First Lutheran

All are welcome

Focus on life at First

September 2026

Our Mission

To experience and celebrate God's amazing grace together.

Our Vision

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.

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Dear Friends of First,

Recently, Laura and I returned to one of our favorite spots for hiking and camping, Rocky Mountain National Park. We hiked several trails that led us to Emerald Lake, Alberta Falls and Dream Lake. On the west side of the park, we enjoyed the Onahu Creek Trailhead which will lead to open meadows, dense conifer forests, and fire recovery zones, ultimately connecting to Big Meadows and the Green Mountain Trail where a hiker can frequently see moose, elk, and deer grazing in the wet meadows.

In 2020, the north and west side of the park suffered a massive and destructive wildfire; the second-largest in the history of the state of Colorado. The East Troublesome Fire burned 193,812 acres between October 14th and November 30th, 2020. The fire destroyed 555 structures and killed two people, devastating portions of the community of Grand Lake. As we drove through that portion of the park and hiked along the edge of one of those burned, scarred areas, our eyes traced the dark, jagged scars etched across the mountainside. In those moments of devastation, it is entirely natural to look upon the charred earth and feel the cold weight of grief, wondering how life could ever return.

Instead, as I looked closer beneath the blackened trunks of ponderosa and lodgepole pines, we saw something extraordinary. Rising straight out of the charcoal-ash soil were vibrant shoots of green young aspen saplings already shooting upward, connected to deeper, resilient root systems that the fire above could never touch. We noticed wildflowers like fireweed seeds that had been lying dormant for years, waiting for the extreme heat of a blaze to unlock their shells. We admired the hillsides of vivid pink and purple flowers.

Scripture reminds us that our God is a God who does not abandon the desolate places. In the prophecy of Isaiah, we are given the enduring promise that the Lord comes to comfort all who mourn, "to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (Isaiah 61:3).

In ecological terms, fire is a ferocious clearing, but it is also an agent of rebirth. The intense heat opens closed cones, clears away thick underbrush, and deposits nutrient-rich ash into the soil so that new, diverse life can take root. Is this not the very heart of our Christian faith? We follow a Savior, Jesus, whose greatest victory was born out of the deepest tragedy. At the cross, all seemed lost to darkness and finality. Yet, the grave could not hold Jesus, and the ultimate destruction gave way to the eternal dawn of the Resurrection. God's grace works not by preventing every storm or fire, but by descending into the ashes with us and calling forth life where nothing seemed possible.

Many of us are carrying our own private burn scars right now. Perhaps you are walking through a season of illness, a difficult loss, a strained relationship, or the quiet ache of exhaustion. The landscape of your heart may feel stripped bare. If that is where you find yourself today, take heart in the quiet testimony of our Colorado mountains. The fire may change the landscape, but it does not have the final word. The roots of God's steadfast love run deeper than any trial, and His

...continues on page 2

Dear Friends of First continued...

Holy Spirit is already at work beneath the surface, preparing you for a season of unexpected growth.

As we look toward the months ahead as a congregation, let us keep our eyes open for the green shoots in our midst. Let us be a community that tends to one another with patience, provides shelter for the weary, and celebrates every small sign of renewal. May the God of resurrection bring beauty to your ashes, peace to your spirit, and new life to your soul.

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are a God of resurrection. For every person in our community walking through a season of loss, exhaustion, or uncertainty, we pray for the quiet comfort of Your Holy Spirit. Give us eyes to see the new growth breaking through the hard places in our lives. Ground our roots deeply in Your unfailing love. Amen.

In Christ's abiding hope,
Pastor Jim

National Night Out

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, and came out for National Night Out on August 5th. And a special shout-out to the Rummage Sale Committee for giving us the funds for the bicycle helmets.





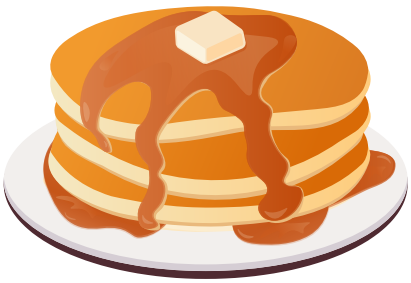
School Kits

By the time you read this, we will probably be in the process of putting school kits together. We have been collecting school supplies for these kits since early August. This year, we will be able to put together 100 kits! Much thanks to Jean Spindler for making the school bags that the supplies are put in.

Thanks to all for helping to provide the school supplies that make up these kits. They will go out with the quilts on September 12th.

Holy Currencies Pancake Breakfast

Holy Currencies is hosting a Pancake Breakfast as a thank you for your support in the many renovations we have done to our beautiful church, on Sunday, September 13th after the service.



Quilting Begins Anew

We will start our quilting season on Wednesday, September 2nd, at 9am.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with "quilting," there are several members who come together once a week and tie quilts. We have other members who cut up the squares and other members who sew them into tops. On Wednesday mornings, we put them together by tying them to a backing and a filling to make a quilt. The quilts are stored until September when they are shipped out from a central location to a variety of places (including the U.S.) to be used by people who need them.

On September 2nd, we are going to display our work from last September up until May. Look for them during worship services Thursday and Sunday. On September 9th, we are going to pack them up and get the boxes ready for shipping. And finally on the 12th, we will take them to Madison for the shipping.

We are in need of double, queen and king-sized sheets for backings and fillers. When cleaning out your linen closets this fall, please consider us.

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.

Finances at First

July ended with a net operating loss of $3,507. The Summer months tend to have less attendance which is made up in the Fall and Winter.

We continue to be blessed with generous donations and Estate gifts to keep progressing on renovation projects. The bathroom/storage project came in under budget. Next up, we will be moving forward with a roof replacement.

Looking toward next year, we are exploring resurfacing the parking lot. Thank you all so much for your generosity and dedication to First Lutheran.

Jim Feil

Office Updates

The Church Office will be closed on Labor Day, Monday, September 7th.
The meetings typically held that evening will take place the following Monday, September 14th.

The Church Office will be open on Wednesdays again starting September 9th from 9:00am-12:30pm.

Retirees

Lucy Viola – (920) 887-7137

Our first meeting of the season will be 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.

We'll work on tray favors in October and November for Hillside Manor, Beaver Dam Care Center and Eagles Wings. Also, we will have a Toy Drive in the month of November. In December, we plan on Christmas music.

EVERYONE is Welcome. We would love to have you join us. Just be sure to call me (Lucy) to let me know what you would like to have for your meal. We meet the 2nd Thursday of each month from September to May.

Thrivent

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 that day. 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.

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).

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.

The next planning meetings will be **Tuesday, September 1st and Monday, October 5th 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. The Sunday School Teachers and helpers will be having a brunch following worship on Sunday, September 20th.

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

Signup for Sunday School will be on Sunday, September 27th after worship.
The first day of Sunday School will be Sunday, October 4th at 9am.

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 orientation and to sign up to volunteer throughout the year. Confirmation class will then be held every Wednesday except the last Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm.

Baby Steps

Evangelism Committee continues to share God's word in the community through a collaboration with Dodge County Maternal and Child Health Services to provide support to babies and parents in need.

First Lutheran will collect baby items on an ongoing basis. Collection baskets will be in Friendship Hall. Dodge County nurses will collect and deliver each basket to parents and babies they are working with.

Items needed are: diapers, wipes, blankets, towels, onesies, pacifiers, bottles, hygiene products, infant health items (no medications) new or gently used baby books, baby's first Bible, any baby books in Spanish. Monetary donations are also welcomed to purchase items that are needed. And First will provide information regarding our congregation, Baptism, and Child Faith Formation in each basket.

Any questions, suggestions, or donations please contact Judy Weishan at 608-345-6179.





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!

A Prayer for September

Lord God, bless grace and peace, safety and health, justice and freedom, conscience and courage. Amen.

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.

Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes

Loaves & Fishes Garden
In the middle of last winter, Linda and I thought about what we could do next to support our shared Loaves & Fishes Ministry. One of our goals is finding more opportunities for people to volunteer. We have found that people are more than willing to volunteer when they believe in the mission.

The idea of having our own garden to produce vegetables during the summer and fall seemed like a good idea. While we can receive vegetables for free from Second Harvest, it usually is not in big enough quantities for our growing needs. Then the questions started, where to get the land? How do we pay for plants? Who would plant the garden? Who would weed and water? How would we get water to the garden? Thankfully God is always at work!

We received a grant from MMC-BD Community Health Sub-Committee to defray costs. I asked Dave Keil if he had land or knew of anyone who had land, we might be able to use. Dave not only knew where we could get land, he became an integral part of the success of our garden! Dave introduced us to the Strohshein Brothers, Mark and Alan. Mark and Alan allowed us to use their land for free, and they also worked up and fertilized. Leanne laid out an excellent plan for planting the garden.

When the greenhouses opened, we asked on social media if anyone had extra plants they would be willing to donate. Hoekstra's Greenhouse, Lost Lake Greenhouse, and Wodill's Greenhouse, all contacted us directly, asking if they could donate, resulting in an abundance of plants! Dave also set up a great watering system and kept water ready to use when the garden became too dry. Abel Signs donated our garden sign and installed it for free. The garden has produced an abundance of produce that we have used in our meals. God at work!

Many people volunteered, and continued to volunteer, some anonymously, showing up and weeding for one to two hours at a time. Much like the core group that helps prep meals on Monday and serves the meal on Tuesdays, the garden has its own core group. We couldn't have done this without this special group, Dave, Sharon & their extended family, Mark & Alan, Leanne, Lois, Judy, Mark & Kisa, Bill & Kathi, Diane, Matthew, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Group. We apologize if we overlooked anyone!

Thank you for your support for the Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes Meal Ministry!
+
John & Linda Smedema
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."





Holy Currencies



Pancake Breakfast - September 13th
Please join our Holy Currencies Team for a coffee hour breakfast on Sunday, September 13th. We will have a slide show playing on the TVs featuring highlights of First Lutheran and the many ministries and activities that take place here. We hope to see you there!

Six Currencies for a Sustainable Ministry
Currency of Time and Place: Paid and volunteer time that leaders/members offer the church and its ministries.
Currency of Gracious Leadership: The ability to use skills, tools, models, and processes to create gracious environments of mutual respect.
Currency of Relationships: Identifying the leaders' and members' networks of mutually respectful connections.
Currency of Truth: The ability to articulate individually and corporately the global/holistic truth from the experiences of different individuals or groups within the church and community.
Currency of Wellness: The state of being healthy physically, socially, economically, ecologically, and spiritually within a church, our ministries, and communities.
Currency of Money: Something generally accepted as a medium of exchange, a measure of value, or a means of payment

Holy Currencies Team:
Pastor Jim, Leanne Gensch, Lois Knaack, Lynn Seibel, Judy Weishan, Bev Yunto & John Smedema

Summer's Holy Currencies Letter

Sometimes when we do things, we don't think to explain the process. After we learned some members were concerned that the Holy Currencies Team had looked at their giving statements, we wanted to assure everyone that this did not happen.

Holy Currencies only supplied the office with the letter updating members on the capital fund. Cynthia, our bookkeeper, ran the mid-year giving statements and put them in the envelopes. Michelle, our office manager, then matched up the names in the envelope windows to those on the letters and mailed them out.

Your giving information was kept confidential.
We apologize for not mentioning that in the letter, and we thank you for your understanding and continued support of First Lutheran.

Council Highlights

The Council Meeting for this month was held on Sunday, August 16th.

- **Financial Report:** July showed a negative balance. However, Jim explained that July is typically a slow month. End of the year usually increases in giving and attendance. We are in a good financial position overall.
- **Congregational Health:** Befrienders is looking for more people who would like to make visits. GriefShare is still getting numbers for their program.
- **Evangelism:** National Night Out was held August 5th. They handed out 110 helmets, 54 first aid kits with prayer cards and wooden crosses, 150 applesauce pouches and 240 string cheese pouches. Positive comments on the new canopy were received. There will be an ongoing collection of baby items in Friendship Hall. The items will be distributed by Dodge County nurses and will include information on baptism and faith formation. Trunk or Treat will be October 24th. They would like at least 12 cars participating, A float will be entered in the Christmas parade.
- **Faith Formation:** Due to the Harvest Fest Dinner, council will meet on October 21st at 5:30pm. Sunday School helpers are needed to teach once a month. September 20th is the Sunday School Brunch. September 27th is Rally Day.
- **Personnel:** The committee is meeting with a new organist. The search continues for a youth director. The motion was made and seconded to hire a Sunday School Director. This would be a 10 month position. Personnel Committee will prepare a job description for this new position. Office Manager's job description will also be updated.
- **Property:** An air conditioning unit was added to the new storage area. All Phase did their yearly inspection and fixed the air conditioning in Friendship Hall.
- **Social Concerns:** PEP distributed to 108 households. September will be the next distribution. Loaves & Fishes celebrated their fourth anniversary in August.
- **Stewardship/Holy Currencies:** A Brunch will be served September 13th highlighting what is being done at First and renovation information.
- **Old Business:** A motion was made and seconded to increase the Office Manager's wages due to the increased responsibilities. A motion was made and seconded to hire BRH to repair the carport roof. Staff reviews are being done and should be completed before the next council meeting.

The next council meeting will be held Sunday, September 20th 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)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9:00am Calico Cut-ups 9:00am Yoga 4:00pm L&F Meal 6:30pm Youth Gathering Meeting	2 *(Office Closed)* 9:00am Quilting 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	3 *(Quilt Display)* 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship 7:00pm Glory Ringers	4	5
6 *(Quilt Display)* 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip 10:00am Drive-Thru Communion	7 **Labor Day** **(Office Closed)**	8 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Joyful Praise	9 9:00am Quilting 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	10 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 11:30am Retirees 1:00pm Worship 5:00pm GriefShare 7:00pm Glory Ringers	11	12
13 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip 10:00am Holy Currencies Pancake Breakfast	14 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep 4:30pm Evangelism 5:30pm Finance 6:00pm Worship Mtg. 6:30pm Executive	15 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Joyful Praise 1:00pm Sharon Circle 4:00pm L&F Meal 4:00pm PEP Disribution	16 9:00am Quilting 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 5:30pm Social Concerns 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	17 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship 5:00pm GriefShare 7:00pm Glory Ringers	18 **Focus Articles Due** 11:00am Thrivent @ Horicon Marsh Boat Tour 6:00pm Facility Rental	19
20 8:30am Glory Ringers 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip 10:00am Sunday School Teachers/Helpers Brunch 10:15am Church Council	21 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep 7:00pm Dartball	22 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Joyful Praise 4:00pm L&F Meal	23 9:00am Quilting 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	24 9:00am Focus Folding 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Archives 1:00pm Worship 5:00pm GriefShare 7:00pm Glory Ringers	25	26
27 **Rally Sunday** 9:00am Worship 10:00am Scrip Sales 10:15am New Member Orientation	28 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am L&F Meal Prep	29 9:00am Yoga 10:00am Joyful Praise 4:00pm L&F Meal	30 9:00am Quilting 11:00am Quiet Prayer Time 6:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	Office Hours Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.		

September Worship Assistant Schedule

	Time	Minister Assistant	Lay Reader	Communion Assistants	Ushers	Greeters	AV Helper
Sept. 6th	9am	Bridget Sharkey	Heidi Freeby	Lois Bennett Heidi Freeby Sue Schroeter Gary Spielman	1st Week Ushers		Adam Pfister
Sept. 13th	9am	Anita Nehmer	Carol Crawford	Karen Bilitz Bev Etscheid Vikki Fischer-Kurth Sarah Pfister	2nd Week Ushers	Vikki Fischer-Kurth Mary Kahler	Adam Pfister
Sept. 20th	9am	Judy Weishan	Mary Irwin	Rose Dobie Gary & Edie Scharfenberg Lynn Seibel	3rd Week Ushers	Gail Henschel Lynn Seibel	Adam Pfister
Sept. 27th	9am	Sig Schecher	Sharon Keil	Linda Joeckel Sharon Keil Katelynn Strieff Judy Weishan	4th Week Ushers	Sharon Keil Georgine Sumnicht	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 through 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
September 6th | 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

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NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

Office Staff Hours

Monday thru 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