



## First Lutheran Church

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### Church office hours:

Monday: 8:30 am 12:00 noon  
Tuesday-Friday: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

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[www.hope4u.cc](http://www.hope4u.cc)

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Thought to ponder:

**For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah 9:6

## A Letter to you From Taiwan

When I think about what is acceptable and what is not, I often think about the years I spent in Taiwan before I was married. My Taiwanese friends and acquaintances would often talk about marriage and how I needed to get married, too. When my friends and I got together, inevitably someone would bring up the topic. Being the eldest in the group, they always pointed their fingers at me to hurry up and get married. I kept in mind they were just trying to get me to fit into the box of what they deemed was acceptable. One-by-one, I attended wedding after wedding as they got married. After Jamie and I had been dating for several months, even his mother began to ask when we were going to get married. One day she pulled me aside and said, "Norma, if you and my son plan to have children, you need to hurry up and get married. Your age is quite a bit older and you need to consider this." I smiled and thanked her for her advice. Even standing in the supermarket line, the cashier asked if I was married. When I told her no, she asked how old I was. At that time I was 39 and when I informed her of my age, the older woman standing in line behind me backed away and looked me up and down as if trying to find out what was wrong with me. It is difficult to fit into another's standards, especially when those standards are apt to change year after year and culture by culture.

For those in Taiwan, the appropriate age for a woman to marry is between 20 and 26. At age 29, no one weds because the number is bad luck for marriage for both male and female. By the time a woman is thirty, she is considered too old for marriage. And for a woman of forty – all hope is lost. Ages between males and females also need to be considered when selecting the right mate. The male must always be older than the female because that is what is normal. There cannot be an age difference of four years between the

couple because the number four sounds like the word death and their relationship will fail. The maximum age difference should not exceed 6 years nor should the ages be identical. The male also needs to be taller than the female because that is just protocol.

So what is one of the many things that makes my marriage to Jamie so special? We break the rules of all that is considered acceptable in Taiwan. The woman is taller than the male. The woman is older than the male. Our age differences exceed the 6 year maximum. And when Jamie and I were married, my age also exceeded the "all hope is lost" limitation. But what our friends are seeing is a true gift from God. The impossible has become what is possible. Our love that has come together was not something set to fit into a human time or standard.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*  
Isaiah 55:8-9.

When I think about what is acceptable and what is not, the only standard I need to keep in heart is to be acceptable in the eyes of God. And with God everything becomes possible.

Appreciating Him,  
Jamie, Norma and Julian (in Taiwan)

### LWML CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

This year we are having our ladies Christmas potluck on Tuesday, December 12th at 6pm in Tedrahn Hall. Besides Dinner, we will let our secret pals of the past year know who we are and give them their Christmas presents, plus bring a gift less than \$7.00 in order to pass it on to one of the ladies attending the potluck. We always have a great time every year at this party, so come to our Christmas Potluck to have fun and enjoy being with others that evening. Any questions? Call Ellie Pehling at 619-443-6541

## Upcoming Events

**Mourning to Morning**  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday / month  
6:00-7:30 pm  
Tedrahn Hall

**Couples Group**  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday / month  
5:30-7:30 pm  
Tedrahn Hall

**Pastor's Breakfast for Men**  
First Saturday / month  
December 2nd  
8:15-9:45 am  
Tedrahn Hall

**Love El Cajon**  
First Saturday / month  
December 2nd  
10:00-12:30 pm  
Meet in front of the Administration Building

**Timothy Girls**  
Women's Luncheon  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday / month  
December 12th  
12:00 noon  
Coco's, Melody/E. Main  
All women welcome!

**New Member Class**  
Sunday, January 21st  
1:00-5:30 pm  
Music Dept.  
Administration Building

**MOPS**  
Second Friday / month  
December 8th  
9:15-11:30 am  
Tedrahn Hall

**Christmas Service**  
Monday  
December 25, 2006  
9:00 am  
Sanctuary

**Fellowship Potluck**  
There will be no potluck in December.

## PASTOR'S LETTER

The Miracle of Christmas

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...full of grace and truth.*  
John 1:14

Max Lucado writes in his book, God Came Near:

*It all happened in a moment, a most remarkable moment.*

*As moments go, that one appeared no different than any other. If you could somehow pick it up off the timeline and examine it, it would look exactly like the ones that have passed while you have read these words. It came and it went. It was preceded and succeeded by others just like it. It was one of the countless moments that have marked time since eternity became measurable.*

*But in reality, that particular moment was like none other. For through that segment of time a spectacular thing occurred. God became a man. While the creatures of earth walked unaware, divinity arrived. Heaven opened herself and placed her most precious one in a human womb.*

*The omnipotent, in one instant, made himself breakable. He who had been spirit became pierceable. He who was larger than the universe became an embryo. And he who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl.*

*God as a fetus. Holiness sleeping in the womb. The creator of life created.*

*God had come near.*

The incarnation is a mystery and a wonder. It is a mystery how God, the infinite creator of the universe, became finite in the flesh; how God was both Father and Son at the same time. It is a wonder that He became flesh; that God would stoop down to a broken world that had turned its heart and face away from Him and sacrifice Himself for it in order to redeem it. Such love.

But even though the incarnation is a mystery and a wonder, the result of it is not a mystery, though it still is a wonder. The result was a God "reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Cor. 5:19). The result is that wrong people can be right with God. That never would have happened or been made possible if Jesus had not first made his

dwelling among people. Jesus lived the life people have not lived, (but were supposed to have lived), and Jesus died for the life people actually have lived. He did this by planting His presence in the world.

Jesus made reconciliation and a right relationship with God and others possible. God got back relationships He had lost, and people got back the ability to enjoy healthy and enduring relationships with Him and with one another.

Enjoy the miracle of Christmas – Christ coming to earth – Christ incarnate. A miracle God gave for you and me.

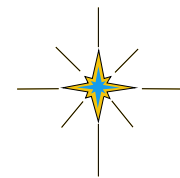
Grateful to be serving as your pastor.

*Pastor Scott Riche*

## MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Interested in learning more about membership at First Lutheran? Our next class is Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup> from 1-5:30pm in the Music Department. To sign-up use a communication card in the pew on Sunday or call the church office. Childcare is available upon request.

## CHRISTMAS IS FOREVER!



Mark your calendar and invite your family and friends! The choir, drama team, soloists, and youth and children's choirs will present this awesome Christmas

production on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm and Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. We'll have a reception following the program in Tedrahn Hall on both nights! Come early, as the seats fill up quickly!

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

### Sunday Hospitality Team

Every Sunday we enjoy goodies, juice and coffee after every service. Over 60 people serve each month to make the time after



Worship a place where we can meet people and mingle. Currently there are 2 openings for "Servers" and 3 openings for "Providers." If you want to be a part of this ministry, call or email Marilyn.

443-6636/marilynhh@ecflc.org

## THE DISCOVERY ZONE

(Grades K-5)

Sundays - 9:30-10:30am  
in Tedrahn Hall

Follow the star!

Let's head for Bethlehem Village!

Wow! You don't want to miss this.... We've got some exciting adventures planned for our Bethlehem Village adventure! We're exploring market-place shops, a Bethlehem Barnyard, visiting the Census Taker, playing games and dancing to lively Bible songs as we learn about the coming Messiah. Each week we're on a new adventure discovering more about authentic Bible times culture and what it was like to live in the Roman empire.

The village gates are open! See you there!

## CHILDREN'S CLUB

*Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:00 pm*  
*Tedrahn Hall*

Join us for our December activities at Pioneer Clubs:

- Be a part and grown in God's Family
- Join us and bring a friend for our Happy Birthday Jesus party
- Be a part as we work on our "Team Games" activity award
- Explore God's world as we earn our "Rocks" activity award

*Come be a part of the Pioneer Club*

*For questions, contact:  
Fried Thomas (669-1295)*

## MOPS

*Friday, December 8th*  
*9:15 - 11:30am in Tedrahn Hall.*

MOPS is a place for mothers of young children (infant to Kindergarten).

We have a speaker, small group time, snacks & a craft just for you!

Childcare is available for a minimal fee.

Your 1<sup>st</sup> time here is FREE!

For more information, please call

Kathleen Bellavance at

(619) 749-4844

FRESH AIR: What Every Mom Needs

## CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

Sunday, December 10  
4:00-7:30pm

It's a Christmas Party!

Where?

First Lutheran Church

What are we going to do?

Celebrate Jesus' birthday!

Come one, come all....for all ages...  
infants, children, teens, and adults!  
Family & Friends Christmas Event....

Crafts, games, activities, the Christmas story, Christmas caroling, FOOD – a chili dinner, and more....including....

\*\*Christmas Around the World desserts!!!!!! Yes, if you have Christmas cookies or a dessert from another country you'd like to share – bring it along and we'll do a Christmas Around the World cookie exchange!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

To make our Family and Friends Christmas Event a success – we need you!!!

How can you help?

Kitchen crew

Craft booth volunteers

Donate: chili supplies, paper goods, drinks, Christmas cookies

Decoration team

Set up/take down volunteers...

Please contact Lori Rische #593-7832 if you would like to be part of creating this exciting event! We're going to celebrate Jesus, our Savior!

## THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who came to our First Annual Family, *Movie Night* all who came had fun watching *Swiss Family Robinson*, eating fresh popped popcorn and coming up with original ideas on how to survive while stranded on a deserted island. Watch for our next event in the coming months to see what is to follow...

Sincerely,

Kevin Robinson,  
Kathleen Vaughn  
and Sandy Robinson

## BASIC TRAINING



What's a Christian?  
What's a Lutheran?  
What do we really believe?

Basic Training is a place to learn about what it means to be a Christian and what the basics of our faith are. Basic Training is our confirmation program for 7th and 8th graders that starts in January. We meet on the fourth Friday and Saturday of the month for three months. The dates are January 27 & 28, February 23 & 24, and March 23 & 24. The times on Friday are 6:30 to 8:30, and on Saturday it is 9am to 3pm. If you're interested in signing up talk to youth director Ryan Albert. 444-7444

## VISITATION MINISTRY

This ministry seeks to meet the needs of our members and friends who are ill or homebound, or members who need transportation to Dr. appointments.

## BIBLE STUDY AT GRANITE HILLS Convalescent Hospital

1st and 3rd Mondays from  
10:00 to 10:45 AM.

Residents are led in worship, prayer, scripture reading, and song. The residents, as well as the group that goes to minister to them, are blessed each time!



*If you are interested in finding out about these ministries, and discovering if this is where God wants to use you, please contact Sue in the church office at 444-7444*

## MOURNING TO MORNING

"Hope for the Holidays: Finding Peace in a Season of Loss" is our 13<sup>th</sup> annual workshop to support those who are grieving losses in their lives. The workshop will be held on Monday December 4 at 6:00 PM in Tedrahn Hall. Guest harpist Linda Hill will be with us for the evening. Whether you are grieving a loss, or want to help someone who is grieving, we invite you to join us.

*When there is a way for people in grief to honor the memories and to give expression to their feeling, healing can proceed.*

*If you are interested in finding out about these ministry, and discovering if this is where God wants to use you, please contact Sue in the church office @ 444-7444.*

## BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC



The next blood pressure clinic will be on Sunday December 10th after the 8:00 service in the Parish Nurse office. The normal blood pressure is 120/80. Do you know what yours is?

## THANK YOU !

Wow!! . . . What a successful craft faire we had this year! How come? It is due to all you crafters, bakers, cooks, volunteers and by those who put us in their prayers. And of course, the Lord guided all of you in order to be able to help others through our faire. Just think, in only eleven months we will be having our 14th Annual Craft Faire! All of you be praised and God Himself be glorified!! Thank you, thank you!!

The winners of the raffle were the following. The antique quilt was won by Tina Sinclair. The picture of the Coronado Bridge was won by Marguerite Reed and the wreath was won by Mary Gideon. Congratulations to you three!

## SKI TRIP

Saturday, Feb. 10th we will be taking a busload up to Mt. High in Wrightwood for a day in the snow. For more information, go to the Celebrate Recovery Table and pick up a Ski Trip packet with all the details. For more information call Marilyn or Ryan at 444-7444.

## PASTOR'S BREAKFAST FOR MEN

### GIFTS THAT ARE GOOD FOR GUYS TO GIVE

Saturday, December 2, 2006  
8:15 to 9:45 a.m.



It's getting close to Christmas. Gifts are going to be given. But what are the gifts guys should give? After all, we're guys!

Join me as we look, from God's Word, at some really powerful and meaningful gifts that you and I can give – as guys. They are gifts that will truly be appreciated.

These breakfasts feature awesome food by Chef Joe, but they are also offered FOR YOU – to support you as a man in your relationship with the Lord and with the others in your life.

Join me and others on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

In Christ,

*Pastor Scott Rische*

## FAMILY MATTERS

**Family Matters** is a monthly page on which we share significant events or happenings in your life with others in your church family. Please submit your items to the church office by the 12<sup>th</sup> of every month to be included in the next issue of **Focus 2020 Family Matters**.

### Birthdays

Bob Saunders	12/01	Danene Abbott	12/17
Ginger Warner	12/01	Fried Thomas	12/20
Brandon Fritts	12/02	Dorothy Thomas	12/21
Sabrina Padillo	12/02	Louise Holder	12/21
Evie Wallace	12/04	Tom Sipan	12/21
April St. Clair	12/04	Jazmine Flynn	12/21
Daniel Bristol	12/04	Samson Serrano	12/21
Kim Freeman	12/05	Kathy Perez	12/22
Bea Allen	12/07	Bill Smith	12/22
Rick Dunican	12/08	Barbara Shrum	12/22
Katie Thomas	12/08	Sandy Robinson	12/22
Pat Kettler	12/09	Amber Unger	12/22
Jere Wyatt	12/09	Ralph Suelzle	12/25
Margaret Felde	12/09	Chuck St. Clair	12/25
Christoper Rodriguez	12/09	Dale Shrum	12/26
Emma Dahlberg	12/10	Dan Scott	12/26
Erik Clabeaux	12/10	Sue Liston	12/27
Suzanne Suelzle	12/12	David Reinhardt	12/27
Tim Brown	12/13	Ron Rhoades	12/28
Charlene Butler	12/13	Linda Todd	12/29
Tatiana Sanderson	12/15	Vickie Honeck	12/29
Lainey Lewis	12/15	Ryan Garat	12/29
Erika Jones	12/16	Sarah Rische	12/30
Nick Stutzman	12/16	Jenny Sevick	12/31
		Taylor Kehl	12/31

### Wedding Anniversaries

12/04	12/17
Jim & Mary Hanson	Sean & Jen Frick
12/04	12/19
Travis & Michelle Moore	Mark & Rebecca Kaul
12/04	12/22
Jim & Mary Hanson 12/04	Byron & Evelyn Killmar
12/05	12/28
Kevin & Sue Benson 12/05	Vince & Margen Fritts
12/06	12/28
John & Shairrie Van Duzer	Kian & Shellby Hemmen
12/08	12/29
Ken & Jenny Sevick	Mark & Rebecca Kaul
12/10	<b>Baptism</b>
Dale & Barbara Shrum	Jakob G. Kielinen 11/05
12/17	Aubrey D. Dutton 11/11
Jim & Betty Brown	

Join in this month for...

# Love El Cajon

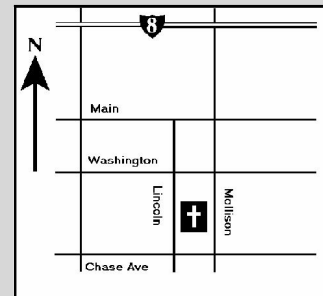
Saturday, December 2, 2006  
10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Give the gift of Christmas by loving  
someone else in Jesus' name!

“A place to *discover*, *deepen*, and *live out* the life and relationships we were created to have with God and others.”

***Focus 2020 ... To Inform and to Inspire***

First Lutheran Church  
867 S. Lincoln Ave.  
El Cajon, CA 92020



**Sunday 8:00 am Worship**  
Powerful hymns, organ & choir  
*Childcare provided*

**9:30 am Worship  
& Education Hour**  
Uplifting new songs, band & vocalists in  
worship & a variety of adult classes,  
children's activities, middle & high school  
classes. *Childcare provided*

**11:00 am Worship**  
Uplifting new songs, band & vocalists.  
*Childcare provided*

**Friday 6:00 pm  
Celebrate Recovery**  
Dinner, Worship, Recovery Groups,  
Coffee House. *Childcare provided*