

The *First* Word

Volume 25, Issue 2

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

November 2023

Seek FIRST His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Special November Dates

All Saints Day.....Nov. 1	
Dorcas Circle Quilters meet	
First Edition Book Club.....Nov. 4	
Home of Connie Onstad	
Daylight Saving Time endsNov. 5	
All Saints Day (observed)	
ELECTION DAYNov. 7	
Veterans Day.....Nov. 11	
WOW! <i>The Holy Spirit</i>Nov. 14	
Bible Study	
Dorcas Circle Quilters meet.....Nov. 15	
OWLS.....Nov. 16	
FLS Thanksgiving Break.....Nov. 22-24	
Thanksgiving Day.....Nov. 23	
Christ the King Sunday.....Nov. 26	
WOW! <i>The Holy Spirit</i>Nov. 28	
Bible Study	
Dorcas Circle Quilters meet.....Nov. 29	



REMEMBER . . .
Set your clocks BACK
one hour when retiring on
Saturday night,
November 4!

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Look for a surprise on November 26

A surprise will await you in the Narthex of our church when you walk in that morning. It's something we look forward to each year at this time! Did you guess? The tree we ALL help to "undecorate" by removing ornaments and attaching each one to a gift-wrapped package.... (drumroll....) and this year's gift is a blanket or throw for our developmentally disabled friends — about 200 of them who live in group homes in Helena.

So, we encourage you to indulge in the spirit of giving and start shopping for blankets/throws so that you're ready to put this year's ornaments on the gifts you purchase! The ornaments are extra special this year, too! Two members of the First Lutheran Human Care group made them

and you'll be reminded that 'Jesus is the Reason for the Season' when you see the tree decorated with them.

Thank you for your continued support of the projects we do to spread the

Good News of Salvation through our Savior, Jesus Christ!

— First Lutheran Human Care group



What's your November?

For Davey Blackburn, a pastor in Indiana, one particular month has brought "the highest of highs and the lowest of lows." He was born in November, moved to a new church in November 2011 and learned he'd be a father in November 2013. But two years later, in November 2015, Blackburn's wife and unborn second child were murdered during a home invasion.

Despite that painful tragedy, the pastor determined not to "let the enemy have a claim over November" or "steal the many beautiful memories I once held" about it. Since then, his church's worship team recorded an album one November, he proposed to his second wife another November, launched a new ministry one November and welcomed another child the following November.

That journey, Blackburn says, is evidence of God's faithfulness to replace a spirit of despair with a garment of praise (see Isaiah 61:3). And it's an important reminder for the holiday season, with all its memories and traditions. Just as God wants to heal and restore, Blackburn writes, "Your [deceased] loved one would not want your 'November' to haunt your memory forever."

Blackburn, author of the forthcoming book *Nothing Is Wasted*, says everyone has a November but can choose what to do with it. Instead of letting your November haunt, you can let God use it to heal.

— Stephanie Martin
The Newsletter Newsletter

We thank thee, Lord, for the glory of the late days and the excellent face of thy sun. We thank thee for good news received. We thank thee for the pleasures we have enjoyed and for those we have been able to confer.

And now, when the clouds gather and the rain impends over the forest and our house, permit us not to be cast down; let us not lose the savor of past mercies and past pleasures; but, like the voice of a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memory survive in the hour of darkness. If there be in front of us any painful duty, strengthen us with the grace of courage; if any act of mercy, teach us tenderness and patience.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

Preparing for Thanksgiving

— from your Board of Stewardship



Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His own. By the shedding of His Son's blood, His death for our sins, and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water – combined with His Word, promise, and Name – the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And, being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.

Our true treasure is that we belong to the most Holy Trinity, and

everything that is His – righteousness, peace, eternal life – also belongs to us. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy.

We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and God's holy Word, as a sacrifice.

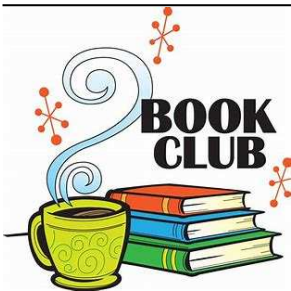
Thus, all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him. We eat to nourish our bodies. We share with our family, neighbors, fellow Christians, the poor, and even our enemies as holy things given by the holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and they bring blessings upon us,

even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom.

Thus, we place all that we have into God's hands, and He never fails to remember us. He pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing, and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but, giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for the celebrations of Thanksgiving, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we have because of God's providential care. And may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all – even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.

— LCMS Stewardship article



First Edition Book Club members will meet for lunch at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, November 4, at the home of Connie Onstad. Members are currently reading — and will discuss — *Sunflower Sisters* by Martha Hall Kelly.

Those who wish to carpool should meet at the Jo-Ann Fabrics parking lot at 11:30 a.m. on that date. **Please RSVP to Connie by Wednesday, November 1, at 406-461-8741.**

The December luncheon and discussion will be held at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, December 2, at the home of Bridget Michel. For the December meeting, the group will read — and discuss — *The Case for Christmas: A Journalist Investigates the Identity of the Child in the Manger* by Lee Strobel.

Please RSVP to Bridget by Wednesday, November 29, at 406-438-6214.

Christian symbol

ROCK — We call Christ "the Solid Rock," remembering His parable about the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24). Jesus changed His disciple Simon's name to Peter, meaning rock, saying He'd build His Church "on this rock" (Matthew 16:18). Although some Christians understand Peter to be the rock-foundation of Christ's Church, Lutherans note that the foundation on which Jesus builds His Church is Peter's confession of Christ.



A report from your Board of Finance

	September 2023	FY 2023 Y-T-D
Income (Church & School)	\$ 57,625.67	\$136,575.98
Expense (Church & School)	\$ 37,491.31	\$ 98,648.95
Gain/Loss	\$ 20,134.36	\$ 37,927.03

The First Word

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Linda Fromm.....Editor
Shari Miller.....Calendar/Servant Schedule
Volunteer Staff.....Printing/Collation

Deadline for the December First Word is Wednesday, Nov. 22. Place articles in The First Word box in the church office or email to: lindafromm@mac.com



Big THANKS for small Things!

Recently I stumbled upon an episode of the PBS series Nature called "My Garden of A Thousand Bees." It was filmed in the Urban Garden of wildlife filmmaker Martin Dohrn at the beginning of lockdown in 2020. What he did was record all the bees he could find in his tiny urban garden in Bristol, England, filming them with lenses he had forged on his kitchen table. The results were amazing! He captured small little bees on a scale I had never even realized was possible. Even though they are small, the importance of bees cannot be understated. They are the most important pollinators in the world and help sustain plant life. We all know if we didn't have plants for the food chain we wouldn't survive.

Seeing things on such a small scale led me to find other similar shows. I came across one called, "Tiny World." Funnily enough, it is narrated by Paul Rudd of Ant-Man fame. It reminds me how something little can make a big impact. This show showcases nature's lesser-known tiny heroes, spotlighting the extraordinary things they do to survive. A little creature it highlighted on an episode I watched was the Elephant Shrew, which is very tiny, yet very fast, and finds amazing ways to thrive in the middle of the African Savannah.



Why do I share about these tiny creatures? It is easy for us to give thanks for the big and obvious things: our nation, our church, our families, and our things. But as Psalm 104:24-25 reminds us, God makes all things great and small and calls us to give thanks for them all. **"How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small."**



A hymn entitled "Creator, We Thank You for All You Have Made" written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, reminds us of giving thanks for small things. She writes,

**"God, thank You for rainfall that ends a long drought,
For cracks in the sidewalk where little weeds sprout,
For birds that build nests in the tops of the trees,
for hot summer days when we feel a cool breeze."**

As commentary for her hymn Gillette writes, "In cities, suburbs, and rural areas, too, we find evidence of God's creative, loving work. When we are praising and thanking God, it is good to look not just at the "big categories" of creation – land, sea, and air-but to celebrate the little details. Take a walk down the street. Look for weeds growing up through the cracks in the sidewalk. Can you identify one plant from another? Can you hear the differences in the birds' songs?"

As we ponder these questions this season of Thanksgiving **let's give God big thanks for small things:** for different colors, for bees, for a cup of coffee, for being able to breathe in and out, for a cup of water. As we do so this Thanksgiving (and always?) **I believe gratefulness will increase in our life!**

As always, **let's give thanks for the greatest small Gift anyone has ever received:** the little Baby we will celebrate on Christmas. Let's give thanks because little Immanuel will be with us! Give big thanks for the small things indeed!



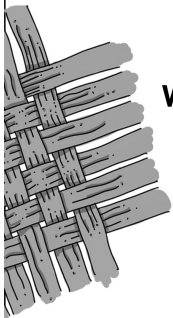
As we think about giving thanks for our Messiah, **let's also share His love in little ways.** Some people, in really hard places might have a hard time seeing what to give thanks for at all. In these times we can encourage them with small acts of love. As they see us in action, they might just echo our actions and give thanks to God for all the tiny things of life with us. In doing so their **lives may be transformed by God in a big way forever!**

Heartily thanking God for YOU!

Pas+or Miller



Handicrafts can spark appreciation for simple items. Weave this basket as a gift.



What you need:

- Paper plate
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Yarn (different colors)

What you do:






1. In the center of the plate, trace something round. Draw 9 lines (evenly spaced) from the circle to the plate's edge.
2. Cut along each line, stopping at the center circle. Trim more of the plate off so the cuts make a gradual V shape.
3. Fold the plate's sides upward to form basket sides. Keep these upright as you weave a bowl-shaped basket.
4. Begin weaving a length of yarn at the circle's base. Hold the end of the yarn in place as you spread the length over and under each side of the plate.
5. Switch colors to make a pattern. Keep the yarn tight as you weave up the sides.
6. To finish, bend down any remaining paper. Leave a tail of yarn and tuck it under a woven portion. Share your craft with a friend!





Just for KIDS!

PUZZLE THANKS-FILLED GIVING

The virtues of gratefulness and generosity are connected. When we're truly thankful for all God provides, we want to sow generous seeds in other people's lives. What will be the harvest?

Directions: Solve the clues associated with each picture. Then write the words in the correct spaces to complete 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, NIV.

- This becomes a plant  _____
-  Willing to give _____
- The result of planting seeds  _____
-  The act of gratitude _____
- Food made from wheat  _____

Now he who supplies  to the sower and _____ for food will also supply and increase your store of  and will enlarge the  of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be _____ on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result  in _____ to God. 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, NIV

Answers: seed, bread, generous, thankful, giving



Rest for your troubled soul

A young lady confidently walked around the room with a raised glass of water while leading a seminar and explaining stress management to her audience. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question: “Is the glass half empty, or half full?”

Inquiring with a smile, she fooled them all. “How heavy is this glass of water?” Answers called out ranged from 8 ounces to 20 ounces.

“The absolute weight doesn’t matter,” she said. “It depends on how long I hold the glass. If I hold it for a minute, that’s not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I’ll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you’ll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it’s the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”



“That’s the way it is with stress,” she continued. “If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won’t be able to carry on. As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we’re refreshed, we can carry

on with the burden, holding stress longer and better each time practiced.”

In conclusion, the young lady advised the group, “As early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don’t carry them through the evening and into the night. If you must, pick them up again tomorrow.”

As Christians, our Lord provides help for our stressful lives when He invites us: “*Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*” (Matthew 11:28-30).

— Post from the Internet

Final paragraph added by editor Fromm

A cornerstone of inheritance



In Matthew 21:33-46, Jesus tells a parable in which vineyard tenants plot to kill the landowner’s son and thereby to “get his inheritance.” Of course, that’s not how life works: Unless the owner of wealth *gives* it away freely, the recipients aren’t heirs — they’re *thieves*!

We are all tenants entrusted with the cultivation and harvest of God’s worldly vineyard. As such, we are to turn the fruits of the vineyard back over to God. We have no need to hoard them because the divine Landowner provides all our needs. What’s more, we *already* have an inheritance of life and love, brought to us by the Son. May we not see Jesus as a threat to our way of life but welcome Him among us. May we not hoard what He brings but share it. And remembering these words of Scripture — “*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone*” (v. 42) — may we not reject Jesus but let Him be the cornerstone of our lives.

—Heidi Hyland Mann
The Newsletter Newsletter

A little inspirational wit to cheer you

Texas goat rancher and humorist Ron Birk, a semi-retired Lutheran pastor who served as campus pastor at Texas A&M and Southwest Texas State Universities, says he’s planning to write a book titled *Real Pastors Will Eat Anything*.

Real pastors, he writes —

- Take at least a bite from every dish at church potluck dinners.
- Will eat anything while attending a convention on an expense account. “*And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you*” (Luke 10:8).

- Don’t subscribe to a sermon service.
- Always witness to the stranger who sits next to them on airplanes.
- Look forward to hearing the telephone ring.
- Don’t have to worry about what goes in the parsonage trash can.
- Have actually read every book in their libraries.
- Always wear their clerical collars when visiting in the hospital and while driving through speed traps.
- Don’t use answering machines.

— from Holy Humor
by Cal & Rose Samra

Supporting our youth

Beginning on Sunday, November 26, Christmas card packages will be available for sale to support our F.L.Y. group. Packages of 12 cards are \$5 each, and include a variety of themes. Sales will continue through Sunday, December 17.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this ministry. I welcome recycled holiday cards, envelopes, stickers, scrapbook materials, etc.

— Janice Larison
CARDS 4 KIDS



Cards shown are for illustrative purposes only. They are not actual card designs.

Be part of the Options Clinic Baby Blanket Challenge

Won't you join us in making fleece and/or flannel blankets to give to Options Clinic in late January? This might be a useful and fun activity for you during the cold winter months. A sample of the style of blanket you can make with minimal sewing will be on display (with directions!) in Ziegler Hall starting the first week in November.



It would be nice to collect several blankets for the new moms who will enjoy them during the colder months of the year!

If you have questions, please contact Ruth Stelter or Janice Larison.



November Birthdays!

November 1
Harmony Letang

November 2
Aries Hindman
Caylee Hultin

November 3
Joseph D. Jurenka
Roger Schultz
Brynn Walker
Wanda Warsinski

November 4
Caleb Blokzyl
Nicholas Gochis
Katya Peterson

November 7
Claudia Cook
Kieran Ellwein
Toni Wollan

November 9
Roy Bjornson
Ethan Elvbakken

November 10
Shauna Eccleston
Deborah Knudsen

November 11
Kathleen Blokzyl
Violet Erdman
Shawn Peterson

November 12
Katharine Antonick
Joshua Miller

November 13
Casey Jones
Dylan Klapmeier
Donna Torgerson
Richard Veach

November 14
Wyatt Deppmeier
Diane Seiler

November 15
Lainee Hill
Joseph K. Jurenka

November 16
Jeffrey Allen
Olivia Mercer
David Stockburger

November 17
Devon Lawson
Tyler Northrup
John Stelter
Ellie Stueve

November 18
Eileen Burns
Karen Cable
Danny Hartford

November 20
Cleo Anderson
Lisa Large

November 21
Alexandria Klapmeier

November 22
Roger Anderson
Janice Larison
Paula Lavender
Aleigha Spatzierath

November 23
Tyler Eccleston

November 24
David Hill
Mark Walker

November 25
Jacob Schmeltzer
Ben Wareham

November 26
John Everson

November 27
Debbie Williams

November 28
Robert Clearman

November 30
Joan Fabricius





Happenings at First Lutheran School



Director
Sue Taylor

Get Set Teacher
Shannon Champagne

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Lori Radtke

After Care Provider
Pam Worthy

Pastor
Larry A. Miller

Our PreK and Get Set students are thankful for the gifts that God has given to them. All these little people have big hearts as they share what they are thankful for:



Bella: I am thankful for all my friends and my cousins and my mom and dad. I love them all!

Percy: I am thankful for Jesus. I love to pray. He put rainbows in the sky and won't flood it again.

Charli: I am thankful for helping friends. I clean up the toys with people.

Kaden: God! He made the world and made the people happy.

Presley: That Charli is my friend, and she is a really good friend.

Hollyn: I love everything Jesus made. My favorite color is blue, pink, red . . .

Beckham: I am thankful that we sing songs. I love to sing. I love my mom and dad.

Rory: God! I love Him so much. I like Him!

Raiden: I like Miss Sue. I like my mommy and daddy and my brothers.

Isaac: I love my mom and dad. They always give me stuff like stuffies, and I like my basketball shoes.

Colten: Mommy and Daddy, cause mommy and daddy.

Trey: My toys, my mom and dad and my sisters and my dog.

Wyatt: I am thankful for God to give us our life.

Myles: I am just thankful that I can do cool moves.

Avram: My mom; she makes stuff at home.

Isla: God loves me. Jesus loves me, too, and They go in our hearts.



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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH is a Congregation of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

THE MISSION of First Lutheran Church is
“Sharing God’s Word with Everyone, Everywhere!”

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Tune in to **“The Lutheran Hour”**—Sundays at 8 a.m. on the Christian Satellite Network 91.1-FM
or listen on **“Family Talk”** on Sirius XM 131
“Woman to Woman”—Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on KMTX 105.3-FM

Things you may not know about Thanksgiving

Most people are under the impression that the origins of Thanksgiving come from friendly Native Americans joining the pilgrims in a friendly feast in 1620. In fact, many people dispute the real origins of Thanksgiving.

The National Parks Service says that in 1565, the Spanish founded a settlement called St. Augustine. They celebrated by having a meal to which they invited the native Seloy tribe. It is gathered that the Spanish had pork stew, garbanzo beans, sea biscuits, and red wine. It’s possible that the Seloy tribe contributed turkey, venison, and maize.

The pilgrims never called themselves pilgrims. The term “pilgrim” was around until the 1880s. At that time, the pilgrims called themselves “separatists.” The term pilgrim literally means “a person who journeys to a sacred place for religious reasons.” Meanwhile, a separatist is a separate group, essentially a minority

group, that separates itself from a larger belief system.

Thomas Jefferson didn’t believe in Thanksgiving. It’s not that he had a vendetta against thankfulness; it’s that he saw it as a “blurred line.” Jefferson was a firm believer in the separation of church and state, and supporting Thanksgiving meant state-sponsored



religion. In fact he went so far as to say that he thought making Thanksgiving a national holiday was a “ridiculous proposition.”

Thanksgiving didn’t become a national holiday until Abraham Lincoln made it one after the tragedy of the Civil War. He declared

Thanksgiving a national holiday on October 20, 1864.

There is a tradition of pardoning a turkey. When Abraham Lincoln was president, a turkey was going to be killed for Thanksgiving dinner, and his son was upset and begged him to let it live. Lincoln agreed, and this started a tradition that has carried on. Now, every Thanksgiving, one lucky turkey is selected to be pardoned by the president, and is then sent to a farm to live out its days. In 2005 and 2009, the pardoned turkeys were sent to Disneyland and Disney World to be the grand marshals in their Thanksgiving Day parades.

And, did you know that the average person eats 4,500 calories at his or her Thanksgiving dinner, which is the same as eating 28 donuts, 16 slices of pizza, or 61 chicken wings? It would take over seven hours of running, or 15 hours of brisk walking, to burn off those delicious calories!

— from the Internet