



# Revelations

of First Evangelical Lutheran Church – 19419 Royalton Road – Strongsville Ohio 44149  
440.238.7890 – [www.firstchurchalive.org](http://www.firstchurchalive.org)

December

2018

Dear Friends in Christ:

“**Dream Small**” may not seem like very encouraging words, especially as we enter into a season of so much hope and promise. What parent tells their child to reach for the lowest rung, or aspire to mediocrity? No boss pats an employee on the back to congratulate him or her for doing an average job.

So let me reassure you that **dreaming small** during this Advent season has nothing to do with being lukewarm followers of Jesus. Instead, it has everything to do with adding up small acts of sacrifice to create a huge impact on the lives of people in need.

I hope you received a “**Dream Small**” packet the last time you were at church, and that ideas are already percolating for you and your family to participate in this important service opportunity. Together, we can make a difference for families who need to stay overnight at Ronald McDonald House; for prisoners who are visited by volunteers from Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries; for a woman who was displaced by an apartment fire and; for teen mothers who receive education and support at the May Dugan Center. I’m excited to watch as gold stars fill our Christmas tree in the lobby of the church as a sign of how much we care for others in need.

The “**Dream Small**” theme will also permeate our Sunday worship services as we explore how we can actively wait for the birth of Christ, our need for repentance, the gracious judgment we experience through Jesus, and the great expectations we share with Mary and Elizabeth for life and salvation. I hope you will join us as we walk together toward the celebration of our Lord’s birth.

The small dreams we conjured during Advent will turn to **BIG DREAMS** as we gather to celebrate Christmas. I invite you to worship with us as we discover that God was dreaming really big dreams when he sent Jesus to live among us. A wonderful counselor to soothe our sorrow. A prince of peace to end hatred and war. A comforter to reassure us. A great light to shatter the darkness.

Of course, God invites us to embrace his big dreams and proclaim the good news of Christ’s birth to others. We are called to share God’s big dreams with those who have not yet heard, with those who may have had their own dreams fractured, those who still live in darkness and those who live in constant fear.

And so, people of God, dream small for a time. But not forever. For in just a short while God will ask us to dream big.

In Christ,

Pastor Chuck



# Worship for



## **Advent 1**

Sunday, December 2            8:30 AM Contemporary Worship, Eucharist  
11:00 AM ELW Setting 3, Eucharist

Tuesday, December 4            6:30 PM Pub Church at TGI Friday's

## **Advent 2**

Sunday, December 9            8:30 AM Contemporary Worship  
11:00 AM ELW Setting 3, Holy Baptism

## **Advent 3**

Sunday, December 16            8:30 AM Contemporary Worship, Eucharist  
11:00 AM Sunday School Christmas Pageant,  
Eucharist

## **Advent 4**

Sunday, December 23            8:30 AM Contemporary Worship  
11:00 AM ELW Setting 3

## **Christmas Eve**

Monday, December 24            4:00 PM Contemporary Christmas Celebration  
8:00 PM Candlelight & Communion  
10:00 PM Candlelight & Communion

## **Christmas 1**

Sunday, December 30            10:30 AM Lessons & Carols

# Upcoming Events

## SHORT STORIES BY JESUS

### *The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*

The **Adult Class** will take a hiatus in December and then start fresh on **January 6** with a brand new class featuring video presentations by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University. In this new study, Dr. Levine will take us back in time to understand how the original Jewish audience heard the parables. With this revitalized understanding, she interprets these moving stories for the contemporary reader, showing how the parables are not just about Jesus, but are also about us - and they still challenge and provoke us two thousand years later. Of course, you can count on open, honest, challenging conversation as we take a fresh look at these popular stories from Jesus' ministry.

## DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Many hands are needed to help decorate the church for Advent and Christmas on **Sunday, December 2, immediately following the 11:00 service**. Please join your friends for a joyous time of decorating and fellowship.

## BASKETBALL

Men of First Church (18 yrs and older) play pick-up basketball games on Thursday's, 7:30 PM at Kinsner Elementary, Strongsville. Any questions, please contact Wayne Mosley at [wmmosley238@gmail.com](mailto:wmmosley238@gmail.com).

## OVER 50'S GROUP

...will meet **Tuesday, December 11 at 12:15 PM** in the *Fellowship Hall*. Bring your bag lunch and join us!

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

We will be Christmas caroling on **Sunday, December 16 immediately following the 11:00 AM service**. We will have lunch first, please bring money. All are welcome!

## YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS

As you consider your end of the year contributions, please keep First Lutheran in your thoughts. Every additional dollar donated helps us achieve our goals for the ministry of Christ. The last Sunday of 2018 is December 30. Contributions can also be mailed in the church office, the last date to receive your mailed contribution of 2018 is Monday, December 31.

## YOGA AT FIRST CHURCH!

Beginning on **Thursday, January 3 at 7:30 pm**, Cyndi Milluzzi returns to lead a six week yoga class for any person over the age of 16. Cost is \$5/class. Sign up & details at the Welcome Center. A minimum of 7 people are needed for this class to be held. Questions? Contact Bonnie Eggers, Guests are welcome to visit any session for \$5.



## *'Tis The Season To Remember...*

*A poinsettia may be purchased in memory or in honor of a loved one.*

*The poinsettias will be used to decorate the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve services.*

*Place your order by filling out the order form below and return by Sunday, December 9.*

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### **Poinsettia Order Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**\$10.00 for 6 1/2 inch single plant**

# of plants \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment must accompany order.

**Please make checks payable to:**  
*First Lutheran Youth Gathering*

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

- I will *pick up* my poinsettia at the church.  
 I will *leave* my poinsettia at the church.

**All orders must be in by December 9, 2018.**

# MISSION EVENTS

## Christmas Food basket

Thank you to the congregation for the bountiful contributions of non-perishable food items and monetary donations for our Harvest Month food basket program. The donations were used to fill Thanksgiving food baskets that were donated to the less fortunate in our community; including families in need served by Frontline Services; Southwest General Hospice Care and Kids Hope USA.

A special thanks to the confirmation class; who did the **AWESOME** job of collecting **over 75 bags** of food from local neighborhoods. We will continue to collect food throughout December for the Christmas food baskets. Items can be placed on the table in front of the controller's office or in the shopping cart in the lobby. We are also in need of monetary donations to help fill the baskets with perishable items. Envelopes marked "Food Baskets" are available on the table outside the controller's office and can be placed in the offering plate.

Also: Donations of sturdy empty packing boxes will also be very much appreciated and can be dropped off in the cloak room near the *Fellowship Hall*.

**PLEASE NOTE THE DATE CHANGE:** Packing for the Christmas Food baskets will now be on **Friday, December 21 at 9:00 AM**. Please call Reiner Mueller e-mail if interested in helping out [reinermueller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:reinermueller@sbcglobal.net).

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## Sharing Tree

The Children's Sharing Tree will be up in the lobby on **Sunday, December 2**. Please take a tag and help make a child's holiday brighter. There will be \$25.00 gift cards from Target, Walmart and Kohl's that can be purchased at the Youth Table. Take a tag and proceed to the Youth Table to fill out the form and write your check. We will take it from there. All gifts and gift cards need to be returned to the Sharing Tree by 11:00 AM on Sunday, December 9. If you have any questions, please contact Connie Nielsen at [the3niensens@gmail.com](mailto:the3niensens@gmail.com). Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry.



## KIDS HOPE USA

On Christmas Eve, beautiful red poinsettias will adorn our sanctuary and contribute to its festive atmosphere as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. An old Mexican legend explains how poinsettias and Christmas come together. Several versions of the story exist, but I am partial to the retelling done by author/illustrator Tomie dePaola. He tells of a young Mexican girl who lives with her family and helps her parents by watching her younger brother and sister and by doing chores. As Christmas grew near, the local priest visited and asked her mother to weave a new blanket to cover Baby Jesus in the church's nativity. Her mother replied that she was honored to weave the new blanket, so they began to work on it.

On Christmas Eve, the villagers would form a procession, walk along a candlelit path, and place their gifts at the manger. The new blanket would be her family's gift. A few days before Christmas, the Mother became ill. Her father had to take her away to get help. She would not return until after Christmas. The girl decided to finish the blanket on her own but ended up with a tangled mess that could not be repaired. Now her family would not have a gift to give. She felt she had ruined Christmas and was very sad. On Christmas Eve, she hid and watched the villagers proceed to the church and lay their gifts at the manger. Suddenly, an old woman appeared and told her she had a message for her. Her mother would be fine and would return soon. She told her to go to church to celebrate the birth of Christ. The girl replied that she could not go because she had no gift. The woman told her any gift, no matter how small, given in love, is beautiful. Baby Jesus would love her gift because it came from her.

The girl gathered a bunch of green weeds growing by the roadside and fashioned them into a bouquet. She proceeded through the church to the manger. She arranged the green weeds around the manger and knelt to pray. The villagers watched in amazement as the weeds burst into bright red star shaped flowers. When they went outside, all the other green weeds had also burst into red flowers. The flowers became known as 'Flores de Noche Buena' or 'Flowers of the Holy Night.'

Just like the girl, KIDS HOPE USA mentors and prayer partners give gifts out of the love in their hearts. Their gifts cost no money but are priceless. Their gifts of friendship, encouragement, and prayer nurture young children and help them blossom and develop their skills, talents, and abilities so they can make the world a better place. At this Christmas season, we are grateful for the gifts they give to make a difference in the lives of children.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a healthy, happy New Year from KIDS HOPE!

Gloria Reichert  
Director  
KIDS HOPE USA

# **“HOW TO HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS”**

**JOIN US FOR OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS  
PROGRAM**

**ON**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16**

**DURING THE 11:00 A.M. SERVICE**



**THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM WILL FOCUS ON THE JOURNEY OF A YOUNG  
GIRL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE SECRET TO THE CELEBRATION.  
AFTER SHE EXHAUSTS EVERY VENUE SHE DISCOVERS THAT THE  
“MERRY” IN CHRISTMAS COMES FROM WITHIN, AND THERE IS NO  
BETTER TIME THAN REMEMBERING THE BIRTH OF JESUS TO  
CELEBRATE LOVE.**



## **SPARK ACTIVITY**

**(K thru 5<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

**JOIN US**



What: Ornament Painting

Where: Maggie & Ellie's Pottery  
15155 Pearl Road, Strongsville

When: December 9, Noon

Paint two Christmas Ornaments per child to hang on your tree

Cost: \$10 per child

Please fill out the form below:

<https://goo.gl/forms/KVhah0VZqUG7ZFbb2>



## **Women's Book Club**

We continue to meet at The Market District on Pearl Road in Strongsville, one Saturday per month at 9 am. Sign up at the Welcome Center. Dates & book selections are:

January 26: "Time Keeper" by Mitch Albom

February 16: "Small Great Things" by Jodi Picoult

March 16: "Educated" by Tara Westover

April 13: "The Chilbury Ladies Choir" by Jennifer Ryan

May 18: "Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood

## **Thank Offering Date: February 10, 2019**

On Sunday, February 10, First Church women are invited to share a gift with the Women of the ELCA. This annual gift supports the ongoing ministry and operations of the denomination's Women of the ELCA.

# DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

	December 2	December 9	December 16	December 23	December 24	December 30
<b>Acolytes</b> Ellen Kolman	10:30/11:00	Caroline Haggett Samantha Hoffman	Abbey Uline	Hannah Carrossellia Luke Thellman	Olivia Brewer 4PM 8PM 10PM Owen Smith	Madelyn Fox
<b>Ushers</b> Maureen Shorts	8:30	Bob Strong Gladys Otto Dave Chaya	Ron Shorts Maureen Shorts Mike McNamara	Bob Strong Linda Browning Dave Bewie	Gladys Otto Shelley Fetzer Dave Chaya	Mike McNamara Stacey McNamara Ron Shorts
Dawn Evangelista	10:30/ 11:00	Renee Chaya	Stacey McNamara	Margaret Bewie	Maraget Chaya	Maureen Shorts
	4:00 PM	Jerry Krueger Barb Krueger Bob Snyder Heather Snyder	Bob Jacob Brenda Jacob Dennis Beckman Jim Gist	Alan Evangelista Dawn Evangelista Eddie Forse Lori Forse	Jim Zakrajsek June Zakrajsek Reiner Mueller Rolf Gaab	Ron Warzel Mary Jane Warzel Chuck Kaskey Sandy Kaskey
	8:00 PM				Al Hoffman Shelley Hoffman	
	10:00 PM				Jerry & Barb Krueger	
					Eddie & Lori Forse	
<b>Readers &amp; CA</b> <b>Barb Krueger Comm Assts:</b>	8:30	Mike Thellman Chuck Whitecar Andrea Cassidy Mike McNamara Jan Kappus	Alli Thellman	Paul Schlacht Bob Strong Don Nielsen Connie Nielsen Bonnie Bailey	Tony Rugar	
	10:30/11:00 <b>Comm Assts:</b>	Alfonso Hinojosa Ron Warzel Ben Blake Lori & Eddie Forse	Marj Gray	Laurie Uline Marj Gray Jerry Krueger Sandy Treudler	Megan Uline	Linda Walker
	4:00 PM				Alan Evangelista Dawn Evangelista	
	8:00 PM				Linda Walker - RCA Tony Rugar Melina Rugar	
	10:00 PM				Bob Jacob Brenda Jacob Kerry & Jacquie McLemore	
<b>Nursery</b> Bonnie Bailey	8:30/10:30	Sandy Treudler Bonnie Bailey	Kelly Worsencroft Jennifer Paine	Barb Krueger Bonnie Bailey	Gerri Sagan Barb Krueger	Sandy Treudler Bonnie Bailey
<b>Counting Teams</b> Terri Mosley		Reiner Mueller Al Hoffman Shelley Hoffman Pierre David	Gayle Kovach Rita Ross Chris Hamel Carol Paulini	Sam Reichert Rolf Gaab Jackie Wojciehowski John Brinzo	Terri Mosley Bob Snyder Heather Snyder Bob Jacob	Wade Zwingler Mary Whitecar Pat Sauernheimer Daphne Leon
<b>Altar Guild</b> Beth David		Janice Hentosh Ellen Kolman Beth David	Barb Krueger Lynn Stenger Shelley Hoffman Jacquie McLemore	Sandy Rath Billie Hoffman Karen McFarland	Pat Sauernheimer Janet Kaiser Sandy Kaskey	Dawn Evangelista Marsha Stephens Sheri Gist Tricia Nolder

## **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)**

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

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Dear First Church Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the name of Jesus! It is with great joy that First Church Council is reaching out to you today to inform you of the outcome from the November congregational meeting.

The congregation approved the motion to amend the voting members from 75 to 50 to constitute a quorum. This is the second step in a three step process. The next step will be to have a ratifying vote at the next congregational meeting in May and a two-thirds majority vote would be required for the amendment's final approval.

The congregation also approved the motion to amend the by-laws to create the Sharon & Jason Stanley Memorial Scholarship Fund.

First Church has been blessed by God with so much abundance, and we thank God for all of his gifts. Meanwhile, shifting demographics, societal changes, and congregational stewardship pressures have emerged which resulted in a budget deficit of approximately \$40,000. Through the generosity of our pastors who gave up their 2% raises and a portion of their benefits package, this gap narrowed to approximately \$22,000. This budget for 2019 (with the deficit) was approved by the congregation. **You are needed!**

At the meeting council presented some thoughts and ideas as to how the deficit could be narrowed. The possibility of have another \$60SUN or two along with some revenue generating activities could close the gap. However, none of this can happen without you, the congregation. **You are needed!**

The first step in our process is to reach out to you and prayerfully ask you to examine your pledges for 2019. If you have not pledged or if you feel you can increase your pledge, please place your pledge cards in the offering plate or you can email [firstelcastewardship@gmail.com](mailto:firstelcastewardship@gmail.com).

As 2019 progresses on, we will be coming to you with opportunities to help us narrow our budget deficit. We are asking each and every one of you to support and help us in this these efforts. **Your thoughts, voices and actions are needed!**

We rejoice and thank God for our bounty. We are truly blessed with an ongoing opportunity to serve God and the community around us, all in the face of a changing world. Will you participate with us? Will you be one of the persons or families who help us go forward?

Peace,

Church Council

## **Proverbs 17:3 ESV**

*The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts.*

# December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:45 – Sunday School 12:30 – Christmas Decorating	3 7:00 – Bible Bonanza 7:00 – Confirmation 7:00 – AA	4 6:00 – Crossroad Stitchers 6:30 – Pub Church 7:00 – Toastmaster's 7:30 – Al-Anon	5 7:30 – Chancel Choir	6 6:30 – Praise Band 7:30 – Men's Basketball	7 10:00 – Prayer & Care	8 9:30 – Strongsville Food Bank
9 9:45 – Sunday School 11:00 – Holy Baptism 12:00 – Bell Choir 12:00 – Spark Event – Maggie & Ellie's	10 7:00 – Bible Bonanza 7:00 – Mentor Groups 7:00 – AA	11 12:15 – Over 50's Group 7:00 – Cabinet Meeting 7:00 – Toastmaster's 7:30 – Al-Anon	12 7:30 – Chancel Choir	13 6:30 – Praise Band 7:30 – Men's Basketball	14	15
16 9:45 – Sunday School 11:00 Service – Children's Program 12:00 – Bell Choir 12:30 – Christmas Caroling	17 7:00 – Bible Bonanza 7:00 – Confirmation 7:00 – AA	18 7:00 – Toastmaster's 7:30 – Al-Anon	19 10:00 – Lydia Circle 7:30 – Chancel Choir	20 6:30 – Praise Band 7:30 – Men's Basketball	21	22
23 9:45 – Sunday School	24 Worship 4:00 PM, 8:00 PM & 10:00 PM	25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed! 7:30 – Al-Anon	26	27 6:30 – Praise Band	28	29
30 One Worship Service 10:30 AM – Lessons & Carols	31 7:00 – AA					

**Pastor Charles Knerem**  
[Pastorchuck1@gmail.com](mailto:Pastorchuck1@gmail.com)

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**Pastor Kathleen Kluck**  
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