

Our Church

First Lutheran Church is a small congregation in “un-Lutheran” southern Oklahoma. We have 94 Communicant members, including four recently-Confirmed young people.



Our Plan

As pastor for First Lutheran, let me tell how we at First rolled out our *Ablaze!* and *Fan into Flame*. For six weeks prior to our *Fan into Flame* appeal, I talked about *Ablaze!* for a couple of minutes before each service. I also mentioned the word *Ablaze!* during each sermon. Then using the recommendations for the *Fan into Flame* campaign, we selected a starting date for home visits, and only three weeks later held our Commitment Sunday. One couple, Lyle and Erika Bailey, made about two-thirds of the home visits; and another Elder and I visited the other homes. How wonderful! As you would expect, God was in our presence, blessing all of us! The visits were long overdue and were great!

During one home visit, the Baileys shared the *Ablaze!* message of seeking the unchurched to share Christ and His message. The response from this family was, “If I miss the opportunity of sharing the Gospel with someone I may be sending them to hell.” This expresses the urgency and the importance of every opportunity given each of us. His Word does not come back void, Isaiah 55:11. The only way to share Christ is first to know Him. Then finding the unchurched will be provided through prayer.

Another home visit brought us the value of *Fan into Flame*, when the widows mite (Luke 21: 1-4) was brought to mind. The generosity of the spirit exceeded anything possible of monetary value.

Our Results to date

So, what were the results of our *Fan into Flame* appeal? An amazing, unbelievable amount of \$28,000 has been pledged for our \$10,000 goal! Certainly God still works in mysterious ways.

Our Outreach Effort

How will our congregation use our share? Without myself getting caught in the middle, so to speak, the members want to send it to my daughter, Carla, who plans to do foreign mission work. She is in the Deaconess Program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and will spend two years, starting Jan. 1st, in Bahia Blanca, Argentina; south of Buenos Aires. She needs to raise several thousand dollars for her mission work, so what a blessing to be able to support her with a gift of \$4,000 from the congregation.



First Lutheran Church

1319 East 18th St.
Ada, Oklahoma 74820
Rev. Gary Brandt, Pastor
(580) 332-3433

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Our budget is \$92,000 which makes money always a concern. Thus, when I first heard that each congregation was being asked to have a goal of 10% of its budget for ***Fan into Flame***, I rolled my eyes. Would raising \$10,000 be a wise thing to try, especially in the midst of a drive to raise \$24,000 for a new roof while taking orders for the new hymnal (LSB)? But I did what every Christian is supposed to do—I prayed! I love the idea of ***Ablaze!***, reaching 100 million people by 2017 by sharing the Gospel with at least 4 people per year times 2.5 million LCMS members over the next ten years---what a phenomenal idea! And I was also convinced that raising \$100 million to support missionary work was a terrific idea, especially giving back 15% to both our district and the local congregation. Thus, my hope was that the Lord would bring good from our home visits---that their primary purpose wouldn't be to "ask for money", but to have a warm, family visit, share the purpose of ***Ablaze!***, and then invite our members to contribute to ***Fan into Flame*** if they so desired.

But we cannot forget the most important element of this whole ***Fan into Flame*** campaign. That is, the funds are to be used to support the ***Ablaze!*** movement. Without the Gospel of Jesus Christ there is no need for money! As a follow-up to ***Fan into Flame***, our congregation is going to have an ***Ablaze!*** commitment on Pentecost Sunday. A few members did not wish to contribute to ***Fan into Flame***, but no one should be reluctant to committing to share the Good News. We all know that Jesus Christ died for our sins and has promised us the gift of everlasting life, but the "we all" circle is shrinking! Fewer and fewer people actually know about and believe in Christ. It's up to us---and now is the time! What a blessing from God to be able to share His Word! And what blessings are ***Ablaze!*** and ***Fan into Flame***.

Moving into ***Ablaze!*** with the opportunity to participate in the vision brought to us by the LCMS World Mission is all glory and honor to God. This is so exciting to know God wants His people to reach out and through the ***Ablaze!*** movement we are unified with a common goal.

I personally solicit your personal and congregation support for ***Fan into Flame***. Together we can accomplish marvelous things for the sake of Christ and His Church.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Gary Brandt
First Lutheran Church
Ada, Oklahoma