

The *First* Word

Volume 25, Issue 9

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

August 2024

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

Special August Dates

Book Club potluck.....Aug. 3
Home of Joyce Nachtsheim
O.W.L.S.Aug. 15
FLC Women's Event.....Aug. 17

Mission & Ministry Council 2024-2025

Officers

President.....Jason Mercer
Secretary.....Linda Fromm

At-Large Members

David Goodson
Steven Johnson
Randy Middlebrook
Elly Schmeltzer

Advisor

Pastor Larry Miller

The MMC is looking to appoint people to fill the following vacancies: one at-large position on the MMC; the office of vice president; and the office of treasurer. Term for all positions is 2 years. The vice president's position must be filled by a male member of the church.

Please prayerfully consider serving the congregation in one of these vacant positions. If you would like further information, please see MMC President Jason Mercer or email him at: jmercerc@m-m.net



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Voters handle full business slate in record time at annual voters' meeting

Thirty-three eligible voting members signed the voter registration sheet for this meeting, and after enjoying a light lunch, and an opening prayer offered by Pastor Larry Miller, approved the minutes of the June 11, 2023, voters' meeting, which had also been approved by the MMC at its June 20, 2023, meeting, and posted to the bulletin board in Ziegler Hall, for perusal by interested members.

Voters also approved the proposed spending plan for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, which began on July 1, 2024. This spending plan, as presented, estimates a total income of \$504,620, with estimated total expenses of \$504,374, for an

estimated net income of \$246.

President Jason Mercer was re-elected to serve a 2-year term, and David Goodson, Steven Johnson, Randy Middlebrook, and Elly Schmeltzer were elected to serve 2-year terms as MMC at-large members. All terms began on July 1, 2024.

Marty Baumann, Aaron Hollatz, Bill Spellman, Paul Taylor, and Walter Wareham were elected to serve 2-year terms on the Board of Elders. Mr. Spellman's term will not begin until August 1, 2024, because he will be a member of FLC for one year on that date.

Please see MEETING, Pg. 2

Oh, how we celebrated the Savior!

We had a wonderful Vacation Bible School week from June 22-26, where our theme was "Celebrate the Savior." We had 20-plus incredible volunteers and 65-70 students in attendance. The kids traveled from the opening activities through crafts and snacks to Bible storytelling and music, and on through games and Bible exploration, all the time hearing about God's love through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

On Day 1, our Bible story was Matthew 2:1-12: **Wise Men Worship Jesus**

The Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus. God the Father gave His Son to be our Savior. Jesus is the greatest gift!

On Day 2, our Bible story was Mark 2: 1-12: **Jesus Heals a Paralytic**

We celebrated with friends as we heard the story about four friends bringing a man to Jesus for healing. Jesus forgives us and heals us.

On Day 3, our Bible story was Matthew 14: 13-21: **Jesus Feeds Five Thousand**

The disciples didn't know how they would feed the crowd. Jesus showed that He provides for all our needs, both for this life and for life eternal.

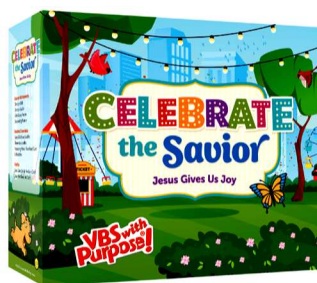
On Day 4, our Bible story was Luke 23:32-49; Matthew 28:1-10: **Jesus Dies and Rises Again**

Because we are sinful people, we experience pain, loss, and sadness, and our punishment is eternal death. Jesus has saved us from this eternal punishment through his sacrificial death. Because of Jesus, we have joy and the promise of eternal life.

On Day 5, our Bible story was Luke 24:13-35: **Jesus on the Road to Emmaus**

After Jesus rose again, He showed His followers how He had died to overcome sin and death and give us eternal life with Him.

God's message that fills us with His love and His joy and helps us to share His love and joy with others was celebrated. May all our VBS attendees go out into the world to share His love and joy!



Meeting

Continued from Pg. 1

President Mercer distributed a copy of the Strategic Plan for FLCS, explaining that no action was required of the voters; he simply wanted to review what has been done thus far. Taking input from members, the MMC put together the Strategic Plan with five areas to be addressed: Worship, Nurture, Fellowship, Outreach, and Stewardship, and developed objectives to be accomplished over a five-year period. We have, he explained, been working on objectives for 2023-2024, and we'll do an update for 2024-2025.

On the accomplishments side, under *Increasing Fellowship Opportunities for Members and Visitors*, we have reestablished the Fellowship Committee under the leadership of Janice Larison.

In the *Improve Our Digital Footprint Through Our Website and Social*

Media area, there is more interest now in online giving and we want to encourage that as a norm for us and regular visitors.

Under the *Develop a Plan for Called Staff* area, we called Sue Taylor as our Director of Education.

In “going forward” planning, under the *Increase Fellowship Opportunities* section, Plan a 2024 summer/fall retreat for families, he explained that it is hard to say whether this will be accomplished this fall or in the future. He knows there are people considering putting this together and leading it. The MMC is talking about this and trying to provide leadership, but we need volunteers to step up to make it work.

The *Expand Our Outreach Opportunities* item is for outreach to the community outside of the church; things like helping someone with lawn care, leaves, or other physical chores. Perhaps we can put up some type of display board where members can post

their needs, and volunteers can select a need and accomplish it.

Under the *Improve Our Digital Footprint* area, we are looking to update the church's website because we need to make it easier for people to navigate the site, and perhaps offer some added items like updated photos. We need to make sure information on the site is current. Without an updated and interesting website, people visiting the site may wonder if our church is really doing anything.

We will continue to look at the *Develop a Plan for Called Staff* area.

President Mercer is hoping we can accomplish these “going forward” goals in the first year of his second term as president, especially developing opportunities for people to get “plugged in” with the church, and using *The First Word* newsletter to bring awareness to those opportunities.



Can you hear the choir singing? We are starting up Chancel Choir beginning in September after summer break. What does this mean? It means that beginning **September 11**, we will meet on Wednesdays following our church services (about 7:15 p.m.) and sing for our church services during the months of September through May. Wednesday schedules will be flexible as the music is learned and practice times will be discussed at our first rehearsal.

Are you a “shower singer”? Are you interested in joining us this year? Our choir just might appeal to you. We'll have exciting music and really hope that you will join us. Please contact Shari Miller if you are interested. Please share your musical gifts with us!



Our present hope

Christian hope involves more than a sunny, cheerful attitude. It is more than a general kind of optimism. It is more than hope in hope, or faith in faith. Christian hope is tied to the goal of history and the purpose of each person's existence. It is the unshakeable confidence of the sovereignty of God and God's eventual triumph over all the forces that stand against truth, righteousness, faithfulness, love and mercy.

And in the great contest between good and evil, Christian hope declares God as winner. ... Christ is the hope not only in the world to come; He is the hope of the world right now.

— Oswald Bronson
The Newsletter Newsletter

The First Word

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Rev. Larry A. Miller.....Pastor
Linda Fromm.....Editor
Shari Miller.....Calendar/Servant Schedule
Volunteer Staff.....Printing/Collation

Deadline for the September First Word is Wednesday, August 21.

Place articles in the First Word box in the church office or email them to: lindafromm@mac.com

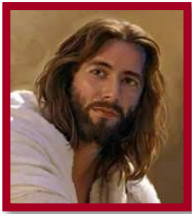


***Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...*** (Romans 12:2)

Our culture almost universally hates conformity. I should be able to decide who I am, what I look like, and what I do. This is one of the few ideas that crosses all political, economic, and social lines. Sure, it might be framed in different ways ("freedom", "rights", "autonomy", "self-determination", and so forth), but it's all the same in the end.

There's an irony here, though, isn't there? With all the talk about our individual choices and desires, **cultures still have norms and mores to which the majority expects everyone to conform.** If an individual or group doesn't conform to these, they are ignored at best, usually shunned, and sometimes persecuted. Some of these values have become so strongly held that one wrong word, idea, paper, post, or tweet can get a person in hot water quickly – and permanently.

The truth is that, despite periods of relative peace and respite, **the Church has always been different than the world.** In fact, our Lord reminds us that we *are not of the world*, but that He *chose us out of the world* (John 15:19). On the one hand, we are *in* the world as we go about our daily business interacting with others. On the other hand, we are not *of* the world, in that our lives should look different than those of people in and of the world.



According to Jesus, this means that we live lives of faith, trusting in God and not in money or other people. It means not seeking after what the world seeks: the vain pleasures that are here today and gone tomorrow. Practically, **it can look so different,** but, the truth is, our *whole* lives should often look different from others' in the world. **We have been transformed by Christ!**

Jesus came to live, to die, and to rise again ... so that we will have new life!

Why would we want to live like those in the world? We shouldn't! As hard as it is sometimes, our lives **will** look different in every way: We'll be in church while others are traveling for games; We'll spend our money helping others instead of storing up for ourselves; We'll treat marriage and children as gifts from God instead of profaning them; We'll teach our children what is good and godly instead of "letting them decide" (as if that were possible in the first place); We'll proclaim Christ's death and resurrection at funerals (with readings, the message, and music) instead of touting a person's achievements or simply holding a party instead; and, we'll forgive, pray for, and love even our enemies instead of holding a grudge or seeking revenge. Why? Because we have been transformed to be like our Lord Jesus Christ, who perfectly did all of this and more for us. All in all, we'll continue to **discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect** (Romans 12:2).

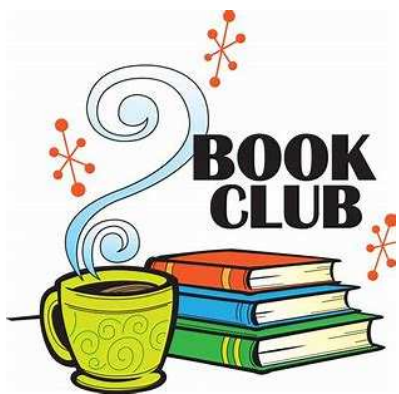
How? Of course, always, and only **by the Word of God!**

Pastor Miller



**"The world seeks to be praised and honored by the mighty
yet never once reflects that they are frail and flighty.**

**But what I truly prize above all things is He,
my Jesus, He alone. What is the world to me!"** (LSB 730, v. 2)



Members of the First Edition Book Club will meet at the home of Joyce Nachtsheim at 4 p.m. on Saturday, August 3, for the annual potluck. Husbands and/or friends are invited to join the fun!

If you have not already RSVP'd to Joyce, PLEASE DO SO IMMEDIATELY at 406-459-9002.

Meat and beverages will be provided by the hostess, and ladies should bring a side dish, salad, or dessert.

In addition to great food and fellowship, members will decide on books to be read, meeting dates, and hostesses for the 2024-2025 year. Bridget Michel has emailed a list of books recommended by members (which includes a brief summary of each book), and ladies should come prepared to vote on the books to be read.

The hostess for the kickoff meeting in September will be decided at the potluck meeting, as will the book to be read for—and discussed at—the September meeting.



Co-laborers with Christ

Rusty Stevens, a ministry leader in Virginia, described trying to finish mowing the lawn before dinnertime. His 6-year-old son darted in front of him and grabbed the mower handle. But when Stevens stopped pushing, the mower soon stopped.

The busy dad fought the urge to tell his son to get out of his way and instead offered to help. Stevens began pushing again, leaning over and walking awkwardly to accommodate his eager assistant. Although the mowing commenced, it was slow-going and not as efficient as the solo effort.

That's when Stevens realized a ministry parallel: "This is the way my heavenly Father allows me to 'help' Him build His kingdom!" The church leader pictured God busy "seeking, saving and transforming the lost, and there I was, with my weak hands 'helping.'"

Although God surely can tackle all the work of ministry and evangelism alone, He "chooses to stoop gracefully to allow me to co-labor with him," said Stevens. What a blessing and privilege that God lets us work alongside him!

— The Newsletter Newsletter



HIS Kids

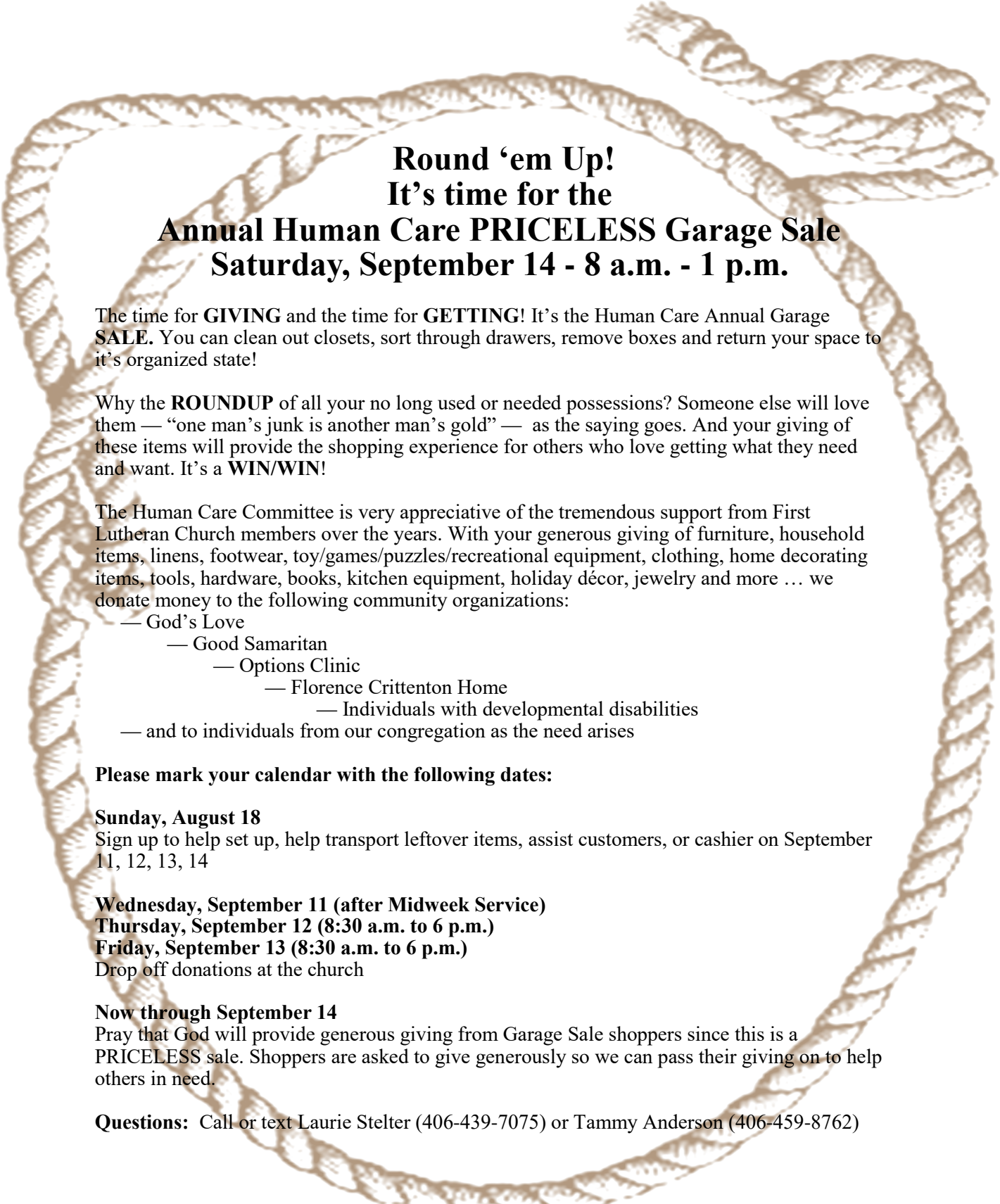


If you are in first (1st) to eighth (8th) grade, YOU are invited to be a member of HIS Kids! We have a LOT of fun and practice to sing in church about one Sunday a month.

Our first HIS Kids! rehearsal is **Wednesday, September 11**, promptly at 5:15 p.m. We only have a short time to learn our songs, so please plan accordingly.

It will be an exciting year as HIS First Lutheran Kids join their voices in praise to our awesome God! YOU are invited to become part of HIS Kids! Contact me with questions.

Shari Miller, Director



Round ‘em Up! It’s time for the Annual Human Care PRICELESS Garage Sale Saturday, September 14 - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The time for **GIVING** and the time for **GETTING**! It’s the Human Care Annual Garage **SALE**. You can clean out closets, sort through drawers, remove boxes and return your space to it’s organized state!

Why the **ROUNDUP** of all your no long used or needed possessions? Someone else will love them — “one man’s junk is another man’s gold” — as the saying goes. And your giving of these items will provide the shopping experience for others who love getting what they need and want. It’s a **WIN/WIN**!

The Human Care Committee is very appreciative of the tremendous support from First Lutheran Church members over the years. With your generous giving of furniture, household items, linens, footwear, toy/games/puzzles/recreational equipment, clothing, home decorating items, tools, hardware, books, kitchen equipment, holiday décor, jewelry and more ... we donate money to the following community organizations:

- God’s Love
 - Good Samaritan
 - Options Clinic
 - Florence Crittenton Home
 - Individuals with developmental disabilities
- and to individuals from our congregation as the need arises

Please mark your calendar with the following dates:

Sunday, August 18

Sign up to help set up, help transport leftover items, assist customers, or cashier on September 11, 12, 13, 14

Wednesday, September 11 (after Midweek Service)

Thursday, September 12 (8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Friday, September 13 (8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Drop off donations at the church

Now through September 14

Pray that God will provide generous giving from Garage Sale shoppers since this is a **PRICELESS** sale. Shoppers are asked to give generously so we can pass their giving on to help others in need.

Questions: Call or text Laurie Stelter (406-439-7075) or Tammy Anderson (406-459-8762)

Mercy and grace lead to generosity — from your Board of Stewardship

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift” (2 Cor. 9:15)! This is St. Paul’s exclamation upon hearing the Corinthian church’s response to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his request for support for the church in Jerusalem. The Christians in Corinth heard and received God’s mercy in Christ, and they responded to St. Paul’s call to support Christians in Jerusalem with a collection. The Corinthians’ joy filled Jerusalem’s need.

This is the reality of stewardship. Because of God’s generosity in the giving of His Son to die on the cross for us, we are to be generous with all that we receive from Him. What do we receive? Everything. All that we are and all that we have is the Lord’s. He is the creator and the giver. We are His creatures and those who receive what He gives.

It sounds easy. And it is. But then again it isn’t. Stewardship is easy because it is God’s work. Through what God gives, we give to others. Through what God gives, we support the work of the church for the life of the world. He gives; we receive. And

like our generous Father in Heaven, we, as His children, use what He gives to us to love and serve others.



But stewardship is also difficult. That is because it goes against our natural inclination to think that what I have is mine to do what I want with. This is our sinful nature. It is our selfishness and our greed. How can we who have been given everything — life, food, clothing, house, home, forgiveness, divine sonship, an eternal inheritance — be so stingy with what we give to the church, the place where we hear about and receive all that God gives us and does for us? We are all

guilty of this kind of thinking. And the only godly response is to repent and trust in the Gospel.

For if God has given you His own Son, will He not give you all things? Yes. He will. This is His sure and certain promise. God provides for His people. He provides everything we need for this body and life and for the life that is to come.

The church is a mercy place. It’s a place where God’s mercy in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, is given and received. For us who believe it means forgiveness, life and salvation in the face of sin, death and the power of the devil. Here in the church, we inhale God’s mercy in Word and Sacrament, and exhale this same mercy in love and service to our neighbor. And that is an enduring, joyful thing to do. Our joy fills our neighbor’s need because His joy filled ours (Heb. 12:2). Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!

— LCMS Stewardship Ministry

August Birthdays at First

August 1
Gloria Mayer
Stan Sternberg

August 2
Cole Koenig

August 3
Susan McCormack

August 4
Curtis Mohs

August 7
Camden Ballard

August 8
Tammy Anderson
Brad Kraft

August 9
Matt Elvbakken

August 11
Darcy Goodson
Jan Leitzke

August 12
George Maier

August 13
Danyeil Wagner

August 15
Andrew Carson
Alice Lawson
Maggie Pentecost

August 16
Greg Criswell
Jeannie Hubbard
Trish Pentecost
Tami Ross

August 17
Carla Adair
Crystal Cislo

August 21
Leah Ellwein

August 22
Mary Ann Gregory
Jacie Sobeck
Theo Woehl

August 24
Teaghan Gozelanski
Olivia Johnson

August 25
Petra Meek

August 26
Nicole Sparks

August 27
Isaiah LaForge
Jill McIntosh

August 28
Susan Bartels

August 30
Briella Ballard
Linda Greaves
Joyce Nachtsheim

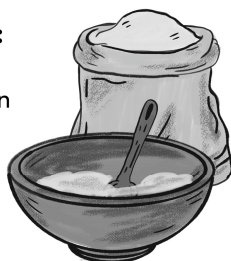
Happy Birthday!



You don't have to visit the beach to make a sandcastle. Make fluffy "moon sand" to build fun structures.

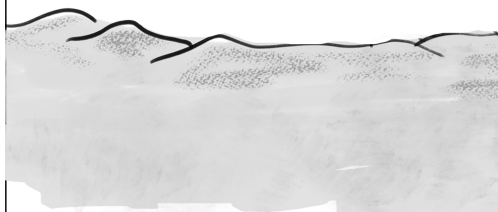
What you need:

- Large bowl
- Wooden spoon
- 8 cups flour
- 1 cup baby oil



What you do:

1. Measure flour into the large bowl.
Add baby oil.
2. Mix thoroughly until all the oil is combined and the texture is consistent. If needed, use your hands to knead the mixture.
3. The sand is ready when it sticks together to form a ball when pressed in your hands.
4. Use sand toys and molds to create a sandcastle. Store sand in an airtight container for up to two weeks.



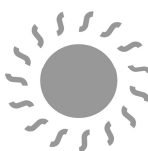
Just for KIDS!



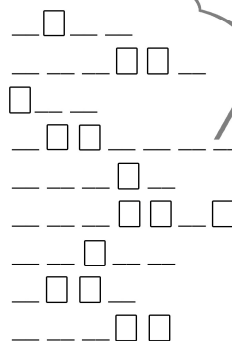
BY THE SEASHORE

The sea and its creatures are evidence of God's intention and purpose in creation.

Directions: Unscramble the words. Then copy the circled letters in order below to complete Psalm 104:24-25, NIV.



DASN
LHSELS
USN
ESEDAIS
BHECA
LALUBMER
WRTEA
FRUS
VWSEA



How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them ____;
the earth is full of your creatures.
There is the ____, vast and spacious,
teeming with _____ beyond number —
living things both large and small.
Psalm 104:24-25, NIV

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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

Walking by Faith

For we walk by faith, not by sight.
2 Corinthians 5:7

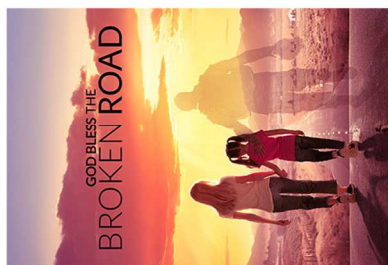
FLC Women's Event

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2024

First Lutheran Church
8:30 a.m. to 12 noon

EVENT ACTIVITIES

- Fellowship
- Bible Study: *HIS Faithfulness to All Generations*
- View:
God Bless the Broken Road
- Gifts and Breakfast Snacks Provided
- Bring your Bible and a donation for missions.



Amber's ideal life is shattered when she loses her husband to the war in Afghanistan. Two years later, she finds herself in a struggle to save her home while providing for her 9-year-old daughter, Bree. When up-and-coming race car driver Cody Jackson rolls into town, Amber and Bree become wrapped up in his pedal to the metal way of life. With her faith hanging in the balance, Amber is forced to decide between the broken road she knows so well or trusting in a new path that God has provided.

ALL WOMEN are encouraged to join us.
Please call 442-5367 by **August 14** to sign up.