

Living Connected...

August-October 2025

TO GOD & EACH OTHER

*First Lutheran Members Worshipped at
St. Demetrius in Greece—May 2025*

*Cover article by Pastor Scott Jakel
Interim Senior Pastor*

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Sunday Worship

(All Age Worship)

Hours:

8:30 AM Chapel

10 AM Sanctuary

10 AM Online

(Facebook, YouTube,
FLCCH.ORG)

Pastoral Staff:

Scott Jakel

Interim Senior Pastor

The Caller Newsletter is

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Editor: Joyce Weaver,

joycew@flcch.org

Blessings—Dear Friends in Christ,

I am so thankful to be writing yet one more “Caller” Pastor’s article to you. It’s been so wonderful to be serving Christ among you for more than a year and a half now.

Will I be writing another one of these as Winter approaches - for our emphasis on “all things Christmas” and looking to the New Year? Only God knows!! I’m just taking my time-line cues from the Holy Spirit - who has called me to be with you as your interim pastor - until I’m not.

Actually, we each have that same sort of open-ended timeline, when it comes to serving God in our largest and most foundational role. We are baptized children of God. That means we’re called to serve out our vocations of grace in daily life - to show mercy to all and to seek after justice and to share joy, hope, and forgiveness in all we do.

Are you not a baptized child of God? Do you know of someone who might want to receive this gift from God? It’s the greatest joy I have as a pastor, to administer the sacrament of Holy Baptism to people - young and old - who want to be washed in God’s grace. Let me know if you are aware of people who would like to be baptized, and we’ll take care of it lickety split!

I extend grateful blessings to you as we serve in Jesus’ name together. Let’s not worry about longer-term schedules - i.e. when will the new pastor arrive? Let’s keep on working as one people of God - “living connected” in love - sharing our faith in word and deed. Then, when the new pastor arrives, that person can join in on the joy of delighting in work still underway.

Peace to you - in the power of the Spirit!

Pr Scott



SIX FAITH-FORMING FALL SERMONS

We give thanks for this Autumn season in terms of our return to the programming year of the Church. For our Sunday sermons, we'll spend our time in the New Testament: in Luke & 1st Timothy.

On Sunday, Sept. 7 we'll emphasize "Moving Forward" with Jesus. He asks us to count the cost of discipleship and plan for the future.

On the 14th we'll hear from the writer of 1st Timothy about "Mercy Forever." We delight in God's plan to show us grace eternally.

On the 21st of September we learn about the importance of "Managing Faithfully." The parable from Luke focuses on the value of relationships with God and with each other that center on love.

Sept. 28, we return to 1st Timothy to learn about "Firm Footing" When it comes to running the race before us, we need to be grounded in grace not mixed up by money.

Oct. 5 brings us to "Mustardseed Faith." We get a chance to see how mighty God's power is in the world if we will use even the tiniest bit of faith that God gives us to trust in God's guidance.

Finally, on Oct. 12, we finish up our first series of sermons with the story of the 10 Lepers "Meeting Faithfulness" in the healing of Jesus. Our savior comes to make us whole and is so very eager to welcome our gratitude for God's grace.

FALL STEWARDSHIP FOCUS

Starting Oct. 19 this Autumn, we're kicking off a 4-week sermon series that centers on God's generosity. We'll emphasize "Giving Connected" as we give members and friends of our congregation the opportunity to make faith promises in reference to how they'll be supporting the work of this church in 2026.

The two word "mission tagline" of this church is Living Connected. The point of choosing Giving Connected as our stewardship emphasis Fall focus is to link our living with our giving. It's all about responding to God's generosity in giving us all that we have and then.... Giving back a portion.

We'll focus on the giving of time - volunteering and sharing talents. Giving of spiritual support - through prayers and sharing stories of how this church is making a difference in the lives of God's people. And last, but not least - giving of financial resources that belong to God and are given to us "in trust." We get to show how much we trust God in the making of our promises and prayerful intentions we make - indicating how much money we'll pledge to give in 2026 to support this life-changing ministry that the Spirit is empowering us to carry out in Jesus' name.

Oct. 19, we'll check out how Jacob, a key figure in the Bible, leaves an encounter with "the holy" with a limp. His wrestling

with God shows us that God wants us to walk with a gimp in our giving. You are invited to get close enough to God, as you wrestle with matters of faith - and finances - so that all people will know you've struggled with God in this holy matter.

Oct. 26 we'll revisit a familiar lesson - the story of the self-righteous supposed holy man, who brags about his worth to God and his chintzy giving to God as this man stands in contrast to the person who gives a small monetary amount but shows faithful trust in God in humility.

Nov. 2 we'll check out what it looks like to do some giving involving forGIVENess, as we emphasize a ministry of hospitality and love. This will be a special heart-centered Sunday as we marvel in God's mercy!

Finally, we'll wrap up the Fall Stewardship Focus time on Nov. 9 in joy and gratitude. In looking to an Old Testament lesson, we'll visualize ourselves on a journey of thankfulness as we highlight thanksGIVING in our daily lives.

We look forward to your prayerful involvement in this Stewardship campaign. This is all about God's love and the joy we get to share as we trust in God's work in our lives and gratefully give of ourselves with freedom and peace.

Fall Bible Study

Sunday Bible study resumes this fall, starting Sept. 14 (the week after First Day) and running until Christmas. We will be taking a look at women in the Bible. You may be familiar with names like Eve, Sarah or Mary, but what about Rahab or Deborah, or about the many women whose names we do not know, like the Shunamite woman, or the Samaritan woman?

We will explore the Biblical texts and try to add some historical and cultural background to deepen our understanding of these women, their lives and their choices. Please join us most Sundays (watch the bulletin for specifics or changes) at 8:30 or 11 AM in Katie Luther.



Fall Dining Room Usage

Each week over 700 children, musicians, and families are in our building! We are blessed to have a busy church!

This year, our main tenant, Bultum Academy, is paying over \$300,000 to rent the entire upstairs (except the library). Bultum is also renting Martin Luther Hall Monday—Thursday, 8 AM—3 PM. First Lutheran members will still be able to use the dining hall for events and funerals as needed. If you are planning an event this fall, please communicate with our Administrator, Joyce Weaver (joycew@flcch.org) one month in advance to reserve a space at church.



MUSIC / CONCERTS



Sanctuary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir will be back in full force starting in September. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings from 7:15-8:45 PM in the choir room and we sing about 2-3 times a month. **Our first rehearsal will be on Wednesday, Sept. 3, and we sing in worship for the first time Sunday, Sept. 7.** We not only make glorious music, but we have fun and fellowship too! We are always looking for new singers! Come join us! For more information or to sign up contact Jeffrey at jeffrey@flcch.org or 763-788-9653, ext. 109.



Campanile Handbell Ensemble

The Campanile Handbell will be back from their summer hiatus beginning in September. They are always looking for new ringers. If you can count to 4, you can play handbells! **Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings in the Sanctuary from 6-7 PM and they play about once a month.** Please reach out to Drew Stolba, drewstolba@gmail.com.



Steinway Piano Restoration

Our Sanctuary piano is being restored and will be back at FLC in September after two months of maintenance. Thank you to Bob Ostlund for his generous gift towards this project. Thank you also to Pat McNabb for lending her piano to us while ours is getting a “facelift.”



Prior Lake Brass

We welcome the Prior Lake Brass in a concert on **Saturday, October 4 at 4 PM**. The Prior Lake Brass Quintet is a group of talented musicians that present an entertaining program of seasonal selections, spirituals, ragtime, polkas and more. Organist Jeffrey Patry will join them on this program. Join us for this free concert of wonderful music!



Augsburg Centennial Singers

First Lutheran welcomes back the Augsburg Centennial Singers in a concert on **Sunday, October 5 at 3 PM**. The Centennial Singers grew out of the tradition of gospel quartet summer tours starting in 1885 on behalf of Augsburg College. During the 1992 Augsburg Homecoming, a group of former quartet singers got together and decided to form a chorus. The chorus has been together ever since. Everyone is invited to this free concert as they fill FLC's sanctuary with beautiful music!

Music at First Sneak Peek

First Lutheran is a very popular venue for concerts. Here is a sneak peek at what we have lined up in the Fall/Winter. More info to come!

- ♦ **Saturday, Oct. 4, 4 PM:** Prior Lake Brass
- ♦ **Sunday, Oct. 5, 3 PM:** Augsburg Centennial Singers
- ♦ **Sunday, Nov. 9, 3 PM:** Northern Lights Chorale
- ♦ **Saturday, Nov. 15, 4 PM:** Singers in Accord
- ♦ **Sunday, Nov. 16, 4 PM:** Singers in Accord
- ♦ **Saturday, Dec. 6, 3 PM:** Chorus Polaris
- ♦ **Saturday, Dec. 6, 7:30 PM:** Lake Wobegon Brass Band
- ♦ **Sunday, Dec. 7, 3 PM:** Mississippi Valley Orchestra
- ♦ **Friday, Dec. 19, 7 PM:** Christmas at First
- ♦ **Saturday, Dec. 20, 7:30 PM:** Magnum Chorum

HOSPITALITY & OUTREACH—SUMMER RECAP & MINISTRY NEWS



After School

We had a fantastic After School Summer program. In the past, we haven't had After School in the summer, but we had 15-25 elementary age kids who spoke primarily Spanish. We gathered from 2-4 PM and played games, made food, and helped them to continue learning English while school is out. Thank you for supporting this amazing ministry to new neighbors in our community!



Neighborhood Events

We were out in the community enjoying neighborhood events throughout summer.



Peace Breakfast

First Lutheran was a proud sponsor of the Columbia Heights Peace Breakfast in June. We were joined by 140 faith and non-profit leaders to celebrate the power of faith, peace, and cooperation.

Pride Festival—Saturday, Sept. 13

We will also be at Columbia Heights Pride Festival. Stop by Kordiak Park, say hi, grab some lemonade and celebrate Pride in Heights!



After School—Sept. 9 (4:30-6 PM)

We are continuing our After School Ministry this fall! We will have the gym full of sports, our playground games, and our craft room full of laughter!

We do need 2 volunteers on Tuesdays and Thursdays (4-6 PM) to help elementary students make arts and crafts. Half of our students are Spanish speaking & looking to practice speaking English with a caring adult. If you can help, please contact Nathan Roberts. nathanr@flcch.org

After School Internship Applications (ages 18-25)

Do you know a young adult who is interested in a career in education, childcare, or coaching? Each year, Nathan Roberts has internship students from our neighborhood and local colleges who volunteer for 30 hours in the fall while learning how to work with children from diverse backgrounds. They also receive coaching and a letter of recommendation for future jobs. Contact Nathan for more details. nathanr@flcch.org



Sunday Community Lunch—Sept. 7

We are so grateful to have an amazing community lunch served each Sunday during the school year. We typically feed around 110 people each Sunday. With lots of neighbors who join us. For some this is their first experience at First Lutheran church.



With rising food costs, we rely on \$5 weekly donations from members, our amazing volunteers, and talented cooks! A big thank you to Rock and Kari Hauser and Kevin and Jill Kailher for cooking such delicious food!

If you can help serve food or wash dishes, please contact Nathan. nathanr@flcch.org



Ministry Fair—Sunday, Sept. 21

Looking to get involved or get the word out about your church ministry or event? We are going to have a Ministry Fair before and after 10 AM worship. Boards and volunteers are welcome to have a table to promote your Fall groups or upcoming events. Reach out to Nathan, nathanr@flcch.org to reserve your table!



Dads Group. The Dads group meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month 11:15 AM-Noon in various meeting rooms. Feel free to drop in! We'll also plan monthly evening events. Talk to Nathan to get connected. nathanr@flcch.org



The Fall Drama Ministry is back!

Mark your calendars for Thursday & Friday Nov. 5 & 6 at 7 PM!

This fall our drama ministry is going to be headed up by first-time Director, Patrick Tapp and writer/co-director Nathan Roberts. We will be doing an original play that retells the story of Noah and the Ark in modern day! If you are interested in acting or being in the stage crew, please contact Nathan **by Sept 10.** nathanr@flcch.org



Play & Pray Dates were piloted this summer as a way to keep connected to our young children on Sunday mornings. We've had between 4-10 kids join each Sunday for a story, activity and prayer in the courtyard after worship.



Service Learning Trip to Chicago

Our team of 14 youth and adults have been working throughout the year to raise money for our Service Learning Trip to Chicago. On June 1, we had our final fundraising event with a Chicago Dogs lunch. We are grateful for the donations from our church family to make this possible. Thank you for your prayers for our team as we served July 19-24.



Magnified! Vacation Bible School

In June, we had 40 kids, 12 youth and 15 adults participate in our Vacation Bible School, for a total of 67 participants. We learned about the Bigness of God in the Smallest of Things. Kids came to our program through our Sunday School families, our After School program, a local daycare, and neighborhood. A big thank you to all the youth and adults who volunteered as crew leaders, kitchen crew, check-in team, station leaders and bus drivers.



Bible Camp at Lake Wapogasset

In August, we have 19 campers from First Lutheran attending SEEDS, Family and Youth Camp at Camp Wapo in Amery, WI. We will be focusing on the theme: Breathe - an invitation to slow down, notice God's presence, and take in the peace and hope the Holy Spirit brings. Also, we have two high school students from First Lutheran serving as camp counselors this summer: Henry & Junia. Thank you to the congregation for your generous support of our campership program, making sure all kids get to go to camp.



Youth Leadership Dinner

Wednesday, Aug. 27

For all youth entering 6th-12th grades interested in leadership at church in youth group, as a high school leader or as a Sunday School teacher. Please let Rachel know if you plan to attend to be sure there's enough of this special dinner, 6-8 PM at church in Martin Luther Hall.



First Day! Sunday, Sept. 7

- * Backpack Blessing in Worship for all students and educators
- * Meet your teachers for Sunday School
- * Picnic in the courtyard
- * Bouncy House



Sunday School and Confirmation Begin Sept. 7!

- * Sunday mornings at 11
- * Classes for kids and youth ages preschool through middle school
- * Register online today at www.flcch.org
- * Paper forms available

Every Sunday, we have **Sunday School** for kids in our Preschool class (ages 3 - PreK), Kindergarten - 2nd grade class and 3rd-5th grade class. We meet together for a fun game & lesson opener in the gym directly following the 10 AM worship service. Class runs from 11 AM - 12 PM. New families are always invited to visit and register on the website.

Confirmation class meets every Sunday at 11 AM for students in 6-8th grade or any interested youth. We'll have a Bible discussion & faith formation time each Sunday, along with service projects, Confirmation Retreats and mentorship opportunities throughout the year.

Please take 5 minutes to help us get prepared to start the year at church!

Register for Sunday School!

Preschool (3 yrs) - 5th grade

<https://flcch.org/grow-in-faith/children-youth/sunday-school/>

Register for Confirmation (6-8th grade or any interested youth)

<https://flcch.org/grow-in-faith/children-youth/confirmation/>

Youth Group

Wednesday, Sept. 3

Youth group begins with a bonfire fun night! We'll kick off the year with hotdogs and s'mores on the fire, yard games and a Bible study. All youth who are entering 6th-12th grades are invited to join us each Wednesday for food, fellowship and fun from 6-8 PM.



CYF articles continue on page 6



Family Choir is an opportunity for children, youth and parents to sing together and share in our worship service. Everyone is welcome to join & raise your voice in song! If you are interested, contact Becca Stolba.

Katie Luther Circle is a group for moms to encourage, pray and learn together. We like to go out for fun too! This fall, we are meeting on the first Sunday of each month, 11:15 AM—noon. Rachel James, rachel@flcch.org



Seeking Sunday School teachers for fall! This year, you get the chance to be a superhero to kids in our church and community! Share the Bible stories, pray with our kids, and lead them in discussions of faith as you volunteer as a Sunday School teacher. Team-teach with another adult or teen volunteer. Interested? Email Rachel at rachelj@flcch.org.

Children and Youth Worship Service Opportunities

We want all kids and youth to get involved in serving and leading on Sunday mornings! Our CYF Board has put together a list of **15 ways** that young people can get involved. Find out more information at this [link](https://flcch.org/grow-in-faith/children-youth/) or on the CYF page of the church website: <https://flcch.org/grow-in-faith/children-youth/>

Youth Sunday / Affirmation of Baptism—October 26

We will have a youth-led worship service and affirm the baptism of our confirmands.



Cheryl Ballingrud's beautiful guest table '24

Young at Heart Christmas Dinner Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 12 PM

Everyone is invited to enjoy this festive and elegant annual event! A decadent meal will be prepared by our chef, Rock Hauser, and served by familiar faces from FLC. The event will also include a selection of our member's favorite table decorations, lots of carol singing and a delightful time of visiting. Advance reservations required. \$20 tickets will be sold at church on Sundays, Dec. 7 & 14.

LUTEFISK 2026

Our next Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner will be held on Saturday, Jan. 17, with seating times at 12, 2, 4 & 6 PM. Tickets go on sale starting at the all Holiday Market on Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025. Tickets can be purchased online at <https://www.flcch.org/lutefisk-meatball-dinner>. This dinner helps us raise important funds for First Lutheran's ministry projects and provides opportunities for our youth to earn summer camp credits, with matching credits if a parent works as well. If you'd like to help, make sure the date is on your calendar and watch for the sign-up board in early December!



Gratitude from the Meyers...

DiAnn & I would like to thank the congregation for participating in the Meal Train on our behalf. We quickly realized there're a lot of great cooks in the crowd! Having meals delivered was a big help during my surgeries and DiAnn's doctor appointments. We would also like to thank Marilyn Lueth for her work in keeping the meal train up to date. Again, thank you for this amazing experience.

Sincerely, Dave & DiAnn

First Lutheran Book Club

The Book Club meets monthly on the 3rd Wednesday at 1 PM. Join them for fellowship & refreshments. Contact Char, charzarich@gmail.com for the book of the month and other details.



Holiday Market Saturday, Nov. 8

Nothing says, **Welcome Fall** like colorful foliage, fresh homemade lefsa and the excitement of friends preparing for FLC's Annual Holiday Market fundraiser! Watch for craft & baking opportunities to be announced in Sunday Bulletins.



Mission Jamacia Crew—2025



There is still time to register for the Jan. 31—Feb. 7 Mission Jamaica trip. We will be sponsoring a home build and would love to have you join us! A \$150 refundable airline seat deposit is due asap. Questions to Larry or Jane Bugbee. lbugbee@msn.com Supply requests will be posted later this fall. Checks for donations toward the new home can be made out to FLC with Mission Jamaica in the memo section. Thank you for your continued generous support!

Dear First Lutheran Friends,

I want to thank everyone for the cards, prayers, and telephone calls during my recovery after my hip replacement and bout with sepsis. I'm on the mend and only use a cane when needed. Your thoughtfulness has made my recovery much easier. God Bless all of you.

Sincerely, Jon Lueth

Hello from the desk of the Finance & Operations Manager

Even though the summer months are usually less busy at FLCCH giving staff members and volunteers the opportunity to take vacation days to spend valuable time with their friends and family, the list of tasks to accomplish and meeting deadlines hasn't slowed down. Taxes for 2024 are done and our liability has been paid, we have contracted with an auditor for a compilation audit (I am in the midst of pulling reports and documents for our auditor), leaders are already preparing for this year's stewardship campaign, funds have been secured for upcoming maintenance projects and the list goes on.

One of the big decisions the M&E committee, the Board of Finance and the Church Council had to tackle was to decide to either pay off the mortgage or refinance the mortgage facing a higher interest rate. The decision was made to be financially conservative and only pay down \$110,000 and to refinance the remainder of the loan with the focus to reevaluate another mortgage pay down in the future once a new Senior Pastor will be on board. This amount will be paid from a General Fund CD that was invested wisely in the past with the Mission Investment Fund.

The tenant task force has successfully renewed a new one year lease with Bultum Academy for the school year of 2025/26. They are also working diligently to secure another one year lease for the 2026/27 school year with the goal to have the lease signed by Bultum management by August 15.

This guarantees that the budget for Fiscal Year 2026 can rely on a steady lease income.

Jody has secured a bid for a new sanctuary AC unit with Gilbert Mechanical which the Church Council has blessed. The cost will be around \$150,000 which will be paid from the same above mentioned General Fund CD. His team including himself, Roger and volunteers are working hard on getting the class rooms upstairs ready for the new school year, doing minor repairs and tackling the weeds in the garden beds around the campus. Even though it starts to look much nicer there is still a lot of additional work to be done including adding blooming perennials in some of the garden beds.

The 2nd qtr. of 2025 has been financially sound due to generous incoming donations even through the traditionally slower summer months. We closed with a net revenue as of June despite increased expenses due to the inflation rate. Your generosity enables FLCCH to not just run the operations successfully but to also give back to the community. These include quarterly benevolence payments, being able to run the after-school program during the summer months, sending the FLCCH youth to Lake WAPO camp and on their youth trip to Chicago and translating signs and bulletins for our Spanish speaking community members.

Thanks to all of you FLCCH keeps being a financially healthy and viable community.

*Blessings,
Jana Dietering*

Financial Snapshot: Period ending June 30, 2025

General Checking	\$ 1,002,765 *
Mortgage & Maintenance	\$ 12,310
Perpetual Reserve Balance	\$ 107,965
Special Projects Balance	\$ 244,078
General Fund CD Balance	\$ 265,232
Memorial Fund Balance	\$ 55,465
Endowment Savings Balance	\$ 31,367
Endowment Investments	\$ 162,816
Total Current Assets	\$ 1,969,591
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 2,713,390
Mortgage Loan Balance	\$ 993,085
Total Liabilities (excluding mortgage)	\$ 20,522
Total Equity	\$ 3,632,810
Net Revenue as of 6/30/2025	\$ 36,564

*includes Endowment Funds that have been transferred and will be reinvested



First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights ([FLCCH](https://www.flcch.org)) is financed by the generous, direct monetary gifts of its members and friends.

There are several ways you can bless this mission of Jesus with your gifts:

- 1) Place your **Check or Cash** in the offering plate during worship or Community Meal. Please use an offering envelope so we can give you credit for your gift.
- 2) **Electronic Funds Transfer** from our website, [flcch.org](https://www.flcch.org) (upper right hand corner). You can set up a one-time or recurring donation.
- 3) **Bill Pay**. Follow the directions of your bank or credit union to create First Lutheran as a Payee at 1555 40th Ave. NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421, and choose regular weekly/monthly offering.
- 4) **Stock Transfer to the Church**.
- 5) **Include FLCCH in Your Estate Plans**.
- 6) For more information, contact Finance Manager, Jana Dietering, 763-788-9653, ext. 104.



First Lutheran Church
1555 40th Avenue NE / Columbia Heights, MN 55421-3195
WEB: flcch.org / PH: 763-788-9653

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SUNDAY WORSHIP
10 AM SANCTUARY
AND ONLINE
YOUTUBE &
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8:30 AM CHAPEL
WORSHIP

COMMUNITY MEAL
11 AM-12:30 PM
(RESUMES SEPT. 7)

Daylight Savings Ends
Sunday, Nov 2, 2025

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights

