The Messenger
September 2026

Contents

2
Music News
Stewardship study

3
Chair Yoga
Baptism

4-6
Youth and Family Ministry

7
Council
Connected Parenting

8
Dinner Church
Kitchen Clean up
Financials

9
Book Study
Respite Care
Open House
WELCA

A publication of

First Lutheran Church ELCA
402 South Court Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-739-3348
office@flcff.org
firstlutheranchurchff.org

Dear People of FLC –

Last Saturday I brought my youngest son, Jesse, to college. I was fine until we were a block from the campus and I saw a mom pushing her kids in a double stroller and immediately it struck me that it seemed like a heartbeat ago that I was pushing my boys in their double stroller.

I'm sure you all have experienced moments like this – where you are so happy for loved ones growing up and moving on but it is bittersweet, too, to know that things are changing.

If you've been in worship in August, you know that in my sermons I've been highlighting stories of churches going through significant changes and how they not only weathered those changes but have found ways to flourish anew. I think it's helpful for us to listen to stories like this especially right now. It's no secret that First Lutheran is in a season of change and our leadership is doing a wonderful job of being open to how the Holy Spirit might be calling us in new ways. This is very much a time for all of us to be listening and paying attention for how God is at work in our midst. This fall I invite you to join in a Bible study we will be doing online on Sunday Evenings as we think about faithful stewardship of our resources and our property in these changing times. We intend to keep each session brief (15-25 minutes). Please join in. You can sign up on the kiosk in the narthex.

We have all sorts of other new things coming this fall as well – please read your newsletter thoroughly and get involved! We can't wait to see you. Invite your friends and neighbors to Dinner church and Christian Ed or chair yoga!

Sending you so much love today and every day –

Pastor Ruth

"One thing at a time.
That's all we have to do. Not two things at once, but one thing done in peace.
One task at a time. One feeling at a time. One day at a time. One problem at a time. One step at a time.
One pleasure at a time.
Relax. Let go of urgency. Begin calmly now. Take one thing at a time.
See how everything works out."
Melody Beattie

First Lutheran Church
402 S Court St. Fergus Falls

Join Pastor Ruth for Bible Study

Each week we will look at and reflect on scripture for the coming Sunday

All Are Welcome

Starting Thursday September 17th

Every Thursday at 11:00am

Sign up sheet in the Narthex or call the office at 218-739-3348

HANDBELL REHEARSAL

Begins September 9
6:30 PM

Celebrating 39 Years Ringing to the Glory of God

Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday September 9th

7:45pm | The Choir Room

Faithful Property Stewardship

A Four-Session Curriculum

Explore how scripture shapes the stewardship, care, and transformation of physical church buildings and land.

As we think about the future here at FLC and how we can creatively fulfill our mission to "Serve God and welcome all people with open hearts as faithful disciples," we hope you will participate in this study this fall.

4 Sessions • September 20th-October 11th
Sunday Evenings 7pm via Zoom
The link for joinng the meeting will come to you via email
A sign up sheet is available in the Narthex, or call the office to get registered 218-739-3348

FLC • Faithful Disciples, Open Hearts

Attention College Students. If you plan to attend an ELCA Lutheran Church College, you can receive a **$500 scholarship from the First Lutheran Church Foundation.** Simply fill out the form, available at the kiosk in the Narthex or call the office and we will get you the form electronically.

🧘 Chair Yoga

Coming to FLC Starting
Thursday, September 17th at 10:00am

Join us for a gentle, all-ages chair yoga class taught by Pastor Ruth Hetland, a 200-hour certified yoga instructor.

When: Beginning Thursday, September 17th at 10:00 a.m.
Cost: $5 per session donated to the Good Samaritan Fund
Where: The Chapel at FLC
Length: 35–45 minutes
What to wear: Comfortable clothing
Who can join: Everyone! Suitable for all ages and fitness levels — no experience necessary.

About Chair Yoga

Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga practiced while seated or using a chair for support and balance. It adapts traditional yoga poses—stretches, breathing exercises, and light movement—
so they're accessible to people with limited mobility, joint pain, or anyone who prefers a lower-impact practice.

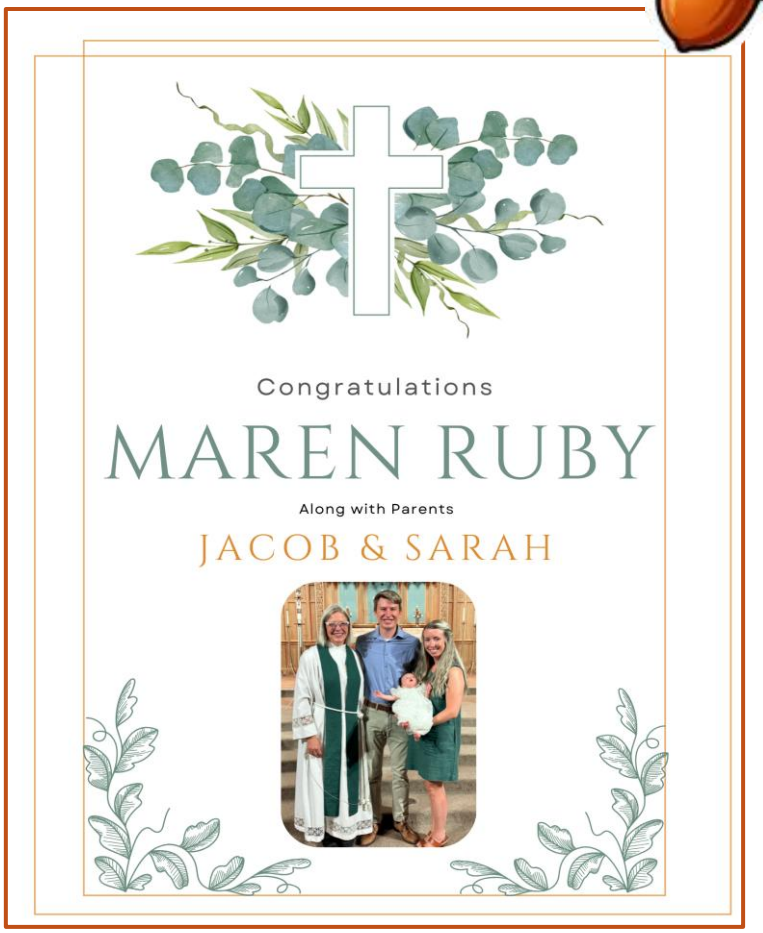
Benefits of Chair Yoga

Improves flexibility and range of motion
Builds strength and better posture
Eases joint stiffness and muscle tension
Supports balance and helps reduce fall risk
Reduces stress and promotes relaxation
Encourages mindful breathing
A wonderful way to connect with others in a peaceful, supportive setting

Sign Up Today!

📋 Sign up at the kiosk in the church narthex
📞 Or call the church office 218-739-3348

Come stretch, breathe, and grow together in body and spirit!



CYF

"He counts the stars and calls them all by name." -Psalm 147:4

CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILIES

Here we are, it's September and everything is starting back up. I'm a little sad to see summer go, but am very excited to see all of you again!

With all our CYF programs starting, we want to make sure you stay in the loop for what is happening each week. So please download the Remind App and join the classes that pertain to your family. Just note that Remind only lets me put in so many characters, so please be patient with me if you get multiple messages, and check out the link when a link is given. Here are the codes for the different programs:

Kristy Wicklund
Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministry
Contact Me:
Call or Text: (218) 531-9544
Email: kristy@flcff.org

Remind instructions: Text the group code you want to 81010. You will receive a welcome text from Remind.

Groups:

Butterflies/Sunday School/Youth Connect- @flcss18

F3 & Elevate- @flyk6

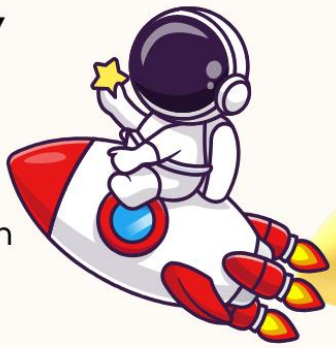
Confirmation- @7h9769e

EPIC- @k9948bg

Please note that you need to download the app and turn on notifications to ensure that you receive messages.

BUTTERFLIES/SUNDAY SCHOOL/YOUTH CONNECT

Join us on Kick-Off Sunday on September 13th. We will be having an Open House along with Kick-Off activites. You won't want to miss it as be blast off into this school year!



Kick-Off Sunday Sept. 13th

CYF CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILIES CONT...

Kick-Off Wednesday Sept. 9th

F3 & ELEVATE

We start on Wednesday September 9th. Ms. Kristy will meet students at Door D at Kennedy to then load the bus and ride to the church. Students may also be dropped off by an adult at the church after school. Please use the front door. Please pick up your child in the narthex at 5:00pm, if they are staying for Dinner Church, they may go down to the Fellowship Hall. We are so excited to start this year with this fun group!

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation starts on Wednesday, September 9th at 5:30pm with Dinner Church. Following Dinner Church we will have our Parent/Guardian & Student meeting for ALL confirmation students in the Narthex from 6:30-7:30pm. Please make time for this meeting, it is important!

Important Dates:
9/9- Parent & Student Meeting
9/25-27- Confirmation Retreat

2027 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

Check out the video following the QR code to see what is happening at this summer's ELCA Youth Gathering. Please talk to Ms. Kristy about questions you may have, and if you are interested in going. Registration due October 11. We are also looking for chaperones for this trip.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Children, Youth, & Families' Ministries

Register Here

"HE COUNTS THE STARS AND CALLS THEM ALL BY NAME." -PSALM 147:4

SUNDAYS

Butterflies
Birth-Preschool

10:30-11:30am

Join Ms. Vicki in the lower Education Wing for Butterflies. During this time children accompanied by their favorite adult can play, sing, and explore as they grow in their faith and learn what it means to find Joy in our lives. Friends are welcome to join.

Sunday School
Kindergarten-6th grade

10:30-11:30am

Join us as we dig in and explore the Bible and God's teachings. Children will learn what it means to reflect God's love in their everyday lives. We will be using "Dig In's Bible in One Year" Sunday School Curriculum as we build a relationship with God.

Youth Connect
7th grade- and up

10:30-11:30am

Sundays during the Sunday School hour. We will meet in youth headquarters known as HQ, during which time we will have conversations around faith. Kids are encouraged to bring their own questions to discuss.

WEDNESDAYS

F3
Kindergarten-3rd Grade

after school-5:00pm

F3- Faith, Fellowship, and Fun! After school on Wednesdays, we will have snacks, games, service opportunities, lessons, friends, and fun!

Transportation from school to FLC is provided.

Elevate
4th - 6th Grade

after school-5:00pm

Calling all 4t-6th graders. We have an after-school Wednesday program just for YOU! Snacks, games, service opportunity, lessons, and friend time.

Transportation from school to FLC is provided.

Confirmation
7th grade- and up

Dinner Church 5:30-6:30pm
Class time 6:30-7:30pm

Confirmation classes are taught weekly in 7th grade and up on Wednesdays starting with Dinner Church for individuals that would like to affirm their baptism. It is a two year program with confirmation happening on Reformation Sunday. It's a great opportunity for family time AND no cooking time. Friends are welcome to join!

thrivent®

Have you thought about FLC for your Thrivent Financial CHOICE DOLLARS or your ACTION TEAM directed dollars? If you don't know what they are or how to use them, call your local Thrivent Representative!

TAKE & PrAY

Please take a backpack for the kiosk in the narthex home with you and pray for the person on that backpack. This person is entering a new school year whether as Kindergartener, first year of college, or as school staff. Let's give these individuals some extra love and care with our prayers!

VOICES RISE!

An adult choral experience designed to bring together people living with memory loss and their caregivers to sing in a chorus that fosters joy, well-being, purpose, social connection, and community understanding.

- You Don't Have to be a Great Singer
- You Don't Need to Read Music
- You Don't Need to Have Choir Experience
- You Don't Even Need to Hit Every Note!
- You DO Need to have Love & Joy for Singing!

Where? Good Shepherd LB Church, 515 N. Western Avenue, Fergus Falls

When? Fridays - September 18 - November 20 10-11:15am with coffee time after each session!

Who? Open to individuals living with memory loss and their care partner as well as other "Choral Companions" to enhance and support the choir

Directed by Aimee Nordlund

Cost? $25 per person

How Do I Sign Up? Scan the QR Code, Online: fergusarts.org Call (218)736-5453

CONNECTED PARENTING

RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESILIENT KIDS

SEPTEMBER 26

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

CALVARY CHURCH IN ALEXANDRIA, MN

FREE CHILDCARE AGES 0-5TH GRADE

RAISING THE NEXT GEN

Designed to equip parents with practical insights, and inspiration for supporting kid and student mental health & emotional resilience in our connected world

Calling all parents, caregivers, & anyone invested in the next generation's growth and well-being

DR. CHINWE WILLIAMS

a nationally recognized speaker, therapist, and best-selling author specializing in anxiety, trauma, and wellness, with over 15 years of experience across clinical, academic, and corporate settings

WILL HUTCHERSON

an author, pastor, and founder of Curate Hope, a non-profit dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health awareness for teens

$10

SCAN TO REGISTER AND LEARN MORE

CONNECT WITH OTHER PARENTS AND GAIN VALUABLE TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

WWW.RAISINGTHENEXTGEN.ORG/CONFERENCES

General Fund

Month	Revenue	Expenses	Profit/Loss
January	$ 37,977.55	$ (49,736.22)	$ (11,758.67)
February	$ 39,102.83	$ (46,962.43)	$ (7,859.60)
March	$ 28,038.06	$ (43,074.96)	$ (15,036.90)
April	$ 43,016.88	$ (42,267.84)	$ 749.04
May	$ 26,317.92	$ (39,559.34)	$ (13,241.42)
June	$ 26,171.17	$ (39,672.92)	$ (13,501.75)
July	$ 43,510.44	$ (46,721.62)	$ (3,211.18)
August			$ -
September			$ -
October			$ -
November			$ -
December			$ -
			$ -
	$ 244,134.85	$ (307,995.33)	$ (63,860.48)

Revenue is collected from weekly offerings. Expenses are general fund expenses that include basic operations: utilities, staff, building maitenance, worship supplies, cleaning expenses, youth support.

Monthly Book Study & Fellowship

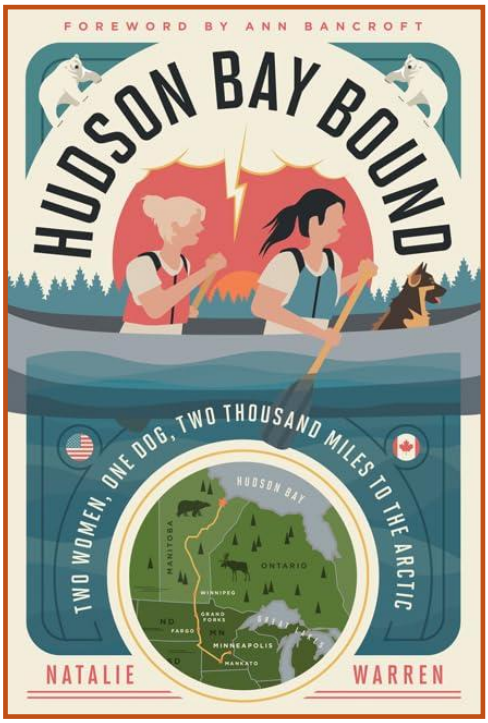
We are excited to announce that our FLC Book Study will resume this September! Whether you have participated before or are looking to join us for the first time, we invite you to come for a time of lunch, fellowship, and engaging discussion.

We meet on the third Monday of the month from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM. Our first meeting of the season will be held on September 21. We will be discussing the book, *Hudson Bay Bound* by Natalie Warren.

Monthly book selections are available in the church library for free check-out. We encourage you to stop by the library to pick up your copy and begin reading.

We look forward to seeing our returning readers and extend a very warm welcome to any new readers who would like to join these gatherings. We hope to see you there!

For more information, please contact
Susanne Ronning 218-205-6370



OPEN HOUSE

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

LSS CAREGIVER SUPPORT & RESPITE SERVICES

Community Care Group Respite Open House

First Lutheran Church
402 South Court Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Thursday, September 17
1-3 p.m.

Learn about our service that provides a much-needed break for caregivers or about becoming a volunteer.

Caring for a loved one can be rewarding, but it can also be exhausting. Join us to learn about Community Care Group Respite, a welcoming service that provides social engagement for older adults while giving family caregivers a break to rest and re-charge.

Whether you're a caregiver looking for support or someone interested in volunteering, we'd love to meet you!

Questions? Contact Us
218.203.7312
Jim.McKinstra@lssmn.org

@LSSCaregiverSupport

LSS Caregiver Support & Respite Services receives funding from the Federal Older Americans Act through an award from the MNRAAA, DSAAA and CMCOA under an Area Plan approved by the Minnesota Board on Aging.

©2026 Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. 07/2026

Women of the ELCA

Love Day Quilters

Meet every Monday from 9:00-3:00, as your time permits. We hope you will come join us to help with mission projects!

Prayers for all Staff & Students
May you have a fun, successful and memorable 2026-2027 school year!

After 5 days return to
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
402 South Court Street
Fergus Falls MN 56537
Address Service Requested

Staff Directory

Interim Pastor	Pr. Ruth Hetland	PastorRuth@flcff.org
Director Children, Youth & Families Ministries	Kristy Wicklund	kristy@flcff.org
Organist	Keith Melberg	melberke@prtel.com
Choir Director	Harriet Wicklund	wicklund@charter.net
Hosanna Handbells Director	Linda Mellon	lindamellon@mac.com
Worship Team Director	Anne Taylor	annemltaylor@gmail.com
Office Manager	Vicki Ray	office@flcff.org
Office Assistant	Mary Johnson	maryj@flcff.org

First Lutheran Church

402 S Court Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-739-3348
www.firstlutheranchurchff.org

Worship Times
Sundays 9:00am

Office Hours
Mon-Fri 8:00am -4:00pm