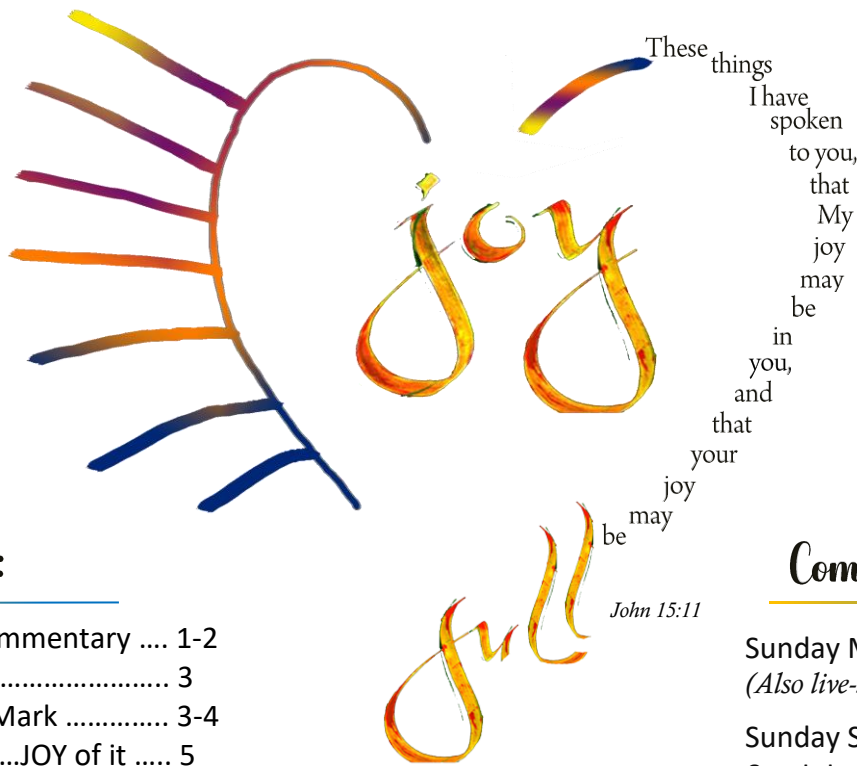


JANUARY 2022  
FRIENDS IN CHRIST NEWS

Friends In Christ Lutheran Church – 1338 Clay Street, Morris, IL 60450



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Come Worship with us:

Sunday Mornings ... 9:30 a.m.  
*(Also live-streamed at facebook.com/ficl)*  
Sunday School  
& Adult Bible Study ... 10:30 a.m.

*Some Thoughts on Being Joyful*

From Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss, President-LCMS Northern Illinois District  
*taken from NID Ministry Update, Winter 2022*



**T**he discussion in my office was intense. Voices raised and feelings hurt. It was pastoral care in the midst of a marriage crisis.

“*This is a joyless marriage,*” one said. Things got very quiet. The other said, “*This is a loveless marriage!*”

These have been a difficult couple of years for several reasons for our workers, congregations, lay-leaders, and schools. Challenges ahead for sure. **Have we become a joyless church?** Where is joy to be found and given in our midst? Is joy not important?

Well, it must be *kind* of important! Our Lord Jesus has said, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that **your joy may be full**” (*John 15:11*). The next verses connect His sacrificial love with our love.

I am intrigued by this passage from the Lutheran Confessions speaking of saving faith: “... *people are righteous by faith, by which they believe that God is reconciled, and he adds that this same faith*

*(Continued on p. 2)*

*(Continued from p. 1)*

*makes alive, because it produces peace, joy, and eternal life in the heart.*” (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)

We live in serious times. We deal with serious matters. We face Satan and an increasingly antagonistic culture and country. We repent of our own sin, both selfishness and self-righteousness.

Yet, with King David and the Church through the ages, we sing, “Restore to us the joy of our salvation.” That is both a prayer and confession of faith. The Lord is the giver of Salvation and that is a gift. The future of the Church and Gospel proclamation is under the direction and protection of the Lord of the church. He is in charge!

*Some thoughts on being joyful:*

*Listen closely and often to the Word of God* read, taught, and proclaimed.

*Rejoice in the gifts* given in Christ for the Church and the world.

*Celebrate and give thanks* more often in your life and congregation.

*Take your fear, anger, and self-serving opinions to Christ* in exchange for true love and true joy.

*Trust God* as you listen and encourage others.

*Keep the main thing the main thing* - Jesus, His Work and Word.

*Laugh and have some fun!* (That works in the Church, too.)

*“God loves a cheerful giver”* (I Corinthians 9:7).

*Exchange ‘me’ for ‘us’ and ‘us’ for ‘them’.*

*Sing together.*

The world is desperate for joy so the harvest is ripe for us. Truth and joy come together because both are gifts! *“The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad”* (Psalm 126:3).

*Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.*

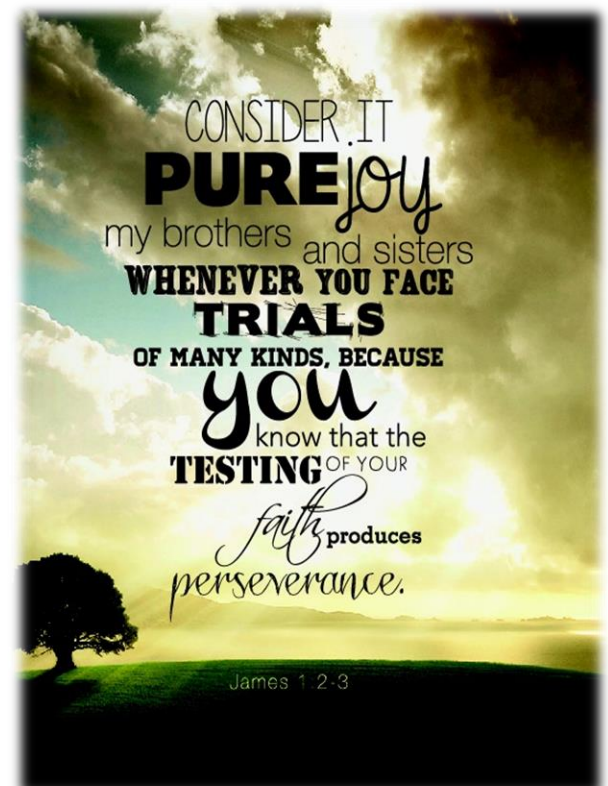
*Psalm 43:4*

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds . . .*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

*Romans 15:13*

Romans 15:13





Our next meeting:  
**Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 10:00 am**

Please note: We will **NOT** be meeting in January

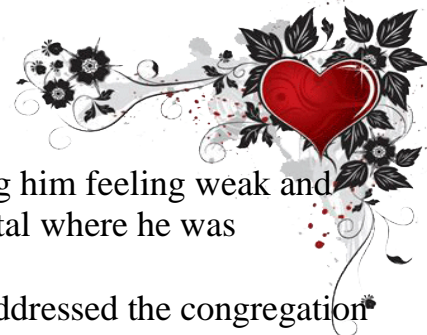
**Hope of Christ for Cancer Patients  
 Phil's Friends — \$70,000**



As Christians, we are charged with sharing the message of the Gospel and the Word with all individuals. The mission of Phil's Friends, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization, is to introduce and strengthen relationships with Christ by providing faith-based hope to those with cancer. The support includes a care package with practical, emotional, and spiritual items, including a Bible, a card sent monthly for 12 months, and a new program "Hope on Call," in which Phil's Friends' trained volunteers meet virtually with the cancer patient to talk and pray. This grant would further fund Phil's Friends Cancer Care Packages, Cards of Hope, and Hope on Call. For more information about this grant, go to [lwml.org/2021-2023-mission-grant-6](http://lwml.org/2021-2023-mission-grant-6).

***An Update about Pastor Mark from Paula:***

*(For those unsure of exactly what happened . . .)*



On Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Pastor suffered a minor stroke leaving him feeling weak and short of breath. Paula drove him to the emergency room at Morris Hospital where he was promptly admitted.

On Sunday morning, December 5<sup>th</sup>, after the worship service, he addressed the congregation from his hospital room via a cell phone that Paula held up to a microphone. On Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, he was released to go home.

Then late in the evening on December 8<sup>th</sup>, he suffered another stroke – this time a major one – in the interior carotid artery on the right side of his brain. Paula immediately called an ambulance and he was initially brought to Morris Hospital but he was soon air lifted by helicopter to Rush University Medical Hospital in Chicago where specialists were waiting to make an attempt to break up the clot. Sadly, they were unable to do so.

After a few days under close observation at Rush University, (and once the doctors deemed his condition stable enough,) he was released to the stroke rehabilitation center at Amita St. Joseph's Hospital in Joliet on Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. He is currently there at the time of writing this.

The stroke has left Pastor Mark with very limited movement and feeling on his left side. He is able to sign with his right hand and is learning to talk again. He *is* making wonderful progress towards recovery – but still has quite a journey ahead of him.

He and Paula have been doing devotions together after which he signs a hymn with his right hand. Most importantly, he and Paula continue to pray together.

Pastor's sons along with their families came at Christmas time to



. . .Continued on page 4

*'An Update About Pastor' Continued*

help Paula with chores and other things around the house, as well as to take turns visiting their dad. Unfortunately, as of December 29<sup>th</sup>, Amita St. Joseph's Hospital has been placed under strict lockdown due to a surge in covid patients and **no** one is allowed to visit him at this time. Paula, thankfully, has been granted a special exemption because Pastor uses sign language to communicate with the staff and she is needed to translate.

Pastor Mark recorded a mediation shortly after his first (minor) stroke. You can listen to it on our website under the 'SERMONS' tab at <https://www.ficl.org/sermons/midweek-advent-meditations-for-family-worship-12821>

As a congregation, we continue to pray for him, his doctors, nurses and therapy staff. We know that our powerful Lord is guiding our dear Pastor through every minute of this – and Pastor knows that Jesus is walking *with* him through this struggle – through this 'no matter what' time in his life.

Paula and the family sincerely ***thank you*** and want you to know how much they appreciate all your love, concern, continued prayers and support during this difficult time.

***Pastor Mark's Address to His Congregation via Telephone:***

I'm going to start out by kind of paraphrasing Polycarp of Smyrna: '67 years I have served Him and He has never done me wrong. How then can I grouse about my King and my Savior?' But this is – what I'm going through right now – is what Luther said about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden: He said 'It is only when they were standing under that tree that they had to face the temptation and turn to God and trust in God.' They failed. But it is not often or long in life that we have trials such as this. And this is the biggest one I've had.

The [bad] times pass and then it goes to a routine or it goes to better times. Do not let the time of temptation or trial pass without rendering to God that special measure of trust and faith – believing His promises – trusting that He is truly, ***truly*** good.

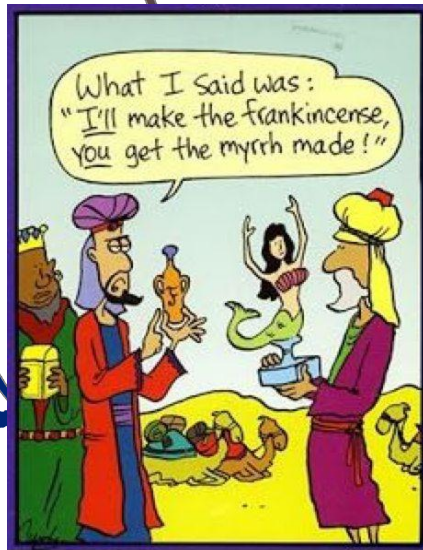
And that's what I have to say about my situation right now. Everything is 'touch and go'. I still have atrial fibrillation. It still has the potential to kick out more clots. Things could get worse. This could end in death. The doctors are hopeful that they can turn it around, but whether for life or for death, all for Christ. Period. End of statement.

Everything He has ever asked me to relinquish or surrender He has responded by putting back; returning something more wonderful and more beautiful. That is the story of my relationship with Jesus.

It was senior year of high school that I was called into the ministry. It happened in the middle of a communion service – in the receiving of the Body and Blood of Jesus – that I learned that the receiving of that Body and that Blood is the visual statement; the physical giving of the statement to us from Jesus: *"I love you and I want you in My Kingdom."* There is an invitation each time you receive that Bread. And each time you receive that Wine there is an invitation from Him to walk with Him in eternal life.

It still affects me when I receive communion in that way and when I share communion with you in that way. It is His profession of love and a call to each one of us: *"I love you and I want you in My Kingdom."*

I want you to remember this the next sip of Wine you receive from the pastor: *"I love you and I want you in My Kingdom."*



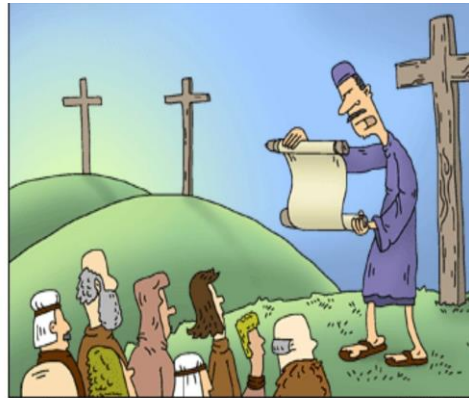
## Flappy Birthday!

- 4<sup>th</sup> Alex McComb
- 9<sup>th</sup> Vicki Kahn
- 11<sup>th</sup> Trisha Johnson  
Patti Lear
- 15<sup>th</sup> Kim Foehringer
- 17<sup>th</sup> Mark Thompson
- 24<sup>th</sup> David Castleberry

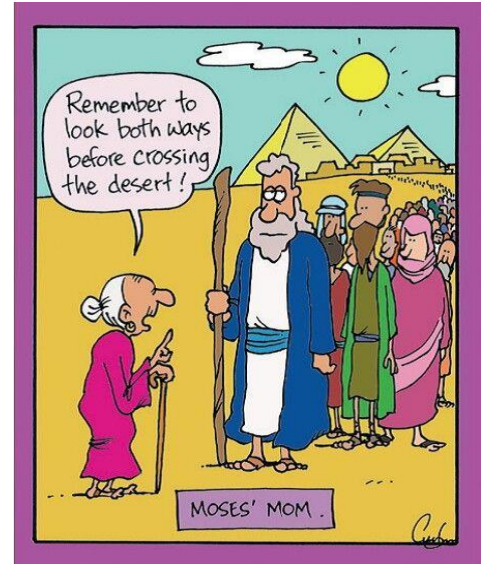
## Flappy Anniversary! (NONE)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
A time to weep and a time to laugh . . .*

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4a



(See John 19:17-37) 04-18-2014  
 "I, JESUS, HEREBY BEQUEATH MY CARPENTRY STUFF TO ZED, MY GOOD TUNIC TO ROB, AND I'LL BE BACK TO PICK UP THE REST. TO EVERYONE IN THE UNIVERSE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE ... I LEAVE LIFE."



## Financial Report Friends in Christ Lutheran Church

General Fund	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	YTD Actual	BUDGETED
Income	\$ 8,977.67	\$ 12,826.26	\$ 8,842.66	\$ 11,242.59	\$ 11,969.41	\$ 129,362.27	\$ 128,645.00
Expenses	\$ 11,199.27	\$ 8,894.46	\$ 10,926.17	\$ 9,617.26	\$ 11,420.50	\$ 113,689.85	\$ 128,601.00
Net Income (Loss)	(\$2,221.60)	\$3,931.80	(\$2,083.51)	\$1,625.33	\$548.91	\$ 15,672.42	


# Prayer Calendar

## JANUARY 2022



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						<p>1 Please pray daily for Pastor Willig, Deb, Kris, Alex and their families. Pray for Missionaries all around the world. Deaf ministry.</p>
<p>2 Help us Lord, to be a bold witness for Christ in word and actions. 1 Cor. 5:17-20</p>	<p>3 Please pray for the agencies in Grundy Co. that help those in need. Give them the finances to keep helping everyone. Open the hearts of those who donate of time and money to help out.</p>	<p>4 God, Thank You for sending us the Holy Spirit who empowers, comforts, counsels, and teaches us all things. John 14:26</p>	<p>5 Pray for all those in the congregation that need healing. Especially today remember those that are home bound and in homes all over the world.</p>	<p>6 Lord, when I am feeling sorry for myself, remind me that your desire is for me to live abundantly. John 10:10</p>	<p>7 Lord, Thank You for giving us the opportunity to worship and praise You during our Church services this weekend. Help us to take what we learn from church out into the world and help others learn more about You.</p>	<p>8 Lord help us to prepare our hearts before we come to worship You.</p>
<p>9 Lord, open our eyes to opportunities to be a friend to each other at church and in our community. Rom. 12:9</p>	<p>10 Lord, remind us that expressing the joy that You bring into our lives shows others that we are Christians. Phil 4:4</p>	<p>11 Lord, as You know our Grundy Co. community needs some place for children and adults to go to learn and have fun. Please bless our community with a YMCA building. Bless those working on trying to bring a YMCA to Morris.</p>	<p>12 Lord, may the New Year bring strength and renewal to those who feel tired and weak. Isaiah 40:29</p>	<p>13 Lord, Thank You for blessing us with friends and family who love, encourage, comfort, and rejoice with us. Luke 1:58</p>	<p>14 God, I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:14</p>	<p>15 Lord, be a source of encouragement and hope to people seeking work. Josh 1:9</p>
<p>16 God hear the prayers of parents who want a better life for their children. 1 Cor. 13:4</p>	<p>17 Lord, Thank You for giving rest to people who are weary and burdened. Matt. 11:28</p>	<p>18 Lord, let all who take refuge in You rejoice and sing for joy. Spread Your protection over us. Psalm 5:11</p>	<p>19 Lord, help us to remember that prayer is a vital connection to You. John 15:4-7</p>	<p>20 Lord, Thank You for enabling us to trust in You and lean not on our own understanding. Pro. 3:5</p>	<p>21 Lord, Thank You for enabling us to trust in You and lean not on our own understanding. Prov. 3:5</p>	<p>22 Lord, help us to meditate on Your Word. Psalm 1:2-3</p>
<p>23 Lord, remove my anxiety and fear so that I can be at peace with myself. Luke 12:32</p>	<p>24 Lord, Thank You for equipping us to do good works in Your name. Eph. 2:10</p>	<p>25 May Your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in You. Psalm 33:22</p>	<p>26 Lord, Thank You for forgiving our sins in accordance with the richness of Your grace. Eph 1:7</p>	<p>27 Lord, may we find Your Word to be "more precious than gold, sweeter than honey." Psalm 19:10</p>	<p>28 God, we praise and bless Your name that is above all names. Phil. 2:9</p>	<p>29 Lord, we ask that You would set us free from any bondage that satan seeks to ensnare us with. 1 Cor. 6:12</p>
<p>30 Lord, we ask that You would set us free from any bondage that satan seeks to ensnare us with. 1 Cor. 6:12</p>	<p>31 Lord Thank You for all my blessing You have given me. Help me to be blessed in the New Year.</p>					

# January 2022 – Friends in Christ Lutheran Church, Morris, Illinois

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
						1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>
2 <b>COMMUNION</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday After Christmas 9:30 AM – Worship & Live Streamed	3	4 7:00 PM – Elders	5 <b>NO</b> LWML Meeting	6 The Epiphany of our Lord	7	8 10:30 AM – Christmas Decoration Removal
9 The Baptism of our Lord 9:30 AM – Worship & Live-Streamed 10:30 AM – Bible Study Hour	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 <b>COMMUNION</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday After Epiphany 9:30 AM – Worship & Live-Streamed 10:30 AM – Bible Study Hour	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Epiphany 9:30 AM – Worship & Live-Streamed 10:30 AM – Bible Study Hour	24	25	26	27 7:00 PM – Church Council via ZOOM	28	29
30 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany 9:30 AM – Worship & Live-Streamed 10:30 AM – Bible Study Hour	31	<p><i>Looking Ahead:</i>  <b>February 13:</b> Voters' Assembly Meeting: Sunday – 10:30 am  <b>March 2:</b> Ash Wednesday</p>				