First Lutheran

All are welcome

Focus

on life at First

August 2026

Our Mission

To experience and celebrate God's amazing grace together.

Our Vison

First Evangelical Lutheran Church will share God's amazing grace by welcoming, growing and serving in Christ's name, enriching the well-being of all.

What's Inside

2 Worship in the Park
5 Faith Formation
6 Loaves & Fishes Report
8 Council Highlights
10 August Calendar

Upcoming Events

National Night Out
August 4th

Worship in the Park
August 9th

Church Council Meeting
August 16th

Trinity VBS
August 16th - 19th

September Focus Articles Due
August 21st

Blood Drive
August 24th & 25th

Dear Friends of First,

Last week, as I prepared to officiate a celebration of life service, I came across a poem that I later read during the service. Since then, I have reflected often on its meaning, especially as I speak with parishioners each week regarding matters of life and death. So, I wanted to share this beautiful poem with you and remind you that we are all facing something along life's journey. It is called: *The Train of Life* by Najim Mostamand.

Our life is indeed like a train ride with many stations, route changes and accidents. Those stations are the beautiful moments in our life, not least of which are when we finish school, start our careers, get married, have children, and become grandparents.

Of course, no train will always go in the direction it is intended. There will sometimes be unexpected changes to the route. We might venture down one path in life, only to realize a little later, that life has a different plan for us. And so, we pivot. We also will end up in a few accidents here and there, causing us to wait inside our train while it gets repaired. A broken heart, for example, will take some time to be healed. A personal setback will take some time to recover. But no matter the route changes or accidents, our train only moves in one direction: forward. It keeps moving and moving, even though we ourselves feel stuck from time to time.

And the beautiful part about this train ride is that we are rarely traveling alone. In the beginning, it is our parents who bring us along on the ride, and later, we are joined by our brothers, sisters, friends, colleagues, children and even our soulmates.

This makes the train ride much more enjoyable, but also more painful. Because as each special person comes into our life, there's a very good chance they may depart the train before us, leaving a massive vacuum in our hearts. On the flip side, so many others will come and go, and we will hardly notice. But the biggest thing to remember is that we are not on this train for no reason. There IS a reason to our life. There is a purpose to why we're here.

And while we may have many purposes in life, one of the biggest is to ensure the people around us have a happy and comfortable life. Whether it's through our words, money, actions, thoughts, prayers...this life is meant to help others as much as ourselves, and to ultimately leave an impact that will last well after we're gone.

So, enjoy this wonderful journey. Make the most of it. And help every single being you can. Because there will come a time when you arrive at the Final Station and leave this train behind.

May God's peace be upon you! Pastor Jim

Summer Kick-Off

Thank you to everyone who joined us in June at Swan Park for the 2026 Summer Kick-Off Event. The Evangelism Committee fitted kids for helmets, handed out ice cream and provided a bounce house.





National Night Out 2026

National Night Out 2026 takes place on Tuesday, August 4th at 5pm. It is a nationwide annual campaign designed to promote police-community partnerships, heighten crime prevention awareness, and strengthen neighborhood spirit.

The Evangelism Committee will be handing out first aid kits and fitting bike helmets for children at National Night Out at Swan Park on Tuesday, August 4th. All are invited to join us.



Worship in the Park

Our annual Worship in the Park will be on **Sunday, August 9th at 10am.** Kylar & Seth James Baumgart, a husband and wife duo who are contemporary Christian artists and songwriters, will be our special music!

After worship, we will have a potluck lunch. First Lutheran will supply the main dish, beverages, paper plates, and utensils. If your last name begins with A-M, please bring a salad or a side dish. If your last name begins with N-Z, please bring a dessert.

We look forward to seeing you in the park!

School Kits

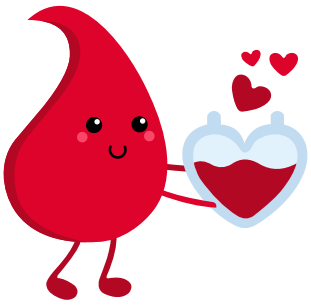
It's almost that time of year again. School supply shopping! Unfortunately, not every country has the resources that we have. Lutheran World Relief distributes school kits to students in need. Last year, they sent school kits to Angola, Djibouti, Honduras, Jordan, Mali, Romania, and Sierra Leone. And they also distribute these kits within the United States (a total of 73,180 in the U.S. alone).

Tubs will be set out in Friendship Hall to collect needed supplies. Needed supplies include pens, pencil sharpeners, rulers, scissors, notebooks and crayons. In September, they will be put together in kits and sent out. When shopping, please consider the school supply aisle in your trip.

Quilting

Stay tuned for quilting!!! We will resume in September, when we pack up the quilts made last year for distribution throughout the world (including the United States).

A big thank you to Pat Roedl, who has been diligently cutting squares for the quilts.



August Blood Drive

First Lutheran will be hosting a Blood Drive on Monday, August 24th at 11:30am, and Tuesday, August 25th at 12:30pm.

Glory Ringers

Tom Irwin



Every Friday morning, the current music teachers and the retired music teachers meet for coffee. On Friday, July 24th, we had a nice chat about vacations and then the topics turned to the upcoming summer band and orchestra lessons and planning for the upcoming school year which is not that far away. This conversation reminded me that I had better begin listening to new handbell music and planning our fall ringing schedule.

So, it is time to announce that our **first handbell practice for the 2026-2027 handbell season will be Thursday, September 3rd at 7pm in the sanctuary.** Although this start date is before Labor Day, school will be in session. We usually perform on the third Sunday of the month.

If you are interested in joining our handbell choir, please see me at church or notify the church office. Obviously, prior music experience is an asset but we have started beginners with no experience in the past (including two ten-year-olds, who are now very productive ringers). We might have a particular need for high bell ringers. These are excellent bells to begin on as they are less demanding making them easier to learn.

I want to take a moment to thank our ringers for a wonderful season last year. It has taken us a while to recover from the pandemic, but now we have reached the level of playing that we had in 2020. Many thanks to our long-term members and those who have joined in more recently.



Joyful Praise Choir

Joyful Praise Choir will r**esume rehearsing on Tuesday, September 8th at 10am in the Chapel.** September rehearsals will be September 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th. We are looking forward to sharing our musical offerings at 9am worship services. Warm-up is at 8:30am.

Joyful Praise used to be known as Senior Choir. We have served in leading music for many decades. Some of our members have been in the group since they were in high school. New members are always welcome. The daytime rehearsal time is to accommodate those who do not drive after dark. If anyone is interested in singing, but is not available during Tuesday mornings, please contact director Mary Irwin (920) 393-9601.
No audition required. Bring a water bottle and a pencil. Come with a joyful heart, ready to sing praises.

Retirees

Lucy Viola – (920) 887-7137

Welcome back! Retirees will meet on Thursday, September 10th with meal beginning at 11:30am catered by Pizza Ranch. The cost of the meal is still $8. You can choose from a chicken meal, pizza of choice, or salad of your choice. Milk, coffee, and dessert are included. Please let us know you are planning on attending so we can order a meal for you.

Pat Marthaler and I will be meeting soon to plan our calendar. If anyone is interested in joining us or have any ideas to share, please let one of us know. In the past, we have collected toys for the Toy Bank, crafts, sing-a-long with *Just Us* at Christmas, games or speakers to share pertinent information with us. Suggestions are welcome!

As always, ALL are WELCOME.

Thrivent

The Thrivent meeting for August will be at Park Avenue Sports Cafe in Beaver Dam on Thursday, August 27th at 4pm. As always, anyone is welcome to join us.

We were able to provide a Thrivent Action Card for the Worship in the Park service and picnic on August 9th. We are volunteering as a group to help with Loaves & Fishes on September 29th. We are also looking to take a Horicon Marsh boat tour on September 18th at 11am. A reservation has been made for 10 people at this time. Cost each is $25, payable in advance. If anyone would like to join us, please get ahold of me ASAP!

We just received notification that ANYONE with Thrivent products will now have Choice Dollars available for them to use. Also, these dollars can be designated right away THROUGH DECEMBER 31st. This is a change from March 31st of the following year.

For any questions, call Sheree Voigt at 920-296-3285.

Faith Formation

2027 ELCA Youth Gathering



The 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering will take place from June 28 to July 2, 2027 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. First Youth are currently making plans to attend with Faith Lutheran Church in Columbus, who will be joining us as we make plans to go the 2027 Gathering.

The first planning meeting will be **Monday, August 3rd at 6:30pm.**

Registration Timeline. There are three different brackets for registration:

- Priority Registration (Oct. 21–Nov. 11, 2026): $450
- Regular Registration (Nov. 12, 2026–Feb. 10, 2027): $525
- Late Registration (Feb. 11–March 17, 2027): $575

A non-refundable, per-person deposit of $175 is due at time of registration for the Gathering and Young Adult Gathering and must be paid within the registration rate you expect to pay.

Sunday School Teachers Needed

We Need You! Sunday School teachers are needed for the upcoming year.
You will only need to teach ONE time a month.

If interested, or if you have any questions, please contact Becky Hoefs (keitser@spectrum.net).

The next Sunday School meeting will be **Monday, August 17th at 5pm.**

Youth Ministry Leader

First Lutheran Church is seeking a passionate and faithful leader to serve as our Youth Ministry Leader, someone who will nurture, support, and grow a vibrant youth ministry. This role centers on fostering meaningful relationships through education, fellowship, service opportunities, and spiritual growth.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send a cover letter and resume to churchoffice@firstluthbd.org.

Confirmation

Confirmation will begin with an Orientation meeting on **Wednesday, October 7th at 6:30pm.** Parents are encouraged to attend. Confirmation class will then be held every Wednesday except the last Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm.

Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes

Report to First Lutheran - Q2 2026

Financials - Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes' financial position continues to be strong. We are blessed with Individual donations, donations from our partner churches, and business donations. Grants continue to be written and awarded to help with rising food costs and equipment costs. We have received a $1,500 grant for our vegetable garden.

# of Meal Dates January thru June	# of Meals Served January thru June	Average # of meals served per Meal Date January thru June
Jan-Jun **20**	**19485**	**974**

The number of meals served continues to increase. We are serving 154 more meals per meal date than we served at the same time in 2025.

Staffing

Only a few open dates remain for volunteer groups in 2026. The core group numbers remain strong. Chef Jim Zuelsdorf and Shirley Schueler are the kitchen leaders.

Mission

No change in our Mission. Our mission is to serve a weekly healthy hot meal to anyone who wants one. There will be no income requirements. We care about serving the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual needs of all people in our community. We want to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed and loved and a part of our community. We look to follow Jesus' command from John 13:34 – "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

Ministry Opportunities

Loaves & Fishes donated 264 lbs of cucumbers to the CWCAC food pantry on Spring Street from our Loaves & Fishes Garden. We continue working with the Social Concerns Committee Personal Essential Pantry. We are proud to partner with Social Concerns, and we see the Ministry growing!

New Storage

The new storage area has helped tremendously with the close location to the kitchen.

Respectfully Submitted,
John & Linda Smedema

Rummage Sale Update

The Rummage Sale Committee would like to inform the congregation of the disbursements approved after our spring rummage sale. Thanks to all who contribute items, as well as all who volunteer, shop, and help in any way. The following requests were approved by the committee for immediate or future expenses:

- A DVD player was purchased for Grief Share - $34.72
- Personal Essential Pantry donation - $250
- Social Concerns for mailing military packages - $200
- Chafing dishes for the Harvest Meal - $280
- Christmas meal food and supplies - up to $400
- New gas grill for church use - $285.99
- Additional funds to ship clothes to South Dakota Indian reservation - $1,000
- Donation to the church renovations fund $10,000

Again, thanks, everyone. It is such a worthwhile project, and there are so many benefits from the efforts.



Trinity VBS

Trinity Church will be hosting VBS August 16th thru August 19th, and First Lutheran is invited!

Visit trinityumbd.org/children to learn more and to sign up today!

GriefShare

First Lutheran will be hosting GriefShare starting Thursday, September 10th through November 19th. The time will be 5:00pm-6:30pm.

Please speak to Pastor Jim if you are interested in taking part in this support group, which will give you tips and counsel to handle the aftermath of loss.

New Members

There will be a meeting on Sunday, September 27th after church for anyone interested in becoming a member at First Lutheran Church.

If you would like to have information sent to you to begin the process, please call the church office (920-885-4497) and let us know.



Save the Date: Polka Worship & Harvest Fest

Mark your calendars for our annual Polka Worship & Harvest Fest Dinner on Sunday, October 18th.

More info to come!

Council Highlights

The Council Meeting for this month was held on Sunday, July 15th.

- **Ministry Report:** Pastor Jim has been working on plans for the service in the park and the Faith Formation Program. Craig Retzlaff, the fire instructor with the BDPD, has requested to use First Lutheran in August for officer training exercises. The council has approved this training for August 17th. Pastor is working with Faith Lutheran in Columbus for the ELCA National Youth gathering in Minneapolis the summer of 2027.
- **Congregational Health:** Befrienders have made 54 visit so far this year. Most people coming to quiet prayer time have been single people but some couples have been coming lately. Grief Share will begin September 10th and will meet for 10 weeks.
- **Evangelism:** A new pop-up tent has been purchased. It has the First Lutheran name on it and can be used for National Night Out, the church picnic and other events. On National Night Out, the committee will be giving out treats, helmets, First Aid Kits, cross necklaces and prayer cards with information about First Lutheran. A new program called Baby Steps is being planned. This program would gather and distribute supplies to eligible expectant parents. This committee would also participate in the Dodge County Baby Shower. Handout in their booth would be information on Baptism, faith formation and raising children with God.
- **Executive:** The council decided that having Ambrose do an inspection of the church roof would not be beneficial at this time. More information will be available when the current shingles are removed. We also decided not to do back to school bags as other organizations in the community are doing them and it would be in conflict with gathering school supplies for Lutheran World Relief.
- **Faith Formation:** The Sunday School leaders have requested a coordinator be recruited to handle the office duties for Sunday School such as attendance, gathering information for the office and other necessary paperwork. It was suggested that maybe this could be a paid position.
- **Finance:** A 3% increase cost of living adjustment is recommended for hourly staff and Mat.
- **Mutual Ministry:** The First Lutheran calendar is available online. You can access it through the church's website to help with choosing a date for an event.
- **Personal:** The committee is looking elsewhere for a Youth Director. The council approved the hiring of Mary Weiss as the new part-time janitor.
- **Property:** An updated quote was received from BHR for the carport roof. There are still some questions about the quote. Leanne will get clarification and the council will vote on this in August. Leanne is getting quotes for the repair of the parking lot.
- **Rummage Sale/Christmas Bazaar:** The rummage sale committee will start accepting items in August.
- **Stewardship/Holy Currencies:** Giving statements along with a letter regarding the renovations have been sent out to those who have contributed to the renovation fund.
- **Old Business:** A motion was made and passed to approved the 3% cost of living expense adjustment for hourly staff and Mat.

The next council meeting will be held Sunday, August 16th at 10:15am.

2026 Church Council

Marian Krueger
President (Executive)

Lynn Seibel
Vice President (Faith Formation)

Leanne Gensch
Secretary (Personnel, Property & Stewardship/Holy Currencies Team)

Jim Feil
Treasurer

Deborah Doerfert
(Social Concerns)

Sam Herringa
(Mutual Ministry)

Scott Jacquart
(Worship)

Phyllis Marthaler
(Rummage Sale & Christmas Bazaar)

Charlie McDonald
(Endowment)

Judy Weishan
(Evangelism)

Bev Yunto
(Congregational Health)

Church Calendar

The Church Calendar is available online! Go to firstluthbd.org > Events > Church Calendar

There is also a link to the calendar at the top of the events page and on the newsletter page. You can click on any date and the events scheduled for that day will be listed in the right column of your screen. The arrows at the top left of the calendar will scroll to next or previous months.

Any changes to the schedule should be given to Michelle (michelle@firstluthbd.org) or Katherine (katherine@firstluthbd.org) to update the calendar and the door unlocking system so the doors are not left unlocked when no-one is present.

Praise Band

Do you play an instrument? Or know how to sing?
Then Praise Band is looking for you!

Interested or have questions? Contact Sven Olson (svenmaryann@comcast.net).

A Prayer for August

There is the marvelous story of a man who once stood before God, his heart breaking from the pain and injustice in the world.
"Dear God," he cried out, "Look at all the suffering, the anguish and distress in the world.
Why didn't you send help?"
God responded, "I did send help. I sent you."

Remember In Prayer

God of sinners and saints, while facing sadness and death, we grieve. As Jesus provided generously in a moment of need, provide generous gifts of healing for those in need this day especially for Rog, Kathy, Rick, Sandy, Kyle, Jan, Michelle, Dennis, Bonnie, Pat, Bev, Mary, Tom, Amber, Ken, Gary, Ruth Ellen, Randy, Eileen, Harold, and Joy. Gather us into the joy of your glory. Amen.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				***Office Hours:*** *Monday, Tuesday & Thursday* *9:00am – 12:30pm*		1
2 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip 10:00am Drive-Thru Communion	3 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep 3:45pm Holy Currency 6:00pm Worship Mtg 6:30pm Youth Gathering Mtg	4 9:00am Calico Cut-Ups 9:00am Yoga 4:00pm L&F Meal 5:00pm National Night Out	5 ***Office Closed*** 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	6 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship	7	8
9 10:00am Worship in the Park/Potluck	10 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep 4:30pm Evangelism 5:30pm Finance 6:30pm Executive 7:00pm Dart Ball	11 9:00am Yoga 4:00pm L&F Meal	12 ***Office Closed*** 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	13 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship	14	15
16 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip 10:15am Church Council Meeting	17 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep 5:00pm Sunday School Meeting	18 9:00am Yoga 1:00pm Sharon Circle 4:00pm L&F Meal	19 ***Office Closed*** 1100am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	20 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship	21 **FOCUS ARTICLES DUE**	22
23 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip	9:00am Bible Study 24 9:00am L&F Meal Prep 11:30am Blood Drive	25 9:00am Yoga 12:30pm Blood Drive 4:00pm L&F Meal	26 ***Office Closed*** 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	27 9:00am Focus Folding 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship 4:00pm Thrivent @ Park Avenue Sports Cafe	28	**29**
30 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip	31 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep					

August Worship Assistant Schedule

	Time	Minister Assistant	Lay Reader	Communion Assistants	Ushers	Greeters	AV Helper
August 2nd	9am	Andrea Brossard	Sue Schroeter	Lois Bennett Heidi Freeby Sue Schroeter Gary Spielman	1st Week Ushers		Adam Pfister
August 9th	9am	Anita Nehmer	Gary Haas	Karen Bilitz Bev Etscheid Vikki Fischer-Kurth Sarah Pfister	2nd Week Ushers		Adam Pfister
August 16th	9am	Judy Weishan	Don Anderson	Rose Dobie Gary & Edie Scharfenberg Lynn Seibel	3rd Week Ushers		Adam Pfister
August 23rd	9am	Sig Schecher	Julie Flemming	Linda Joeckel Sharon Keil Katelynn Strieff Judy Weishan	4th Week Ushers		Adam Pfister
August 30th	9am	Dusty Szewczyk	Carol Crawford	Bev Etscheid Vikki Fischer-Kurth Gary & Edie Scharfenberg	2nd Week Ushers		Sarah Pfister

If you have any questions or need help finding a substitute, please contact Michelle Casper: michelle@firstluthbd.org or Ext. 1.

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 12:30pm

Church Office: (920) 885-4497 • churchoffice@firstluthbd.org

Rev. Jim Wendt, Pastor (Ext. 2) • Katherine Taylor, Receptionist (Ext. 0) • Michelle Casper, Office Manager (Ext.1)

Breanna Kuehn, Communications Coordinator

Worship Schedule
8am - Previous Sunday's Worship
Radio on FM 95.3 WBEV
9am - Blended Worship
Thursday 1pm - Traditional w/Communion

All Sunday Services Online
Facebook Live, Church Website
& YouTube Live

Drive-Thru Holy Communion
1st Sunday of the Month
August 2nd | 10 - 10:30am

Contact Us
Phone: 920-885-4497
E-mail: churchoffice@firstluthbd.org
Website: www.firstluthbd.org

Rev. Jim Wendt
pastor@firstluthbd.org

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, or if you do not wish to receive this paper newsletter in the mail, please contact the Church Office.

First Lutheran Church
311 W. Mackie Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 258
Beaver Dam, WI

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

Office Staff Hours

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am-12:30pm

Church Mailbox & Office Mailbox

There is a secure church mailbox installed outside of the Friendship Hall doors by the doorbell. There is also a secure church office mailbox installed on the wall to the left of the office window. Members can use either mailbox as a dropbox if you need to drop off items for staff after hours.

Due Date Reminders - Email to breanna@firstluthbd.org & michelle@firstluthbd.org

Focus Articles: Due on the 3rd Friday of the month
Sponsors, Bulletin, Welcome Slides, or E-Announcements: Due on Tuesdays by noon

Prayers of the Church

If you would like to be included in the prayers of the church, please contact the church office. If you have prayer requests for the Prayer Chain, please contact Lois Bennett at (920) 887-2698 or benn1741@gmail.com.

Koepsell – Murray
SINCE 1909
FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES
(920) 885-6600 or (920) 885-5291
www.koepsellfh.com