

August 2026

the first messenger



First Lutheran Church

Opening Doors to Life in Christ

August Calendar

Watch for the latest updates in the Friday email
& in the bulletins. A full calendar is on
our website: firstlutheranchurch.com

Worship With Us!

Sundays in the Summer
8:30am & 10:30am (outside)

Adult Vacation Bible School

August 5 & 10 @ 5:30pm

Ruth Olson Funeral

August 7 @ 11am | visitation @ 10am

Rebekah Circle

August 11 @ 9am

Ruth Circle

August 13 @ 1:30pm

Middle School Bonfire

August 23 @ 6pm

Vision Council Meeting

August 25 @ 5:30pm

Weekly Activities

Quilters

Tuesday @ 8:30am

Men's Daybreak Bible Study

Wed @ 6:30am at the Holiday Inn

Worship Team Rehearsal

Wednesday @ 5pm

Women's Bible Study

Thursday @ 8am



On the cover -- You may have noticed a new addition to FLC. This watercolor was made by our very own artist Deb Anderson and donated to First Lutheran by Madalyne Sukke. Thanks ladies -- we know it will be enjoyed for generations to come!

Registration for 2026 -'27 YFM Programming is now OPEN!

Our Fall Kick off will be here before you know it!
Parents -- be sure to register your kids! For more information
contact Olivia.



Wednesday School
Grade PreK-5



The Vine
Grade 9-12



Sunday Kids Fellowship
Grade PreK-5



Confirmation
Grade 6-8

Fall Kick Off!

Rally Wednesday
September 9

Rally Sunday
September 13





Throwing Stones

by Lead Pastor, Joe Skogmo

Welcome to AUGUST!

My friends, I made a two-part post on our First Lutheran Facebook page on Maundy Thursday (April 2nd, 2026). It was a Holy Week reflection that I think applies every day, beyond just the dynamics of Holy Week. So, I offer you this reflection again in case you missed it or wanted a refresh.

Part 1 | When People Throw Stones at Us, Remember that Cruelty is Weakness

How can our religion help when others are unjustly ganging up and 'throwing stones at us?'

To begin, let's acknowledge that being in that position is painful and gross. In the tradition of the Psalms, we acknowledge and lament the injustice of such an experience when the crowd gathers, stones in hand, convinced they are righteous, and their vitriol comes our way.

Jesus knows this scene. In John 8 they drag a woman forward to be stoned to death, and Jesus steps between her and the judgmental crowd. It's important to remember what Jesus does next. He exposes the lie upon which the crowd stands: 'Let one without sin cast the first stone.' Of course, none of them can survive that test and they recoil.

Jesus does this for us, too. He stands beside us reminding us of who we are and stuffs out the gaslighting lie that the ones throwing stones are any better than us. So, the ridicule you've endured says less about your worth, and more about the stone-thrower's need to justify themselves by hurting and condemning others.

As the philosopher, Seneca, has written: **all cruelty stems from weakness**. Meanwhile, Jesus' love serves to remind us that our worth does not come from them, it comes from the Creator who has already established that our worth is immeasurable.

So, remember, as people gang up, or individuals cast stones of slander, remember Christ is right there with you. Their cruelty says more about them than it does about you. And, finally, remember that you don't need the stone-thrower's approval; in God's love you have been freed from needing such superficial assurances.

Likewise, you do not need to pick up stones either, and this leads to Part 2.

Part 2 | When We Want to Throw Stones at Others

Jesus tells us to be introspective when it comes to judging our neighbor: "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye but do not notice the log in your own[?]," --Matthew 7:3.

As we feel inclined to judge others and tout self-righteousness, here are a couple of biblical reminders to help slow us down:

- Refrain from speculative gossip. You probably know less than you think | **Exodus 20:16/Romans 2:1/Galatians 5:20** (8th Commandment & the Apostle Paul)
- Refrain from toxicity even if you think they're wrong | **John 8:7** (According to Jesus, only those without sin can throw stones of judgment.)
- Refrain from publicly ridiculing others. If you think someone is wrong and you think you have all the facts, don't publicly drag them; do as Jesus says to do: approach them in private and address the issues | **Matthew 18:15**

Friends, mature discipleship that bears spiritual fruits for a healthier world heeds the abovementioned biblical wisdom.

This is not easy, of course, since we are imperfect and the world can be so difficult and cruel. But, with God's mercy and forgiveness, we can try again and again to be a more gracious people to one another.

Blessings,
Pastor Joe.

Christian Reflections

by Minister Barry

Sonny (you know, our very own Sonny in the front office) just got a new roof. And it's one of the most selfless acts I've seen in a long time.

Enter the Fuller Center for Housing, a faith-driven and Christ-centered, not for profit organization based in Americus, GA whose mission it is to engage in an "unrelenting quest to provide adequate shelter for all people in need worldwide."

The Fuller Center for Housing constructs low cost homes and housing renovations at low or no cost, and provides interest-free financing or pay back arrangements to beneficiaries. All of this is accomplished by volunteers.

One component of the Fuller Center is the Bicycle Adventure Group. One "flight", as they are called, cycling from Oregon to Maine, made a stop at Sonny's house in Detroit Lakes. There, thirty or so volunteers replaced the roof in one and a half days. In speaking to several of them, I learned that each member shares a common bond; that they are called by God to perform this work. Members of this flight are of different faiths, from all over the country, and one member was even from England.

A three month mission....volunteering to perform multiple construction projects in multiple states....sleeping mostly in churches...relying on the hospitality of others...travel by bicycle

I'm certain that I've heard a similar story recently. I think it had something to do with Jesus sending out His disciples to do His work...assisting in the harvest...and relying exclusively on the hospitality of others.

Selfless, caring, empathetic, generous, compassionate....all the things God wants us to be.

Peace,

Barry

summer music opportunities

We're always looking for musicians to provide special music during our summer worship services! Whether you play piano or another instrument, sing solo or with others— all ages and groups are welcome.

Talk to Karen to schedule a Sunday and share your gifts with our church family.

Karen Bimberg, Music Ministry Director
karen@firstlutheranchurch.com

I Am Worthy

By Phyllis Neuenfeldt



The 2026 Triennial Gathering of WELCA, held in July 16-19 in Des Moines Iowa, the theme was "I Am Worthy". Three women from FLC joined more than 1,000 women who were inspired and challenged through four days of fellowship, worship, Bible study, and selections from 13 topical workshops.

Together we celebrated our worthiness through Jesus, realizing that "I am worthy" does not mean I am better than another. Rather, we recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives and the lives of those around us.

We must accept Christ's command to reach out to each other, taking action to make a difference wherever we see needs.

Piecemaker



What have the quilters been doing this summer? We have been working together to make quilts for donation.

In the first half of the year, five quilts and two lap robes were given to the Blessing Closet. Twelve quilts were donated to the Food Pantry; four large quilts, three baby quilts and two pillows were donated to MAHUBE-OTWA.

The first week of June, 44 quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief.

Twelve quilts were purchased, mostly by members of the church. The purchase of the quilts allowed us to purchase of a number of rolls of batting with which to fill future quilts.

We continue to cut, piece, sew, tie, turn and stitch edges together each Tuesday morning. Please join us.

The FLC Quilters meet every Tuesday at 8am in the Rec Room. Everyone Welcome!

Youth & Family Ministry

Olivia Sauer, Youth & Family Ministry Director | olivia@firstlutheranchurch.com
920.860.4655 | office hours : Mon-Thurs 8:30am-4pm

Moving Mountains



We had a fantastic time this year at VBS! With over 30 kids in attendance our camp counselors from Luther Crest led us in songs and games, water fun, crafts, and worship, we had it all.

During the week, our kids learned about what it means to be a "Mountain Mover" through topics of

Community (Daniel 3:1-30),
Courage (Esther 4:1-17),
Faith (Matthew 2:13-23), and
Love (John 13:1-15; 34-35).

Thanks to our volunteers who provided meals for the Luther Crest counselors and for those who helped during the day serving snacks and lunch to the kids!

We can't wait for next year!!!



Looking Ahead

Middle School

Bonfire & Game Night

August 23 @ 6-8pm

Join Pastor Joe and Olivia outside on the lawn for an epic evening of lawn games and a bonfire!

Confirmation Student and Parent/Guardian Orientation
September 2 @ 5:30pm

Teacher Orientation
September 2 @ 6:30pm
This is for PreK-5th Grade Teachers only.

YFM Needs You!

Soon summer will be over and the halls of the Education Wing will be buzzing and overflowing with energy once again. We are still in need of a few more people to teach or assist with:

Wednesday School | PreK-5th grade

Pre Confirmation | 6th grade

Confirmation Small Group | 7th & 8th grade

The Vine co-leaders | 9th-12th grade

Can teens teach? YES!

Teens must be 9th grade and older to teach Wednesday School and in 11th grade and older to lead Confirmation.

For more info, or to sign up, contact Olivia.



Volunteer Boot camp

Sonny Thomas | Office & Volunteer Coordinator

Thank you to everyone who attended the 1st Annual Ministry Bootcamp! It was a highly successful event filled with lively discussion and engaging questions. Attendees learned about vital Sunday roles, including Communion assisting and Altar Guild (**Jean Benson**), slideshow tech (**Tom Kylve**), ushering and greeting (**Tom and Phyllis Neuenfeldt.**), Fellowship hosting (**Catharine Weisenburger**), and emergency safety and composting (**Paul Haarstick**).

We appreciate everyone who came out to learn something new!



Sunday Morning Volunteers Needed!

The fall volunteer sign up sheet is now available.

Scan the code and claim your dates today!

Questions about volunteering? Contact Sonny Thomas.



Dandelions

By Patty Cummings



¹¹ Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:11-12

Papa and I perused the headstones, scattered throughout the country cemetery, reinforcing our family history memories. Oaklyn appeared much more interested in scanning the green grass carpeting the ground on which those headstones stood.

"Do you think they'll grow Grandma?" came out of the blue from Oaklyn.

"Do I think what will grow, Hon?"

"The dandelions I planted. I dug them up and took them home and dug a hole and planted them" she clarified.

Papa overheard and sought out a dandelion in its full fluffy seed stage and disassembled it to show Oaklyn the seeds that could, with the necessary support, explode into a hundred new dandelions, just like the biblical mustard seed.

We explained how wonderful God's creation was that it could propagate itself and keep the earth covered in grass, plants, and trees which we needed to live. There is no way we could "tend" God's immense earthly garden on our own, so He gave us built-in help.

"I still don't understand why people don't like dandelions – I LOVE them." Most children are drawn to the dandelion's deep yellow color that instills feelings of joy, happiness, and optimism. Its shape reminds us of the hope, energy, and cheerfulness of the sun. Once people attach the word "weed" to the dandelion, they lose sight of the good feelings it offers.

I don't know if Oaklyn will start planting dandelion seeds now. I do hope she keeps and shares all those good feelings the dandelion represents. And I pray she'll never lose the wonder of and desire to care for God's beautiful creation.

I'll have to brush up on my plant biology a bit, though, before she starts asking why I have African violet leaf slips planted in little pots in my kitchen, in hope they will take root and grow into beautiful plants.

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Vacation Bible School August 3 and 10 @ 5:30-8pm

This year's Adult VBS will feature a study of the Book of Revelation, and will include music, art, food, beverage and FUN! We will be meeting outside on the green space and in the dining room during this event. Connor Camrud is chairing this summer's Adult Vacation Bible School.

The Life & Writings of St. Francis of Assisi Sunday, October 4 and 11 @ 10:30am

In memory of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's death, Dr. Roy Hammerling will present the life, writings, poems, and songs of St. Francis that have influenced Christians worldwide. St. Francis and his charismatic love of life drew followers; he founded the Franciscan Order which is the largest religious order in the Catholic Church. Lutherans owe much to St. Francis.

More details will be shared as these and other events are offered. If you have ideas for book and Bible studies, films, activities, speakers that might impact the AFF ministry, please visit with AFF team members or FLC office staff. As tenure on the AFF team rotates per the organizational charter, new members are needed. If you are interested in joining the team, let the FLC office staff know.



Thank You! Meals for Many



In July we gathered a volunteer crew to assemble freezer meals for the Agape Ministry. Together, they chopped, mixed, scooped and froze over 120 meals. Thank you volunteers for serving those in need in our community!

Worthy Women

By Gretchen Henrikson, President WFLC Coordinating Council

We are worthy of God's Love, we are His hands!!
We welcome our Triennial Convention delegates home.
The convention in Des Moines was inspirational and exciting!

Please join us for one of our upcoming meetings:

Rebecca Circle | meets the 2nd Tuesday at 9:00am

Ruth Circle | meets the 2nd Thursday at 1:30pm

The **August Circle meetings** will be a Potluck in the Park,
August 13, 11:30am. Join us for food, fun and fellowship!

FLC Quilters | meet Tuesdays at 8:30am in the recreation room!
They are doing an incredible work and welcome newcomers!

Sabbath at the Lake Women's Retreat

Tuesday August 18, 2026

8:45am -3:00pm in Mentor, MN

Join us for a day filled with spiritual renewal, new friendships, sing-alongs, and inspirational talks!!!

All are welcome! Contact Gretchen to register!

Save the date: Friday, October 30, 9:30am - 3:00pm
for **WELCA Leadership Day.** More information coming soon.

Noisy Offering Beneficiaries

June | **Teach Haiti**

July | **Lutheran Disaster Response**

August | **Fix It Forward**

Memorials

Thank you to those who gave in honor or memory of family & friends.

Agape

In memory of Judie Wood

given by Terry & Sandi Kemmer, Tom & Phyllis Neuenfeldt

Dream Big

In memory of Judie Wood

given by the Curtis & Audrey Listul, Adrienne Buboltz, Rick & Shan Manke

In memory of Ron Fasteen

given by the Dean & Sue Berg

In memory of Bruce Matson

given by the Pat Zurn

General

In memory of Ron Fasteen

given by Dean & Sue Berg

Music

In memory of Judie Wood

given by Karen & Cliff Bimberg, Ardys Horner

Undesignated

In memory of Judie Wood

given by Cindy & Jim Bruflodt

Congregational Life

Baptisms

6/14 - Lennon Brinkman

6/21 - Gavin Berg

7/12 - Stella Gerey

7/12 - Lennon Steeves

Funerals

6/1 - Judy Wood

7/24 - Larry Kjono

7/27 - Arnold Larson

New members recognized on May 3 & May 5.

Peter & Ann Jacobson

Randy & Karen Henrikson

Valerie Nielsen

Bonnie Erickson

Sandy Muchow

Erik Jorgenson & children Jolee and Parker

Interested in becoming a member?

Simply sign up - it's that easy!

Scan the QR code or contact Sonny in the church office: 218-847-5656.



Our next New Member Welcome is in October.



Lutheran World Relief School Kit Collection

Before you know it back to school sales will start! The Women of FLC will once again be collecting items to assemble School Kits. The following items are currently being accepted. New items only please.

- 70 sheet notebooks
- box of 16 or 24 crayons
- pencil sharper
- 30 centimeter ruler
- blunt tip scissors
- unsharpened No. 2 pencils
- black or blue pens
- 2 1/2 in eraser

Items can be brought to the church office.

For more information on Lutheran World Relief or School Kits, visit: www.lwr.org



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**



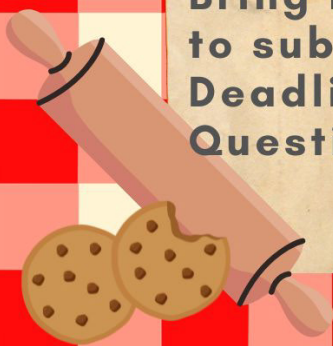
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COOKBOOK

We are collecting your families favorite recipies for a cookbook to be printed this fall.

Bring recipes to the church office or scan QR code to submit online.

Deadline is September 30.

Questions? Speak to Olivia.



First
Lutheran
Church

Stay Connected!



firstlutheranchurch.com

Worship With Us!

Sundays | 8:30am & 10:30am (outside)

KDLM-1340 AM and
93.1 FM radio

Sundays at 10:00 AM.

Online:

firstlutheranchurch.com

Saturdays at 9:00 AM
on Arvig Cable channel 14.

