



October 2026

Focus

on life at First

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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Upcoming Events

First Day of Sunday School
October 4th

Confirmation Orientation
October 7th

Harvest Dinner & Polka Service
October 18th

Church Council Meeting
October 21st

October Focus Articles Due
October 23rd

Trunk or Treat
October 24th

Blood Drive
October 26th & 27th

First Communion Class
October 28th

Dear Friends of First,

Every three years, since 1988, when the ELCA Lutheran denomination was formed, the wider church has done something truly extraordinary. It brought together tens of thousands of high school students from across the country for a week of life-changing faith formation, massive worship experiences, deep learning, and hands-on service. There have been 12 national ELCA Youth Gatherings, I have attended 11 of them throughout my 33 years working in the Lutheran church.

Next summer, from **June 28 to July 2, 2027**, that massive movement is heading to **Minneapolis, Minnesota**. I am thrilled to share that our congregation is planning to send a group of our own young people to be a part of it!

The official theme for the Gathering is "**Imagine More**," rooted in Ephesians 3:20: *"Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine..."*

In a world that often tells our teenagers to shrink their expectations, to be cynical, or to navigate life completely on their own, the Youth Gathering offers a radically different message. It invites them to imagine a life filled with *more love, more community, more grace, and more purpose* than they ever thought possible. Seeing 30,000+ of their peers gathering under one roof at U.S. Bank Stadium has a way of reminding our youth that they are not alone—they are part of a vibrant, living, global church.

The Gathering is open to all youth who will be in 8th through 12th grade at the time of registration this fall. Individual Young Adults, ages 18 to 35 are invited to participate through the dedicated Young Adult Track.

Specialized Tracks events like MYLE (for youth of color or whose primary language is other than English) and the tAble (for youth with disabilities, ages 14–18) are also integrated.

An event of this scale is a foundational milestone in a young person's faith journey, but it takes a whole village to get them there. In the coming months, you will hear more about our registration numbers, prep meetings, and upcoming fundraisers. Here is how you can support our youth right now:

- Pray: Keep our eligible youth, their families, and our adult leaders in your daily prayers as we plan and prepare.
- Encourage: If you know a high schooler in our congregation or neighborhood, encourage them to sign up.
- Invest: Consider financially supporting our youth ministry fundraisers to help ensure that the cost of travel, housing, and registration is never a barrier for a student who wants to attend.

If you are a student interested in attending, or a parent wanting to learn more about schedules, safety, and costs, please reach out to me directly or join us for our upcoming informational meeting to be held on **Monday, October 5th at 6:30pm**, at church in the Fellowship Hall.

Let's step out in faith together and Imagine More of what God is about to do in the lives of our young people!
Peace, Pastor Jim



Harvest Dinner & Polka Service

The Harvest Dinner & Polka Service will be held on **Sunday, October 18th**. Ralph Thull and the Goodtime Dutchmen will again provide the music at 9am. A traditional turkey and ham dinner will be served at 10:30am.

Family Tickets are \$25, Adults \$10, Youth (5-16) \$5, 5 & under are free. Tickets will be available at the door, worship the week before, both Thursday, October 8th and Sunday, October 11th, and the church office starting October 12th.

There is a sign up posted for desserts and those willing to help! This is a great event to invite family and friends.

Trunk or Treat

Join us in our parking lot for TRUNK OR TREAT on **Saturday, October 24th from 2:00-3:30pm**.
Candy. Cars. Community.

This is a fun and safe environment for your family to make memories this Halloween. Children of all ages are welcome to come dressed in their costumes to trick or treat in our church parking lot. Parents will accompany children as they travel from trunk to trunk.



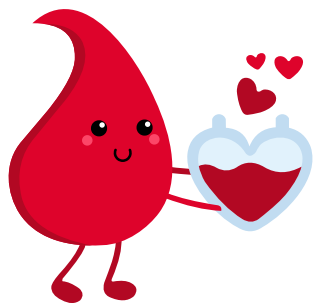
Trunk or Treat is rain or shine! If the weather takes a turn for the worst, we'll head inside (minus trunks!).

Help Us Make Our Trunk or Treat Event a Sweet Success!

Our annual Trunk or Treat event is just around the corner, and we're so excited to bring our community together for a fun and safe Halloween celebration. **To ensure we have plenty of treats for all the trick-or-treaters, we are kindly requesting candy donations from our congregation.** We also welcome candy alternatives for kids with allergies (i.e., small toys, pencils, and allergy-free candy, etc.).

We need decorated trunks of all kinds to make this a great event! If you are interested in sponsoring a vehicle, please contact Judy Weishan (608-345-6179).

October Blood Drive



First Lutheran will be hosting a Blood Drive on Monday, October 26th at 11:30am, and Tuesday, October 27th at 12:30pm.

Greeters

Our Greeter Corps is thinning and we are wondering if you would like to be a greeter before church on Sundays. You need to show up at least 15 minutes before church starts, stand where people are coming in (near the sanctuary or by the back door), and be friendly! Easy, right?

Please let Mary Kahler (mary.kahler@gmail.com) know if you are interested and if there is a particular Sunday you would like to greet at.

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.



Rummage Drop Off

Have items to drop off for the rummage sale?
You can drop off every **Tuesday from 9 to 11am.**

Military Care Packages

Social Concerns will be sending packages to our military members and friends in November. Please turn in addresses of any military person you would like to receive a care package to the church office **by Monday, November 9th.**

Retirees

Lucy Viola – (920) 887-7137 or (920) 296-4757

Its good to get back to our fall schedule! Our next Retiree Meeting will be on Thursday, October 8th and we'll be starting our tray favors for Christmas on that day. If you are able to help with our craft project, please plan on arriving at 10am to begin. All helpers are greatly appreciated and needed to create Christmas bookmarks for residents at Hillside Manor, Beaver Dam Care Center and Eagles Wings. We'll plan on crafting these tray favors at our October and November meetings.

WE WELCOME ALL to join us for our meal at 11:30am. Please call Lucy to let her know that you'll be attending and what you would like for lunch. Choices are: 2 pcs of Chicken with sides; choice of salad (garden, chef, chicken fiesta or taco); or choice of pizza. Price is \$8; milk, coffee and dessert are included. We are finished in time for you to attend the 1pm worship service with Pastor Jim.

November will begin our Toy Bank. Totes will be placed in Friendship Hall to collect toys for less fortunate children. The toys will be taken to the Farmers and Merchants Bank in early December. Toys should be new, in their original package, unwrapped and appropriate for ages newborn through age 15. We are suggesting a price range from \$5 to \$15. Thank you for helping to make Christmas a little brighter for a less fortunate child.

Thrivent

Our Thrivent group met on September 18th at Ginger's Restaurant in Horicon after an enjoyable but wet Horicon Marsh boat tour. The weather was a bit wet but could have been worse!

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, October 29th at 4pm at Pizza Ranch in Beaver Dam. We will meet the night that Friendship International is having their fundraiser so we will be supporting them as well. Our October cookie sale will take place Sunday, October 11th after the worship service.

Normally, we combine our November and December meetings into one. We will be meeting at the church on Wednesday, December 2nd to help with Christmas decorating. We will meet at 4pm for pizza and salad and then decorate. Anyone is welcome to join us for the meal and/or decorating. If interested, call Sheree Voigt at 920-296-3285.

For those who have choice dollars to designate, please remember to do so **by December 31st!** We thank all those giving their choice dollars to First Lutheran Church!

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 last informational meeting will be **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.

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.

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.

First Communion Class

Is your child interested and ready to receive Holy Communion?

A First Communion class will be held on **Wednesday, October 28th from 5:00-6:30pm.** Children will then be receiving their First Communion on either Sunday, November 1st or Sunday, November 8th based on family's availability.

For all those interested in attending, please contact Pastor Jim Wendt (pastor@firstluthbd.org or 920-885-4497 ex. 2).

Save the Dates!

Thanksgiving Eve Service and Pie Social
Wednesday, November 25th beginning at 6pm

Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 13th during worship

Christmas Music during Worship
Sunday, December 20th

Christmas Eve services
4:00pm, 6:00pm and 10:30pm

Christmas Day service
10am

Help Needed!

We are looking for helpers to decorate the church for Christmas on Wednesday, December 2nd. We will meet at the church at 5pm. The Thrivent group will be meeting at 4pm for our meeting and pizza and salad meal and then will be decorating. Anyone is welcome to join us!

If interested, please contact the church office at 920-885-4497 or Sheree Voigt at 920-296-3285.

Thank you in advance for your help!



A Prayer for October

God is at work.
He does not slumber.
Christ intercedes.
He does not fail.
The Spirit comforts.
He does not forsake.
Be at rest.
Be at peace.
Your name at the end of the day
Is Beloved.

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 Kathy, Jan, Michelle, Tina, Travis, Jason, Linda, Hanna, Sandy, Ken, Randy, Lily, Kyle, Amber, Ruth Ellen, Eileen, Karen and Kristi. Gather us into the joy of your glory. Amen.

Council Highlights

The Council Meeting for this month was held on Sunday, September 20th.

- **Financial Report:** August showed an increase in giving compared to last August. The Finance Committee is starting to work on the budget for the next year. Jim suggested that an Emergency Fund line item be established with next year's budget. The Renovation fund is good but giving has slowed down.
- **Ministry Report:** First Communion and Confirmation Classes are planned to start shortly. New member orientation and installation are being planned for those who would like to join First Lutheran. The Polka Service and Harvest Fest Dinner will be on October 18th. Contacts are being made to encourage young people to attend the Youth Gathering that will be held in Minneapolis next summer. Pastor Jim is actively working with community leaders to establish an ongoing shelter for the unhoused in the community.
- **Congregational Health:** Quiet prayer time continues. Befrienders continue to meet with members in homes, facilities and restaurants. Grief Share has begun with more expected to join.
- **Evangelism:** Trunk or Treat will be October 24th from 2 to 3:30pm. They would like 12 vehicles to participate. Candy will be collected from the congregation. Baby Steps collected 47 items which will be delivered by county nurses. These baskets will include baptism information and a baby bible. A new placemat design is being worked on to enhance an understanding of God, church and congregation. The committee has discussed the possibility of holding a block party inviting the community to get to know First Lutheran.
- **Personnel:** The newly hired janitor has resigned. The committee is looking for someone to fill that position. There is a volunteer helping with paperwork for confirmation. They are looking for the possibility that a volunteer could help with the Youth Ministry position. Reviews of staff are almost complete. Looking to fill the Sunday School Coordinator position. Bob Banks has said that he would be retiring within the next year. He would like us to hire someone before he leaves so he can train them. Mat is concerned about the cameras in the balcony in times of security concerns. This will be investigated.
- **Property:** The Sanctuary carpet was shampooed last Monday. The car port roof will be fixed in the next month. We are beginning to discuss and get quotes to put ceiling fans in the sanctuary and replace the HVAC unit for the sanctuary. This is considered routine maintenance.
- **Rummage Sale/Christmas bazaar:** Items are being received for the rummage sale. The Christmas Bazaar will be December 5th.
- **Social Concerns:** Names are being taken for military care packages. Please have names into the church office by November 7th.
- **Stewardship/Holy Currencies:** \$80,000 is still needed to replace the sanctuary roof. Will get updated quotes once we are closer to reaching the goal for funding the project. Will look at the parking lot after the sanctuary roof is finished.
- **Worship:** A greater effort will be made to have people wear their name tags. A survey will be taken to see if people still want to have a summer service in the park. A jazz worship service is being considered. The council discussed the use of the screen for Sunday Worship. We also discussed whether we needed an introduction to the songs sung by the Praise Band.
- **New Business:** Matt and Heidi Freeby have an extensive model train display that they would like to set up at First Lutheran in hopes that it would stimulate multigenerational activity among the members of the congregation. More discussion needs to take place as to the location of the display and how long it will be up.

The next council meeting will be held Wednesday, October 21st at 5:30pm.

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)

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
October 4th | 10 - 10:30am

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

Rev. Jim Wendt
pastor@firstluthbd.org

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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.

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.

