



Jan. 2024

Martin's Lutheran Church, Casselton

701-347-4289 martinslutheran.com



Children's Christmas Program 2023

39 Gift Shoeboxes were filled for the Homeless Shelter.



COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

December 2023

These notes are from the most recent Council Meeting held on December 13. When approved by the Council at their next monthly meeting in January the approved minutes will be posted in the Council Minutes Binder in the Conference Room. The next scheduled meeting will be held on January 10 at 7:30pm.

December meeting notes:

The Council was called to order by Stacy Link, the Council President, followed with devotions led by Pastor Halaas. Treasurer Derek Flanagan presented November's financial report which was accepted and approved. December's bills were presented and approved for payment.

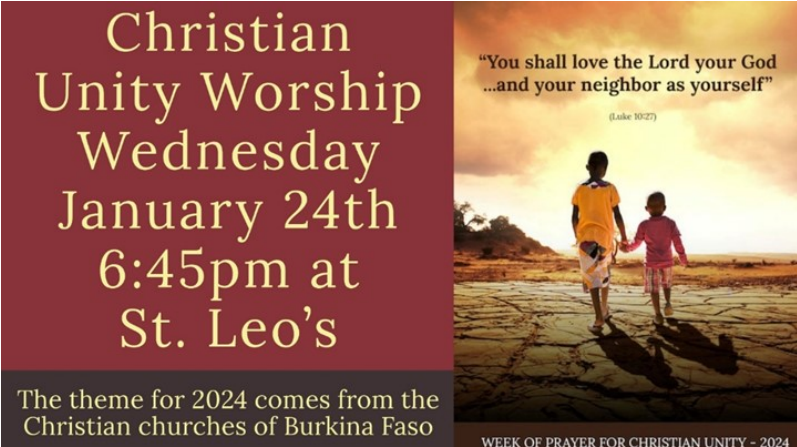
Committee reports included details about Advent and Christmas worship planning, preparation for the Sunday School Christmas program, and details of the Christmas Giving Tree of which 150 tags were taken, gifts were received and given to the YWCA for distribution. Thanks to all. Discussion was held regarding a water leak in one section of the church's new roof which is past warranty. A roofing specialist has given recommendations, but any repairs will be done in the spring.

Discussion was held regarding the proposed 2024 budget. Complete salary details were added for pastors and staff. Discussion continued with the suggestion of adding additional dollars to Martin's commitment to Mission Outreach. The proposed budget with these additional changes was approved. (Please note that Martin's 2024 annual budget will be included in the 2023 Annual Report which will be available on Sunday, January 14, in preparation for the Annual Meeting on January 28, 2024.)

The exciting news of the evening was the Council approving the final payment of Martin's mortgage with Bremer Bank on December 28, 2023. The Council directed Joan Carvell to expedite the payment at Bremer. A special celebration of this accomplishment by Martin's will take place at the Annual Meeting in January.

The Nominating, Endowment, and Call Committees have been meeting. A slate of leadership is being prepared for voting at the Annual Meeting. Disbursements from Martin's Endowment Fund were approved by the Council for several organizations in our area and will be made by the end of 2023. There was an update on the work of the Call Committee. They are continuing to interview Pastoral candidates and will be giving an update to the congregation in December.

President of the Council, Stacy Link, prompted conversation regarding our future mission projects. Martin's mortgage will soon be paid in full and that begs the question of what future projects for Martin's are that might excite our energy and stewardship.



Christian
Unity Worship
Wednesday
January 24th
6:45pm at
St. Leo's

"You shall love the Lord your God
...and your neighbor as yourself"
(Luke 10:27)

The theme for 2024 comes from the
Christian churches of Burkina Faso

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY - 2024

Money Talk

Dec. 2023

December Contributions	\$ 40,094.13
Monthly Approved Budget Year to Date	\$391,461.20
Contributions Year to Date	\$351,358.27
Actual Expenses Year to Date	\$309,674.98
Operating Balance	\$ 41,683.29

MORTGAGE UPDATE:
Mortgage Balance: \$24,659.08
All figures are as of 12/27/23

As the church nears the mortgage pay off, we encourage electronic donors to check the Vanco giving page to see how their New Building pledges can be re-allocated in 2024. If you do not remember your log-in information, please contact the office and Joan can assist you.

Contribution statements will be printed the beginning of January. Please contact the office as soon as possible if you have had a change in address. 701-347-4289

Baptisms

Blessings...

Elowyn Jane Nybladh

daughter of

Lincoln & Heather Nybladh was baptized
on Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023.

What a blessing to celebrate!

Blessings...

Ky Pearson

son of

Alan & April Pearson was baptized on
Sunday, Dec. 21, 2023.

What a blessing to celebrate!

Blessings...

Kingsten Pearson

son of

Alan & April Pearson was baptized on
Sunday, Dec. 21, 2023.

What a blessing to celebrate!

Pastors Thoughts

January 2024

The beginning of a new year brings forth a variety of emotions. On one hand we can reflect on the year past and on the other hand we think ahead of what might be. 2023 has been a busy year for me...getting settled in a new Moorhead home after moving from Spokane, taking on new responsibilities as your Interim Senior Pastor, being supportive to our family during the last days of my wife Gwen's Mom's death, the joy of celebrating with family and friends on the 50th anniversaries of our wedding and my college graduation. 2024 looks to be busy but a bit more relaxed...we are more settled in our new home and places of work and at Martin's the Holy Spirit is moving us closer to the reality of calling a new senior pastor. I sense 2024 may offer a bit more time for family, travel, and being with the Loons on Long Lost Lake!

When looking ahead I know that however we see the future, our situations in life can change in an instant. While we can think we are in charge we are not. Things happen, plans change, sometimes one's world can turn upside down. Sickness, sadness, and sudden changes can take us by surprise and overwhelm us. We can find ourselves on an unfamiliar journey that we least expected nor are prepared for the journey. Life is fragile and at any time our security and safekeeping can fall apart. These times are when we need Christ's love and hope to surround us. These are times when the church can also be there for us with their prayers and support.

In January, when the Christmas carols have ended and the festivities of the New Year are over, it is easy for us to sometimes slide into a spirit of melancholy and maybe the mid-winter blues, or even more seriously, depression. If that is the case talk with someone – a friend, a counselor, your physician, a pastor. Let your feelings out so that better mental health can be present.

We are in the season of Epiphany – a time when we are reminded that God's healing light shines upon us. During Epiphany, discover Psalms of God's love that offer reassurance. All these Psalms will be read in worship. Psalm 147 proclaims that God "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds". Read Psalm 62:5-12 where it says, "Trust in God at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us." And Psalm 139 where the Psalmist reminds us that we are uniquely made by God's hands, "you knit me together in my mother's womb ...for Lord, you have searched me and you know me." For those who read to children - read Psalm 139 and then read to your children *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown. These Psalms provide us all with God's promise that nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus.

As we begin a new season in the Church year and a New Year in our lives, may the love and light of Christ be in our hearts and shine out to others!

Peace,

Pastor Mark

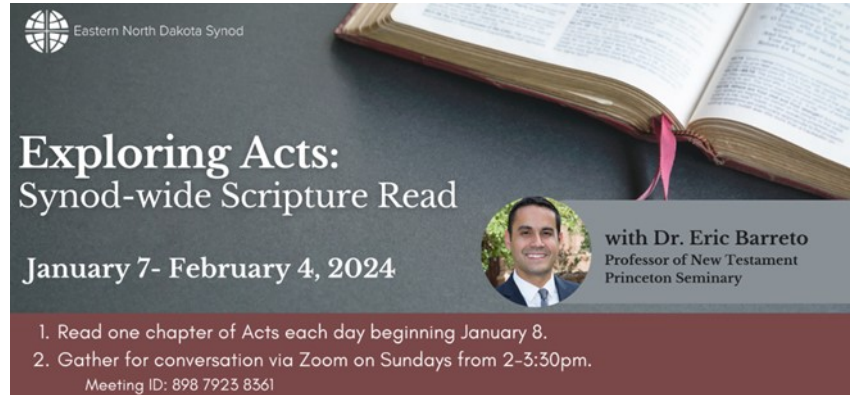
Living Lutheran

The magazine and print resource of the ELCA is now in an all digital platform. You can subscribe for free at: <https://livinglutheran.org/subscribe> and get weekly, biweekly or monthly stories delivered to your inbox. I enjoy the Stories of Faith, I'm a Lutheran focus, and seeing the 100+ birthdays listed. It is fun to see local and global stories that inspire faith and how to serve our neighbors. I encourage you to take time to check it out!

The logo for Living Lutheran features the word "Living" in a light blue, sans-serif font above the word "Lutheran" in a darker blue, sans-serif font. A stylized yellow cross is positioned to the left of the "L" in "Lutheran".

Opening Our Book of Faith

The reflections that our youth did after reading the Gospel according to Mark were wonderful! This was a great challenge put to them by some of our BLAST and Acts29 leaders. Then there was a challenge to read through the Gospel of John and they could use an app on their phone to stay on what was next. It so happens that our EaND Synod has also been working on setting up an initiative to open our book of faith together and read through Acts in January. You can find more information on the synod website: <https://www.eandsynod.org/>



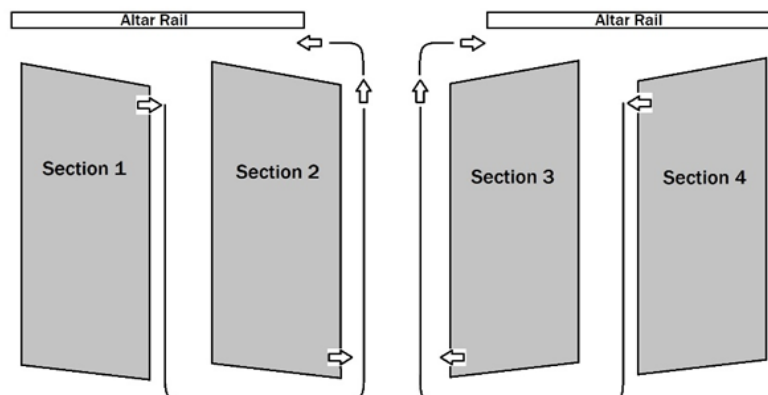
Join the Zoom gathering at 2pm on Sunday, January 7th for conversation with Dr. Eric Barreto, Professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary to kickoff the event. Then read a chapter a day starting on January 8th. Each Sunday there is a Zoom check-in and a wrap up on Sunday, February, 4th. Reading the Bible is a practice we can all do more of and doing it together can be more fun and interesting. I have enjoyed the Book of Acts before and really look forward to reading it again in this way and learning new insights from each other throughout the synod and from a professor I have enjoyed having classes with in the past. Put it on your calendar and see how the Holy Spirit moves in the early years of the Christian Church and where the Holy Spirit is moving in us today!

Peace,

Pastor Keith

Communion Diagram

We have begun a new pattern for Communion ushering starting with the outside sections of pews (Section 1 & 4) and directing people from the front toward the back to go around to receive communion in the center aisle. Then when those sections have received communion the ushers move to the middle pews (Section 2 & 3) and direct people toward the front by starting with the back rows. Hopefully this diagram helps visualize this. For Communion at the rail the same pattern is used with the difference being you can fill in at the rail from the center out to the sides. When we do 4 stations for Communion we'll keep much of the same pattern and have Sections 1 & 4 Commune in the back of their Section and return to their place by the side aisle by the wall.



February-Service Group 8

Meeting January 7th during Coffee Time

Joan Ahonen

Amy Baumgarten

Dan & Colleen Baumgarten

Donald Baumgarten

Dan & Jess Eckert

Charlene Ekeland

Jacob & Christy Forward

Robert & Connie Goettle

*Glenn & Melissa Grommesh

Chris & Kayla Hanson

Kyle & Lisa Jorissen

Travis & Michelle Jorissen

Cecilia Jorud

Lana Kaufman

Kara Kost

Randy & Kelly Krause

Broc & Karen Lietz

Lynn Madsen

Dorene Nelson

Mike & Beth Nelson

Brad & Dana Parkhouse

Mike & Michele Rieniets

Dustin & Jerrica Sawicki

Nathan & Janelle Scherr

Brad & Amy Schultz

Jeremy & April Sinner

Kristi Storey-Ness

Duane & Sandy Strand

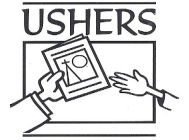
Paul & Francie Strand

Julie Surprenant

Joan Turchin

Caryn Weber

* Denotes coordinator.



Service groups, ask **NOT** what the church can do for you, but what **YOU CAN DO** for the church!!!

After many phone calls to update our membership information, we have started a new process for our monthly service groups. In the past a member of your group called you to either serve at fellowship hour or bring cookies and if they filled the needs, you were not called. This process left many members not having a way to serve the church and many felt as if they were never called. Now the service groups will be in charge of filling the many areas that are needed EVERY week at Martins.

It takes between 20-25 people most Sundays, not counting musicians, pastors, offering counters, and sound people, to make each service run smoothly.

We are also adding a Service group "Fellowship Social" the month before your actual service month so each member can meet their group members, put a name to a face, and initial sign-ups can be done. During this time, we will run through what is expected for each job and questions can be answered at that time. After that meeting those who were not able to attend will be called to fill in empty areas. The group, the service coordinator and I will meet after church on the **FIRST SUNDAY** of the month. We hope this process will help eliminate the last-minute weekly needs of the church. Together we can make Martins a strong, faithful, serving community.

Erin Baumgarten



Thank you for helping support Martin's Lutheran Church.

F.Y.I.

Rachel Circle Bible Study using *Gather Magazine* will meet **Jan. 10th** at 2:00pm. Newcomers welcome.



HOLY YOGA CLASSES

Class times will be determined each week. Fee for the class is a donation to the Food Pantry, as we love our neighbors as ourselves!

WIDOW'S GROUP

Widow's Group will meet **Jan. 1st & 15th** at Sundance, 10:00am.

Newcomers are welcome. For information, contact Judy Orvik. 730-6704

The quilters will meet at 9:30am **Wednesday, Jan. 2, 10, 17, 24, & 31.** Bring an item to share for potluck lunch and join us to put quilts together, tie and sew.

Newcomers are invited to join.



women's ministries

"LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, 'WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?'"
-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Office Closed Monday, Jan. 15th for MLK Day

The Women's Retreat is **January 19-21** @ Coteau des Prairies Lodge (Havana, ND) Final payments are due by **Jan. 1, 2024.** Cash or check (*payable to Martin's Lutheran*) should be directed to Joan Carvell at the church office. Please memo your deposit for Women's Retreat.

If you or someone you know would like a visit from a pastor, please call or text one of the pastors. Pastor Mark Halaas (701-213-2800) or Pastor Keith Walka (701-335-6213) or call the church office (347-4289) or email them: srpastor@martinslutheran.com associatepastor@martinslutheran.com

January 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 New Year <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00am Widows Grp (Sundance)	2	3 9:30am Quilters No Confirmation	4	5 <i>Pastor Mark & Pastor Keith off</i>	6
7 9:30am Worship 10:30am Sunday School/Coffee/Service Grp.8 Meeting 2:00pm Synod Zoom-Book of Acts	8	9	10 9:30am Quilt 12:30pm Lutheran Faith 2:00pm Rachel Circle 4:00pm 6th Gr. Conf. 5:30pm Lutheran Faith 6:30pm 9th Grade Conf. 7:30pm Council	11	12 <i>Pastor Mark & Pastor Keith off</i> 6:00-8:00pm Feed My Starving Children	13 3:00-5:00pm Feed My Starving Children
14 9:30am Worship 10:30am Sunday School/Coffee/ Annual Reports Available 2:00pm Synod Zoom-Book of Acts	15 <i>Martin's Lutheran King, Jr Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00am Widows Grp (Sundance)	16 12:00pm Health Cabinet-Comm. of Care	17 9:30am Quilt 12:30pm Lutheran Faith 4:00pm 6th Gr. Conf. 5:30pm Lutheran Faith 6:30pm 9th Grade Conf.	18 12:00pm Casselton Ministerium	19 <i>Pastor Mark & Pastor Keith off</i> <i>Women's Retreat</i>	20 <i>Women's Retreat</i>
21 9:30am Worship/Bapt. 10:30am Sunday School/Coffee 2:00pm Synod Zoom-Book of Acts	22	23	24 9:30am Quilters 12:30pm Lutheran Faith 5:30pm Lutheran Faith 6:45pm Christian Unity Service-St. Leo's	25	26 <i>Pastor Mark & Pastor Keith off</i>	27 10:30-3:00 Bates Baby Shower
28 9:30am Worship/Noisy Offering 10:30am Sunday School/Coffee/Annual Meeting Mortgage Celebration 2:00pm Synod Zoom-Book of Acts	29	30 2:00pm Fold Newsletters	31 9:30am Quilt 12:30pm Lutheran Faith 4:00pm 6th Gr. Conf. 5:30pm Lutheran Faith 6:30pm 9th Grade Conf.			

Dates to Remember

Jan. 1st-Office Closed-New Year's Day

Jan. 15th-Office Closed-Martin Luther King Day

Jan. 24th-Christian Unity Service @St. Leo's Church

Jan. 28th-Annual Meeting/Mortgage Celebration

Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31-Lutheran Faith classes

Lutheran Faith

This year Pastor Keith is offering times to learn more about our Lutheran Faith by reading through the Large Catechism. These writings of Martin Luther go deeper into his reflections and teachings on the Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. All are welcome to come on Wednesdays at 12:30pm-1pm or 5:30pm-6pm.



JANUARY 10TH Commandments 1-3

JANUARY 17TH Commandments 4-6

JANUARY 24TH Commandments 7-10

JANUARY 31ST First Article of the Creed

This time will remind us of who Martin Luther was as we read some of his writings. We'll notice his concerns some of which are the same today and some we may see differently 500 years later. His desire was to meet the needs of people and churches to have God's Word and teaching on the basics of faith accessible for everyone. Come, bring a friend or neighbor and think deeply on these teachings of faith. Here are two links for the text and the audio for the Large Catechism.

<https://bookofconcord.org/large-catechism/>

<https://librivox.org/the-large-catechism-by-martin-luther/>



The Annual Meeting is **January 28th** after the Worship service. All confirmed members are strongly encouraged to attend. Exciting news will be shared with the congregation and maybe some celebrating.

Feed My Starving Children at the Fargo Dome



This year Feed My Starving Children is taking over the Fargo Dome for a huge goal of packing 10,000,000 meals in 10 days! Martin's is signed up for 20 spots on Friday, January 12th from 6pm-8pm and Saturday, January 13th from 3pm-5pm. Click the links below to sign up with your family or group of friends to pack vitamins, veggies, soy, and rice together. If you are 5yrs old or older you can come. There are some roles for volunteering that can be done even while seated if that is a concern. Parking at the Fargo Dome is free for this event. If you have questions or would like Pastor Keith to sign you up for these or other times, contact him.

Use a link below to sign up for Martin's block to have 20 volunteers help serve others.

Friday, January 12th 6pm-8pm <http://www.fmssc.org/join-group?joincode=0P92ZG>

Saturday, January 13th 3pm-5pm <http://www.fmssc.org/join-group?joincode=169172>



5th Grade Class
Advent Poster



6th Grade Class
Advent Poster

Education News

Dec. 31st No Sunday School

Jan. 7th Sunday School resumes.



6th Grade Confirmation

Meet in BLAST at 4pm

MARTIN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Wednesdays Jan. 10th, 17th, 31st Feb. 7th

9th Grade Confirmation

Meet in Acts29 at 6:30pm



When these women aren't making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, Churches United Homeless Shelter, the Veteran's Hospital, Community of Care, Heart River Lutheran Church or to raise donations they are checking in with each other and others from the congregation that are no longer able to attend Martin's services in person.

MARTIN'S AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
PO BOX 587
CASSELTON ND 58012

Non Profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
Casselton ND
Permit No. 41

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Jan. 7th

9:30am-Worship (ELW) w/Comm.

Jan. 14th

9:30am-Worship (PW) w/Comm.

Jan. 21st

9:30am-Worship (CBW) w/Comm./Bapt.

Jan. 28th Annual Meeting

9:30am-Worship (SOW)/Noisy Offering

MISSION STATEMENT

*Named, claimed, and sustained by God,
Martin's Lutheran is a worshipping
community which gathers together to
hear the Word, learn about God's love,
and to provide support for one another.*

*Together we respond to Christ's
command to share the Good News and to
serve our neighbors -- across the street
and across the world.*