

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ministers: All God's People at FLC

Beth Pottratz, Pastor



2100 Riverview Drive
Little Falls, MN 56345
(320) 632-6667
firstserv@flclittlefalls.org
www.flclittlefalls.org

October 2024 Newsletter

October 1, 2024

First Lutheran Church Budget Update

Greetings from your First Lutheran Church Council. We are a little over 2/3 through this fiscal year and I want to bring you up to date on our financial situation. Each month at our church council meeting we go over the financial report and look at the spending and balance sheet. Unfortunately, we are seeing a familiar trend this year as we did last year. As of the end of August our giving is about \$34,500 under budget. Our expenses are about \$9000 over budget (most of this overspending is related to the work we did on the roof repair that wasn't in our initial budget predictions).

Here are some of the numbers:

Year to date Donations vs. 2024 budget - \$224,870.66/\$259,448.72 = -
\$34,578.06 (under budget)

Year to date Expenses vs. 2024 budget - \$281,776.92/\$272,564.00= **\$9,212.92 (over budget)**

Year to date Shortfall -**\$41,494.87**

By comparison, last year's budget shortfall at the end of August was \$33,778 (comparing this year's shortage to last year's). Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of First Lutheran members we ended 2023 in the black. In addition, I am aware of some First Lutheran members who wait until later in the year to donate due to tax reasons so I am optimistic that the negative trend will turn. I just want to bring this to your attention. Thank you all for your faithfulness and generosity.

Carl Rydeen
First Lutheran Council Treasurer

Pastor Beth's Article
see page 2

FLC Community Announcements
see page 3

Children and Youth Ministry
see page 6-7

Health Ministry News
see page 8

**“Children First”
Preschool News**
see page 9

Reflections by Pastor Beth

Every year the bishop invites all pastors in the synod to attend the Fall Theological Conference. At the conference, there is always a speaker brought in to share a theological conversation for continuing education for all who attend. In the middle of September, I was able to attend this year's Fall Theological Conference. Our topic was on Living out our Baptisms.

The first part of our conference focused on living our baptismal promises. When each of us was baptized, our parents and godparents made promises for us. Those of us baptized as adults, and each of us in our confirmation, affirmed these vows for our own selves. These promises are:

- To live among God's faithful people
- To come to the word of God and the holy supper
- To learn the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments
- To read the holy scriptures
- To nurture in faith and prayer
- So that you may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.

Along with the promises we also make renunciations:

- The devil and all the forces that defy God.
- The powers of this world that rebel against God.
- The ways of sin that draw you from God.

Martin Luther taught that although we are only baptized once, that daily our baptism is renewed. Each day our sins are given. Each day Jesus names us and claims us as children of God. Each day we choose to renounce the devil, ways of sin, and the powers that rebel against God. Each day we choose to live out our baptismal promises through prayer, scripture, study, and we say and do.

We walk through our days with our foreheads wet with the waters of baptism. We live our lives with the cross of Christ marked on our foreheads and the Holy Spirit poured out over us. As we live out our baptismal promises, Jesus continues to cleanse us from all sin, refresh our lives, and claim us as his beloved.

This October, on Reformation Sunday, our youth have the opportunity to affirm their baptisms. The opportunity to make an important step in their faith journey of naming and claiming their discipleship journey as their own, taking on the responsibilities of these promises for themselves. This year, we are excited and blessed that our Northeastern MN Synod bishop, Bishop Amy Odgren, will be joining us for this day to pray over our youth taking this step and leading worship.

As our youth publicly affirm their faith and take on the promises of their baptisms, it gives us all the opportunity to do the same in each of our lives. To reclaim again and again the promises we have made, to commit ourselves to our walking in our baptismal waters, and to be challenged by the Holy Spirit in the ways we live our God's justice and peace and work make our world more and more as God desires

Peace, Pr. Beth

Adult Ministry Opportunities



Men's Morning Bible Study Wednesday, October 2

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to Men's Bible Study, which resumes on Wednesday, October 2 at 7:00 a.m. We meet on various Wednesdays of the month at the church for breakfast and conversation. Come when you are able, leave when you must. For more info, please call the church office at 632-6667.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Bible Study continues on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. during Pr. Beth's maternity leave. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join us! Join us on occasion or every week, whatever works in your schedule. Bring your own Bible, or use one of ours. We meet in the library.

Prayer Shawl Group

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Come for fun and fellowship—bring a friend and your helping hands! We are making prayer shawls and baptismal blankets. We meet on the second Monday of the month. Our next time is Monday, October 14, at 1:00 p.m. If someone you know could use the comforting hug of a prayer shawl, please contact the church office.

Book Club

Tuesday, October 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Join us as Book Club continues into the fall! All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The September pick for Book club is "[The Women by Kristin Hannah](#)". Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. We will meet for discussion on the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. For more information contact Tifanii Dahl at 320-360-8207.

Pastor Parish Relations Committee

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee is a small group that provides support for the Pastor and provides a communication conduit between the congregation and the Pastor. The committee supports and maintains an open relationship between the Pastor and the members of the congregation. Its mission is to serve the congregation and the Pastor as an efficient and confidential communication conduit between the congregation and Pastor, and as an aid to the Pastor in any personal or professional needs the Pastor chooses to present. Meetings are scheduled quarterly or as needed. Current members are Matt Dahl, Bob Mueller, Liz Rydeen, Paula Monahan, and Katie Martinson. They are available to hear your joys or concerns.



Quilting Group

Come and join us on Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Come when you can, leave when you must; we teach all and turn away none. Donations are always welcome. We are still taking donations of new or gently used cotton sheets, fabric, and thread in any color. If interested or have questions call the church office and ask for Pat or Monica's number.

Advent Craft Sale & Luncheon Saturday, December 7

Fall is here and it's time to start preparing for the Advent Craft Sale, a fundraiser for youth ministry. Get creative and mark this date on your calendar. If you or someone you know would like to help with this event, please reach out to the church office at 632-6667.

Connect Virtually for Worship at:

Worship services are available on Live stream via our Facebook page, First Lutheran Church, Little Falls MN. You can access as you are able. Sunday worship videos post on Mondays to the church website: flclittlefalls.org and immediately on the church Facebook page: "First Lutheran Church, Little Falls MN". Video also airs on Spectrum/Charter cable channel 180 on the following Sunday at 1:00 p.m., and the following Monday at 1:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. You may connect to current or previous video worship services at any time on our YouTube channel: First Lutheran Church Little Falls MN.

Take-Home Communion is available at the church office for anyone who needs it.



Worship and Music News

Wednesday Night Connect Meal Coordinator

We are looking to hire a meal coordinator for the Wednesday Night Connect meal. Please prayerfully consider if this position might be right for you! For more information, please call the church office at 320-632-6667, or email at firstserv@flclittlefall.org

FLC Fall Music Opportunities All are welcome!

Children's Choir for kids in Kindergarten through grade 5. We will meet on Wednesdays at 3:30-4:15 p.m. Registration forms can be found at the church and the FLC website, www.flclittlefalls.org.

The Men's Choir will begin rehearsing from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, You can reach Becky

First Lutheran Staff

Pastor: Beth Pottratz

pastorbeth@flclittlefalls.org

Youth and Family Minister: Kylie Stewart

kstewart@flclittlefalls.org

Office Manager : Ashleigh Wappler

awappler@flclittlefalls.org

Financial Clerk : Jen Schott

financialclerk@flclittlefalls.org

Music Director: Becky Nelson

rpnelson@brainerd.net

Parish Nurse: Tim Ludwig

tludwig@flclittlefalls.org

Custodian: Ken Bergren

Housekeeper : Peg Bellamy

Preschool – Director : Gail Hittesdorf

childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org

Preschool – Teacher : Jessica Gustafson

Preschool – Teacher's Aide: Jodi Stumpf



at the church on Wednesday afternoons or via email rpnelson@brainerd.net or cellphone at 320-360-0209.

Women's Choir will start rehearsing Wednesday evenings at 6:45 to 7:30 p.m.. You can reach Becky at the church on Wednesday afternoons or via email rpnelson@brainerd.net or cellphone at 320-360-0209.



First Lutheran Community Announcements

Luther Crest Annual Meeting Saturday, October 12 at 10:00 a.m.

All are invited to attend the Luther Crest Annual Meeting held in the Chapel at 10am on Saturday October 12th. At this meeting, we will recap the past year at Luther Crest and will look forward with excitement to our 80th Anniversary year in 2025. Light refreshments will be provided.



Library Corner

The library is ready for your fall reading! Thank you to all who have donated books. Please read the criteria for donations. There are a number of borrowed books which have not returned. Please check your personal library and see if you have any overdue First Lutheran books. Our new Wednesday night activities at church provide a good opportunity to browse the library and check out material!



Annual Fall Hayride October 6, 1:00-5:30

Dress for the fall weather and bring the family and friends to enjoy God's creation on Sunday, October 6. We'll carpool from First Lutheran at 1:00 p.m. to Darrell and Arlene Larsen's farm near Bowlus for a hayride. Thank you to the Larsen's for hosting! All are welcome to this fun afternoon. Please call the church office for directions if you would like to meet at the farm. We'll be back at church around 5:30 p.m.



Blessing of the Animals

The Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls along with First Lutheran Church and First United Church, invite all animal lovers and their pets to a traditional Blessing of Animals on Sunday, October 6 at noon, St. Francis Campus, 116 8th Avenue SE. Bring your furry, feathered or scaly friends, large or small, for an individual blessing during a simple service. Whether they have two, four, a hundred legs or none at all, every pet is welcome. This event is held each year in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and all creation. For more information, contact Linda Dobosenski at 320-632-0680 or ldobosenki@fslf.org



Weekly Email Announcement

First Lutheran Church is now using MailChimp for its Email Blast, it's weekly email announcement. To sign up for our Email Blast, you can scan the QR code, visit our website, or contact the church office. This is an excellent way to stay updated on all the Fall activities starting in September!

Offering: Online Option with Vanco

First Lutheran Church will be offering a new form of eGiving. This is an opportunity to give your offering and financial gifts to First Lutheran electronically. Look for more information about Vanco soon!

Welcome to October! With school being back in session and our routines solidified a bit more First Lutheran is excited to be back in the swing of things. We had a very productive summer- youth wise praise God! I am encouraged day in and day out with the youth that call First Lutheran their church family. It has been a treat to look back and see the return of some of the memories and new traditions we have made and created in my time with you all. The month of October will be our first full month together educationally as 7th and 8th grade confirmation classes have begun for the year. Our 9th graders are looking forward to their Affirmation of Baptism service that will be held on Reformation Sunday on October 27th and will be led by Bishop Amy Odgren while Pastor Beth is out on maternity leave.

Youth group wise, we have settled into a new “Soul Squad normal” in terms of knowing and depending on meeting with one another on Wednesday nights which is such a blessing. We have a core group of students that have bonded and continue to seek to know God and one another better each time we gather. There has been significant ground broken in terms of the depth in relationship that was forged over the summer with participation in Act Local and the National Gathering. As the leader of this group, it is wonderful to see all of the different personalities

come together and work so well in our context. It is such a gift from God to witness their dedication to this group and to learning more about Jesus. One of my favorite parts of youth ministry is watching teens understand and live out their faith through our shared experiences. I am very proud of our youth here at First.

We will be meeting on the same schedule as we had last year and will continue offering Soul Squad throughout the school year. This year our confirmation program has begun operating as a separate group led by Pastor Beth. We have plans to strengthen both of these programs and make intentional time to intersect for hopes of forming lasting relationships in both groups. This fall we have begun a new set of series lessons that have been sorted by topic. These topics are anything from individual character studies, specific stories, and cover the connective themes of the Bible. I’m excited to see how God uses our conversation time this month as we continue in our themes.

I am incredibly encouraged in the plans that we have for this year and know that God will shine through and lead us the direction he intends us in this ministry to go. Thank you to those who continually pray, volunteer, and aid in all things Youth Ministry here!

Love, Kylie

Children and Youth Ministry

Wicked Woods Haunted Walk & Games Friday, October 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Meet me at the church at 7pm. We will carpool over to the Wicked Woods Walk in Royalton. We will return to the church and play *dark games until pick up*.



Fields of Faith

Meet at the LFCHS Football field. Soul Squad will be field tripping over, and this is required as a part of the 7th & 8th grade confirmation schedule. Date to be determined, please look at your weekly announcements and for an announcement in Team Reach.

Affirmation of Baptism Service Practice Saturday, October 26, at 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

This is for 9th graders who are wishing to be confirmed this year. We will meet at **9:30am** at the church to practice the order of service the following day. Please plan to be here! This is where all questions about what will happen will be answered.

Affirmation of Baptism Service Sunday, October 27 at 9:45 a.m.

Please arrive at church no later than 9:45 a.m. to prepare and put on robes for the service. Parent help is requested to help with flowers, pinning carnations, and pictures.

7th & 8th Grade Confirmation Class

Confirmation will be held on Wednesday evenings at 6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. during the school year. If you are interested in joining or if you have any questions please contact the church office.

Soul Squad

6th-12th graders are invited to Soul Squad every Wednesday, at 6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Join us for a time of fellowship, fun, games, and focused devotionals.



Trunk or Treat! Wednesday, October 30 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

This year we have decided to host a Trunk-or-Treat event in our parking lot on Wednesday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m. Bring your vehicle and your decorated trunk as well as some candy to hand out to kids in the community who come to Trick-or-Treat! Decorations can be simple (Google Images/Pinterest is a great place to start) or it can be anything you come up with! Come dressed in your Halloween costume, and kids, come prepared to Trick-or-Treat! We hope to see you there!

Save the Date!

The NEMN Synod All Youth Gathering November 22-23, 2024 Grades: 6-12

All youth in grades 6-12 and their adult leaders are invited for a weekend retreat to grow in faith, build relationships, laugh and play, and worship with hundreds of youth from across the synod! We plan to gather once again at Cragun's Resort near Brainerd, – Friday night through Saturday noon. The All Youth Gathering will include large group sessions for the entire group, learning opportunities by age group, hotel life, games, worship, and more! This event is planned and led by the LYO Leadership Team. This year we will focus on the Apostle's Creed.

Team Reach

We have also joined the free app "Team Reach" as a way of getting announcements. This is for anyone that is interested in all things youth ministry. Download the app, add in your profile info, and type in our code FLCSS2022 to find our group. Here you will receive reminders about events and be able to contact Kylie directly with questions anytime.

**Welcome Tim Ludwig,
Parish Nurse!**

Hi, I am Tim Ludwig, your new Parish Nurse here at First Lutheran Church of Little Falls. When November rolls around, my wife, Mari, and I, will have been attending here for 3 years. We became members here 2 years ago and have experienced a welcoming and loving congregation. We now call many of you friends and look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months.

Now, a bit about me and my journey to become a Parish Nurse. I went back to school as a grandfather in 2005, graduating from the nursing program at Central Lakes College in Brainerd, in 2008. My first employment as a R.N. was in Long Prairie CentraCare where I worked as a floor nurse and spent the majority of the 3 years working in the ER department and doing critical transfers. In 2011, I moved onto Public Health Nursing with Todd County Health and Human Services.

My time at Todd County was split between homecare and service coordination. I became very comfortable going into peoples' homes as a homecare nurse and as a services coordinator assisting people with getting the services they needed to stay in their homes. When living at home is no longer feasible, I assisted them with transitioning to assisted living or long-term care facility. This background will provide a smooth transition to Parish Nurse where I can also minister to spiritual needs.

On a personal note, I have been married to my lovely wife, Mari, for 46 years with 4 children and 11 grandchildren. My hobbies include gardening with my spouse and playing with grandkids. Camping and outdoor activities are something my entire clan can enjoy, but fishing is my favorite. If I have not had the pleasure to meet you, please come introduce yourself at church or out in the community.

In Christ, Tim Ludwig

**Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 3**

Daylight Savings ends on Sunday, November 3 at 2:00 a.m. Remember to set your clocks back one hour on Saturday, November 2 so you are not late for church!



Caregiver Support Group

This support group is for those who are providing primary caregiving for a family member. This gives caregivers a safe and supportive environment to share thoughts, ideas, tears, and laughter. The next will be in the announcements. at the church. For more info, contact Tracy Moe, 320-282-5928.

Care Center Worship

One of First Lutheran's ministries is providing a protestant worship and Holy Communion opportunity twice a month; FLC provides this to the Little Falls Care Center and Saint Otto's Care Center. Pastor Beth leads worship and our Parish Nurse, Tim Ludwig, coordinates the service volunteer musicians, lead hymns and special music.

Prayer List

Please notify the church office if you or someone you know would like to be added to the prayer list. on the announcements or would like a Prayer Chain Request. Due to privacy rules, we do not always know when one may be hospitalized, please call the church office if you would like us to know. Also, please let the church office know when you would like to be removed from the prayer list. Thank you!

“Children First” Christian Preschool Update

Greetings,

It is a new year of Preschool! We have finished our first month and are excited to welcome new and returning Preschoolers along with their families. As our year progresses, please keep our families, children and staff in your prayers for a year filled with health, purpose, service, and an abundance of God’s love.

Our classroom themes for September were Manners, Friends and “We are Special”. We learned about each other. We learned we are different and yet the same. God loves us and made us each special! October will be a busy month with community helpers visiting our classroom. We will be learning about fire safety, community helpers, transportation, fall and pumpkins! If you would like share your community helper job and how you are using your God-given gifts and talents to help others, please schedule your visit with the Preschool Staff.

We are looking to increase the number of Preschoolers! Registration at “Children First” is open to all who are 33 months of age through Pre-Kindergarten. Class is held Monday-Thursday from 8:30am-11:30am, or Monday-Friday, September through May . Children who are ready for a Preschool setting may register and attend at any time throughout the Preschool year. If you have questions or would like a preschool tour, please contact myself or the First Lutheran Church office. There is also an opportunity for childcare prior to class, please inquire.

Thrivent Financial offers opportunities for you to support “Children First” Christian Preschool. Individuals who have product with Thrivent Financial may participate in a program called Thrivent Choice which allows you to allocate money to “Children First” and through Thrivent Action Teams, you can assist Preschool by supporting a Preschool project with a \$250.00 gift card. Thank you to all who are currently providing donations and project cards! Please contact Gail if you need more information.

Thank you to those who are giving generously of their time and talents as well everyone who provides financial support to our Preschoolers through fundraisers, tuition assistance, Gifting Campaign and general contributions. “Children First” appreciates all of you! God’s Blessings!

Yours in Christ’s Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

News of the Family



Riggins Jay Nibaur, son of Emily and Adam Nibaur, was baptized on August 4, 2024.

Welcome to the family of God!

Layne Irene DeLeon, daughter Of Stephanie and Tony DeLeon was baptized on September 8.

Welcome to the family of God!

Juniper Lee Suska, daughter of Leah and Gavin Suska, was baptized on September 15.

Welcome to the family of God!



James D. Gustner, husband of Sue Gustner, passed away Sunday, August 18, 2024. His funeral was held on Friday, August 23, 2024.

Judy Marx passed away on Thursday, September 19, 2024. Her funeral was held on Friday, September 27, 2024.

May God grant peace to her family and friends.



Please submit all materials for the **November Newsletter** to the Church Office **Tuesday, October 15!**

Sunday Worship Schedule

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings

9:30 a.m. Coffee Hour

9:35 a.m.- Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Praise Worship led by a Praise Band

Holy Communion is served at all services.

All are
welcome!

**First Lutheran
Church**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2100 Riverview Drive
Little Falls, Minnesota 56345-4402

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT OR
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 14