



January 2012
#610

The Chimes

First Evangelical
Lutheran Church
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Dear Members and Friends,

We are excited to announce **we will be publishing a new pictorial directory** of our church family – our last one from **2007** is very outdated! The new directory will help connect names with faces, serve as an outreach tool, and capture a time in the history of our church congregation.

Please participate by coming to the church to have your picture taken by the Olan Mills photographer. In the next several weeks we will be setting appointments before and after services at the church. You may, also, sign up online by going to www.signup.olanmills.com and enter 231-744-1522 to schedule your appointment.

- Every participating family/household that selects a pose for the directory will receive a complimentary directory and a \$25.00 Portrait Coupon to be used towards any portrait size you wish!
- You will come to the church only once for less than an hour for photography and portrait viewing.
- The program is available at NO COST to the church budget.
- You will have the opportunity to order additional portraits during your scheduled appointment time. Purchases are guaranteed.

The scheduled dates for photography are:

Tuesday, February 21 st	2:00pm – 9:20pm
Wednesday, February 22 nd	2:00pm – 9:20pm
Thursday, February 23 rd	2:00pm – 9:20pm
Friday, February 24 th	2:00pm – 9:20pm
Saturday, February 25 th	9:30am – 5:10pm
Monday, April 23 rd	2:00pm – 9:20pm
Tuesday, April 24 th	2:00pm – 9:20pm

Families photographed in February 2012 will receive a 20% discount on portrait orders. Seniors 60 and older will receive a 10% discount all year long!

We request families that are available to sign up for the February dates, as we want to be able to offer the April 2012 dates for our “snow-birds” and/or families that were not available in February.

Remember, everyone’s participation is important to make the new directory an important and useful tool for newer and long-time members alike – it just won’t be complete without **you!!**

Blessings,
Pastor Bill

Upcoming Events In



(Information inside)

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 4 | Wednesday Night Programs Begin |
| 4 | Confirmation Resumes |
| 8 | 3—6 Grades at Crazy Bounce |
| 11 | Zumba Begins |
| 15 | LYO Sledding Challenge |
| 16 | Youth Ski Trip |
| 21 | Scrapbooking Event |
| 23 | Corporate Challenge Begins |



From Pastor Bill

Some days are diamonds, and some days are stones. Last Thursday for me was a diamond.

I personally had nothing going on at the church on Thursday, but I was aware that as on most nights there was a lot going on in our building that night. Frankly, I was worried that there might be some turf wars, so I decided that I needed to take the long hike over to the church building. After the thirty-second commute, I arrived in the entrance to the administrative wing of the building, being greeted by Donna Veeck, one of the persons I wanted to see because she was leading a Zumba class in the Fellowship Hall. I worried that she would be wondering where her class was to meet because in the building we had Family Promise families (who, by the way, were living in the building all of last week), the Family Promise volunteers and cooks, a huge group of Boy Scouts and their leaders, a larger than normal catering crew, and a group involved in a Pilates class. They were all present at the same time. I worried that Donna would be flustered and maybe even a bit mad.

I approached her a bit hesitantly, worried about what she was going to say. "Everything set?" I asked her. "Oh ya," she said somewhat nonchalantly. "I hope it's okay, but I told the Family Promise families that we could be in the same space together. They could ice their cookies at one end, and we can do our exercising at the other end."

"Wow," I said to myself. "That was easy." One crisis averted.

Then I made my way to the narthex. I had heard that the Pilates group was using the narthex for their class. It's an awkward place for exercise, but I assumed it would work. "Everything okay?" I asked the instructor. "Oh, it's fine," she responded. "If we could just make sure that the Pilates' students know where we are, that would be very helpful." Sure. No problem. Wow! That was easy.

Then I walked toward the kitchen because I knew that

the people who were preparing the Family Promise dinner had had a struggle finding space to do their cooking because our caterers that night had a huge job and a massive amount of food in the kitchen. I approached the cook and began to apologize. "No problem," he said. "The more the merrier." Wow, I said to myself. That was easy.

I then walked into the kitchen to check on the catering crew. They were sweating a bit, but it was obvious that they all were going to survive. They joked about the busyness of our church and then got back to work. Wow, I said to myself. That was easy.

Then I thought I better check on the Boy Scouts. After all, they had given up a couple of rooms that night. I didn't need to check on them. They were busy doing their work. They had adapted and were functioning quite well.

Wow! What a gift that night was to me! Flexibility reigned! We could adapt. We could recognize that our building is a gift not to possess, but one to share.

In 2012 we will continue our focus on discipleship (following Jesus) as essential to our being the church. This coming year I want us to examine more fully the role our building plays in our discipleship. This examination will require us to examine our attitudes about the space we have and how it is used by us and, mostly, others. I am thrilled that some people already understand that our space is ours, but not in an ownership kind of way. It is ours to care for and to use as a tool for our mission and ministry. Turf wars aren't necessary, nor are they reflective of what it means to follow Jesus.





From Intern Ken

Three times during the year we interns write an article for Trinity Lutheran Seminary's "Obserflections", a collection of our stories and experiences. I received my copy in the mail a few weeks ago and enjoyed reading about what my fellow interns were up to. Some told funny stories about dancing in the Texas rain, taking city tours on segways, "Pandamania" VBS programs, and how lots of food is the best way to "grow" a congregation (even when the numbers don't change). Others told stories of churches in anxiety, interns separated from spouses by distance, struggling rural communities, and children indoctrinated by racism at an early age. Yet woven among each story was the

clear and obvious presence of God.

Now, you may think that we see God everywhere because we are interns. Perhaps that is true. But it's not because we are imagining it. We really DO see God everywhere.

For my Obserflection, I wrote about my experiences with God sitting under the Muskegon South Breakwater Light in the evenings. It was not very hard for me to feel God at those times, when the world is falling asleep and the boats chug along up the channel. The whole experience reminded me of Baptism, for I knew that after the sun settled beneath the waves, it would rise again out of the water anew. I saw God in that moment.

That's one of the reasons I am so passionate about the environment—I truly do see God in it. And this winter, when the world seems to fall silent and dead, I remember that when spring comes, life will return to nature again. It's Baptism on a grand scale, and the ultimate reminder of our life, death and resurrection.

Non-Stop Crop & Shop 'Till You Drop Scrapbook Party

January 21, 2012
10:00 a.m.—11:00 p.m.

Lunch, Dinner, Snacks and Beverages provided

Cost: \$30 by January 9, \$35 after Jan. 9

Or

\$35 preferred seating
Paid and registered by Jan. 9

Groups must register together

*PayPal option and registration forms available at
firstlutheranmuskegon.com*

Register at church or at firstlutheranmuskegon@yahoo.com

Questions? Call Diane Kroll



From Ed



Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Confirmation News

Confirmation class resumes Wednesday, January 4th at 7:00pm in the Gallery.

Mentors will meet with their students on Wednesday January 25th from 7:00pm to 8:15pm.

Youth Activities

High School and Junior High LYO

January 15th 12:00 to 4:00pm. Pastor Bill **Sledding Challenge!!** Are you as fast as Pastor Bill on a sled???!! Come out on the 15th and prove it. Bring your sled as we are heading to the Sugar Bowl for the challenge of 2012. Pastor Bill will have his famous classic runner sled. Bring a lunch so we can eat before heading out. When we return to church, we will have hot chocolate and snacks.



Youth Ski Trip January 16th

You have the day off of school, so let's go to Caberfae!!! Sign-up by January 11th so Ed can work out a deal with Caberfae. More details after the first of the year. We need 15 people to get the group rate, so invite your friends. Rates: \$20 for lift ticket, lesson, and ski rental, \$8 for a snowboard rental, and \$3 for helmet rental.



****NOTE: If you have your own equipment it still costs \$20 for the lift ticket.**

3rd-6th Grade LYO

January 8th from 12:00 to 3:00pm **Crazy Bounce trip.** We are heading to Crazy Bounce in Holland for an afternoon of great fun and **BOUNCING.** Bring comfortable clothes and shoes. We will have pizza before we leave church. Each child should bring \$3 to help cover the cost of the activity. Parents are welcome to chaperone; please let Ed know so we can plan accordingly.

Fundraiser for National Gathering

Youth and kids going to Camp.

Scrapbooking Fundraiser January 21st from 9:30 to 12:00am. We will help

participants carry in and out their stuff, help with games, serve food and snacks, clean up, and other fun jobs.

Each person working will earn an hourly "pay" that will go into their Youth Account. You must be signed up by January 18th.



Family Events

We are offering two options for skiing this winter starting in January:

1) Family Fun Sundays

Bring the Family to the slopes for only \$49!



The perfect family activity for a January Sunday afternoon! Now part of the "Learn to Ski & Snowboard Month" and new this season, all Sundays in January are Family Fun-Day Sundays! Caberfae

Peaks invites all families to spend some time together on the slopes. Package includes lift tickets, ski or snowboard rentals and a beginner group lesson for a family of three. Must have at least one parent present. Additional family members are only \$15 each. Presentation of a completed coupon at the ticket office is required to obtain the Family Fun-Day rate. Children 8 and under are not complimentary with this discount.

2011/2012 Family Fun-Day Dates:

- January 1, 2012: 4 pm to close
- January 8, 2012: 4 pm to close
- January 15, 2012: 4 pm to close
- January 22, 2012: 4 pm to close
- January 29, 2012: 4 pm to close

2) Ski Club

The 2nd and 4th Friday night of each month we will have our Ski Club at 5:00pm.

This is open to people of all ages and abilities. Join us for a fun night of skiing, food, and fellowship. If you need to rent equipment, see Ed for a rental form. We send in the rental information on Wednesday's so they have the equipment set and ready to go. We will organize food and beverages.

Non-skiers are welcome to spend time in the lodge reading, knitting, telling stories, and enjoying fellowship.



We are looking for people willing to drive the church van on various Friday nights, see Ed if you would be willing to drive.

Ski rental is \$2, snowboards are only \$8, and helmet rentals are \$3.



Get Ready to RIDE

We are teaming up once again to participate in the Mercy Health Partners "The Ride". We will have four teams of 8 riders that will participate in the annual event, which is scheduled for **March 17th** at the Lakes Mall. **Each team member commits to ride a stationary bike for 25 minutes and raising \$50 to support the Mercy Health HEART Center.** Team sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board outside the choir room.

Stationary bikes will be in the Family Life Center starting the week of January 15th. You are welcome to come in anytime to ride the bikes. This is available to those participating in the Ride and anyone who needs to move during the winter months.



HEALTHY MUSKEGON COUNTY
STATE'S HEALTHIEST BY 2021

Corporate Challenge

6 Week program 1/23/2012 – 3/4/2012

What is our challenge?

With this Challenge you can make physical inactivity a thing of the past. The goal is for every participant to get 30 minutes of activity (with increased heart rate) at least 5 times a week. Points are awarded to participants who make an extra effort each day to increase physical activity, make healthy choices.

How to join the challenge:

1. Set up your 4-person team and see Ed to pick up information packets.
2. Team members track individual efforts by using provided charts to help you calculate points and then report to the team captain weekly. You may get points for pedometer steps – pedometers will not be provided.
3. Team captains report team points weekly online or by fax.
4. Watch your team rise to the top of the challenge on the front page of the site.

See Ed to sign up for a team by January 18th, we start January 23rd.

Wednesday Night Programs

Programming begins Wednesday January 4th with dinner at 5:25.

Music Programs

<i>Children's Choir</i>	6:00pm to 6:30pm	K thru 8 th grade
<i>Children's Handbells</i>	6:30pm to 7:00pm	2 nd thru 8 th grade
<i>High school/adult handbells</i>	7:00pm to 7:45pm	

Group Activities

Mouse trap race cars 6:00pm to 7:00pm 2nd thru 8th grade
Kids will work in pairs to build small race cars that are powered by a mouse trap. All the building materials will be provided. This group will meet in the Family Life Center for the first meeting.

Servant Leaders 6:00pm to 7:00pm 8th thru 12th grade
This will be an active group learning about leadership and being a "servant leader". We will explore ways that we can use our skills to help others.

Euchre Players 6:00pm to 7:00pm 8th thru adult
Form your own team or come to join a team. We will begin with teaching the game and move towards a tournament.

Thank You!!

*Thanks to those who assembled the
November Chimes:*

Deb Majkol	Jan Sharlow
Lyle Graham	Alice Stafford
Marge Graham	Dorothy Pfhistner



Family Promise Thanks You

On behalf of our Family Promise Coordinating Team, I would like to thank all of you who volunteered, and our team members, who helped host 14 homeless people from December 4th to the 11th. Serving and caring for others is fundamental to Christian discipleship, so thank you so much to Dennis and Kathleen Cobler, Jim and Sande Borushko, Community UMC Youth Group, Community UMC Women's Group, Don and Sharon Aley (Comm. UMC), Dave and Cindy Short, Ed Wosinski and our FLC Youth Group, Bernie and Cathy Berntson, Robin Policka, Renee Petersen, Kim Wood (Comm. UMC), Natalie Dunlap, Ken Ranos, Barb Pellerin, Scott Gearhart, Bonnie Nolan, Linda Long, Mark Thogerson, Tom and Sabina Freeman, Bill and Bev Uetrict, Dianna Radel, Ken and Marianne Newman, Dawn Shank and Family, Larry Loch, George Harryman (Comm. UMC), Eric Baker, Sandy Baker and Lenny Stenberg.

Our guests appreciated their stay at First very much and you all helped to give a little more meaning to our Advent journey.

Bob Eichelberger, Family Promise Coordinator



"Dollar-A-Day" Update

Thanks to your generosity, the Dollar-A-Day campaign fund now stands at nearly \$27,000 as of December 4th. Amazing how it all adds up! This money has allowed us to offset the church internship budget by nearly \$8,000 in 2011, set aside another \$8,000 toward the chancel refurbishment fund, save roughly \$8,000 as an on-going emergency fund to smooth the highs and lows of our annual budget's cash flow, and plan contributions for community benevolence to the tune of almost \$3,000! This is truly remarkable when we consider that it is our collective pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollar bills that we have saved as good stewards, and cheerfully contributed as part of our discipleship growth here at First Lutheran. Please continue to save your dollars each day and participate in the monthly offering held at worship services on the first weekend of each month.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:38



Zumba

New Zumba Gold classes will be starting the week of January 11th. They will be on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Family Life Center. There will no longer be a Thursday Evening Class.

Zumba Gold is a low-intensity workout with dance and rhythm as the focus, based on dance moves which are choreographed to Latin and international music. The moves focus on improving balance, strength and flexibility, while raising your heart beat and improving cardiovascular ability. For more info call Donna Veeck



Those Who Serve

			<i>Assisting Minister</i>	<i>Lectors</i>	<i>Acolytes</i>	<i>Servers</i>
1 Christmas	Sat. Dec. 31	5:30 p.m.	Ken Ranos	Sandy Baker	OPEN	Barb Elliott
	Sun. Jan. 1	10:30 a.m.	Ken Ranos	Dennis Cobler	OPEN	Sylvia Koski, Bert Goodman
Baptism of Our Lord	Sat. Jan. 7	5:30 p.m.	Ken Ranos	Patti Shafer	OPEN	Pat Shafer
	Sun. Jan. 8	8:00 a.m.	Ken Ranos	Lynn McCurdy	OPEN	Barb Pellerin
	Sun. Jan. 8	10:30 a.m.	Ken Ranos	Sylvia Koski	OPEN	Carl and Mary Luther
2 Epiphany	Sat. Jan. 14	5:30 p.m.	Paul Petersen	Judy Davenport	OPEN	Patti Shafer
	Sun. Jan. 15	8:00 a.m.	Paul Petersen	Ken Ranos	OPEN	Ruth Basch
	Sun. Jan. 15	10:30 a.m.	Paul Petersen	Mary Luther	OPEN	Dennis and Kathleen Cobler
3 Epiphany	Sat. Jan. 21	5:30 p.m.	Steve Smith	Bev Uetrict	OPEN	Judy Davenport
	Sun. Jan. 22	8:00 a.m.	Bonnie Nolan	Lynn McCurdy	OPEN	Dianna Radel
	Sun. Jan. 23	10:30 a.m.	Bonnie Nolan	Kathleen Cobler	OPEN	Kevin Hine and Jay Vaclavik
4 Epiphany	Sat. Jan. 28	5:30 p.m.	Ken Ranos	Sandy Baker	OPEN	Adam Baker
	Sun. Jan. 29	8:00 a.m.	Ken Ranos	Marcie Joy	OPEN	Barb Pellerin
	Sun. Jan. 29	10:30 a.m.	Ken Ranos	Jay Vaclavik	OPEN	Sandy and Gene Young

	<i>Eternal Candle</i>	<i>Flowers</i>	<i>Nursery</i>	<i>Building Lockers</i>
Jan. 1	OPEN	Jack Joslyn		Doug Fenbert
Jan. 8	OPEN	OPEN		Dolores Brondyke
Jan. 15	Jerry & Robbin Dibble	First Lutheran		Karen Eichelberger
Jan. 22	OPEN	First Lutheran		Darrell Van Fossen
Jan. 29	OPEN	First Lutheran		Sylvia Koski



January 2012

	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Communion Bread</i>	<i>Communion Setup</i>	<i>Communion Cleanup</i>
Sat. Dec. 31		Gene & Sandy Young	Judy Davenport	
Sun. Jan. 1	Warren & Connie Robinson George & Billie Bramer			
Sat. Jan. 7		Kathleen Cobler	Shirley DeVries	Judy Davenport
Sun. Jan. 8	Bernard & Carol Harrell			
Sun. Jan. 8	Kent & Sue Johnson Jim & Marci Sutton			Lisa Le
Sat. Jan. 14		Kevin Hine	Jean Boxer	Sherree Neumann
Sun. Jan. 15	Merle Hanson & Bob Laban			
Sun. Jan. 15	TJ & Suzanne Udell Roland & Karen Crummel			Barb Bonifield
Sat. Jan. 21		Cathy Berntson	Barb Pellerin	Pam Nelson
Sun. Jan. 22	Bill & Ruth Baxter			
Sun. Jan. 23	John & Deb Majkol Jan & Bill Naymick			Bert Goodman
Sat. Jan. 28		Suzette Matson	Dave Neumann	Pat Westjohn
Sun. Jan. 29	Bernard & Carol Harrell			
Sun. Jan. 29	Deb Roest, Diane Kroll Mark Thorgerson, Stan Daszko			Kathleen Cobler

	<i>Sound</i>	<i>Info Stations</i>	<i>Coffee Hour</i>	Counters January Shirley DeVries Sue Johnson
Jan. 1	John Robinson		OPEN	
Jan. 8	Jeff Lindell	Jerry & Evelyn Borreson	New Members	
Jan. 15	John Robinson	Linda & Jim Clark	Katie Neel	
Jan. 22	Kent Johnson	Steve & Sandy Devries	Jay Vaclavik, Kevin Hine, Newmans	
Jan. 29	Jeff Lindell	George & Billie Bramer	OPEN	

Birthday Greetings to You!!



01/01	Martin Shields	01/12	Jackie Westenbroek Jane Boyle Lori Archer	01/23	Stephen Dix Christian Peterson Connor Anderson
01/02	Tonya Tufts Tracy Elliott	01/13	Marjorie Graham	01/24	Diane Kroll Andrew Neumann Tara Tallquist
01/03	Judy Proctor Connie Robinson Larry Heidelberg Dennis Plekes Amanda Hutchins	01/14	Bill Webber	01/25	Peggy Heidelberg Judith Borghi Stanley Shank III
01/04	Craig Baker	01/15	Delaney Scholl Benjamin Veihl	01/26	Marilyn Cooper Lenny Stenberg Kimberly Beidler Heather Seiber Bridgette Kimble
01/05	Timothy Vanderstelt John Hanson George Marsala	01/16	Jordan Meloche	01/27	David Shields
01/06	Jane Kane Jon Goodwin Lea Dyga	01/17	Gordon Bonifield Pamela Goven Kathy Tellier Lora Eaton Mark Besteman Heidi Cantu' Lisa Naymick Christopher Tindall	01/28	Bud Fiser Lark Roberts Kelsey Bleich
01/07	David Neumann James Bleich Caitlyn Giddings	01/18	Andrew Cooper Ethan Ness	01/29	Stephanie Moore
01/08	Kimberly Carey Sean Nienhouse Jonathon Woodring	01/21	Katie Neel	01/30	Hunter Willacker
01/09	Julie Lyvere Cade Schauer	01/22	Jack Irmischer Paul Becker Michael Parrish Kimberly Fenbert	01/31	Marianne Newman

Church Directory Information

Military Veterans—There will be a military page in the 2012 church directory which is currently being planned. Please indicate your rank, name, and dates of service on the sheets provided at the information stations. It would be a pleasure to honor you all in this way.



Weekly Attendance and Offerings for November

Weekend of 11/05 & 11/06

Attendance: 344
 General Fund: \$7,116.75
 Mortgage Fund: \$1915.65

Weekend of 11/12 & 11/13

Attendance: 353
 General Fund: \$7,284.00
 Mortgage Fund: \$1,285.00
 Noisy Offering for Acolyte Robes: \$212.79

Weekend of 11/19 & 11/20

Attendance: 377
 General Fund: \$4,315.95
 Mortgage Fund: \$726.00

Weekend of 11/26 & 11/27

Attendance: 285
 General Fund: \$6,351.50
 Mortgage Fund: \$2,270.00
 Noisy Offering for Flag Pole: \$197.48

Dollar-A-Day for November: \$2,452.43

Total General Fund Offering received:	\$25,068.20
Total General Fund Offering needed:	<u>29,230.25</u>
	-\$4,162.05
Total Mortgage Offering received:	\$6,196.65
Total Mortgage Offering needed:	<u>8,534.00</u>
	-\$2,337.35



Official Acts

Funerals:

George P Buris

Date of Birth: July 12, 1930
 Date of Death: November 30, 2011

Carol A Rubley

Date of Birth: May 4, 1950
 Date of Death: November 23, 2011

Russell A. Kitchen

Date of Birth: August 18, 1926
 Date of Death: September 29, 2011

First Communion:

November 20, 2011

Josee Cooke
 Sam Gallo
 Bruce Latsch
 Faith Latsch
 Gage Lowry
 Matthew Shank
 Tea Schlager
 Mackenzie Wheeler

Chimes Articles

Articles and information for the Chimes should be submitted via email to Rhonda Smith at rhondak33@comcast.net or placed in her mail box next to the church offices no later than the **15th of the month.**

Keepers

Please contact the church office for a current list of our homebound members.



Heading for Warmer Climates?

If you're one of those lucky "snowbirds", please remember your church during your absence through your continued weekly offerings and monthly "Dollar-A-Day" contributions. You can mail them to:
First Ev. Lutheran Church, 1206 Whitehall Road,
Muskegon, MI 49445.

Did You Know?

Did you know that a copy of the weekly sermon is available from the First Lutheran website? Just click on *Worship*, then *Sermons* at the top of the home page (<http://www.firstlutheranmuskegon.com/>).

When available, an audio recording of the Sunday morning service is also accessible from this page.

From Living Well Ministry

THE LONG WALK

By Rev. David S. Blanchard

The best story I ever heard about gift-giving has nothing to do with Christmas, and everything to do with Christmas. It's about an African boy who wanted to give a gift to his teacher, who was going home to England. The child had no money and his options were few. The day before the teacher was to leave, the child brought her a huge seashell. The teacher asked the boy where he could have found such a shell. He told her there was only one spot where such extraordinary shells could be found, and when he named the place, a certain bay many miles away, the teacher was speechless.

"Why...why, it's gorgeous...wonderful, but you shouldn't have gone all that way to get a gift for me." His eyes brightening, the boy answered, "Long walk part of gift."

"Long walk part of gift." Most of the meaningful gifts we give to each other require some version of that "long walk." The long walk we sign on for with children, who need our patience, our wisdom, our honesty, and our trust more than we might first have imagined when their lives began. The long walk we share with our spouses, which takes us through uncharted, unexpected territories of sickness and health, richer and poorer, better and worse. The long walk we take with our friends when they are grieving the loss of someone

they love, when they are ill, when they are discouraged. The long walk of feeling a sense of unity with those whom prosperity has left behind. The long walk of reconciliation with all that separates us from a deep sense of life's great purpose and meaning. "Long walk part of gift."

When Christmas has been tidied up and packed away for another year, the gifts acknowledged, many already forgotten, the New Year stretches in front of us. What will get us through the long months, with all they may

Most of the meaningful gifts we give to each other require some version of that "long walk".

hold, will not be the things in boxes. We must look to the hands of those who bought and wrapped and carried those gifts.

With their gifts, they are telling us something too wonderful, perhaps too embarrassing, for words. They are telling us that, for us, they will take that long walk.

So when you open the box and find the chainsaw, the long underwear, the fruitcake, the pot holder, or the seashell from a distant ocean, remember that it's not "the thought" that counts. Remember too, "long walk part of gift."





Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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www.mittensynod.org

Just Like Me

December 12, 2011 – Yesterday was our second home visit Pastor Cliff Randall since he had been diagnosed with cancer, had major surgeries, and was now receiving chemotherapy. Because his illness is so severe, so life-threatening, on the first visit he began to formulate with Phylis and me his funeral service, the hymns he'd want sung, the texts to be read. Before we left that day, I asked him to think about the kind of pastor St. Peter would need if he couldn't continue to serve or if, by the grace of God, he was renewed in health and could look forward to the retirement he'd planned beginning in the summer of the new year. Yesterday he was ready with his "list." In his characteristic disarmingly honest way Cliff said he hoped the next pastor would be "just like me."

Just like me – that might be heard as vain and arrogant. But it was not. A gift God often gives and has surely given Pastor Cliff is the ability to "cut to the chase," to give others a clear window into one's soul, especially when one is looking at the real possibility of an imminent death. What he was saying was undeniably from a humble heart. Here is the list he shared. His successor would:

- + Love Jesus
- + Have an unwavering commitment to the ELCA.
- + Be wide open to everyone who comes through the door of the church
- + Have a total commitment to kids...going to camp with them and participating with them in Sunday School and VBS
- + Proclaim that the Lord's table is open to all...because it is the Lord's table.

As I say goodbye to 2011 and embrace the new year, as I think about the reality that our synod will elect a new bishop in 2013, I have a list forming too. It is not too different from the one spoken by this beloved pastor at St. Peter, Unionville.

On January 22-24 your pastor, together with our other rostered leaders, lay ministers, and synodically authorized ministers and our counterparts in the SE Michigan Synod, has been urged by me to spend time praying, thinking and talking with his or her colleagues about his or her "lists." Coincidentally these days are in the midst of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Especially mindful of our baptismal unity with sisters and brothers in Christ in every community, the Winter Leadership Event at Trinity, Midland, will be a time to discern and commit to what matters most to us as followers of Jesus and servant leaders. Your pastor with the help of some committed key lay leaders will then invite your whole congregation in February to develop your congregation's "list." We'll gather these lists before the next Synod Assembly and work to see the big picture, the emerging portrait, of what God is calling us to be and do as ELCA congregations in the lower peninsula of Michigan.



On some level, Pastor Cliff's fragile life, not knowing whether or not he might soon die, is a metaphor for all of our lives in Christ. It is the reality of our congregations. What do we hope for those who succeed us? What are the deepest values we'd want them to embrace? Though it could be construed as arrogant, the best future for our congregations and our synods, might well come forth from our own honest wrestling and disclosure of what, in and by God's grace, matters more than anything else.

~ Bishop John

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

January 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day 10:30 AM Worship Service 4:00 PM Nursing Home Service	2 Office Closed	3 9:00 AM Pickleball 9:00 AM SHOP Group 6:30 PM U.F.O. 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir	4 Weekly Bulletin Deadline 4:00 PM Journey Thru Grief 5:25 PM Dinner 6:00 PM Activities 7:00 PM Confirmation Class	5 9:00 AM Pickleball 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:30 PM Board of Worship Meeting 7:00 PM Pilates	6 8:30 AM Pickleball 10:00 AM Tai Chi 11:00 AM Strength, Stretch, Stepping Up!	7 5:30 PM Worship
8 Dollar-A-Day Weekend 8:00 AM Worship Service 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Third-Sixth Grade Youth Group 4:00 PM High School Youth Group	9 12:00 PM Quilters 4:00 PM Blais Dance 6:30 PM Internship Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Volleyball 7:00 PM Overcomers Outreach	10 9:00 AM Quilting Bee 9:00 AM Pickleball 9:00 AM SHOP Group 6:30 PM U.F.O. 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir	11 Weekly Bulletin Deadline 4:00 PM Family Promise Meeting 4:00 PM Journey Thru Grief 5:25 PM Dinner 6:00 PM Activities 7:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM First Writers	12 9:00 AM Pickleball 12:00 PM Bible Study 3:30 PM Supper House 6:00 PM Boy Scouts 7:00 PM Pilates	13 8:30 AM Pickleball 10:00 AM Tai Chi 11:00 AM Strength, Stretch, Stepping Up! 5:30 PM Bunco	14 10:00 AM Leadership Retreat 5:30 PM Worship
15 Monthly Chimes Deadline 8:00 AM Worship Service 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service	16 12:00 PM Quilters 4:00 PM Blais Dance 7:00 PM Overcomers Outreach 7:00 PM Volleyball	17 9:00 AM Pickleball 9:00 AM SHOP Group 12:00 PM Lunch Bunch 6:30 PM U.F.O. 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir	18 Weekly Bulletin Deadline 4:00 PM Journey Thru Grief 5:25 PM Dinner 6:00 PM Activities 7:00 PM Confirmation Class	19 9:00 AM Pickleball 12:00 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM Pilates	20 8:30 AM Pickleball 10:00 AM Tai Chi 10:00 AM Feeding America 11:00 AM Strength, Stretch, Stepping Up!	21 Scrapbooking Event 8:30 AM - Men's Bible Study 9:00 AM Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM Accidental Book Club 5:30 PM Worship
22 8:00 AM Worship Service 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Junior High Youth Group 4:00 PM High School Youth Group	23 12:00 PM Quilters 4:00 PM Blais Dance 7:00 PM Volleyball 7:00 PM Overcomers Outreach	24 9:00 AM Pickleball 9:00 AM SHOP Group 6:30 PM U.F.O. 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir 7:00 PM DeColores	25 Weekly Bulletin Deadline 4:00 PM Journey Thru Grief 5:25 PM Dinner 6:00 PM Activities 7:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM Spirituality Group	26 9:00 AM Pickleball 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:00 PM Ministry Gathering Meeting 7:00 PM Pilates	27 8:30 AM Pickleball 10:00 AM Tai Chi 11:00 AM Strength, Stretch, Stepping Up!	28 5:30 PM Worship
29 8:00 AM Worship Service 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Annual Chili Cook-Off	30 12:00 PM Quilters 4:00 PM Blais Dance 6:00 PM Muskegon County Cooperating Churches 7:00 PM Overcomers Outreach	31 9:00 AM Pickleball 9:00 AM SHOP Group 6:30 PM U.F.O. 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir	1	2	3	4



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