstenglishchurch.com



PASTOR LUKE

lukeh@firstenglishchurch.com

507.218.1311

NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Traveling to Greece and Turkey

It is hard to believe, but Lisa and I are counting down the days until we leave for Greece and Turkey. We will be with a group of pastors on a tour called 'The Footsteps of Paul' from January 6-15, 2025. We've been saving up our Continuing Education funds over the last several years and are cashing them in to wander through the ancient ruins of the Acropolis, sit in the grand theater of Ephesus, and remember our baptism in St. John's Cathedral in Izmir. Two of our favorite seminary professors - Karoline Lewis and Michael Chan - will be leading us in study throughout the trip. Your prayers are welcome for safe travels and for kids not being too lonesome for their parents! Maddie will lead worship on January 12 and my colleague, Pastor CJ Boettcher from Cross of Christ and Cannon River, will provide emergency pastoral care in my absence.

Annual Congregational Meeting

First English will celebrate 2024 and dream about 2025 together at our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, January 26, at the conclusion of worship. We plan to focus on relationship and doing life together in 2025 in efforts to continue engaging our community in more meaningful ways. We will discuss some of the new things we plan on trying this year, as well as our options for staffing as we plan to replace Maddie, our Children, Youth and Family Director, who will be heading on her internship to become a pastor. Hope to see many of you there!

With gratitude,
Pastor Luke

FELC YOUTH IN DECK THE FALLS PARADE

First English participated again this year in the annual Cannon Falls Deck the Falls parade, held November 30. Families decorated the float and tossed candy in the chilly weather.



WOMEN OF FELC GATHERING AND BIBLE STUDY

The next gathering of the Women of FELC group will be held on **Tuesday, January 14 at 10 am** in the Family Room. Join them for fellowship and bible study!



FIRST ENGLISH PLANS 2ND ANNUAL TRIP TO GUATEMALA

Join Pastor Luke and Bill Peterson as they lead a second team from First English on a cultural immersion trip to the western highlands of Guatemala. Our host is "The Mission" in San Lucas Tolimán which has served the people of San Lucas since 1963. We will learn about Mission programs, visit communities and sacred places, and immerse ourselves in the ancient culture of the Maya people.



Dates of the trip are June 3-10, 2025. This trip is open to participants ages 16 and up (younger if accompanied by a parent. (Please note, we promise to have a 2026 trip offered during summer break to allow wider youth participation!)).

This is a great opportunity to learn about international development work, to gain perspective on another culture and to experience first-hand what God is doing in San Lucas. We will end the trip with two nights in the beautiful colonial town of Antigua.

Cost of the trip is \$1600. This includes: airfare, trip insurance, ground transportation, hotels and meals. Everything except a couple of meals and souvenirs! Participants need valid passports (not expiring before 2026) and must be able to walk on uneven ground.

To register, make a \$350 deposit with First English by February 1st. Group size is limited to 12.

For questions, contact Bill at 612-325-3667 or bipet001@gmail.com. Bill is the recently retired Executive Director of Friends of San Lucas and has led dozens of groups to San Lucas. For more information about the Mission and Friends of San Lucas go to: sanlucasmission.org.



Please join us for a series of Faith and Life Conversations on January 5, 12 and 19 when we explore the role of metaphor in theology with a particular focus on the Creation Stories of Genesis.

Jan. 5: Metaphor and Life.

Understanding metaphor and how it both hides and illuminates our experience of life. How do metaphors shape our behavior? What are some of the dominant metaphors in our culture? And how do metaphors affect our understanding of God?

Jan. 12: Creating Order. Genesis

1:1 – 2:4a. What does the first creation story tell us about the world and how God relates to it? What is the character of God in this story? And what does the form and content of this story tell us about the people who wrote it?

Jan. 19: God the Tailor. Genesis

2:4b – 3:24. What does the second story tell us about the world, our human experience of it and the character of God? Why is the character in this story so different from the character in the first? What does this story tell us about the passionate and compassionate side of God?

Conversations will be led by Bill Peterson.

CANNON FALLS FOOD SHELF

For over 25 years, the volunteers of the Cannon Falls Food Shelf has devoted their energy to passionately advocating for the needs of our community family.

Consider donating funds or food to restock the shelves for our community today.

NEW HOURS!

**Thursdays
3-6 pm**

The Cannon Falls Food Shelf is run by a local volunteer board and is not under the administration of First English Lutheran Church.

Tax ID# is 30-0221349.

Contact Info: 507-819-0236, cannonfallsfoodshelf70@gmail.com

FELC OFFICE HOURS

Our church office hours are
**Monday-Friday,
9 am-Noon, 1-3:30 pm**
Closed on New Year's Day and
Martin Luther King Jr. Day



CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Maddie Patterson

Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry

maddiep@firstenglishchurch.com

507-384-8317



YOUTH PROGRAM UPDATES

2025 GIVING ENVELOPES

The 2025 Giving Envelopes are available at the welcome desk. If you have been using envelopes or notified the church office that you prefer to use envelopes, a numbered box is now available to you.

Every member does have a giving number for their household whether they have an envelope box or not. Please be sure to note your name or your 2025 household giving number if you are donating via cash or check throughout the year.

Questions? Please contact the church office at 507-263-3042.



HELP WITH SNOW SHOVELING!

Help is needed to shovel snow around the church during the winter months. Please contact Pastor Luke, Diane Johnson, Scott Johnson or any member of our Property Committee if you can help.

Questions? Contact the church office at 507-263-3042 or email info@firstenglishchurch.com. Thank you for your consideration!

Hi FELC, here's what's been happening in children, youth, and family ministries this December and what you have to look forward to!

Starting with our smallest members and what they've been up to! Our Sunday Schoolers have been working hard to prepare the annual Christmas Program. Our narrators Daisy Nobach and Lakynn Ayres led us through the play; where our shepherds, angels, wise men, and animals showed us the story of how Jesus was born in stellar fashion.

After the Christmas Program we continued the celebration with the Pancake Breakfast and Bake Sale. We had the chance to support our youth as they get ready for their Colorado trip and enjoy each other's company while ushering in Christmas. Reminder that we will not have Sunday School December 29 or January 5, but there will be service. So come worship the newborn king!

Our Confirmation students have been hard at work learning about how God's Kingdom comes into the world, and hearing Jesus' parables. This week they took a break from lessons and got to join in the celebration of Jesus birth with a Christmas party of their own. Outside of classes, keep an eye on the schedule. We won't have class December 25 or January 1 for Christmas break. Another change will be that we will not have Wednesday night worship until the beginning of Lent.

The last update is about our growing youth program! Youth group continues to gain members on Wednesday nights. If you're looking for ways to get involved as a high school member, Wednesday nights, Sunday mornings, and youth trips are a great place to start.

Thanks for your support and a great year!

Peace,
Maddie Patterson
FELC CYF Director



During the last Confirmation Wednesday on December 18, the group had fun playing games as part of their Christmas celebration.

CONFIRMATION UPDATES FROM PASTOR LUKE

Confirmation has been going well this year. A huge thank you to the small group guides, Kay, Megan, Jeremy, and Shelly! And, of course, to Maddie for her leadership. We are looking forward to the spring portion of our program year.

A couple of updates. First off, we won't be having Wednesday night worship following confirmation starting in January. This means confirmation will be done by 7:30 pm. We hope this will improve the quality of our time together and that it will encourage families to attend Sunday morning worship with us more often. Second, Confirmation Sunday will be May 25th for the 9th graders who will be confirmed this year. We are looking forward to celebrating this milestone with them in the spring!

HIGH SCHOOL COLORADO BACKPACKING TRIP

As of the writing of this article, we have seven students signed up to travel to Colorado in August 2025 to backpack in the mountains, white water raft, grow in their faith, and build community. In my experience, trips like this are what connect students to church and their faith more than anything. I hope we will end up with a full trip.



We had a successful bake sale which will help off-set travel expenses. Our next fundraiser is an envelope fundraiser. It is a simple, yet effective, fundraiser that can help us raise over \$5,000 to provide scholarships and make trips like this possible for all of our youth. Trip participants will decorate envelopes numbered one to one hundred. You simply grab an envelope, or several, and put the amount of money numbered on the envelope with your name so the youth can write personal thank you's.



Thank you to all who baked and purchased items for our youth bake sale fundraiser this year!



AURELIA JANETT BJORGEN was baptized on Sunday, December 8, 2024. Aurelia was born on January 12, 2021 in St. Paul, MN. Her parents are **Katherine** and **Edward Bjorgen** and sponsor is **Jenny Phillips**.

NEW BABY?

We want to know!



Are you expecting a child through birth or adoption? Do you have a new infant at home? In these sacred times of welcoming a baby, First English Lutheran Church is here for you. We have resources to support the whole family and look forward to connecting with you! Contact our office for more information.

For baptism requests, please fill out the Baptism Request form found on our website at

www.firstenglishchurch.com.



**First English
Lutheran
Church-Cannon
Falls**

  **300 likes · 328 followers**

2024 ADVENT LETTER

FROM BISHOP HASSANALLY, SE MN SYNOD, ELCA



Some nights, when tucking in my youngest son, he struggles to sleep because some frightening reality has claimed a place in his consciousness. Before I can leave, he grabs my hand and whispers, “Mom, will you stay?”

He has never once asked me to do anything other than stay. Perhaps he knows, on some level, that staying is the best I can do.

We have entered the season of Advent. Last Advent was marked by the beginning of war in the Holy Land, by the ongoing invasion of Ukraine. Those miseries, and so many more, march on.

In the darkness of night, in a season when that darkness falls over us earlier and earlier each day, I am struck by the hope held in the hand of my six-year-old son as he whispers in the night, “Stay with me.”

A few weeks ago, someone asked me how we might continue to care for our neighbors at this particular time—local and global. What can we do, they wondered, to express God’s love?

As I considered the question, the words of Psalm 23 filled my head. “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, *for you are with me.*”[1]

In this season of Advent, I am again overwhelmed by the fact that the greatest expression of God’s love is to enter in, put on flesh, and become human so that God might walk among us, be with us, and stay with us.

How can we express love in this season of hope and tumult? We can stay. Stay with our neighbors in their anxiety, joy, and fear. Stay in our striving for peace. Stay in the conversation that exposes us to ideas that are not our own. Stay in the neighborhoods and communities to which we have been called, refusing to walk away from those who have much to lose but instead proclaiming and pointing to God’s boundless love and grace in all we do.

My son has never asked me to magically make his fear go away. Instead, he simply asks me to stay. Being with him in those moments is enough. He may still be frightened, but he is not alone.

The promise of God, revealed in both Scripture and so fully in the person of Jesus Christ, is that God does not leave. God’s love is so deep that God is compelled to put on flesh and dwell among us. In all things, in all seasons, the presence of God remains.

“And remember,” Jesus said, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”[2]

That is the promise we cling to and the fulfillment we long for. Christ is with us, and Christ is coming soon.

In this season of Advent, I am inviting us, people who long for and know the presence of the incarnate God, to pay attention to those among us who might be whispering through the night, reaching out a hand, asking us, in the way of the incarnate Christ, to stay.

We cannot bear or fix all the problems of the world. But we can stay. We can stay with those whose walk in the valley is long and deep. In the way of Christ, we can walk alongside our neighbors and friends. In this way, we proclaim both the presence of God now and the presence of God to come. We, too, become the body of Christ, a body compelled by deep love to stay. We can ensure no one is left to journey this life alone.

In this way, in this Advent, we bear the light of Christ. The one who is with us even now. The one who is, to our great joy, here and coming soon.

In the name of Christ.

Amen.

In Christ,

Bishop Regina Hassanally

Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The First English Lutheran Church Council met at their rescheduled meeting on December 19, 2024.

The following are the highlights of the meeting:

- Approved November 14, 2024, council minutes.
- Pastor's Report presented his written report.
- Approved Treasurer's Report

November 2024 Income/Expense Report

Total Income	+ \$ 50,544.00
Total Expenses	- \$ 32,127.22

2024 Year to Date Income/Expense Report

Total Income	+ \$ 333,037.95
Total Expenses	- \$ 364,936.89

- Approved recommending 2025 general fund budget of approximately \$351,500 to congregation for approval at January annual meeting.
- The Annual meeting will be January 26 during last 20 minutes of worship. The 2025 theme will be "Doing Life Together."
- Reminder that Christmas offerings/memorials (if undesignated) go to general fund.
- Approved Rooted in Faith mission fund distribution of \$1,000 to Jesus Driven, \$1,000 to Tree House, \$1,000 to CF Breakfast Club, and splitting the remaining balance between Friends of San Lucas and Good Samaritan Fund (\$2,100 plus for each).
- Rooted in Faith mission fund will be zeroed out at end of 2024. The Rooted in Faith Building Endowment and Building Furnishing will be combined into Rooted in Faith Building Reserve in 2025.
- Approved accepting the \$2,800 bid for a new light duty commercial water softener unit.
- Approved Karen Coakley, Cathy Rehm, and LaNor McDonald to serve on Audit Committee.
- Property Team: Scott Johnson reported the Josh Miller is working on getting energy audit.
- Julie Gergen reported that we are scheduled to serve at the CF Breakfast Club on February 4, March 4, and April 1. She will be asking other groups from First English to be involved.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:

Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 7 pm



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! CONGREGATIONAL MEETING! SUNDAY, JAN. 26

Our annual congregational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 26 during the last 20 minutes of worship! All hands are needed for this official meeting.

MEMORIALS & GIFTS

DECEMBER 2024

In Memory of Duane Holt

Lawrence and Jill Potts
Betty Nelson
Tanner and Anne Grimmus
Bev Stedman
Jim and Babe Nelson
Kathleen Dalton
Terry and Mark Rydberg
Kathy Grosland

In Memory of Jan West

Stephen West

ABOUT THE GOOD SAMARITAN FUND

The Good Samaritan Fund is a joint effort of area churches (through the CCIC) to support community members with emergency needs. Donate to help your community members today! Any community members can donate to the CCIC Good Samaritan Fund directly.

The Good Samaritan Fund is available to assist Cannon Falls community members with funds for emergencies. Each household may use these emergency funds only ONCE during the calendar year. For requests, please contact Pastor Shannon Bauer at 507-298-7719 or Lori at 507-298-7282.

All other inquiries for monies should be done through the Public Safety Building - 918 River Rd., Cannon Falls.



JANUARY 2025

JAN 1, WEDS NEW YEARS DAY

Church Office Closed

JAN 2, THU

3-6 pm CF Food Shelf

JAN 5, SUN

9 am Communion Worship

10 am Altar Guild Christmas Decoration
Take-Down

10:15-10:45 am Faith and Life
Conversations

JAN 8, WEDS

6 pm Confirmation Classes

JAN 9, THU

3-6 pm CF Food Shelf

7 pm Church Council Meeting

JAN 12, SUN

9 am Worship

10:15-10:45 am Sunday School and Faith
and Life Conversations

JAN 14, TUE

10 am Women of FELC Mtg/Bible Study

JAN 15, WEDS

6 pm Confirmation Classes

JAN 16, THU

3-6 pm CF Food Shelf

JAN 19, SUN

9 am Communion Worship

10:15-10:45 am Sunday School and Faith
and Life Conversations

JAN 20, MON MLK JR DAY

Church Office Closed

JAN 22, WEDS

1 pm Staff Meeting

6 pm Confirmation Classes

JAN 23, THU

3-6 pm CF Food Shelf

JAN 26, SUN

9 am Worship

Annual Congregational Meeting at the
Conclusion of Worship

JAN 29, WEDS

1 pm Staff Meeting

6 pm Confirmation Classes



FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

511 W Belle St

Cannon Falls MN 55009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cannon Falls, MN
Permit 55

CELEBRATING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON WITH MUSIC

Thank you to our music ensembles for provided joy and harmony during our Christmas Eve worship services and throughout the year.

