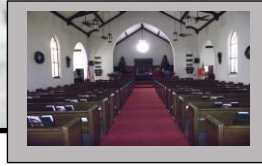


FIRST FRUITS

WE GIVE OUR FIRST FRUITS

BECAUSE HE GAVE US HIS ONLY SON

January 2021



Volume 24 No. 1

First Things First...

This I Believe

"...in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect."
1 Peter 3:15

Belief exerts a powerful influence on every aspect of life. As Peter says above, there is a hope in everyone who believes in Christ the Lord. Each one of us should be ready, at any time, to make a defense (tell the reason) for that hope. In the series of statements which began in the February 2020 edition of *First Fruits*, I plan to share a summary of what I believe so that you may know me more fully and so you may see the reason for the hope that is in me. I continue the series with this article stating my belief regarding the nature of worship. Next month I will offer my beliefs regarding the style or practice of public and corporate worship.

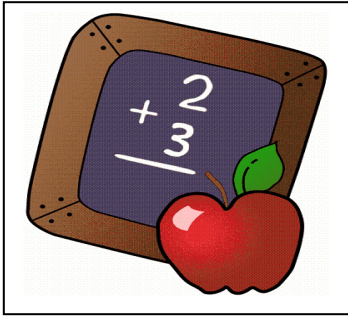
I believe worship is not a gathering of believers and nonbelievers, meeting at a set time, in an appointed place. Worship is more than a time of praying, singing, Bible reading and Biblically-authentic prophecy. Worship exceeds singing along with a radio/CD/MP3/phone/streaming service, etc. Worship goes beyond attending Christian concerts. Too often, worship is perceived to be a worship service at a church or other reserved venue. True worship is much more than any or all of the aforementioned experiences (and many other unnamed ones).

I believe worship is the totality of one's life lived in a loving relationship with the One, True God. Worship calls out to God in an attitude of humility, thankfulness, adoration and neediness.

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." (Psalm 95:6)
"Humble yourselves before the Lord..." (James 4:10) Why should we come before the Lord in humility? Job 38-41 presents evidence of God's singular strength, power, wisdom and authority. There is no other like Him. He is above all and over all. He created all that exists by the power of His Word. He sustains all that exists by His gracious will. He provides all that is necessary for this life and the life to come. He is God. We come before Him humbly because He deserves worship and honor.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good." (Psalm 136:1) *"...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18) *"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"* (2 Corinthians 9:15) Should we be thankful to God? If He had done nothing more than provide the way for our salvation, He would deserve our unending thankfulness. Yet, He has done more. For everything mentioned in the preceding paragraph, He deserves our thanks. Luther's Explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed states: "...God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and

Continued on page 6



First School And Day Care



First School currently has 88 children enrolled. We are so excited about adding another classroom for our Toddlers. We are relocating our school office to the stage area and will be doing some modifications to make that work. We look forward to the new year and we are so thankful for all that God has blessed us with.

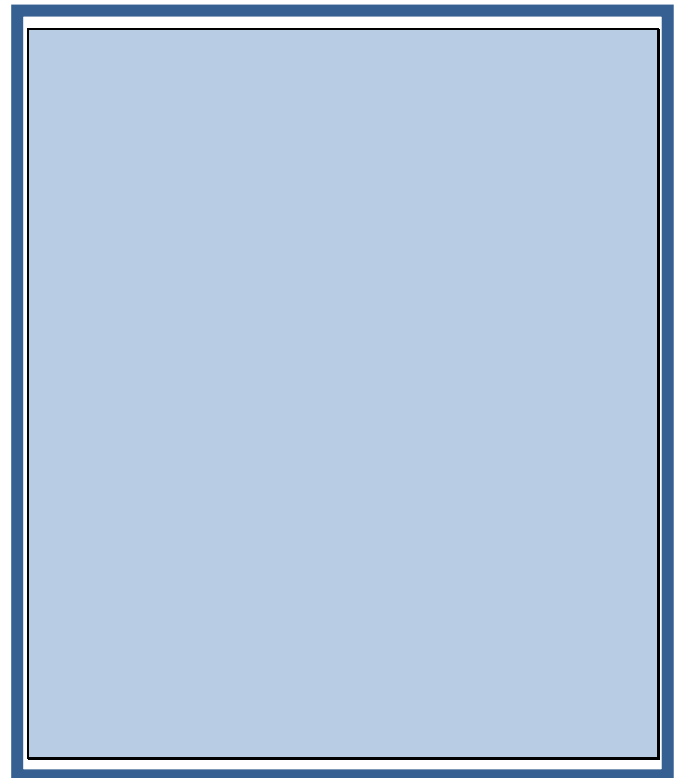
Many Blessings,
Bree Joines
First School Director

First School Board Meeting Tuesday, January 12th, 5:00 p.m.

A Prayer for the New Year

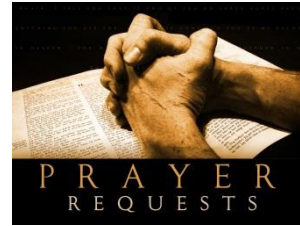
Eternal Father, you have placed us in a world of space and time, and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love. Grant that in this new year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event which gives us joy forever – the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

--- LBW, page 41



JANUARY READINGS

- 01/03 Psalm 27:1-7; Genesis 29:1-12, Acts 18:12-17, Matthew 15:10-20
- 01/10 Psalm 27:8-14; Genesis 29:13-20, Acts 18:18-28, Matthew 15:21-28
- 01/17 Psalm 28:1-4; Genesis 29:21-30, Acts 19:1-12, Matthew 16:29-39
- 01/24 Psalm 28:5-9; Genesis 29:31-35, Acts 19:13-22, Matthew 16:1-12
- 01/31 Psalm 29:1-6; Genesis 30:1-7, Acts 19:23-31, Matthew 17:13-20



- 01/02 Becky Sample
- 01/03 Sarah Langston
- 01/08 Nora Hollingsworth
- 01/09 Helen Johnson
- 01/09 Kirk Marek
- 01/10 Landon Thane
- 01/13 Kalin Christenberry
- 01/15 Everly Orsak
- 01/16 Sarah Thane
- 01/18 Sheila Miller
- 01/20 Odis Newton
- 01/21 Dorothy Atchetee
- 01/27 Cathy Schoenfield
- 01/30 Rachel Hernandez
- 01/30 Cindy Mathews

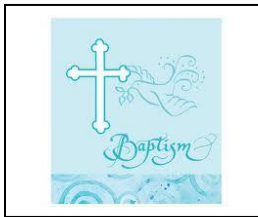
Our FLC Family

- Dorothy Atchetee
- Harlo & Rhonda Achtetee
- Charles Bard
- Ron Chambles
- James & Sheila Herrington
- Nora Hollingsworth
- Harry & Marilyn Kight
- Kim & Larry Ledwig
- John Nelson
- Ruth Speckels
- Charlotte Watson
- Larry & Cheryl Young

Friends of FLC

- Lucille
- Dustin & Catherine Sless
- Riley Sless
- Camille Flisowski
- Jolene
- Joy Roppolo
- Chad Rodgers
- Dustin Chudalla
- Dillon & Kori Berglund
& Baby Charlie Ann
- Todd Socha
- Tracy Morton

List will be cleared on the 1st in January, April, July and October. Please help us stay current; call the office with changes or additions.



- 01/03 Karen Kight
- 01/04 Ashlyn Hanna
- 01/04 Angelina Tijerina
- 01/04 Gabriella Tijerina
- 01/18 Jake Herrington
- 01/25 Claudia Wilfert



**PRAY FOR OUR
LOVED ONES
IN THE MILITARY**

Jake Barosh
U.S. Armed Forces

WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US



- 01/25 James & Diane Stewart
- 01/26 Ted & Cathy Schoenfield



OR



Office hours: Tues & Thurs: 8:30am - 4:30pm
Wed: 8:30am – 12:00pm

Phone: 979-543-5847

Email: office@firstlutheranec.com



COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, January 21st
6:00 p.m.

Pastor Clyde Grier
Phone: 979-541-6173

FLCEC Manna Meals Team

Thank you to our members who have been faithful in providing food for meals and also serving at Manna Meals on behalf of our First Lutheran Team! Our team will serve on Monday, January 25th.

+ + + + + + + +

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed the week of December 28-January 1.

Flower Chart

The new Flower Chart for 2021 is available for you to choose your special dates. Please sign up for the Sundays when you would like to provide flowers for our service!

End of Year Giving

All donations must be in the church office by Dec. 31st in order to receive credit for 2020. All contributions received Jan. 1st or later will be credited to 2021, regardless of the date on the check.

Thank You!

As 2020 comes to an end and a new year begins we want to say "thank you" to Helen Kight for her faithfulness as organist for all our worship services especially throughout this last year (and the over 50 years she has played for First Lutheran)!

We appreciate all who have volunteered and helped in many ways this year - our Manna Meals Team, those who have been faithful in their monthly duties, Mr. Chamblis for the care of the Cemetery, the Church Council, and First School Board and Bree Joines for the guidance of First School during the pandemic!

We look forward to the new year with hope as we await what it will bring!

A = Always

S = Say

A = A

P = Prayer



WOMEN OF THE WORD MEETING

Monday, January 4th
5:00 p.m.

WOW Food Drive
Sunday, January 3rd

Annual Congregational Meeting

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, January 31, 2020. We will have our annual meeting following the service that day.

LCMC Three Days of Prayer January 7-9, 2020

Day One: January 5

This is a day focused on **confession**. We have made our lives, our relationships—and even the church—in our own image. We confess that the church belongs to Jesus and not to us. We gather to lay down our pride, our sin and our agenda and ask the Lord of the church for forgiveness, which He gives freely and with mercy.

Day Two: January 6

This is a day of **petition**. Pray for your congregation, pastor, leaders, Sunday School teachers, Confirmation leaders, adult Bible study and small group leaders. Pray for those in hospital and nursing home ministries. Pray for all those connected to your church that they might know God's redeeming love for all in Christ.

Day Three: January 7

This is a day for **vision**. Pray that the Holy Spirit will again move through the hearts and minds of leaders and pastors that God's vision for His church might be revealed and fulfilled. This is a time of prayer for renewal, revival and encouragement. Pray for God's vision.



January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	4 WOW Meeting 5PM	5 - - Three - -	6 - - Days of -	7 - - Prayer -	1/8	2/9
10 Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship Service 10:45 AM	11	12 First School Board Meeting 5PM	13	14	15	16
17 Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	18	19 Newsletter Items Due	20	21 Church Council Meeting 6PM	22	23
24 Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship Service 10:45 AM	25 FLCEC Manna Meals Team serves	26	27	28	29	30
31 Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship Service 10:45 AM Annual Congregational Meeting						

January Responsibilities

ASSISTING MINISTER: Daniel Wilfert
SEXTON: David Kight
USHERS: Odis Newton, Alvin Yackel
ALTAR GUILD: Billie Jean Bram, Cori Koudela
 Kim Ledwig

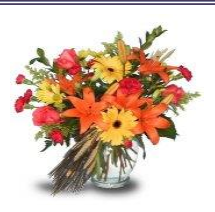
ACOLYTES

3rd
 10th
 17th
 24th
 31st

READER

Helen Johnson
 Lynn Talafuse
 Ty Schoenfield
 Kirk Marek
 Ted Schoenfield

If you are unable to serve on your date,
 please find someone to take your place.



JANUARY FLOWER CALENDAR

3rd Open
 10th Open
 17th James & Sheila Herrington
 24th Open
 31st Open

all the powers of my soul, together with food and raiment, home and family and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all of which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him.”¹ He also promises the elimination of this fallen and imperfect creation, at a future date known only to Him, and the creation of a New Heaven and a New Earth which shall be the eternal home of all those He redeems. We come before Him in thankfulness because He deserves our thanks.

“Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth...” “I love You, Lord, my strength.” “Sing the praises of the Lord...” “I will extol the Lord at all times...” “Praise the Lord.” (Psalms 8:1; 18:1; 30:4; 34:1; 150:1) The reasons for adoration of the Lord can be found from Genesis 1:1- Revelation 22:21! He delivers us from sin, death and the power of the evil one. The reasons for adoration of the Lord can be found in our daily life experiences. He is with us continually: protecting, guiding and teaching. He disciplines and encourages us. Most of all, the reason for adoration of the Lord is that He loves us! We adore Him because He deserves praise and adoration.

“...but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6) In times of trial or circumstantial crises we readily cry out to the Lord for help, but we seem to forget the advice of the songwriter: *“Count your blessings...”*². However, when life is good and we face minor (if any) problems, indifference becomes a danger. Hopefully, we are aware of our dependence on the grace and mercy of our Savior. We should worship in prayer daily, hourly, moment-by-moment. *“Pray continually...”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17) Take your troubles and triumphs, your needs and wants, your family and friends (and even your enemies. Cf. Matthew 5:44), take everything to the Lord in prayer.

I believe the entire life of the Christian is to be a life of worship, continually worshipping God for all His blessings and disciplines.

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BIBLE READING SCHEDULE			
JANUARY 2021			
Date	Reading	Date	Reading
1	2 Samuel 4	17	2 Samuel 20
2	2 Samuel 5	18	2 Samuel 21
3	2 Samuel 6	19	2 Samuel 22
4	2 Samuel 7	20	2 Samuel 23
5	2 Samuel 8	21	2 Samuel 24
6	2 Samuel 9	22	Acts 1
7	2 Samuel 10	23	Acts 2
8	2 Samuel 11	24	Acts 3
9	2 Samuel 12	25	Acts 4
10	2 Samuel 13	26	Acts 5
11	2 Samuel 14	27	Acts 6
12	2 Samuel 15	28	Acts 7
13	2 Samuel 16	29	1 Kings 1
14	2 Samuel 17	30	1 Kings 2
15	2 Samuel 18	31	1 Kings 3
16	2 Samuel 19		

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

304 Oscar
El Campo, TX 77437
979-543-5847

Email: office@firstlutheranec.com

ESTABLISHED FEB 1893

*Worshipping Christ and Sharing
the Word for over a century.*

*Clyde Grier, Pastor
Helen Marie Kight, Organist
Christine Richter, Office Manager
Bree Joines, Director of First School*



Join us on **FACEBOOK** or check us out at
www.FIRSTLUTHERANEC.COM

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS: Milton Johnson, David Kight, Kirk Marek, Jimmy Nielsen, Cathy Schoenfield & Lynn Talafuse

OUR NEWSLETTER
CAN BE FOUND ON
OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERANEC.COM



**Join us for our Annual Meeting
on Sunday morning, January 31st!**

Sunday School – 9:30 a.m

Worship Service – 10:45 a.m.

**Our Annual Congregational
meeting will follow immediately
after the worship service.**