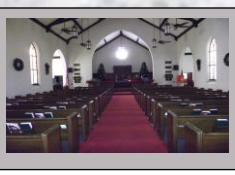
FIRST FRUITS

WE GIVE OUR FIRST FRUITS **BECAUSE HE GAVE US HIS ONLY SON**

January 2026 **Volume 29 No. 1**



First Things First...

Yes, First Things First… As we continue to celebrate the birth of our Messiah, may the angel's greeting to the shepherds be yours to share with your loved ones throughout the new year: peace on Earth and goodwill to all mankind. We pray you had a joyous and safe Christmas and now have a healthy and prosperous new year. May the love of Christ, our Savior, be yours now and always.
Jesus loves you and so do we! Pastor and Alys

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 upcoming issues of *First Fruits,* I share summaries 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. This edition I continue my belief regarding the Ten Commandments.

There was a time when all children were expected to memorize the Ten Commandments, so they might obey them and thereby lead decent and moral lives. Today, escalating numbers of "Christians" cannot name three or four Commandments much less ten. Today, numerous "Christians" reinterpret the Commandments to say whatever society, or any individual, wants them to say. Today, too many "Christians" want the Commandments to be suggestions not Commandments. What is the result? Decay of ethical and moral standards, civil disobedience and unrest, increased violence and crime, among other negative effects. The danger of living in a culture bereft of moral restraint will deteriorate ultimately to Jesus' prophecy: "…*as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man"* (Matthew 24: 37- 39). By his Illustration that people were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" the Messiah revealed an apathetic attitude in the world's population. All was right and normal in their world. Knowing the truth completely, Jesus knew that Scripture painted a different and more sinister painting of "as were the days of Noah."

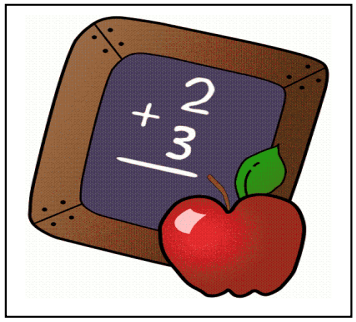
(continued from page 1)

Scripture reveals the morality of society during "the days of Noah." *The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that He had made man on the Earth, and it grieved Him to His heart* (Genesis 6:5-6). We know the judgment which followed God's assessment of rampant evil as the Flood. That could have ended history, except for the mercy of God. *Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord* (Genesis 6:8). Adam's lineage was preserved as the flood waters carried the Ark and all its passengers safely above the tumultuous carnage below the surface of the Deluge. Unfortunately, the pattern would be and will be repeated until the final Judgment Day.

Examining human history, we easily determine that people have trouble obeying rules. Some people do better than others, but whether it is a blatant and intentional disregard for a Commandment, an attempt to justify sinful behavior because "times change," or an excuse founded on ignorance ("But I didn't know that was what the Bible says.") everyone disobeys (Romans 3:23). Even if someone does not know of God's Top Ten, there is a nearly universal ethic in every person. Even if there is only a shadow remaining from the "law written on their hearts," that vestige of a conscience does limit the amount of evil which could be seen. The matter remains that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Fortunately, the love of God provided forgiveness for our rebellion and sinfulness by sending his Son, Jesus, Who by his death and resurrection became the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Christ reconciled us to God by his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. What we could not do for ourselves, He did by taking our sin to Calvary.

This I believe: unless the disciples of Christ willingly devote time and energy to learn, understand and obey the Ten Commandments, this era will be branded with the epithet: "as were the days of Noah." *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:14-16). *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God in the day of visitation* (1 Peter 2:11-12). May the Living Spirit of God accomplish this in and through us! *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible"* (Matthew 19:26b).

Always remember: Jesus loves you and so do I! Pastor Grier



First School And Day Care

The First School is very thankful for all the church members who came out to our annual Christmas program! We truly appreciate all the support!

The school is excited to start the new year with the new building! We are preparing to be in the building by summer. It will be fast approaching sooner than we think and we will be ready! We look forward to everything God has in store for us this year and as always, he gives us the strength to take on new challenges!

Many Blessings,
Bree Joines
First School Director

First School Board Meeting
Thursday, January 8th, 5:00 p.m.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, January 25, 2026.

January Readings

01/04 1 Kings 3:4-15, Psalm 119:97-104, Ephesians 1:3-14. Luke 2:40-52
01/11 Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 29, Romans 6:1-11, Matthew 3:13-17
01/18 Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 40:1-11, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, John 1:29-42a
01/25 Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27:1-9, 1 Corinthians 1:10-18, Mark 8:27-35

01/02 Becky Sample
01/03 Sarah Langston
01/09 Helen Johnson
01/09 Kirk Marek
01/10 Landon Thane
01/15 Everly Orsak
01/16 Sarah Thane
01/18 Sheila Miller
01/27 Cathy Schoenfield
01/30 Rachel Hernandez
01/30 Cindy Mathews
01/31 Landyn Woods

Our FLC Family
Cecil Anderson
Rhonda Achtetee
Cora Lee Bishop
Pastor & Alys Grier
James & Sheila Herrington
Marilyn Kight
Kim & Larry Ledwig
Misty Ledwig
Lloyd Nelson
Ashley Schoeneberg
Bentley

Friends of FLC
Mckenna & Connor Jones

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

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.

PRAY FOR
ALL WHO
SERVE IN
THE US MILITARY

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

WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

OR

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

Phone: 979-543-5847
Email: office@firstlutheranec.com

COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, January 19th
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 next date to serve will be Monday, January 12, 2026.

\+ + + + + + + +

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed December 24-25 and January 1.

Flower Chart

The new Flower Chart (pages) for 2026 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

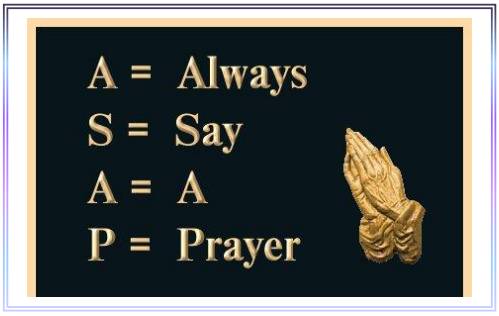
All donations must be in the church office by Dec. 31st in order to receive credit for 2025. All contributions received Jan. 1st or later will be credited to 2026, regardless of the date on the check.

Thank You!

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. Borak for the care of the Cemetery, the Church Council, and First School Board and Bree Joines for the guidance of First School!

As 2025 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 throughout this last year (and the many years she has played for First Lutheran)!

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



First School Board
Thursday, January 8th
5:00 p.m.

Church Council
Monday, January 19th
6:00 p.m.

LCMC Three Days of Prayer

January 6-8, 2026

Day One: January 6

For Our Congregations and Leaders.

"Lord, we pray that You bless our congregations and leaders with Your favor and with Your provision and power to carry out the ministry and mission You have in store for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Day Two: January 7

For those who Don't Yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and For the Prodigals.

"Lord, give us Your heart for those who don't yet know you as Savior and Lord, and for the prodigals. Create in us a boldness to love them and to share our God-stories with them as opportunities arise. Open our eyes to be aware of everyday encounters in which we can minister your love and Your power to those in need. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day Three: January 8

For our International Partners.

"Thank You, Lord, that You have bound us together with these sister churches and leaders and partner networks. We pray that You will show us how we can come alongside them, encourage them, and serve with them. Lord, grant our brothers and sisters Your favor in their cities, communities, and countries. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

January 2026

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

January Responsibilities

ASSISTING MINISTER: Pat Marek
SEXTON: Calvin Borak
USHERS: Kirk Marek, Alvin Yackel
ALTAR GUILD: Billie Jean Bram, Cori Koudela
Kim Ledwig

READER

4th Dagny Thane
11th Ted Schoenfield
18th Helen Johnson
25th Calvin Borak

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

JANUARY FLOWER CALENDAR

4th
Open
11th
Open
18th
Open
25th
Open

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: Calvin Borak, Will Joines, Karen Kight, Kim Ledwig, Kirk Marek, Cindy Mathews & Doug Mathews

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

Join us for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 25th!

Worship Service – 10:45 a.m.