



# Fields of Grace Newsletter

Website: [fieldsofgracemn.com](http://fieldsofgracemn.com)

Vol. 14, Issue 5

Bernadotte, First & Swan Lake Lutheran

Dec. 2024

## FOG SERVICE SCHEDULE, Dec.-Jan.

DECEMBER 2024			
		8:00 AM	9:30 AM
Week 1	Dec. 1	SL*	BLC*
Week 2	Dec. 8	BLC	FLC*
Week 3	Dec. 15	SL*	FLC*
Week 4	Dec. 22	FLC	BLC
Christmas Eve	Dec. 24	5:00 PM	FLC
Christmas Eve	Dec. 24	7:00 PM	SL
Christmas Day	Dec. 25	8:00 AM	BLC*
Week 5	Dec. 29	Joint Worship	BLC*

JANUARY 2025			
		8:00 AM	9:30 AM
Week 1	Jan. 5	SL*	BLC*
Week 2	Jan. 12	BLC	FLC*
Week 3	Jan. 19	SL*	FLC Ann'l Mtg
Week 4	Jan. 26	FLC	BLC Ann'l Mtg

\* communion



## Many hands make a tree!

After painting pumpkins Sunday, November 3 at Bernadotte, the Sunday School kids (and some adults) painted their hands and made leaves on a tree.



## Baptism at First Lutheran

Claire Madelyn Schreiner, daughter of Zack and Miranda Schreiner, was baptized at First Lutheran in Lafayette Sunday morning. Her sponsors are Bryon Kuehn and Madelyn Fromm and her grandparents are Deb Sandberg and Tom Sandberg. She has an older sister, Hattie. Claire was born August 8. Sunday was Pastor Bruce Bringle's first service at First and Bernadotte. Welcome, Pastor Bruce!



## First Communion at First Lutheran

Brennan Hagberg, son of Kelly and Mark Hagberg, made his first communion during the 9:30 a.m. service at First Lutheran Sunday, November 10.

## New Christmas Eve service times

Christmas Eve—5:00 p.m. at FLC, 7:00 p.m. at SL  
Christmas Day—still at 8:00 a.m. at BLC

# From the Pastor

by Pastor Bruce Bringle

Well, here it is, my first newsletter column as your new pastor. Having been here for just a little over a week, my wife and I are still unpacking boxes, asking each other, "Have you seen \_\_\_\_\_ anywhere?"

I suggested that, instead of getting the tree up for Christmas, we just stack unpacked boxes in the form of a tree and decorate that.

But no, I love Christmas, so we'll try to continue to carve out some time to unpack.

I'll tell you a little about myself. I was born September 1, 1961 and grew up in Estherville, Iowa, six miles from Minnesota. Estherville is around 15 miles east of Spirit Lake and the Okoboji area, so I spent a lot of time there while growing up. I am the youngest of two children. My brother, Chuck, lives in Iowa City. My parents owned and operated Bringle Insurance Agency in Estherville, until my father passed away on Easter morning when I was ten, back in 1972.

I graduated from Estherville High School in 1980. In high school, I was involved in debate, golf, band, choir, swing choir, acting, and was active in Luther League at church, as well as working as a stockboy at Hoyer Rexall Drug. It was there that I started to think about a career in pharmacy. I attended one year at Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, then transferred to South Dakota State University in Brookings.

Halfway through my junior year of college, I came to the realization that pharmacy was not where I should be. At the time, I had many friends who were either pastor's kids or were thinking about being a pastor. Talking with them, as well as other experiences in my life, I felt the call from God to become a pastor. I do have an uncle on my dad's side who was a pastor, as well as a great-uncle on my mom's side, and three cousins on my mom's side who were pastors; also a cousin on my dad's side who was a missionary to Japan, who also happened to marry a pastor! So I switched majors to psychology, and graduated with a B.S. in psychology in 1984. A month later, I started summer Greek classes at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary (now Luther Seminary) in St. Paul. In May 1988 I graduated from LNTS with a Master of Divinity degree, and was ordained at my home church in Estherville on August 28, 1988. The summers of 1985 and 1986 I worked as a camp counselor/day camp director at Outlaw Ranch in Custer, South Dakota, and the summer of 1988, right before ordination, I worked as the day camp director for Good Earth Village near Spring Valley, Minnesota.

My first call was to Florence Lutheran Parish (New Helgen, Bergen, and Goodhue Lutheran Churches) of Florence, South Dakota from September 1988 to April 1993. From April 1993 to July 1998, I served Immanuel Lutheran Church of Wykoff, Minnesota, which is where I met my wife, Jennifer, who happened to be working as an elementary teacher at the Missouri Synod school. We were married July 11, 1998 in her home church in Bloomington. Soon after, we moved to Jasper, where I served Jasper Evangelical Lutheran Church from August 1998 to October 2004. Following that call, I served at Trinity Lutheran Church in Madelia, Minnesota from November 2004 to September 2013. Most recently, I served the churches of Garfield and



Lac qui Parle Lutheran, country churches near Madison and Dawson, from September 2013 until now. Jennifer, taught at various places and recently was a paraprofessional for the Lac qui Parle Valley school district.

Not to forget our kids, both adopted from Bogota, Colombia. We travelled to get Rachel in February/March 2002 and Jacob in July/August 2005.

Our kids are biological half brother and sister, having the same birth mother.

Rachel is currently a fifth year senior at Concordia College in Moorhead, with a major in elementary instrumental music education and a minor in Spanish. Rachel will graduate in May. Jacob attended Ridgewater College in Willmar the past year, graduating out of the occupational skills program in May. He now attends Moorhead State Community and Technical College, but lives at Minnesota State University, Moorhead, since MTEch has no place for students to live.

Personally, as far as free time goes, I do more than fall asleep in my chair, as I mentioned Sunday at the installation service. I love music, singing and listening to it. We like to go to movies. Like any parent, we attended our kids' sports and band/choir concerts in high school, and have attended Rachel's band concerts in Moorhead—though now we are four hours away. This weekend, on Saturday, we'll attend Rachel's swim meet for Concordia in Mendota Heights. We've always managed to stay busy!

There—that's probably more than you wanted to know. I'm looking forward to knowing all of you. I'm usually pretty good at names, but don't be offended if I ask your name a few times—there are a lot more of you, and your directory is from 2013, so some people have changed, especially the kids.

As I am sure you are well aware, this time of year gives us many opportunities to come together to anticipate and celebrate the birth of Christ. I would like to end this column with these words. Mark Neilsen, in the Advent devotional *Growing in Love: Family Devotions for Advent*, writes: "Christmas, the great feast of God becoming human, is not the end of the story of salvation, but only the beginning. The baby born in Bethlehem would grow up to redeem us all and give us the hope of everlasting life. This is the great good news of Christmas. This is the reason for the festival. Pause sometime today in silent wonder for a moment to appreciate this miraculous event."

May you and yours find in this Christmas the peace, the joy, that only God can supply through His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. A blessed Advent, a merry Christmas and a joyful New Year to all of you.

Pastor Bruce, Jennifer, Rachel & Jacob Bringle

## Council Meeting Dates

- FOG Council—Wed., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m., FLC
- Bernadotte Council—To be determined
- First Lutheran Council—Mon., Dec. 2, 6:00 p.m.

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## DECEMBER 2024 WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

### First Lutheran Church

Ushers: 8-Jay Hagberg, Mark Hagberg; 15-Jeff Uhde, Randy Sandquist; 22-Mike Hoffmann, Conner Hoffmann

Reader: (open) Liturgist: (open)

Altar: Geni DeBoer, Heidi Sjogren, Sandy Hartley

Coffee: 8-Wendy Hagberg, Emily Hagberg; 15-Mary Martens, Marti Uhde; 22-Marti Uhde, Wendy Hagberg

### Bernadotte Lutheran

Greeters: Ruth Klossner, Konnie Bartels

Ushers: Jim Bartels, Wendy Schulz, Tim Schulz, Elias Webster

Readers: 1-Trish Gieseke; 8-Jim Bartels; 22-Rosanne Johnson; 25-Ruth Klossner; 29-Steve Sjostrom

Communion (Dec. 1, 25, 29): S-Jim Bartels; C-Steve Sjostrom; U-Neil Rasmussen

Coffee: 1-Advent Potluck Dinner; 8-, 22-, & 29-volunteers needed.

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## News & Notes from all over

- Bernadotte Lutheran will hold its annual Advent potluck dinner after the 9:30 a.m. service Sunday, December 1. Trish Gieseke, Shaun Anderson, and Rosanne Johnson will head the dinner with A-L helping in the kitchen.

- Bernadotte WELCA is making committee nominations and assigning servers for 2025. Those who would like to be on a specific committee or serve at a specific time are asked to contact either Rosanne Johnson or Shaun Anderson. A sign-up sheet will also be placed in the back of church.

- Christmas Tree decorating will be done at FLC Friday, November 29, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. There will be sit-down jobs, like fluffing branches, and more active jobs, like assembling and decorating the tree. Come to help and visit.

- Volunteers are needed from all FOG churches to form a FOG choir to provide special music at future events, including the Community Carol Sing. Choir practices will be December 1 at BLC and December 8 at FLC, following the 9:30 services. A new role for the choir is to sing hymns during communion.

- A brief First Lutheran WELCA meeting will be held following the 9:30 a.m. church service Sunday, December 8.

- First Lutheran Church is looking for volunteers to head its altar committee and WELCA. The altar person would order supplies when needed and help direct the monthly volunteers. WELCA co-chairs would help with the calendar, email information for church bulletins and the FOG newsletter, and chair WELCA meetings. The co-chairs would also play a pivotal role in fundraisers for the church.

- First Lutheran is doing a special collection for the Vryheid Circuit in South Africa during the month of November. A jar for donations has been placed at the front of church.

- Scholarship applications for the Roman Fischer and John S Johnson scholarships are now being accepted for members of First Lutheran. Applications are available in the church entry, on the east side of the front door. Apps are due December 29.

## Fields of Grace Confirmation Corner

A few notes on Fields of Grace confirmation. Pastor Bruce and the students spent the first night together getting to know each other.

There will be no class Wednesday, November 27, due to Thanksgiving break. The group plans to go caroling at The Lodge in Winthrop on December 4, taking treats to share with the residents. If December 4 is not available, the group will go December 11.

Assuming that caroling is on the 4th, the group will have a Surprise Supper during Confirmation time on the 11th.

In a Surprise Supper, people pick things off a menu which has item numbers but no names, so they won't know what they're ordering. That's the surprise. For instance, a person might receive ice cream, bread, and a toothpick for the first course without realizing it. Then they try to eat the ice cream without silverware.

Or maybe someone will unwittingly order a fork, knife, and spoon for one of their courses and then not be able to use the utensils for the other three courses.

There will be no confirmation classes on December 18, December 25, and January 1.

When classes resume January 8 at 7:00 p.m., Pastor Bruce will meet with students AND parents to go over expectations concerning confirmation and to explain the curriculum that will be used. There will be no regular class that night.

## Good News from FOG



Bernadotte member Deb Sjostrom retired from a long career with the U.S. Postal Service in early November.

Sjostrom started as a clerk in the Gibbon Post Office in 1988. After five years there, she moved to Lafayette as a clerk, then became postmaster in 2001. When smaller offices were cut to part-time, she moved on to Kasota for a year-and-a-half, then Lester Prairie for a year-and-a-half.

When the postmaster position in Winthrop opened in 2015, she moved there, a position she held until retirement.

Deb can now spend more time with the grandkids and her father, as well as helping out on the farm.



# Pastor Bruce Bringle's Installation



Synod Pastor Heather Culuris installed Pastor Bruce



Sunday, November 17  
at First Lutheran Church





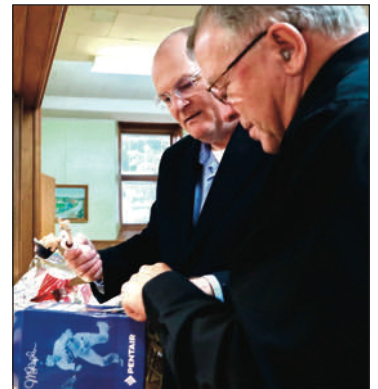
The quilting ladies at Bernadotte gave Pastor Mike a special quilt that they made for him.

And "someone" at BLC wanted to be sure that Mike would remember his favorite (not) Minnesota Twin, Max Kepler!

## Pastor Mike's send-off at BLC



When all else fails, read the directions!



Thank you for being with us for almost all of 2024!



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## Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be held at St. Francis Catholic Church in Winthrop on Thanksgiving Day, serving from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Reservations are welcomed, but not necessary. Call Bill or Che May at 507-647-2238 or Ted or June Oman at 507-647-5771 to leave a message with name, phone number, and number of meals. Menu is turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green bean casserole, dinner roll, and dessert. Free will offering will go to Santa's helpers.



## Pastor Mike's Farewell at First Lutheran

A Vikings shirt—along with a box of scalloped potatoes, a can of SpaghettiOs, and homemade pickles—were all given to Pastor Mike at First Lutheran on his last Sunday at Fields of Grace November 10.



And there was time for one more “sports chat” as Mike enjoyed the goodies after church.

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Prayer requests and announcements for the church bulletin should be sent to Administrative Assistant Trish Gieseke at [trish.fieldsofgrace@gmail.com](mailto:trish.fieldsofgrace@gmail.com) or phoned to her on the parish phone 507-766-3471. Newsletter items should be emailed or phoned to Ruth Klossner at [cowladyruth@gmail.com](mailto:cowladyruth@gmail.com) or 507-240-0048.

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The Sunday School kids talked about gratitude, made gratitude turkeys and a turkey cup craft Sunday, November 24 at Bernadotte, above, and the kids at First Lutheran, Sunday, November 10, below.



Helping grandpa

## Kids' Korner



Daddy's little helper



Children's sermon at Pastor Bruce's installation



The Sunday School Christmas program will be held during the 9:30 a.m. service at First Lutheran December 15. A BBQ lunch for all will follow.

Annual Lafayette Area

# CHRISTMAS CAROL SING, SOUP & SANDWICH SUPPER

DECEMBER 8th

✧ First Lutheran Church, Lafayette

SOUP & SANDWICHES AT 6:00 PM

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING AT 7:00 PM

A Free Will Offering will be accepted for a local charity.

Volunteers are needed to bring soup,  
sandwiches or bars and to help serve.

Please contact Sue Helget  
at 507.276.5536 to volunteer!

