

# First News First

Volume 61, Issue 9

September 2026

As we welcome September, we enter a season of **new beginnings**. The slower pace of summer gives way to the familiar rhythms of fall, bringing fresh opportunities to grow in faith, deepen relationships, and serve others in Christ's name. It is an exciting time in the life of our church, and I invite you to join us as we begin this new season together.

This fall, on Monday afternoons at 1:00 there will be a **Bible Study on the Book of Romans**. Bible Study offers a welcoming place to explore God's Word, ask questions, and encourage one another in our walk of faith. There is always something new to discover as we gather around Scripture. We hope you will join this group. Sign-up is on the white board by the main office door.

September also marks the beginning of our **Sunday School** year. Our sincere thanks go to our dedicated Sunday School teachers who generously share their time, talents, and love to nurture the faith of our children and adults alike. Their commitment helps plant seeds that will continue to grow for years to come. We pray for an exciting year of learning, friendship, and growing closer to Jesus as classes begin.

As we begin our fall schedule this year, we will have a **"Welcome Back" lunch** on September 13 following worship. Please sign-up by September 6 on board near main office or call the church office.

The **Women of the ELCA** will also be resuming their gatherings this month. This group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at the church. WELCA is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, Bible study, service, and mutual encouragement. Whether you have been involved for many years or are looking for a way to become more connected, we invite you to join the WELCA Group and experience the blessings of growing in faith alongside one another.

One special opportunity this month is our participation in **God's Work. Our Hands**. On Sunday, September 13, at 9:30 a.m. we will meet in the Fellowship Hall to assemble Health Kits that will be sent overseas to people facing difficult circumstances. These simple kits become tangible expressions of Christ's love, reminding recipients that they are not forgotten and that God's people care for them. It is a meaningful way for our congregation to put our faith into action and share God's compassion with neighbors around the world.

As we begin this new season, may we embrace every opportunity to worship, learn, serve, and grow together. Whether through worship, Bible Study, Choirs, Sunday School, the WELCA Group, or hands-on service, each of us has a place in God's mission. I look forward to sharing this season of ministry with you. May God bless each of us as we continue to be Christ's hands and feet in the world.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jane Nicholson





# September Worship



September 6  
September 13

9:30 Worship with Holy Communion  
10:45 Worship on 'God's Work. Our Hands.' Sunday with  
Bible Presentation with lunch to follow.  
Ben Schellhase organist

September 20  
September 27

10:45 Worship with Holy Communion. Linda Peppernick organist  
10:45 Worship. Ben Schellhase organist

October 4  
October 11

10:45 Worship with Holy Communion. Babette Wenerd organist  
10:45 Worship on In-Gathering Sunday  
with blessing of kits and quilts led by WELCA

October 18

10:45 Worship with Holy Communion  
Bishop Steven Herr Preaching and Presiding  
Lunch to follow worship

October 25

10:45 Reformation Worship with Holy Communion  
(wear red)  
Pastor Bill Nienstedt Supply Pastor

## **VISIT from BISHOP STEVEN HERR**

Bishop Steven Herr will be joining us on Sunday, October 18. Conversation time with the Bishop will be at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall. He will be giving us an update on the ministry in the synod. Bishop Herr will preach and preside at Communion that morning at 10:45 and there will be a light lunch following the service. We hope you will join us for this time together. Our congregation council has invited the other Lutheran Churches in the Conference to join us as well.



"God's Work. Our Hands." is the ELCA's annual day of service, taking place September 13, 2026. It is a blessed opportunity for all our congregations to celebrate who we are as a church, engaging in projects and activities that explore our convictions as Lutherans: that all life in Jesus flows from a living, daring confidence in God's grace. The ELCA is one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor every day.

At First Lutheran we will be assembling Personal Care Kits to send to Lutheran World Relief. With the help of an Action Team Grant from Thrivent our goal this year is to put 100 health kits together. A health kit consists of a bath towel, sturdy comb, nail clipper, two bars of soap and an adult toothbrush. We are asking members of First to contribute 4 oz. bars of soap and toothbrushes. On Sunday, September 13 our youth and church members will assemble these health kits in the Neighborhood Task Team room at 9:30 a.m. We are hoping everyone can help with this project.

# FAITH FORMATION



## Adult Sunday School

Adult Sunday School will begin on Sunday, September 20 with Tim Gotwald teaching from the book, “Honoring Our Neighbor’s Faith: A Lutheran Perspective on Faith Traditions in America.” Hundreds of Christian denominations and dozens of non-Christian traditions have followers in the United States. How do we view this wide variety of beliefs and practices? How does the Lutheran tradition compare with others? Join us on Sunday mornings at 9:30 in the Parlor to discover the answers to these questions and many more.



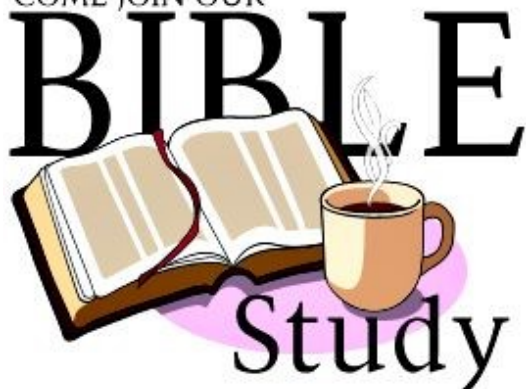
## Children’s Sunday School

Children’s Sunday School will begin on Sunday, September 13 at 9:30. On this first morning we will be working with the ‘God’s Work. Our Hands.’ Project in the Fellowship Hall. After that we will be meeting in the second floor classroom. Thank you to Nicki Johnson and Mary Gotwald for teaching again this year.



## FALL BIBLE STUDY - ROMANS

COME JOIN OUR



**The Book of Romans** describes the good news of God’s powerful salvation for all humanity. Through Christ, God is reclaiming the world from the power of sin and death.

Paul’s letter to the Romans declares that, in the end, absolutely nothing can separate us from God’s love! This study of Romans is at 1:00 p.m. each Monday from September 14 through October 12. Sign-up sheet is on the board by the main office. You are welcome to attend as few or as many sessions as you are able. If you miss one or two, the next session will still make sense.

Facilitator: Pastor Nicholson.



## Alive 2026 RHYTHM

Learn More & Register at  
[bit.ly/lssalive](http://bit.ly/lssalive)

Join us Sept. 25th-27th  
for a beautiful fall  
weekend at Camp  
Nawakwa for ALIVE,  
the annual LSS Jr. High  
Youth Retreat!



Enjoy great music  
played by the ALIVE  
Band, incredible  
speakers, fun games,  
engaging small groups,  
and enjoy God's  
creation with our  
welcoming  
community!

# MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

September 25-27

Come and join the **ALIVE** retreat in which our youth from across the synod gather at Nawakwa for an incredible weekend. We are hoping to bring a group from First Lutheran. Please indicate your interest to Pastor Nicholson by Tuesday, September 1 if possible. Registration forms and non-refundable \$50 deposit are due to church by Tuesday, September 8.

The church budget and the youth savings account will cover the rest of the cost of the retreat for each youth.

We are also in need of someone to attend as an adult chaperone. You will need to have clearances to serve in this volunteer position. The cost for our chaperone will be covered by the church.

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

## July and August Meetings

### Finance Committee

- Recommendation to purchase new computer for the main church office. **Approved**
- Working on 2027 budget

### Worship

- Bishop Steven Herr will be at our church on the morning of Sunday, October 18, 2026. He will be available for an update on the Synod during Sunday School. Parish Life is planning a meal following Worship. The Bishop is available until 12:30 pm. We may invite Trinity Lutheran, Solomon Lutheran, St. Thomas Lutheran, etc.
- Building Appraisal Quote from Apex- \$3,500.00. **Approved**

### Property

- The New Doors in Memorial Hall to the Rose Garden will be installed in August.

### Church Records

- Request for Transfer of Membership for Janice and Paul Holbrook to Mount Pleasant Church on Black Gap Road. **Approved**

Death of Robert Ellis Herbert on June 30, 2026.

Death of Mary Wingert on July 2, 2026.

Death of Constance Wilkins on July 9, 2026.

### Administration

- Paul Holbrook will continue being a COR, Chartered Organization Representative, for the Boy Scouts.
- Updating constitution to be in line with the ELCA Model Constitution

### Social Missions

- Benevolence Distribution to local and global organizations approved



# WOMEN'S MINISTRY

*please join us for*



## LADIES BREAKFAST

Wednesday, September 16  
8:30 a.m. at  
Cracker Barrel

*Women of the ELCA  
(WELCA)*

will gather for Bible Study  
and fellowship on  
Thursday, September 10th  
at 1:00 p.m.

in Meeting Room 1.

We are studying the Women  
of the Bible.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Join us*

September 13  
following  
worship for a  
back to  
Sunday School  
lunch in the  
fellowship hall.

Greetings First Lutheran,

Jeff and I will be traveling from Sept. 6 after worship and will return Oct. 10. During this time, we will be heading west to visit the sites and national parks along the way. The last week of our trip will be in Colorado to visit our western family as they prepare to welcome our newest grandbaby (#10).

Handbells and Sanctuary choir will officially begin on Oct. 15 with bells at 6 p.m. and choir at 7:15 p.m. We welcome new members to join us then. Please let us know if you plan to be part of our groups this fall. While we are away, there will be a few choir rehearsals. These dates will be posted on the choir room bulletin board...Please check it out and put those dates on your calendar.

Keep us in your prayers as we travel.

Blessings to all, Freda (and Jeff)



## Conversations with Kids about School



It is Back-To-School time and here are seven questions that lead to productive conversations with students while also helping kids grow mentally stronger:



### **1. 'What was the best part of your day?'**



This question encourages kids to scan their brains for positives. For children who dislike school or tend to focus on what went wrong, answering this question helps them build optimism and gratitude — which are both protective factors for mental health.



Frame the question with your own experience, saying, "The best part of my day was going for a walk during my lunch break. What about you?" Your child might share a highlight, like, "I played kickball at recess."



### **2. 'What's a mistake you learned from today?'**



This one normalizes errors and celebrates healthy risk-taking. Talking openly about mistakes reduces shame and helps kids see them as opportunities for growth.



Ask with a tone of curiosity, not judgment: "Did anything happen today that you'd do differently next time?" This might prompt them to say, "I forgot my library book so I'm going to pack it tonight so I don't forget."



### **3. 'Who were you proud of today?'**



It works because it turns their attention to others and cultivates empathy. You will also gain insight into your child's relationships and what they value.



Make the question more specific by asking, for example, "Did you see anyone try really hard at something today?" Your child may talk about a friend who was brave or might give themselves a pat on the back and say, "My friend forgot her snack so I shared mine."



### **4. 'What's one thing that would have made today better?'**



This question helps kids identify feelings like frustration and disappointment without dwelling on those experiences. It naturally opens the door to problem-solving and planning.



You can ask in a fun way, such as, "If you had a magic wand to change one thing about today, what would it be?" This can lead to creative ideas, like, "I wish there was more time for my art project so maybe I'll bring it home to finish it."

(continued to next page)

## 5. 'Who did you help today?'

You can empower [kids to engage in prosocial behavior](#) with questions like this. When you ask regularly, kids begin to look for opportunities to be helpful and acts of kindness become second nature.

Ask about small acts of contribution: "How were you a helper today?" They might remember something simple, like, "I helped the teacher pass out papers."

## 6. 'What was the most interesting thing you learned today?'

It emphasizes curiosity over academic performance. Showing interest in the learning process itself fuels lifelong learning. Encourage kids to talk about what they learned aside from just their subjects. They may share a fun fact, like, "I learned that my teacher knows how to play the violin." Show interest and ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going.

## 7. 'What's something new you'd like to try?'

This nudges kids to look outside their comfort zone and encourages them to be courageous. They don't have to be good at something in order to try something new — it's a learning experience.

If your child hesitates to try new things, encourage an experiment by asking, "Is there a club or activity you're curious about just trying once?" They may be more likely to explore if they know they don't have to stick with it forever.

# THANK YOU

Thank you to the congregation of First Lutheran for the celebration of my 30th ordination anniversary into ministry in the ELCA. I am grateful for all the kind words and wishes, for the beautiful flowers, and lovely quilt. The reception was very thoughtful and a wonderful opportunity to connect with people in this special way.



I am grateful to God for calling me to fulfill this holy responsibility of preaching the Word, sharing the sacraments, and caring for all of the Lord's people. I am humbled by the privilege, grateful for the journey, and amazed by God's grace given each day.

In humble gratitude, Pastor Jane Nicholson

---

Dear Members of First Lutheran,

We wanted to express our heartfelt gratitude for the many prayers said on our behalf over the past few months. In addition, we thank you for the kind wishes expressed in the congregational cards we each received as well as the other "Get Well" notes sent by members. Finally, a huge thank you to Pastor Nicholson for her multiple visits to see Kristy at Penn State Hershey Medical Center as well as her emails, phone calls and text check-ins with both of us.

In Christin Love, Bill and Kristy Nienstedt

**YOU ARE  
INVITED!**

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



## GRIEF SHARE

is a weekly grief support group on Mondays from August 31-November 30 from 6-8 p.m. at Christian Life Church located at 1400 Warm Spring Rd. Chambersburg. A 'Loss of Spouse' session will also be held on September 12 from 10 a.m. – noon. A 'Surviving the Holidays' seminar is offered on November 14 from 10am – noon. The group classes and one-day seminars are free of charge and include all the materials a participant will need. Please feel free to contact Lisa Fidler at 717-404-3599 if you have any questions or would like more information. Register for GriefShare classes: <https://christianlifechambersburg.churchcenter.com/registrations/events>

## Pregnancy Ministries Fundraising Dinner

October 8 at 6 p.m. at Antrim Brethren In Christ Church, located at 24 Kauffman Rd. Chambersburg. Reservations are required. Proceeds benefit Pregnancy Ministries, Inc. Special speaker Dr. William Lile. For more info or to register visit [pregnancyministries.org/events](http://pregnancyministries.org/events) or call 717-267-3738 ext. 108

## First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Carlisle presents the Fine Arts at First 2026-2027 Artist Series.

Hanover Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet  
Sunday, September 20 at 3 p.m.

The Baltimore Consort  
Sunday, October 26 at 3 p.m.

Hershey Handbell Ensemble  
Saturday, April 24 at 7 p.m.

Free admission. To learn more about the Fine Arts at First and performers, visit [www.firstlutherancarlisle.org](http://www.firstlutherancarlisle.org)



## Habitat for Humanity Used Book Sale and Donations

Habitat for Humanity and St. John's United Church of Christ have again partnered together to host a used book sale to benefit Habitat's housing ministry in Franklin County. The sale will be October 24 to 26.

For details on how to donate, please visit [www.sjucc1811.org/book-sale](http://www.sjucc1811.org/book-sale). We welcome new and used books on all subjects, including paperbacks. We also welcome artwork, DVDs, audio books (on CD), puzzles, and board games. We respectfully decline textbooks, encyclopedias, musty books, cassette tapes, and VHS videos.

The sale will take place at St. John's UCC over three days on Friday, October 23 from 2-8pm; Saturday, October 24 from 9am-5pm and Sunday, October 25 from Noon-4pm. All proceeds will be used to help build the next Habitat house in Franklin County.



**BOOK  
SALE**

# HELPING HANDS

## 2026 Council

President: Mike Ross  
 Vice President: Gary Kennedy  
 Secretary: Marianne Kennedy  
 Treasurer: Sally Herritt  
 Pastor: Jane Nicholson  
 Deacon: Freda Dorand  
           Jeff Dorand  
           Lori Palmer  
 Mary Beth McGraw-Warne  
           Gerry Wilson  
 Financial Secretary: Carol McCoy



## PRAYER CHAIN

May we include you in our prayers? Do you have a prayer need that we can help you with? If so, please call our prayer chain group leader:

Marcia Hunt @  
 717-263-0781

Names are kept on the prayer chain for 1 month. After that month, please contact the office again if you would like to have a name on for another month.

|                  |      |                   |      |
|------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| Ann Kmiecik      | 9/1  | Charles Kampmeyer | 9/18 |
| Tim Gotwald      | 9/3  | Renee Holoviak    | 9/19 |
| Mia Long         | 9/5  | Justin Holoviak   | 9/22 |
| Benjamin Yaukey  | 9/9  | Bill DeHass       | 9/21 |
| Kenneth Shearer  | 9/11 | Justin Holoviak   | 9/22 |
| Angela Cody      | 9/12 | Collyns Plasterer | 9/24 |
| Kathy Shoop      | 9/12 | Gerry Wilson      | 9/25 |
| Strauss Vinson   | 9/12 | Aria Lensbower    | 9/26 |
| Jane Love        | 9/14 | Bonnie Huber      | 9/28 |
| Leonard Carbaugh | 9/16 | Shirley Shaner    | 9/28 |
| Patti Plasterer  | 9/17 | Carol McCoy       | 9/30 |

## TRANSPORTATION

### Need a Ride?

Our church provides transportation to church on Sundays!

Please call if you need a ride. Church office: 717-264-2015



**Deadline for  
 the October  
 Newsletter  
 will be  
 September 15**



**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

43 W. Washington Street

Chambersburg, PA 17201

E-mail: felccoffice@gmail.com

Website: www.felcc.org



@FirstEvangelicalLutheranChurch

@felccyouth



**Church Office Hours**

Monday-Thursday

9 a.m.-1 p.m.

CHURCH OFFICE 717-264-2015

Parish Administrator ext. 1

Director of Music ext. 3

Pastor ext. 4

# Welcome to Fall Ministry

**September 13**

- 9:30 a.m.**  
*God's Work. Our Hands*
- Start of Sunday School**
- Worship at 10:45 a.m.**
- Welcome back to Sunday School  
Lunch to follow worship**