
FEBRUARY 2024

THE MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of First Lutheran Church, ELCA

Growing in God's grace, reflecting Christ's love, and living in the Spirit.



GO AND... HAVE THE CONVERSATION

WRITTEN BY NEBRASKA SYNOD STAFF

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Conversation is an exchange involving active listening as well as taking turns sharing ideas and stories. It can be easy for us to fall into monologuing, lecturing, or tuning out especially when we think we know the answers. As a result, we often avoid having difficult conversations. Faith-filled disciples are called to be honest and engage with each other in Christ-like love.

Questions to consider:

- What is your prayer as you consider engaging in a hard conversation?
- When was a time you had a hard conversation? What did it feel like? What did you learn from it?
- What is The conversation that you need to GO have and with whom?

Prayer: Engaging God, who is not afraid of any conversation, give me the words, wisdom, and heart to join in difficult conversations. Amen.

Suggested Song: Canticule of the Turning (ELW 723)

RESOURCES

ELCA: WWW.ELCA.ORG
800-638-3522

NEBRASKA SYNOD: WWW.NEBRASKASYNOD.ORG
402-896-5311

NEBRASKA LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY:
WWW.NELCM.COM 402-391-1144

NEBRASKA LUTHERAN OUTDOOR MINISTRIES:
WWW.NLOM.ORG 402-944-2544

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF: WWW.LWR.ORG
800-597-5972

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE: WWW.ELCA.ORG/OUR-WORK/RELIEF-AND-DEVELOPMENT/LUTHERAN-DISASTER-RESPONSE
800-638-3522



PRAYER VENTURES FOR THIS MONTH CAN BE FOUND:
[HTTPS://WWW.ELCA.ORG/RESOURCES/PRAYER-VENTURES](https://www.elca.org/resources/prayer-ventures)

THESE PETITIONS ARE OFFERED AS GUIDES TO PRAYER FOR THE GLOBAL, SOCIAL, AND OUTREACH MINISTRIES OF THE ELCA, AS WELL AS FOR THE NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR NEIGHBORS, COMMUNITIES, AND WORLD.

WITHIN OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY

Prayers of Comfort and Peace for...



- Fred & Betty Kempf on the death of their nephew, Charles “Andy” Tomsen and Betty’s Brother, Jim (James) Tomsen
- The family & friends of Larry McMaster on his death.
- The family & friends of Virginia (Virgy) Lund on her death.

Thank you:

Volunteers of the Month for February: Confirmation Small Group Leaders

Ashley Lewandowski
Desiree John
Megan Schmidt
Michelle Dutcher
Derek Schweitzer
Sarah Schweitzer
Josh Sikes
Dave Behle
Meressa Bayley

Amy Sikes
Kelsey Ostrander
Pastor Rick Carlson
Pastor Michelle Carlson
Kyle Means
Scott Darveau
Adam Wegner
Stefani Wegner
Jamie Banzhaf



Confirmation Leaders:

- You are making a huge impact on generations below us.
- You are Christ’s representative, and are often the only source of the Gospel teens will know.
- Youth ministry is an incredible way to serve God’s people.

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much to all the preschool families and church families for coming to support

First Lutheran Church

Preschool! It was such a fun event! Over \$1,200 dollars was raised which will go towards some much needed education manipulatives and toys.



Music Ministry

Praising God through music!

The choirs practice weekly and all are welcome to join!

Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:00 pm.*
High School through adults are welcome
CJ Sabah--director

Chancel Bells rehearses on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.*
Choir is open to high schoolers through adults
Natalie Radcliffe--director

Sound Offering Praise Band rehearses on Thursdays from
5:30 to 7:00 pm.*
If interested contact Stacy Bean
Stacy Bean--director

Praiser Bells rehearses on Wednesdays from 5:15 to 5:45 pm.*
This choir is for 3rd grade through 8th grade
Angela Wright--director

Heavenly Treble Makers rehearses on Wednesdays from 6:15 to 6:45 pm.*
This is a vocal choir for middle schoolers
Angela Wright--director

Children's Choir Rehearses on Sunday mornings during the Sunday
School & Wednesday evenings during FROG. All children are welcome.
Feb. 18th - 11am service | We will practice during Sunday School. Please
have your child come to the choir loft a little before the service.
Amanda Lewis - Director

**Practice times may adjust during Lenten Service.*



Ash Wednesday & Lent Announcements



February 14
Ash Wednesday
services with
Communion and
Imposition of Ashes

Join us Wednesdays
for Lenten services

Lenten Mid-Week Services Wednesdays at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Take time out of your week to pause,
find refreshment, and start anew with
God as we gather for worship.

February 14 through March 27

Order your Easter Flowers

Help adorn our sanctuary on
Easter morning!

Orders forms are on the
welcome stations and are
Due February 28.



Order forms for
Easter flowers are on
the welcome stations.
You can also call
the office to place an
order & mail
a check.

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES



\$1,437.26 was donated to ELCA
Good Gifts for water filters.
This will allow 48 water filters
to be purchased.
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
DONATIONS!**

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE

Get involved | Volunteer | Ministry Opportunities



Please fill out the
“Called to Serve” forms
located in the pews.

Fold & put in the offering plate

Jubilee Meals



FLC will host meals on
Thursday evenings in
February and March.

Please contact
Paula Peterson at
308-440-2424
with any questions.



**Do you have
questions on the
renovation
process?**

**Join us Sunday, February 18
9:50 am in Centennial Hall**

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



The Annual Meeting of Kearney Area Habitat for Humanity will be held February 13 at 6 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. All volunteers and vendors are invited to attend this evening of celebration for a successful 2023 build season and the anticipation of the 2024 build season. Our third applicant for a house in 2024 has been selected. The 2024 Build Season will begin on April 6 at 8 am on P Ave between 16th and 17th Streets.

Thank you to everyone who donated cash, time and talent to the completion of the 2023 build season and to the Give Where You Live fund to help with ongoing expenses.



MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



**Our 2024,
HUNGER CHALLENGE
TO SAVE LIVES
ends March 15.**



HURRY! GIVE NOW

With each new year, many of us focus on making a resolution — a personal commitment to in some way improve ourselves and our futures. But come February, many of these promises have already been broken. The gyms are once again populated only with the long-term fitness enthusiasts, and old habits take the front seat.

While our gym membership lapsed years ago, here at Lutheran World Relief, we take each new year to recommit to what matters most: Affirming God's love for all people and working toward ending poverty, injustice and human suffering around the world.

<https://give.lwr.org>

ROYAL FAMILY KIDS

It's our desire for every child in our community to experience unconditional love, hope, and safety.

Royal Family KIDS Kearney's mission is to create life-changing moments for children who have experienced relational trauma.

Go to www.kearneyrfk.org to volunteer at camp, become a mentor or give online.



MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES: S.A.F.E. Center



**PLEASE PLACE ITEMS ON THE
"SHARING SHELF" IN THE
NARTHEX. THANK YOU!**

The S.A.F.E. Center is the Spouse/Sexual abuse family education center.

The S.A.F.E. Center's mission is to provide free and confidential services for those affected by dating violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and stalking while bringing awareness and prevention efforts to all individuals across South Central Nebraska.

Counties we serve: Buffalo, Franklin, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps



Hours: Monday-Thursday 9a.m. - 5 p.m.

Address: 620 E. 25th Street Suite 14

Kearney, NE 68847

308-237-2599/Crisis line: 877-237-2513

WORSHIP THEMES

February 4, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPHIPHANY

ISAIAH 40:21-31; PSALM 147:1-11, 20c; 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-23; MARK 1:29-39

In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So, in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strength in quiet times of prayer.

February 11, 2024

**TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD
LAST SUNDAY AFTER EPHIPHANY**

2 KINGS 2:1-12; PSALM 50:1-6; 2 CORINTHIANS 4:3-6; MARK 9:2-9

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

February 18, 2024

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

GENESIS 9:8-17; PSALM 25:1-10; 1 PETER 3:18-22; MARK 1:9-15

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey towards baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the food with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is the sake of the whole world.

February 25, 2024

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

GENESIS 17:1-7, 15-16; PSALM 22:23-31; ROMANS 4:13-25; MARK 8:31-38

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

A COUNCIL UPDATE

Plans for the New Year

Council Report

Council Q&A on Feb. 18th

Greetings members of First Lutheran,

Here's an update from council on the latest happenings at First. The Building Committee continues to meet with our representatives from Wilkins APD on our office renovation and HVAC project. We're going over every last detail to ensure the plans are set up in the best way possible. We've been finetuning things like door and window placement, HVAC duct work, bathroom finishes, and more.

There will be a Council Q&A session on Feb. 18th between services at 9:50am to share final plans and discuss next steps for construction, continued fundraising efforts, and updated cost projections.

The FLY Director job has been posted and we're praying that God brings us an excellent candidate to fill that role. Please be thinking if you know anyone who would be a great fit for leading FLY and helping in areas of congregational and community engagement efforts.

Finally, we invite you to consider getting more involved in our ministry efforts through volunteering. If you haven't done so yet, please complete one of the volunteer forms located at the welcome stations and in the pews. This form showcases the variety of volunteer opportunities available. To be transparent, it's been getting harder to find enough volunteers to carry out the weekly needs of the church. There are volunteer needs with ministry team positions, worship services, children's ministry, music ministry, hospitality, audio & video, and more. There are many ways to serve God! Please prayerfully consider these options.

In peace,

Kyle Means

Council President, on behalf of Kelly Russman (VP), Lee Fritson (Secretary), Shirley Smalley (Treasurer), Judy Henning, Karen Emal, Bill Schmidt, PJ Bartels, Deb Schauer, Pastor Michelle, and Pastor Rick

Children's Ministry

Anyone can sign up for these opportunities at any time throughout the school year.

The Sign-Up form is on the church website and on the Welcome Stations.

Sunday School

Classes for ALL Ages
9:50 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.

Wednesday Night events
Feeding the Flock for youth and adults.
Meal served: 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

FROG (Fully Rely on God) for Preschool and Elementary aged kids.
6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

Confirmation
Large Group 6:50 p.m.-7:25 p.m.
Small Group 7:25 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
FLY: 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m

**FROG & Confirmation will not meet during Lent:
Feb. 14 - March 28**

Registration for Preschool is open to the public. Please share with anyone you know looking for preschool.



Don't forget to register for Communion Class!

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS Open to 4th and 5th graders

Classes will be held during Lent on Wednesdays
5:45-6:20 PM in Fellowship Hall
February 21, 28, March 6, 13 & 20

Class members will receive their First Communion at the Maundy Thursday service on March 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Spring Children's Choir Dates

Feb. 18th - 11am service | We will practice during Sunday School. Please have your child come to the choir loft a little before the service.

March 24th - 8:45am service | Please have your child come to the sanctuary at 8:15am to quickly run through the song with all the choirs.

April 21st - 11am service | I will call you forward when it is time.

May 12th - 8:45am service | Please have your child come to the sanctuary at 8:15am to quickly run through the song with all the choirs.

Questions call or text 308-240-0872 Thanks! Amanda Lewis

Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

Adult Sunday School

Please join Pastor John Gosswein and Jantha Jamison as they lead this six week session “C.S. Lewis & Friends.”



Beginning February 25, please join Pastor Rick for Adult Bible Study.

Adult Bible Study with Pastor Rick

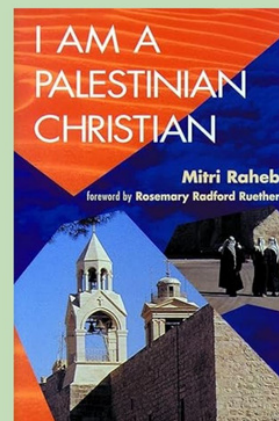
- What Does the Book of Revelation Really Reveal?
- February 25, March 3, 10, 17
- 9:50 am | Centennial Hall



“Reading with Pastor Michelle” will be Wednesdays after Lenten services.

- Reading with Pastor Michelle
- Wednesdays, Feb. 21st-March 27
- 7:07 pm in Fellowship Hall

**“I AM A PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN”
by Mitri Raheb
is available on Amazon.**





FLY Updates February 2024

We were excited to get back to regular FLY meetings in January and have a lot happening!

Over break FLY members began work on updating the basement spaces. We have more to do but are making great progress!

The month of January brought bible studies, bowling nights, and a “Beignet Break” fundraiser as we continue to look forward to the ELCA youth gathering in New Orleans this summer! Once again, we are extremely grateful for the support and generosity of the congregation.

Over Lent we will be taking a break from our regular schedule to engage in practical faith conversations with leaders of the congregation. These topics will range from the existence of Hell to society’s role in ending homelessness. We look forward to the conversations and the opportunity to hear about matters of faith from others in the congregation.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or thoughts!

-Ashlea Denton

My email is adenton@firstlutherankearney.org



Enjoying Beignets



Big Apple Fun!



Preschool NEWSLETTER

PreK

Hello First Lutheran! We hope 2024 is going very well you!

We began the year making a fun snowman and writing the new year on its hat. We had brown, black, stripe, backwards day and hopefully our 100th day on Feb. 7th! (If we don't have any more snow days!) We are learning about snow, ice and water. They can tell you the difference between a solid and a liquid.

We have a lot of new centers. The students read around the room with pointers! They know many words, numbers, letters and shapes. They have a ton of wood blocks in the block center and are having a blast creating with them. Soon they also will have a music center and will make some of the most beautiful music.

They are getting really good at making snowflakes out of coffee filters and paper. We have a pretend paper friend on the wall and we are surrounding her with snow. They also got to paint with puffy paint. Oh, it is so much fun!

Our teddy bear picnic day was January 23rd. We had teddy bears and other stuffed animal join us all morning. We had a picnic with them and ate pizza. Some even had a tea party with them during centers!

By the time you read this our Preschool Brunch will be over and I am sure it will be another fun time! Thank you for your support and coming to see what we are up to. Donations received at the breakfast will go towards some new manipulatives and toys. Registration for the new school year opened to the public on January 26th.

Valentine's Day is just around the corner! Tell those family and friends how much they mean to you!

Have a blessed February!
Mrs. Amanda & Mrs. Sonya

3 & 4 year old class

Hello First Lutheran Parishioners,

Well, the preschoolers have been excelling in their second semester of school and we are constantly amazed by their academic growth! They know many of their numbers and letters and ask great questions when we do our science experiments. Speaking of science, we have stirred up our Pumpkin Jack into the soil and are anxiously awaiting to see if he will come back. Also, we have learned about why some objects sink in the water and some float. We have observed what happens when snow and ice melts and in February we will discover how shadows are made when we talk about the groundhog.

We are super excited to host our moms in February for Mommies and Muffins Day when we will show off our measuring skills by making some mud pies! And we are also enthusiastic for Valentine's Day and look forward to filling people's buckets by being polite, doing random acts of kindness and giving complements!

We will wrap up the month with some activities about poison safety and dental care and then have fun learning as much as we can about dinosaurs!

We hope you all are staying warm, safe and healthy!
Gods Blessings,
Mrs. Lora and Mrs. Mindy



WOMEN of the ELCA

The Women of the ELCA Gathering and Convention was held in September in Phoenix, Arizona. Myrna Wells-Ullan, was elected as the organization's president for the 2023-2026 triennium.

"Women of the ELCA is a wonderful organization I love the things we do [and] all of the initiatives we have. I know they are challenging... I am really excited about the capabilities we have for this next triennium. [In Hebrew], hineni means 'Here I am, Lord. You called me. Use me. So I'm going to close with that. Hineni.'" There are many ways in our local church that you can ask "Here I am Lord, use me." Maybe it's helping with the infant care kits, helping with quilting, being the chair for Lutheran World Relief, helping serve or bring food for funerals, sewing backpacks for school kits, or bringing a friend or other ladies to the Women of the ELCA events. The choices are endless, but it's about asking how am I going to serve the Lord.

The Southern Prairie Spring Gathering will be held on March 9th at Bethany Lutheran Church in Ruskin. The theme is "Open Our Hearts, Listen, Be Kind and Pray."

They have speakers who will focus on mental health, and work that is being done in the Superior area. As soon as registration forms are available they will be posted on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board by the office. All women of the church are invited to attend.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 5 -7:00 pm - Women of the
ELCA Board Meeting Classroom 21 & 22

March 4 - 7:00 pm - Women of the ELCA
Board Meeting Classroom 21 & 22

March 9 - 9:00 am - Southern Prairie
Spring Gathering Bethany Lutheran -
Ruski

DEBORAH CIRCLE

5:00 PM -3RD MONDAY

CHAIR: DEB SCHAUER

308-233-2669

GLORIA CIRCLE

12:00PM-3RD THURSDAY

CHAIR: JUDY WORKMAN

308-237-2781

NAOMI CIRCLE

7:00PM-4TH THURSDAY

(3RD THURS. IN NOV.)

CHAIR: JUDY NIEMANN

308-234-4332



DECEMBER FINANCE REPORT			
Ministry Budget:	Dec 2023	YTD '23-'24	YTD '22-'23
Budget Supporting Revenue	\$81,947	\$382,728	\$ 401,834
Budget Related Expenditures	\$(53,297)	\$(385,949)	\$(424,579)
Total 2023-2024 Ministry Budget: \$759,201			
Facilities Budget:	Dec 2023	YTD '23-'24	YTD '22-'23
Revenue	\$7,708	\$38,155	\$ 51,044
Expenditures	\$(4,020)	\$ (13,678)	\$ (27,896)
Total 2023-2024 Facilities Budget: \$44,100			



ELECTRONIC GIVING:

Please consider using VANCO Mobile Faith, as you give and donate to help us lower expenses. You can select a one-time or recurring donation.

Online: Visit FirstLutheranKearney.org.

Click on the "Resources" tab, then "Make a Donation".

Or download the Vanco Mobile Faith app on an iPhone or Android. Search for "First Lutheran Church" at 3315 Ave G, Kearney. Create a profile.

OFFERING ENVELOPES:

If you contribute by check, please put it inside an offering envelope. It may not be possible to record your contribution if you don't use an envelope. If you contribute by check without using an envelope, please write your offering envelope number on your check. This will enable us to record your contributions accurately. Any loose checks received without an envelope number noted may not be reflected on your contribution statement.

Contributions to the Ministry Budget and Facilities Budget can be combined in one check.

Thank you for your help!

If you have any questions or need assistance using the electronic giving options or need offering envelopes, please contact Stacy Seim in the church office: (308)237-5544 or SSeim@FirstLutheranKearney.org

Thank you so much for your faithful generosity to First Lutheran Church's ministry!

Church Office

office@firstlutheranearney.org

Pastor Rick Carlson

Co-Pastor

rcarlson@firstlutheranearney.org

Pastor Michelle Holley Carlson

Co-Pastor

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Kandy Bacon

Administrative Assistant

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Kathy Benne

Director of Communications and Events

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Stacy Seim

Bookkeeper

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Natalie Radcliffe

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Amanda Lewis

Lead Teacher for the Preschool

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CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Kyle Means

President

Kelly Russman

Vice President

Shirley Smalley

Treasurer

Lee Fritson

Secretary

Judy Henning

Karen Emal

Bill Schmidt

PJ Bartels

Deb Schauer

Pastor Michelle

Pastor Rick



PRESIDENT:

DEB SCHAUER

308-233-2669

VICE PRESIDENT:

LINDA FOWLER

308-236-7265

SECRETARY:

BEV VACHA

308-468-6239

TREASURER:

JO SMALLCOMB

308-234-3053

February Dates to Remember

1st/3rd Weekends	Laying on of Hands for Healing during Worship Services
Saturday, February 3	6:00 pm Worship
Sunday, February 4	8:45 am & 11:00 am Worship 9:50 am Sunday School for all ages & Adult Bible Study 2:00 pm Worship at Brookstone Gardens
Saturday, February 10	6:00 pm Worship
Sunday, February 11	8:45 am & 11:00 am Worship 9:50 am Sunday School for all ages & Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, February 14	12noon & 6:30pm - Ash Wednesday Services
Saturday, February 17/18	6:00 pm Worship
Sunday, February 18	8:45 am & 11:00 am Worship 9:50 am Q&A Session on renovation process 9:50 am Sunday School for all youth
Wednesday, February 21	6:30 pm Midweek Lent Service 7:07 pm Reading with Pastor Michelle
Saturday, February 24	6:00 pm Worship
Sunday, February 25	8:45 am & 11:00 am Worship 9:50 am Sunday School for all ages & Pastor Rick's Bible Study
Wednesday, February 28	6:30 pm Midweek Lent Service 7:07 pm Reading with Pastor Michelle

Wednesday Nights

Music Rehearsals – Praiser Bells, Heavenly Treble Makers, Chancel Choir
FEEDING THE FLOCK – 5:30 pm in Centennial Hall. (Not on Ash Wednesday)
FIRST COMMUNION CLASS – 4th & 5th Graders beginning February 21.
FROG* 6:30 – 7:45 pm
Confirmation* 6:50 – 8:00 pm
FLY in basement youth room – 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm (7pm-8pm during lent)
***NO FROG or Confirmation classes during Lent | Feb. 14 - March 27**

Thursday Nights:

Jubilee Meals

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
3315 G AVENUE
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847-3699

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
3315 G AVENUE - KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847



The church calendar, weekly bulletins, prayer lists, and LIVE Webstream Broadcasts on
Sunday mornings can be found on our website:

<https://firstlutherankearney.org>

Find us on Facebook: "First Lutheran Church-Kearney"

Sign Up for Weekly Email Updates: office@firstlutherankearney.org

LIVE Radio Broadcast Sundays at 8:45 a.m. | KXPN 1460AM

PHONE: 308-237-5544 WEB: <https://firstlutherankearney.org>

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

**To save postage costs and receive "The Messenger" via email exclusively,
please call or email the church office.**