

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 27, 2026

WELCOME VISITORS

*A warm welcome to visitors who join us today to worship our Risen Lord!
We invite you to pick up a Visitor's Packet as you leave worship today.
Thank you for joining us this morning! We are blessed by your presence.*

Children are always welcome at worship.

If desired, there is an unstaffed nursery available for parents and their children on the second floor in the education wing. Take the first left down the hallway, and the nursery is the first door on your right.

*Large print bulletins and hearing assistance devices
for today's worship are available.
Please feel free to ask an usher if interested.*

THIS WEEK AT FIRST September 27 – October 4

Sunday	9:15 a.m.	Coffee and Donuts
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:45 a.m.	Worship
Monday	1:00 p.m.	Bible Study
	7:00 p.m.	Scouts
Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	Scouts
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Quilting
Sunday	9:15 a.m.	Coffee & Donuts
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:45 a.m.	Worship with Holy Communion Hats, Gloves, Mittens Hanging on Fence

GATHERING

WELCOME

STEWARDSHIP

Tim Gotwald

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all harm and danger.

We ask that you would also protect us today from sin and all evil, so that our lives and actions may please you.

Into your hands we commend ourselves:

our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours.

Let your holy angel be with us,

so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Please stand as you are able.

Come, beloved people of God. Come awake to the wonder of God's love.

We come with hearts ready to receive, to rejoice, and to respond.

Open your eyes to the gifts that surround you,
the gift of this day, this community, this life,
and the grace of God that meets us in every moment.

We open our hearts to God's abundant love.

God's love does not leave us unchanged.
It awakens us to the needs of our neighbors,
the beauty of creation, and the gifts God has entrusted to us.

We desire to live fully awake and fully alive.

Let us worship with grateful hearts, generous spirits,
and lives ready to be poured out in love.

Come, let us worship the Lord!

Come Down, O Love Divine

Text: Bianco da Siena, d. tr. Richard F. Littledale Music: DOWN AMPNEY, Ralph Vaughan Williams

1 Come down, O Love di - vine; seek thou this soul of mine
2 Oh, let it free - ly burn, till world - ly pas - sions turn
3 Let ho - ly char - i - ty mine out - ward ves - ture be,
4 And so the yearn - ing strong, with which the soul will long,

and vis - it it with thine own ar - dor glow - ing;
to dust and ash - es in its heat con - sum - ing;
and low - li - ness be - come mine in - ner cloth - ing—
shall far out - pass the pow'r of hu - man tell - ing;

O Com - fort - er, draw near; with - in my heart ap - pear
and let thy glo - rious light shine ev - er on my sight,
true low - li - ness of heart, which takes the hum - bler part,
no soul can guess Love's grace till it be - come the place

and kin - dle it, thy ho - ly flame be - stow - ing.
and clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.
and o'er its own short - com - ings weeps with loath - ing.
where - in the Ho - ly Spir - it makes a dwell - ing.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.

For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,
 you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,
 in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Please be seated.

WORD

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³ As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 25:1-9

- ¹ To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.
- ² **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**
- ³ Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.
- ⁴ **Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.**
- ⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
- ⁶ **Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.**
- ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your
goodness, O LORD.
- ⁸ **You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**
- ⁹ You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

SECOND READING

Philippians 2:1-13

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

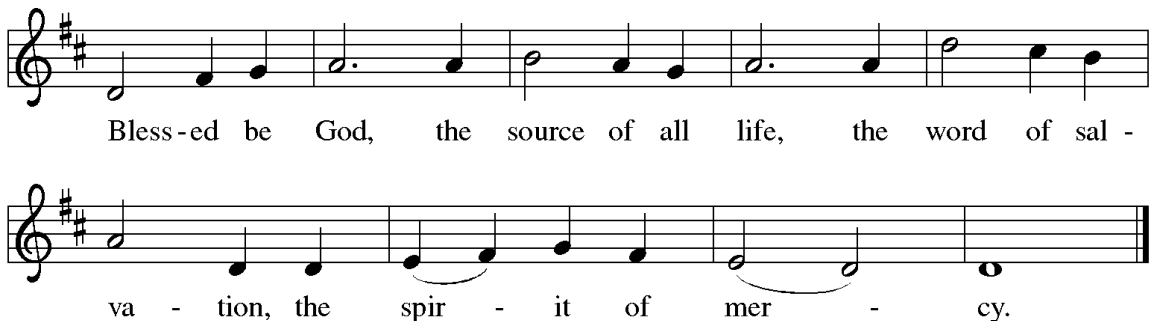
⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Bless-ed be God, the source of all life, the word of sal -

va - tion, the spir - it of mer - cy.

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23-32

The Gospel according to Matthew, the 21st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²³ When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

SERMON

Silence follows the sermon for reflection.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

O Master, Let Me Walk with You

Text: Washington Gladden Music: MARYTON, H. Percy Smith

1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with you in low - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear,
3 Teach me your pa - tience; share with me a clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the

paths of ser - vice true; tell me your se - cret;
win - ning word of love; teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, in work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - 'ning way, in peace that on - ly

help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong,
you can give; with you, O Mas - ter, let me live.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OUR RESPONSE

GATHERING OF GIFTS

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. Online giving is available at felcc.org or by scanning this QR code



ANTHEM

OFFERTORY

(to the tune of Morning Has Broken)

Verse 1

Open our eyes to the ones who are hurting,
Those who are hungry, forgotten, alone.
Show us the places where mercy is needed;
Make us your hands, make compassion our own.

Verse 2

You have entrusted your gifts to our keeping,
Time and our talents, our treasure and care.
Not for possession, but for your kingdom,
Not to be hoarded, but freely to share.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, all blessings are from you. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors.

May our giving become a way of living, fully awake to your love and fully alive in generosity. Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The assembly is seated.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

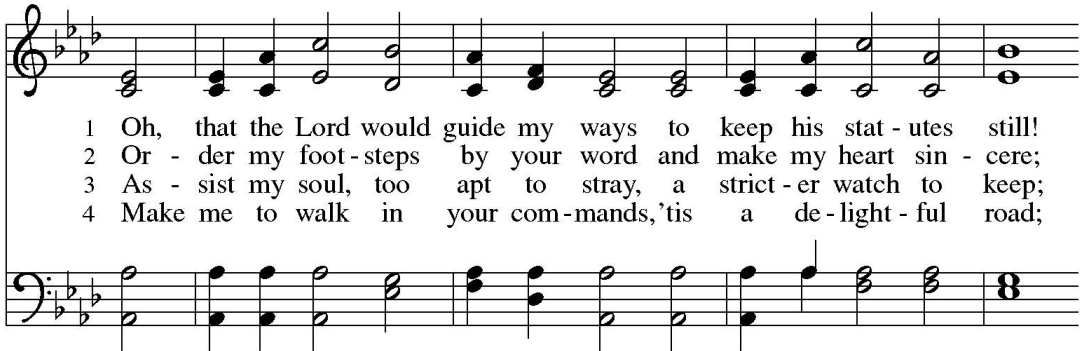
SENDING

BLESSING

May the God who has fully awakened you in love,
and made you fully alive in generosity,
bless and keep you today and forever more.
Amen.

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

Text: Isaac Watts Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal



1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!
2 Or - der my foot - steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;
3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;
4 Make me to walk in your com - mands, 'tis a de - light - ful road;



Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
let sin have no do - min - ion, Lord, but keep my con - science clear.
and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan - d'ring sheep.
nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

DISMISSAL

Go with awakened hearts, open to God's abundant love.

We go with generous lives, ready to share God's gifts with others.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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Please remember in your prayers ...

Healing: **Doris Burdick** (10/9), Bob Hockensmith (10/15),
Kristy Nienstedt (10/1)



Continuing Prayers: **Joanne Caskey, June Diehl, Marcia Hunt,**
Charles Kampmeyer, Don Mayer, Dalton Paul, Julie Paul

Grieving: **Family and Friends of Harold Forrester**
Family and Friends of Al Sloan

Military: Tawny & Brad Arnold, **Hunter Boock**, Derek Haugh

ATTENDANCE September 20 54 in person 17 online



Welcome!

This morning we welcome Ben Schellhase as our guest organist. Thank you for sharing your musical talents with us as you lead us in giving praise to God Almighty.

IN-GATHERING SUNDAY October 11 will be the Sunday of the Blessing of the Quilts and Kits as well as the Women of the ELCA helping to lead our worship service. Bring your friends to join us on this colorful morning.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL is at 9:30 a.m. Sunday mornings with Tim Gotwald teaching from the book, "Honoring Our Neighbor's Faith: A Lutheran Perspective on Faith Traditions in America." Join us on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor to discover the answers to these questions and many more.



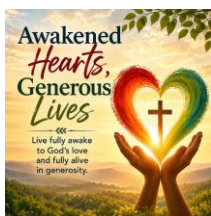
RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS First Lutheran will be receiving new members on Sunday, December 13 during the 10:45 worship service. If you have an interest in or questions about becoming a member of First Lutheran, please speak with Pastor Nicholson.



HATS SCARVES AND MITTENS hanging time is here again

the Neighborhood Task Team is planning to hang items that will help our neighbors stay warm in the winter months. These items will be hung on the church fence. What can you do to help with this project? Purchase new or donate gently used hats, scarves and mittens for men, women and children to donate to this project. Share this with your friends, relatives and neighbors. Volunteer to hang items on the fence. Dates are October 4, November 1, December 6, and January 16-18. Contact Mary Beth Warne McGraw at 717-372-8282.

AWAKENED HEARTS, GENEROUS LIVES As we continue our **Awakened**



Hearts, Generous Lives journey, we invite you to prayerfully consider your anticipated giving for the coming year. Please return your **Anticipated Giving Card** on **October 11** by placing it in the offering plate or returning it to the church office. The giving cards are available in the October newsletter and also by the elevator on the first floor. Thank you for your faithful generosity and for the many ways you help support the ministry and mission of our church. Together, may our awakened hearts lead to generous lives!

BIBLE STUDY **The Book of Romans** describes the good news of God's powerful salvation for all humanity, for all creation, for all time. Through Christ, God is reclaiming the world from the power of sin. He is justifying and saving us from sin and death. Paul's letter to the Romans declares that, in the end, absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love! Bible Study on the Book of Romans is at 1:00 p.m. each Monday through October 12. 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.



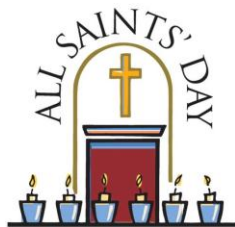
VISIT FROM BISHOP STEVEN HERR Bishop Steven Herr will be joining us on Sunday, October 18. Conversation time with the Bishop will be at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall. He will be giving us an update on the ministry in the synod. Bishop Herr will preach and preside at Communion that morning at 10:45 and there will be a light lunch following the service. The sign up for lunch is by the main office door in Memorial Hall. Please sign up by October 11. We hope you will join us for this time together.

GRIEF SHARE at Christian Life Church located at 1400 Warm Spring Rd. Chambersburg is hosting a “Surviving the Holidays” seminar will be offered On November 14 from 10 to noon. There is no cost. Register: <https://christianlifechambersburg.churchcenter.com/registrations/events> Contact Lisa Fidler at 717-404-3599 with questions.



HABITAT HUMANITY USED BOOK SALE & DONATIONS

Donations accepted at Habitat for Humanity and at Patriot’s Federal Credit Union. Accepting new and used books on all subjects, including paperbacks. We also welcome artwork, DVDs, audio books (on CD), puzzles, and board games. Please no textbooks, encyclopedias, musty books, cassette tapes, and VHS videos. Sale dates at St. John's UCC: Friday, October 23- 2-8pm; Saturday, October 24 - 9am-5pm & Sunday, October 25 - noon-4pm.



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026 If you have a loved one who has entered the church triumphant between November 1, 2025 and October 31, 2026 whom you would like to have remembered by name on All Saints Sunday, please contact the church office and include the spelling of the name, and date of death if available. felccoffice@gmail.com

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING First Lutheran will be having a congregational meeting on Sunday, November 22 following the 10:45 worship service. The purpose of this meeting is to elect council members to serve a three year term beginning January 1, 2027 and to vote on revisions to the constitution as recommended by the congregation council and the ELCA. The constitutional revisions may be found online at www.felcc.org under ‘resources.’ Anywhere there are highlights, means that revisions are recommended. Printed copies of the constitution will be available at the entrances to the worship space on November 8.



COUNCIL NOMINATIONS First Lutheran Church is in need of persons who are willing and able to serve on the Congregation Council from January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2029. Please pray about serving in this leadership capacity. If you are feeling called to serve on our governing body, please speak with Marianne Kennedy, Gerry Wilson, or Jeff Dorand or another council member.



SCAN (Student Clothing Assistance Network) Working with the social workers of the school district, SCAN volunteers fill emergency requests for clothing and school supplies. When a request is received, it is assigned to volunteers to acquire the necessary items, either through purchase or donation. When requests are received the need is urgent. The children involved are in crisis situations—domestic upheaval, homelessness, unexpected relocations. Please contact Tim or Mary: 717-264-4759, 717-491-0611, tim@gotwald.org, mary@gotwald.org
Thank you for considering.



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

	<u>September 27</u>	<u>October 4</u>	<u>October 11</u>
Lector:	Becky Hoover	Ralph Burdick	Nancy Fricke Jane Love Joyce Ray
Communion Assistants:		Mary Gotwald Tim Gotwald Karen Sloan	
Greeters:	Bob Hammer Dot Hammer	Bob Wildeson Nancy Wildeson	Bob Wildeson Nancy Wildeson
Ushers:	Jim Brown Rose Wilson	Mary Beth McGraw-Warne Bob Wildeson	Bob Wildeson



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Pastor
Pastoral Assistant
Director of Church Music
Parish Administrator
Treasurer
Financial Secretary
Technical Lead
Custodian

The Rev. Jane Nicholson
The Rev. Charles Kampmeyer
Freda J. Dorand, Deacon
Ashley Hessong
Sally Herritt
Carol McCoy
Daniel Worcester
Jennifer Flores

Church Office Hours – Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

We welcome visitors this morning.

Please pick up a **visitor's packet**. They are located at the top of the steps.
at the rear of the church or on the table at the elevator entrance.

Our Mission

The mission of First Lutheran Church is to be the light of Jesus,
burning brightly and vigorously in our community.

Sunday Schedule

Coffee and Donuts at 9:15

Sunday School at 9:30

Worship at 10:45 a.m.

also on Facebook at First Evangelical Lutheran Church
and on our webpage at www.FELCC.org

ALL are invited to hear and receive God's blessing in Jesus,
and to learn and worship with us.