

MISSION STATEMENT: To connect ourselves and others to Christ through acts of faith and love.

VISION STATEMENT: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lexington shall be a Christ-centered community participating in Spirit-led worship, challenging learning and loving outreach; willing to be transformed by the Gospel and eagerly using our gifts to transform the world around us.

Pastor's Message

The Rev. Matthew L. Miller



Preparing for Lent is a significant time in the Lutheran tradition, marked by reflection, repentance, and spiritual renewal as followers journey with Jesus towards the cross. Here's how Lutherans typically prepare for the season:

Ash Wednesday: Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a solemn day of repentance and reflection. Lutherans attend a worship service where ashes are imposed on their foreheads in the shape of a cross, reminding us of our mortality and the need for repentance.

Prayer and Devotion: Lent is a time for increased prayer and devotion. We engage in daily prayer practices with special devotional materials, attend Wednesday Lenten meals with Holden Evening Prayer, and many participate in Facebook Wednesday devotions. This could be the season when we connect with the Tuesday morning bible study or Beer and Bible.

Fasting and Self-Examination: Fasting is a common practice during Lent, symbolizing self-discipline and spiritual focus. We may choose to fast from certain foods or activities as a way to deepen their spiritual connection with God and reflect on our own lives. I will always be known as the pastor who did not allow dessert at Lenten meals—but this is a time to be aware of your sisters and brothers who may have given up sweets for Lent. Fasting should not be suffering for sufferings sake. We take time to fast from the things that might separate us from God and each other.

Almsgiving and Service: Lent is also a time for acts of charity and service. We can participate in Outreach Team events, volunteer opportunities, and increase giving as a way to live out our faith and serve others in need.

Participation in the Sacraments: The sacraments of Holy Communion and the proclamation of the Gospel are central to our worship—especially during Lent. We offer individual Confession as part of our Lenten observance. There will also time for service of public confession and healing.

Let us use this Lenten journey as our time to prepare for the celebration of Christ's resurrection and our new lives at Easter.

God's Peace,
Pastor Matt

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We Pray for Each Other



CHURCH FAMILY:

Christopher Bartholomew
Lorraine Carlson
John Conrad
Jean Conrad Darstein
Craven Ford
Phil Foster
Norma Heath
Matt Hogrefe
Dan Huber
Steve Ketner
Dalane Kitzman
Katie Lemly
Lewis McMillan
Tracy Miller
Frank Mills
Ronnie Moretz
Willie Ruth Pless
Barbara Carlson Romaine
Joe Romaine
Carolyn Scott
Gracie Shepherd
Jody Shepherd
Dan Smith
Debbie and Terry Triplett
Laura Turlington
Deborah Wertman
Pr. Bob Young

LOVED ONES, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS:

Tonya Adams (Friend of David Smith)
Larry and Donna B. (friends of John and Sabrina Conrad)
Richard and Toni Berish (Brother and sister-in-law of the Wertman family)
Brad, Melody, and Erick Bizzell (Son and family of Susan Bizzell)
Mary Brink (Niece of Pauletta Conrad)
Anne Burkhart (friend of Pam Mabry)
Mike Byrd (Friend of Bob Sink)
Eula Carroll (Joe Carroll's mother)
Paul and Dawn Cohen (friends of the Wertmans)
Paul and Carolina Conrad (Larry Conrad's aunt and uncle)
Don and Jackie Craft (parents of Rebecca Moretz)
Amy and Wes Cups
Greg D'Ambrosio (friend of John Conrad)
Robert Dasch (Father of Keith Dasch)
Connie Dillard (friend of the Wertman family)
Marina Dunaway & family (friends of Karen Riggs)

Juan Escobedo (cousin of Amanda Hathcock)
Danny Fine (Lynn Smith's brother)
John Fisher (Bleasha Carroll's uncle)
Abby Fobes (friend of Bing Grubb)
Ray Franks (Friend of Pr. Matt)
Marc Frye (friend of Craig and Robin Deal)
The Greer Family (Friends of Karen Riggs)
Katie Grubb (niece of Ronnie and Rebecca Moretz)
Mike and Sharon Heffner (friends of John and Sabrina Conrad)
Kenny Hirsch (friend of Rick Grubb)
Capt. Matthew Honeycutt (friend of the Carroll and Scott Family)
Scott Hummel (friend of the Turlingtons)
Betty Jordan (friend of the Carlsons)
Larry Kerns (Tim Welther's husband)
Bob and Karen Kernstine (friends of Sabrina Conrad)
Holly Krueger (Connie and Lewis McMillan's daughter)
Thomas and Toni L. (friends of John and Sabrina Conrad)
Larry Leonard (John Leonard's brother)
Betty Lopp (friend of John and Sabrina Conrad)
Franklin Mabry
Mandy Marshall (Debbie Triplett's daughter)
Mary Jane Marshall (friend of Pr. Matt and Tracy Miller)
Donna Miller (friend of Kelsey Lambert)
Sarah Montross (friend of the Turlingtons)
Matthew and Faith Moretz (nephew and wife of Ronnie and Rebecca Moretz)
Dermont Morris (friend of Ken Clodfelter)
Todd Morris (father of Michael Gauldin)
Claire Murphy (Rebecca Moretz' cousin)
Becky Osborne (friend of Karen Riggs)
Linda Owings (friend of John and Sabrina Conrad)
Hap Palmer (Pauletta Conrad's brother-in-law)
Mickey Persinger (Tracy Miller's cousin)
Julie Proctor (friend of John and Sabrina Conrad)
Brenda Safrin (Beth Huber's cousin)
Kim Schlueter (Trisha Reichard's mother)
Robin Schuster
Peggy Sipe (mother of Pr. Ray Sipe)
Mark Sives (Bleasha Carroll's cousin)
Aubrey Smith (Dan Smith's dad)
David Smith (Nephew of Bob Sink)
Marilee Strasser (friend of Bill and Patsie Baker)
Johnny and Pat Straughn (friends of Sylvia Sink)
Denny Swimley (brother-in-law of Scott and Deborah Wertman)
Jackie Taylor (Lorraine Carlson's sister)
Juliet Teachey (great-granddaughter of Jon and Celie Lough)
Stephen Thompson (Danny Thompson's father)
Lori and Doug Walser (friends of Sylvia Sink) Charlie Ward (friend of Kim Odum)
Mary Louise Wilkerson (Friend of FLC)
Devone Wohl (Dalane Kitzman's sister)
Nathaniel Wohl (Dalane Kitzman's nephew)
Ken Woisin (Lorraine Carlson's brother)

The families of those who have passed to life eternal:

Joe Carroll (Joe Carroll's father)
Larry Childress (relative of Sabrina Conrad)

Expectant Parents:

Kathleen Lockwood and Munashe Magarira

January Ministry Schedule

	February 4	February 11	February 18	February 25
Assisting Minister	Bing Grubb	Judy Conrad	Bing Grubb	Judy Conrad
Crucifer	Patti Grant	Patti Grant	Patti Grant	Patti Grant
Acolyte	Sydney England	Sydney England	Sydney England	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Lector	Christine England	Christine England	Christine England	Tawn Bizzell
Ushers	Pat Richardson James Whitaker	Pat Richardson James Whitaker	Debra Kitzman	Debra Kitzman
Communion Steward	Judy Conrad Teena Walker	Debra Kitzman Sabrina Conrad	Judy Conrad Sabrina Conrad	Sabrina Conrad <i>Volunteer needed</i>
Communion Preparation	Jay and Christine England	Jay and Christine England	Jay and Christine England	Pat Richardson
Sound System	Lee Conrad	John Leonard	Lee Conrad	John Leonard

Lutheran Men in Mission January Recap

Bill Baker



Attendance - 19 (WOW!)

Pre-dinner - gathering outside under the shelter, lots of men reconnecting.

Dinner of Oyster Stew and Beef Stew compliments of chef John Conrad and recipe by Paula Dean!

Devotion - Dalane Kitzman
 "Leaning On Jesus" By Dr. Kari Vo
 "The Lord is at hand". He is right here with us!

We had a great time of fellowship this evening, including a post devotional table discussion where we shared our thoughts with one another.

Treasury Report

Current Bank Account Balance \$1557.68
 \$86.00 Deposit to be completed after distributing expenses for tonight's meal.

Tonight's offering less expenses to be reported at the next meeting.

A big thank you to the men's group for pulling off a very successful Congregational Christmas dinner.

Thanks to our men for helping us clean up and wash and "put away" !

Our next scheduled meeting is April 29th.

It was suggested that we schedule a visit to the men at the Lutheran Home this May or June. If anyone is interested in helping out with the logistics let Bill Baker, John Conrad or Allen Mabry know. Date has yet to be determined for providing them with a hamburger and dogs "grill out".

Worship and Fellowship Opportunities



February 5 — 7:00 PM

The Property Team will meet in the 1st floor meeting room.
If you would like to know more or be a part of the Property Team,
please see John Conrad.



February 5 — 7:00 PM

Agape Circle

*Many thanks to the ladies who assisted with the
WELCA State Leaders Gathering on January 20, 2024.*



February 13 — 11:30 AM

Mary Circle will meet in the first room on the left in the Family Life Center.

All women are invited to this time of fellowship and study.
Please see Pat Mills for more information.



February 13 and February 27 — 7:00 PM

Beer & Bible at Goose & The Monkey

All ages are welcome to this time of Bible study and fellowship.
Please see Pastor Matt for more information.



February 11 — 8:30 AM

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church Council will meet in the council meeting room.

As a reminder, any member of the congregation may bring an idea or concern before council at any time. You may choose to share this idea through a team liaison, if you are on a team. You may also contact any council member directly to be added to the agenda.

Council members can be found on page 8 of this newsletter. Contact the church office if you need a directory or an individuals contact information.

All incoming and outgoing council members are encouraged to come together for this meeting.



February 8 and 22, — 7:00 PM

Prayer Shawls will meet in the first room on the left in the Family Life Center.

All folks interested in the ministry of creating prayer shawls are invited to attend.
We welcome novice and experienced crochet and knitters.



February 14 — 7:00 PM

Ash Wednesday service in the Nave with Imposition of Ashes.

Mid-week Lenten Services to follow on

February 21, 28 and March 6, 13, 20 at 7:00 PM (Supper served at 6:15 PM)

Worship & Fellowship Opportunities



Pericope Study

Each Tuesday at 9:30 AM

Pericope will meet at Southern Lunch (26 S Railroad St, Lexington, NC 27292).

Pericope is a Bible study focusing on the week's texts.

All are welcome to join us in this time of breakfast, study, and fellowship.



Each Wednesday at 10:00 AM

Facebook Live Devotions with Pastor Miller

Please use the link below to join the devotions each week.

Join us here: <https://www.facebook.com/FLCLEX/>



Adult Sunday School Class will meet *each* Sunday at 9:30 A.M.

Denny Whalen will lead this class using the Augsburg Fortress Curriculum



Monthly Sunday School opportunities exist for our elementary aged saints. Amy Whalen and Melissa Morris will lead this class. Please join us at 9:15 AM for breakfast with Sunday school to follow at 9:30AM. Sunday School for elementary aged students will meet in the Family Life Center the following Sundays:

February 4, March 3, April 7, and May 5



Confirmation will be led by Pastor Matt and meet in the Youth Room the following dates.

February 4, March 3, April 7, & May 5

Please see Pastor Matt for more information.




Handbells rehearse on at **6:30 PM on Wednesday, February 7**, in the Bell Room.


Handbells rehearse on **Sundays at 9:15 AM, February 11, 18, and 25**

Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesdays in December at 7:30 PM in the choir rehearsal room.


Outreach Opportunities

	<p>February — dry pasta and/or pasta sauce</p> <p>March — canned pasta (i.e. ravioli, etc.) April — dry beans May — instant mashed potatoes June — Grits (individually packaged) July — Hamburger Helper or store brand version August — canned tuna September — cans of mixed vegetables October — oatmeal (individual servings) November — soups December — macaroni & cheese January, 2025 – Canned meats (chicken, tuna, etc.)</p> <p>Donations will be collected on the shelving outside of the chapel.</p>
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Good Shepherd Clothing Closet

	<p>February 17 ~ 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon</p> <p>The Good Shepherd Clothing Closet is open the 3rd Saturday of each month from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to transport items from the church over to the closet as well as volunteer while the clothing closet is open. If you'd be interested in supporting this ministry, please see Teena Walker for more information</p>
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Cracker Ministry

	<p>We continue to collect all brands of saltine crackers for our cracker ministry. Please leave your donation on the rack outside the chapel. Crackers are regularly donated to Davidson County Crisis Ministry .</p>
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Pop Tab Collection & Pennies Collection

	<p>The Women of the ELCA continue to collect pop tabs and pennies. These tabs are donated to the Ronald McDonald House in Winston– Salem while the pennies go to a district wide project. Please donate your tabs and pennies in the marked containers in the narthex.</p>
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Genesis House Schedule

February 25, 2024	Handbell and Chancel Choirs
March 24	WELCA Circles
April 28	Council
May 26	Learning Team
June 23	Endowment
July 28	Pericope
August 25	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
September 22	Worship and Music Team
October 27	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
November 24	Inreach Team
December 22	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
January 2025	Outreach Team



Prior to your Sunday, please call Davidson County First Hope Ministries [\(336\) 248-6684](tel:3362486684) to get the number of individuals you will be serving on your assigned Sunday. Then, please deliver drinks, paper products, a meal and a dessert on your given day by no later than 5:30 PM.

FLC serves the family shelter every fourth Sunday of the month.

Please direct your questions to Teena Walker.

Noisy Offering Schedule

February 4, 2024	Lutheran Services of the Carolinas
March 3	Meals on Wheels
April 7	Domestic Violence Shelter
May 5	Humane Society
June 2	Fairgrove Family Resource
July 7	Novusway
August 4	West Davidson Food Pantry
September 1	Pastor's Pantry
October 6	The Life Center
November 3	Thanksgiving Meal Project
December 1	Angel Tree Project
January 2025	Storehouse for Jesus



The Noisy Offering

The listed Sundays, our littlest saints are encouraged to stay following the children's sermon to choose a small bucket. The children of the church will then collect change, checks, and paper money for donation to a charity each month. Our children will bless the funds collected to the glory of God before returning to their seats.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Members

President	Teena Walker
Vice President	Lee Conrad
Treasurer	Connie McMillian
Secretary	Marcia Hoffmann
Council Members	Melanie Bumgardner, Larry Conrad, Rick Grubb, Rebecca Moretz, Darrell Parks

Congregational Council Minutes — December 10, 2023

Attendees: Tawn Bizzell (President), Pr. Matt Miller, Rick Grubb, Marcia Hoffmann, Connie McMillan, Teena Walker, Lee Conrad, Rebecca Moretz (by phone), Darrell Parks, Greg Turlington

Absent: Melanie Bumgardner, Larry Conrad

Meeting Opened 8:35 AM

Breakfast was provided by the Inreach Team and it was greatly appreciated by Council as we welcomed new member, Lee Conrad and thanked Tawn Bizzell for her service as president. This is her last meeting.

Devotions: Rick shared memories of his time teaching in Indonesia during the Christmas season and how his students interpreted symbols of the season. We all need the heart of Christ. He closed with a prayer.

Tawn thanked members of Council for their work during her term as president. Council members returned the thank you to Tawn for her dedicated service.

Approval of Minutes: November minutes, Connie made a motion to accept, and Darrell seconded, vote carried.

Reports

- **Financial Report** (Greg) November wasn't a good month financially. Giving is down though we may have more giving units, the accumulative amount doesn't make up for income lost due to the passing of some long-time members. There is a cost to online giving due to bank fees of \$1,700 a year. We will need to pull out the 4% this year. Outreach Benevolence distributed over \$9,000 in Aldi gift certificates to 476 families at Thanksgiving that were identified through school social workers.
- **Pastor's Report** (Matt) Mutual Ministry, Matt and Kelly are rethinking the responsibilities and number of hours for the position of Director of Congregation Life. Benefits will not be included. They will consider candidates of any age and gender. We have very few high school youths currently. Installation of Council Officers will be during worship this morning.

New Business:

- Election of Council Officers for 2024 for one-year terms.
After a discussion this slate was proposed by Pastor Matt and seconded by Connie. Vote carried.
 - President: Teena Walker
 - V.P.: Lee Conrad
 - Treasurer: Connie McMillan
 - Secretary: Marcia Hoffmann
- The January Council meeting will be Sunday, January 14 at 8:30 a.m. with Matt providing devotions.

Team Reports:

- **Endowment** (Marcia)
Marcia made a motion to approve the following appointments to the Endowment Team:

<u>New</u>	<u>Term End Date</u>
Allen Mabry	December 2026
Kim Odum	December 2026

Teena seconded the motion and it carried.

Marcia also presented the following Endowment disbursement requests for Council's approval. Matt made a motion to accept the recommendations and Teena seconded and the vote carried.

Congregational Council Minutes — December 10, 2023

Group / Ministry	2023
Fairgrove Family Resources	\$750.00
Meals-on-Wheels - Lexington City	\$750.00
Meals-on-Wheels of Davidson County	\$750.00
Pastor's Pantry	\$750.00
West Davidson Food Pantry	\$750.00
Grace Episcopal Meal Program	\$500.00
Life Center	\$500.00
Match Noisy Offering	\$1,200.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$5,950.00

- **Inreach** (Melanie, absent) Tawn reported that they helped with the Christmas dinner, Council's breakfast today and several receptions after worship.
- **Outreach** (Teena)
 - Instead of distributing turkeys this year \$25 Aldi gift cards were given to 476 families for Thanksgiving. Aldi was selected because it doesn't sell alcohol.
- **Property** (Tawn reported)
 - The ice machine was repaired but has failed again. That repair should be under warranty.
 - Lee will be the Council liaison to the Property team.
 - Quotes for bids for two awnings were reviewed. One awning to be installed over the door of the Beer Garden and the other over the unprotected door that is used by staff entering the office side of the building. Teena moved that we accept the one from Triad Awning and Canopy for \$6,568.73 for metal ones. Rick seconded and the motion carried.
 - Greg noted that this expenditure would be considered a capital improvement rather than from the Spending Plan
- **Harris Fund** (Larry absent)
 - No meeting
- **Youth** (Rebecca)
 - All agreed the Christmas play was great. A great job by all involved.
- **Learning** (Darrell)
 - No report
- **Worship** (Connie)
 - No report

Closing Prayer: Rick

Meeting Closed 9:32 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Hoffmann, Secretary

Next meeting will be **January 14 at 8:30-AM.**

Pastor Matt will lead **devotions.**

Late-life Blooms

Dr. Dalane Kitzman

My good fortune of meeting Danny Townsend was born from tragedy. I had driven by his house hundreds of times but had never stopped. I had noticed the rustic, backyard workshop covered with antique product signs and had sensed there was an interesting story there. However, on that particular day, I was on a mission, helping search for my neighbor's beloved lost dog. I shyly knocked on the front door of the house at the edge of our neighborhood, hoping the house's occupant might have seen the dog. Displaying a soft heart for animals, Danny immediately dropped what he was doing and joined the search.

Sadly, we have still not found the dog. However, I made a new friend whom I have come to appreciate as one of the most interesting septuagenarians I have ever met. Over a series of visits, I learned about Danny's backyard workshop. There he spends a large amount of his time since retiring from his job in a print shop decades ago. The workshop is his creative refuge.

In his workshop, Danny creates beautiful, ornate birdhouses. Each is a unique, intricate, exquisitely detailed work of art (Figure 1). He plans and designs each new piece over days or weeks. When asked where he gets the ideas for his creations, the artist replied, "There's a voice inside me. I think it's the Lord, telling me it's time to make another birdhouse, and giving me the initial idea and direction." This humble description made me recall how the pioneering African American scientist, George Washington Carver, described the inspiration for his many discoveries, "The thing I am to do and the way of doing it are revealed to me the moment I am inspired to create something new. Without God to draw aside the curtain, I would be helpless."

You can tell by looking at his birdhouses that Danny is patient and meticulous in their construction. At the start of each one, he builds a stout wooden form that serves the same purpose as a painter's blank canvas. Then, over many sessions, he progressively adds the siding, windows, shutters, roof, paint, and the adornments. He pauses frequently to stand back and ponder the next step. He often cuts small pieces of scrap wood and metal, gently shapes them, and then tries them out to see how they look. The older artist has several boxes on the shelves in his workshop containing an endless variety of accoutrements, such as antique glass knobs and brass handles, that he has collected over the years from visiting antique festivals. From the boxes, he carefully selects just the right ones to adorn each birdhouse and make it unique.

Hand lettering is the final step in the process. For this, Danny collaborates with an octogenarian who in earlier years hand painted the lettering, stripes, and signature designs on racecars owned by legendary drivers in NASCAR (a popular American motorsport that

features intricately painted automobile exteriors). His NASCAR work ended with the development of laser-cut decals designed on computers that could be applied by anyone with a steady hand. The hand lettering and designs provide a final touch of warmth and authenticity. Each birdhouse takes between 30 to 40 hours of work to produce.

Danny's creations are sought after and treasured. A local boutique store gladly accepts any that he brings in; they always sell fast, even at the handsome price of \$250–350. However, Danny likes to donate his best work to charity. The back wall of his workshop is covered with letters of gratitude he has received from local and national charitable organizations for donating his birdhouses, including St. Jude Children's Hospital and Crisis Control Ministries, two of Danny's favorite charities. One of Danny's pieces recently brought \$1100 at a silent benefit auction.

Danny received no training in woodworking or in art; he taught himself by trial and error. However, there were some important influences that shaped his approach. When his father, a brick mason, taught him how to lay brick, he told him, "It's not how many bricks you lay each day that counts; each one has to be perfect." Another influence was a retired local furniture maker. Danny asked him to make a hutch from old barn wood he had found, and he learned a lot watching the older man produce it.

"A pair of old window shutters that I saw abandoned by the roadside" was the reply when I asked Danny how he got started. He loves old, worn, and weathered wood, and could not resist stopping to pick up those old shutters. However, he wasn't sure what he would do with them. When he settled on the idea of trying to make a special birdhouse, his wife Gail was skeptical. However, when she saw the finished product, Gail asked him to make four more new ones as special gifts for friends and relatives. Then she asked him to make a birdhouse just for her. This request confirmed to Danny that Gail was no longer skeptical of his newfound hobby. He says that birdhouse for his wife was the most important one he's ever made.

Several weeks after I first met him, I stopped by my new friend's house unannounced because I felt compelled to learn more about this interesting older man. I found him resting in the wood rocking chair in the middle of his workshop, gently rocking, listening to gospel music. As I peered at him through the screen door, I took in the 74-year-old man's weathered skin, his slight paunch, and his partially balding head. However, what struck me most was the completely calm, peaceful, contented look on his face. I realized that Danny's workshop not only produces beautiful birdhouses that benefit charities and adorn the homes of fortunate buyers, but it

also benefits him in this stage of his life (Figure 2). I hope that in my retirement I will be as fortunate.

We usually think that a person's most creative period of life is young adulthood and midlife. However, Danny's example shows that creativity can have its first bloom in late life. Indeed there are many other examples, including President George W. Bush who took up painting at age 66, had his first formal exhibition at age 71, and has achieved acclaim for his artwork, particularly his portraits of American veterans. The transformation was so profound that even his wife, Laura, was astonished, like Gail was when Danny began his artistic journey. Danny may not be as famous as George Bush, but I consider his artistic accomplishments equally impressive.

Art can also inspire and uplift. Recently, I had a painful, debilitating right arm injury. It was the latest of numerous complications of the systemic corticosteroids needed to help control my severe reactive airways disease. Corrective surgery was judged too risky due to severe osteoporosis, another complication from steroids. So, I was beginning a long process of physical therapy and acceptance of chronic pain and significantly reduced function in my dominant arm. I was deeply discouraged and felt beaten down and deflated.

I stopped at Danny's workshop to purchase a birdhouse as a Christmas gift for a very good friend. I noted he had just completed a new birdhouse; on the roof

was hand-painted: "Think big! Dream bold!" I told my friend that his new birdhouse would be a great graduation gift for someone beginning their career. But Danny had a different idea. He surprised me by offering his newest creation to me as a gift.

I felt like declining. My outlook at the time was the exact opposite of the message painted on the birdhouse roof. I was certainly not at the beginning of my career. At age 64, my injury, piled on top of my other chronic conditions, had made me reconsider everything: my goals, my longevity, my vigor. I wasn't even sure I'd be able to resume my favorite hobbies: fishing, kayaking, and traveling. I had resigned myself to a future of much lower expectations.

However, as that older artist looked at me, hoping for a positive reaction to his offered gift, I began to reconsider. Maybe, deep inside, I had some fight left in me. Perhaps my most impactful achievements were still ahead of me. Danny's kind gesture gave me hope.

So, I accepted his heartfelt gift as a challenge to buck up, pour myself into physical therapy, and embrace an optimistic outlook. That has made all the difference. I'm learning that late-life blooms can be just as gratifying as those from younger years. Thank goodness for friends like Danny, his birdhouses, late-life blooms, and art that inspires.



Figure 1 (above) Some of Danny's recent creations

Figure 2 (left) The artist in his workshop with his current birdhouse under construction

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Joys and Cares

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO:

Joe Carroll and family upon the passing of his father. Joe Carroll, 92, of Benton County, MS, passed away on January 2, 2024 at Jackson General Hospital in Jackson, TN. He had a fall at his home that broke his collar bone and put him in the hospital; that was followed by COVID and pneumonia. His funeral service took place on January 5 at Canaan Baptist Church in Ashland, MS. He worked as a self-employed carpenter. Let us remember Mr. Carroll's wife, Eula; son and family, Joe and Bleasha, Aaron and Ashley, Ben, Owen, Adam and Rachel, Eric and Ashley; and the extended Carroll family in our daily prayers.

Laura and Robert Hollar (son of Billie Sue Hollar) upon the passing of Laura's mother. Mrs. Nancy Amelia Robinson Plowden, 81, "Amy", "Amelia" to those from her hometown, and beloved "Mimi" to her grandchildren, passed away after a bout of COVID (she already had a respiratory illness) on January 6, at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, NC. Amy taught French in a few schools in Virginia, with 16 years at Hunter High Huss High School. There, she established a legacy of helping and inspiring students. She was extensively involved in student life and regularly led student tours to France. Amy organized the Hunter Huss quiz bowl team and started the first quiz bowl events in Gaston County. *Those years were a formative teaching experience for Amy. She enjoyed helping her students in and out of the classroom and maintained friendships with these students for the remainder of her life. Amy was a devoted wife and mother to children Laura and Rob. Her children recall her tireless efforts in caring for them, managing the home, and juggling busy dance, sports, and school schedules. During these child-rearing years, Amy skillfully made crafts including needlepoint projects and hand-made dolls to sell as part of charitable fund-raisers.* Amy loved her church, First United Methodist Church of Gastonia, where she was an active member for over 55 years. A service of Celebration of Life was held January 12 at First United Methodist Church of Gastonia.

Lee and Lori Conrad upon the passing of their friend. Tracy Shane Davis, 66, of Woodbrier Drive in Lexington, passed away January 6 at his home. His funeral service was January 11 at Davidson Funeral Home. *Tracy enjoyed spending time at the beach, listening to good music, boating and spending time with family and friends.*

Teena Walker and her brother Phil Foster upon the passing of Phil's wife. Vickie Foster had been ill for a couple years with cancer and was recently under Hospice care. She passed to life eternal on January 19. When Phil married Vickie, Teena remembers *I didn't know it at the time, but we would become best friends, partners in many adventures and, best of all, sisters.* The two of them made wonderful memories shopping, crafting and traveling together.

Alice Barnette (mother of Sabrina Conrad) upon the passing of her first cousin. Robert "Larry" Childress, 81, of High Point, passed away January 20 at Kernersville Medical Center. Larry started in retail as a teenager and was manager of Hines Shoes until he retired. *Larry never met a stranger and loved all his customers. He will be missed by all who knew him, and his favorite saying was "hang in there".* A memorial service will be conducted January 27 in the High Point Chapel of Wright Funerals-Cremations with Rev. Mike Lee officiating.

OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Billie Sue Hollar received a "cement" procedure on December 27 for a compression fracture in her spine. We are happy to report that it is gradually helping with her pain. She will be back in church mid-January!

Larry Conrad is recovering from lung issues and is awaiting an appointment with a pulmonologist in February.

Bob Redwine had laparoscopic surgery on December 19 in the High Point hospital for severe diverticulitis and a perforated bowel. He was transferred to Magnolia Gardens in Thomasville on January 2 before having to return to the hospital on January 13 due to an infection at his port site. His plans are to be able to return to his own home (not a rehab facility) January 23.

Mickey Persinger (cousin of Tracy Miller) was put on a ventilator early January for serious breathing issues; he is now under Hospice care. Mickey is just in his 50's.

Deb Wertman was hospitalized on January 9 at Forsyth Hospital for several days with hemoglobin issues. She received blood transfusions and more tests; she came home on January 12, and is now awaiting results.

Joys and Cares

Whitney Hahn (daughter of Galen and Sandy Hahn) was taken to the hospital January 3 for a serious gall bladder attack. After a couple days her gallbladder was successfully removed. She is resting at home for another week before heading back to her work mid-January at the VA.

Ronnie Moretz's brain tumor is growing; he hopes to soon begin a new medication that will slow the growth.

Tracy Miller had carpal tunnel surgery on January 18, her birthday! During her recovery, she is also trying to pass a kidney stone; when it rains, it pours! After healing from this surgery, she will be scheduled to have the same surgery on her other wrist.

Lorraine Carlson had an outpatient procedure on January 19.

Anthony Fuller, neighbor of the church, finally received his long-awaited kidney transplant last year. However, after a year, that transplant has now failed and he is back on dialysis.

Norma Heath, associate member who watches our service from Iowa via Facebook, is hospitalized and not doing well.

Debi Henderson had a back procedure on January 22.

Scott Wertman is scheduled for his second knee replacement surgery at the Lexington hospital on January 23.

John Conrad is scheduled for his first knee replacement surgery also at the Lexington hospital on January 24.

THANKS!

Prayer Shawl Ministry – Thanks to those who lead and participate in the Prayer Shawl Ministry. **Completed prayer shawls are in the closet in the “Prayer Shawl Room”. Please feel free to pick up any that are needed, bless them and send them out. (Please notify Kelly so that he can note in our records.)**

Thanks to Pastor Matt and Kelly Newsome for “putting up Christmas” by taking down all our Advent trimmings and Christmon tree, storing them safely for another year!

Inreach Team – Thanks once again to our dedicated Inreach Team for providing a wonderful breakfast repast on January 7 for those families coming to gather for our “First Sunday” activities!



Blood Drive – During the blood drive at First Lutheran Church on January 10, only 25 people had signed up. However, we surpassed our goal of 29 units; and collected 31 units! Thanks to Carol Leonard for her passion and leadership in this blood drive ministry; and to all others who volunteer their service through presence and snacks.

CONGRATULATIONS

Maryem Hassan (daughter of Cassie Hassan, granddaughter of Nancy Beck) is in her first year at Appalachian State University and has already been named to the Chancellor's List! Way to go, Maryem!

Joys and Cares

Pregnancy – Frank and Pat Mills are going to have another great-grandbaby! Adam and Lindsay Mills (son of Ralph and Joni Mills) are pregnant and due in June! This couple lives in Lexington.

Wedding – Laura Tanley and Christopher Wright were married by Pastor Derek Boggs on January 13 at Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mt. Sidney, Virginia!

(pictured on right with Laura's children, Jordan Tanley and Gavin Tanley)



OTHER NEWS AND TIDBITS:

Men in Mission – The FLC men met for a delicious oyster and beef stew meal in the Family Life Center on January 15. *It was a great meeting – one of the best in recent years...good turnout and some new members also!* Many thanks to Bill Baker and John Conrad. A future meeting is being planned, and could possibly be on April 29.



Employment Update – From First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury: *Welcome Amanda Hathcock! We are so excited to welcome our NEW Director of Christian Formation and Discipleship...Amanda Huber Hathcock! Please join us on Sunday, Jan 21 to welcome Ms. Amanda and her family to First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury NC. We love discovering how this mother of three little boys found her way to First Pres Salisbury!! Welcome Ms. Amanda! We are so excited that you have joined our staff and already found a love for our young people!!*



From Amanda: *A little background on me; I grew up not far down the road in Misenheimer, NC. I have two wonderful parents, Dan and Beth Huber, and an older brother, Bart Huber. I attended Gray Stone Day School and then Lenoir-Rhyne University, where I received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. After teaching for*

Joys and Cares

about 10 years, I felt led to work as the Director of Congregational Life at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lexington, NC. I have served in that capacity for the past 6 years. I am now looking forward to working closer to home and supporting the growth of God's word in our beloved Salisbury. I am happily married to Kevin Hathcock, my high school sweetheart, and we have built a wonderful life complete with three rambunctious boys. We recently moved into a new home and combined houses with my mother, Beth. My father's health has prevented him from living at home and he is a resident at Autumn Care in Salisbury. Our new house is certainly a glimmer in a season of change for our family and we look forward to hosting an open house soon and sharing our world with you all. I live my life by the blessings that God shows us each day. In a world of change, a strong faith and community of believers are vital to happiness. I look forward to working with First Pres Salisbury to strengthen an already vibrant community and grow our faith together.

Forty Days — Forty Items



Wednesday, February 14, is the first day of Lent. We have a challenge for you!

Each day of Lent, remove one item from your cupboards that you no longer need or just wish to donate and place it in a trash bag. At the end of the forty days, we will distribute these items in our clothing closet and/or donate the items to the clothing closet at First Reformed United Church of Christ who also has a thriving pantry.

We suggest that you consider household linens such as towels, sheets, blankets, kitchen linens, etc. (We have an abundance of clothing on hand at this time.)

***One may also consider donating food items!
We will deliver food items to Pastor's Pantry, Inc.***

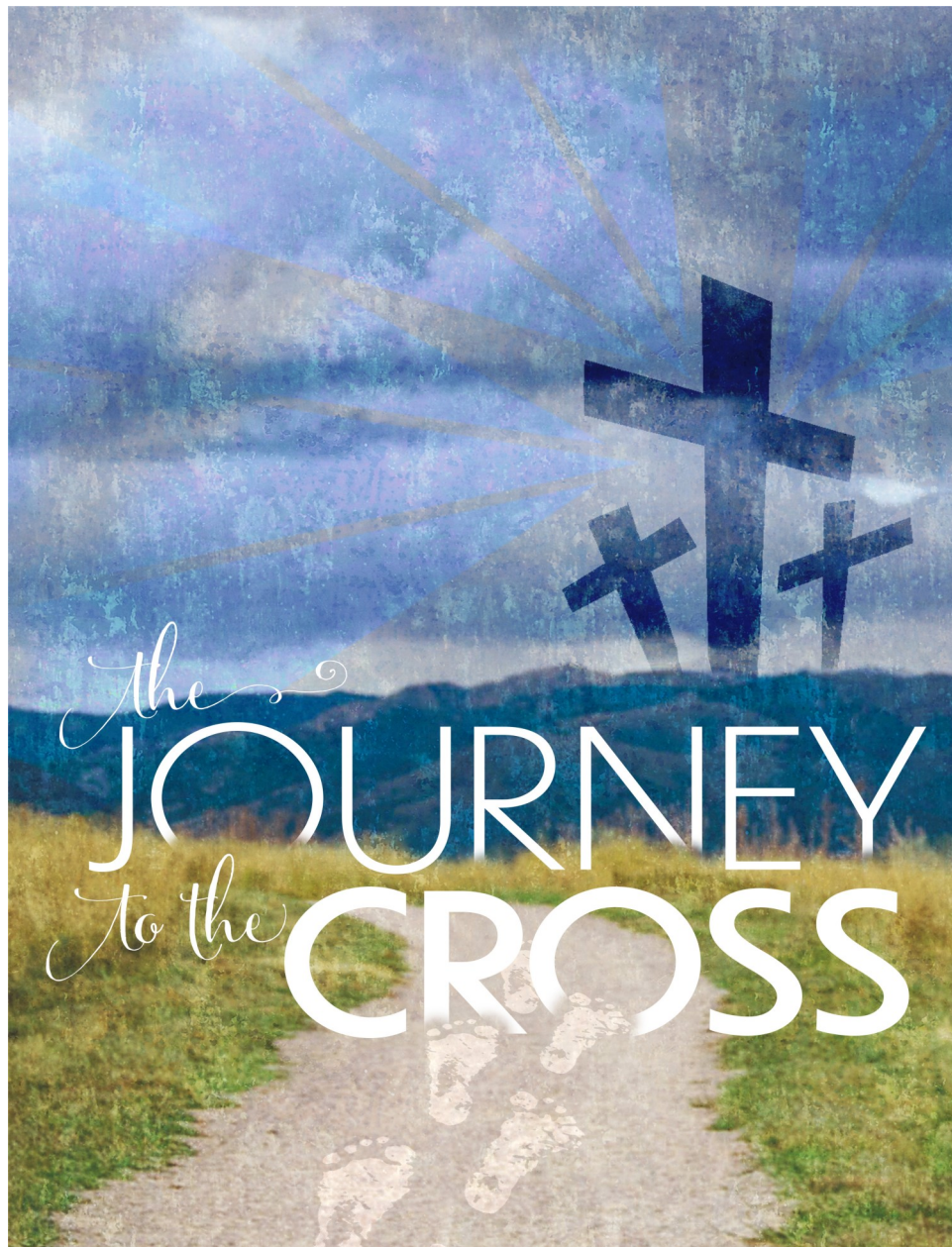
Note of Thanks



Dear Church Family,

I'd like to thank you all very much for the many calls and cards I've received while I have been under the weather. I am grateful for my church family and the support you have shown.

*Much love,
Lorraine Carlson*



February 2024 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 VITA Tax Program 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM	2 Yoga 9:30 AM	3
4 Breakfast 9:15 AM Sunday School and Confirmation 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM	5 Yoga 9:30 AM Property Team 7:00 PM Agape Circle 7:00 PM	6 Pericope 9:00 AM Smart Start 5:00 -8:45 PM Area Lutheran Pastor Pericope 12:00 Noon VITA Tax Program 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM	7 Yoga 9:30 AM Facebook Devotions 10:00 AM Handbells 6:30 PM Chancel Choir 7:30 PM	8 Outreach Team 12:00 Noon VITA Tax Program 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM Prayer Shawls 7:00 PM	9 Yoga 9:30 AM	10 Reception of Friends for Vickie Foster 1:00 PM—4:00 PM
11 Super Bowl Handbells 9:15 AM Worship 10:30 AM	12 Yoga 9:30 AM	13 Pericope 9:00 AM Mary Circle 11:30 AM Area Lutheran Pastor Pericope 12:00 Noon VITA Tax Program 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM Beer and Bible 6:00 PM	14 Ash Wednesday Yoga 9:30 AM Facebook Devotions 10:00 AM Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 7:30 PM NO HANDBELLS	15 VITA Tax Program 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM	16 Yoga 9:30 AM	17 Clothing Closet Open 9:00 AM -- Noon
18 Handbells 9:15 AM Worship 10:30 AM	19 Yoga 9:30 AM	20 Pericope 9:00 AM Smart Start 5:00 -8:45 PM Area Lutheran Pastor Pericope 12:00 Noon	21 Yoga 9:30 AM Facebook Devotions 10:00 AM Lenten Supper 6:15 PM Lenten Service 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 7:30 PM	22 Prayer Shawls 7:00 PM VITA Tax Program 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM	23 Yoga 9:30 AM	24 VITA Tax Program 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM
25 Handbells 9:15 AM Worship 10:30 AM	26 Yoga 9:30 AM	27 Pericope 9:00 AM Area Lutheran Pastor Pericope 12:00 Noon VITA Tax Program 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM Beer and Bible 6:00 PM	28 Yoga 9:30 AM Facebook Devotions 10:00 AM Lenten Supper 6:15 PM Lenten Service 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 7:30 PM	29 VITA Tax Program 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM		



First Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Return Service Requested

We're on the Web:
WWW.FLCLEX.ORG

Church Staff & Volunteers

The Rev. Matthew L. Miller ~ Pastor
Teena Walker ~ Council President
Kelly Newsome ~ Organist / Parish Associate
Jim Lovelace ~ Pianist
Kelly Newsome ~ Music Ministries
Bing Grubb ~ Sexton