

The *First* Word

Volume 26, Issue 10

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

September 2025

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

Special September Dates

Labor Day.....	Sept. 1
Church office closed	
FLS Open House.....	Sept. 2
First day of classes at FLS.....	Sept. 3
Dorcas Circle quilting begins	
Episode 1 of <i>The Chosen</i>	Sept. 4
Sponsored by the Buhr Family	
First-Ever Church Retreat.....	Sept. 6
In our Fellowship Hall/Sanctuary	
Grandparents Day.....	Sept. 7
Sunday School classes for ages preschool through high school begin	
WOW! Bible Study.....	Sept. 9
<i>Gifts, Chosen for You</i>	
First HIS Kids rehearsal.....	Sept. 10
First Chancel Choir rehearsal	
Human Care Garage Sale.....	Sept. 13
LWML Fall Rally in Ennis	
Dorcas Circle quilting.....	Sept. 17
OWLS.....	Sept. 18
LWML Fall Retreats.....	Sept. 19-21
(Bigfork and Bozeman)	

First's Human Care Ministry needs you and your donations



READY ... Get together your unused and unneeded items!

- Bring them to church on Thursday, September 11, or Friday, September 12.
- Share this opportunity to turn “trash into treasures” with your friends and neighbors!

SET ... Sign up to help arrange donations on Thursday, September 11, or Friday, September 12.

- Sign up to help from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on SALE DAY, Saturday, September 13, by assisting customers or cashiering. Sign up sheets are in the Fellowship Hall.
- At 1 p.m. on sale day, help box remaining clothing and books, and/or help transport boxed remaining clothing/books to Good Samaritan.

GO ... Pray for a great turnout for the sale, and do some shopping yourself!

- Let God use the proceeds to help others as He helps us every day by wiping our slate of sins clean through the blood of His Son, Jesus.



Funds will be distributed to benevolent community organizations, individuals with developmental disabilities, and others in our church family and beyond.



September 7th!

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Psalm 100:5 theme for LWML Fall Rally

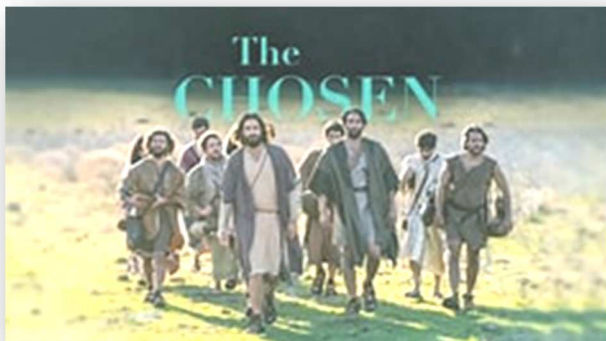
First Lutheran ladies! You are invited to the LWML Fall Rally, to be held at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Ennis, Montana, on Saturday, September 13, 2025.

The Bible verse and Bible study for the Rally is Psalm 100:5: *For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endures to all generations.*

Please bring canned good as Gifts of the Heart for the Ennis Food Bank.

Please see the announcement board in the Fellowship Hall for more details.

Season 1 of *The Chosen* to be shared by the Buhr family



Coming this fall, the Buhr family invites you to join them on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. to watch *The Chosen: Season 1* airing in the Fellowship Hall. There will be discussion after each

Episode. There may even be treats! Be there on Thursday, September 4, for Episode 1 of 9.

Please contact Brian Buhr at (406) 475-0942 if you have any questions.



Back to school means sales on cookies! You can help stock up our kitchen pantry with store-bought cookies for our Sunday morning coffee hour! Lisa Tullis does a wonderful job providing us with delicious snacks, but sometimes we don't have enough "sweets" and it is helpful to have some in reserve. We appreciate all those who choose to donate this summer!

First-ever Church Retreat will center around "Prayer and the Family"

On Saturday, September 6, 2025 (the Saturday *after* Labor Day), all members and friends of First Lutheran Church and School are cordially invited to join together for the First-Ever Church Retreat at **First's Retreat Center** (aka the Sanctuary and Fellowship Centre) to learn more about the power of prayer and its impact on the family, enjoy good fellowship, and good food. *This is a CHANGE IN LOCATION* from previous plans.

We'll begin at 10 a.m. with a welcome and the opening prayer, and then the kids will break off and adjourn for activities geared to their ages.

Bible study and fellowship time will include opportunities to learn what God has to say about prayer and how prayer has impacted our families and lives.

Everyone (kids and adults) will then break for lunch, which will be provided (you do not need to bring anything except yourself).

Organizers Melanie and Randy Middlebrook are seeking ideas for how to fill the time slot right after lunch, so if you have ideas, please see them at church, or email Randy at: rmgrizzly@gmail.com.

A craft activity for the day will be creating a prayer jar to take home. If you come with family, the entire family will get to help with this

special creation, and we'll wrap up this exciting day at 4 p.m.

Sign up sheets are in Ziegler Hall. Please sign up **BY September 3**, so we'll have enough food.



*Be joyful in hope,
patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer.*
Romans 12:12

I wish to see all arts, principally music, in the service of Him who gave and created them.

Music is a fair and glorious gift from God. I would not forego my humble share of music. Singers are never sorrowful, but are merry, and they smile through their troubles in song.

Music makes people kinder, gentler, more staid and reasonable. I am persuaded that after theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of heart ... the devil flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God.



— Martin Luther

The First Word

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*Then shall the earth
yield her increase: and
God, even our own
God, shall bless us.*
PSALM 67:6, 12-13

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

**Deadline for the October First Word is
Wednesday, September 17.
Place articles in the First Word box
in the church office
or email them to:
lindafromm@mac.com**

A Word from Our Pastor



A Parable: The Duck

There once was a young farm boy named Billy, who loved almost more than anything to go out with his bee-gun and shoot at various targets and objects around the yard. He loved to pretend he was defending his home, but one day, while he was defending his family, while he was sneaking around the barn, he quickly jumped around the corner of the barn and took a shot—but to his horror, he saw the bee-gun strike a duck in the yard and kill it instantly. Now this was no ordinary duck, it was practically a family pet that loved his father, it would even lovingly follow the father all around the farmyard.

The crushed and terrified boy picked up the limp body of the duck, and snuck into the barn, dug a hole and covered it up with hay. But he could barely cover his own remorse and fear.

That night at dinner, everyone kept discussing and asking questions about the duck. Billy couldn't dare to look at his father's face, but quietly stared at his plate.

The next day, the hired hand came up to Billy and said "Time for you to fill the wood box". Billy answered, "I'm not going to fill the wood box, that's your job". "Billy, I saw what happened to the duck yesterday. I saw you shoot it, dig a hole in the barn and bury it and cover it with straw. What do you think your father would say if I told him what I saw?" Well the boy wasted no time in filling the wood box.



The next day, the hired hand came up to him and said, "Time for you to clean out the chicken pen". Billy answered, "That's your job." "Billy, what do you think your father's going to do to you after I tell him about the duck?" Well Billy immediately set about cleaning out the chicken pen.

Well this went on day after day for several days, and Billy was dragging around the place, with all of the extra work on top of his chores, but mainly from the guilt, for he still could not look at his father's face. He just couldn't take it anymore, and so finally, with tears in his eyes, he went to his father and confessed, "Daddy, I killed the duck, and buried him in the barn — I'm so sorry"— and he ran into his father's arms. His father said, "Son, that's okay, I forgive you — it will be alright."



The next day, the hired hand came up to Billy and said, "Well, the wood box is getting low again, time for you to fill it." "NO, that's your job and I'm not going to do it!" "Billy, remember that duck and your father..." And Billy joyfully shouted back "I already told my father about the duck, and he told me that it's okay, that everything is alright—so get away from me, I am not going to do it!" **He had been freed from the burden and slavery of guilt and fear, freed by the forgiveness of His loving father.** By confessing his sin, he was able to be restored to the relationship with his father that he enjoyed before, not having to hang his head in shame, or walk in fear that his accuser might tell his father bring down punishment.

My dear family in Christ, **because of the cross and tomb of Jesus, our Father has already declared us forgiven, completely.** In the waters of our baptism, God has washed away the stain of our sinful guilt and Satan cannot accuse us anymore. It's okay, it's alright—all of our sin has been forgiven. There is nothing that you or I have done or could do that is beyond the shed blood of Jesus, it is already washed away. We don't have to be afraid, we can go to a loving Father like that.

There is no need for us to try and cover up our deeds from our Father—He already knows what each of us has done, thought, or said. And, He has already forgiven it for Jesus' sake. There's no need to listen any longer to the accusing voice of Satan in our ear telling us what we've done and what God's going to do to us—no need to hang our head in shame, instead we can go to your loving Father and confess our sin without fear, for we know that He will forgive us. Indeed, looking back at our baptism, we know that He has already forgiven us. Now we can live, really live in that freedom and joy!



Blessings to you in these waning days of summer
and these first days of fall,
In Christ, our forgiving and loving Savior,

Pastor Miller



Happenings at First Lutheran School



Director
Shannon Champagne

Get Set Teacher
Shannon Champagne

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Lori Radtke

After Care Providers
Melanie Middlebrook/Emily DuPre
Lillian Buhr

Lunch Assistant
Jeannie Hubbard

Pastor
Larry A. Miller

Let the New Year Begin!



The start of our 2025-2026 school year is quickly approaching. Open House will be held on Tuesday, September 2, from 6 to 7 p.m. to welcome new and returning families. The following morning, Wednesday, September 3,

will be the BIG day, with all our littles getting to know their new classrooms and teachers.

We still have openings in both the Get Set and Pre-K classes, so if you or someone you know is looking for a good Christian preschool for their 3-5- year-old, please let us know.

We welcome back Lori Radtke teaching our Pre-K class, and Shannon Champagne our Get Set class. We want to thank Sue Taylor for all her years of service and hope to have her assist with our school/students on occasion. Shannon Champagne is excited to start serving in the role

of school director.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and — in our case — a church to teach our children. We are in need of a couple of staff members to fill part-time positions: A lunch assistant for 2 hours, 2 times a week, and an aftercare provider for 3 hours, 3 times a week. Volunteers are also appreciated to help with special events, and/or to be an extra person giving that special one-on-one or small group attention that all of God's children cherish and deserve. Whether you are available once a week, once a month, or even just occasionally, your support in helping teach our young learners about our Lord would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in sharing your time and making a positive impact, please contact Shannon at shanathome@outlook.com or 406-439-3035.

New school years are filled with excitement and hesitation, laughter and tears, hopes and challenges. Please keep our staff, students, and their families in your prayers as we begin a new year.

Dorcas quilters are back at it!



All are invited to come to the Fellowship Hall between 9 a.m. and noon on Wednesday, September 3, to tie quilts and share Christian fellowship. We will maintain our previous schedule of gathering on the first, third, and fifth Wednesdays (if there is a fifth Wednesday) each

month, starting in September and ending in May.

No experience is necessary. As a group, we layer quilt

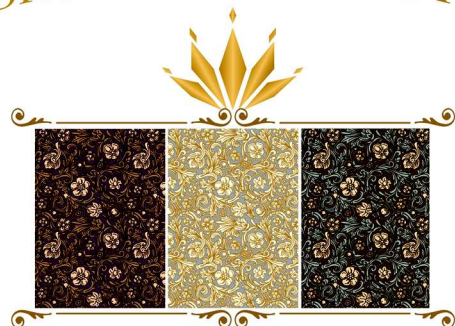
backs, batting, and tops together and then tie knots to hold layers in place. The cutting, sewing, and binding is usually done by volunteers in their homes.

Our group derives its name from Dorcas, who was a disciple "full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36). Those works included sewing tunics and other garments. Read the brief account of how God used Dorcas' life, death, and resurrection to His glory in Acts 9:36-43.

For more information, please contact Bridget Michel at (406) 438-6214.

— Bridget Michel

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



LWML Fall Retreats

September 19–21, 2025

Mountain Top Retreat — Bozeman
Trinity Lutheran Camp — Bigfork

You will be treated to food, fellowship, and fun as we unplug and enjoy the beauty of the world around us. There are two locations from which to choose.

Registration fee is \$125.
Due no later than September 2, 2025.

Please see the Summer *Missive* for a registration form,
which will include items you need to bring, depending on
the location of the retreat you choose to attend.

To work and to keep

— from your Board of Stewardship

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15).

Genesis chapters one and two faithfully relate to us the account of creation, and also give us the creation of the “office” of steward. The man, created in the image of God in Genesis 1 and formed from the dust in Genesis 2, is created for a distinct purpose. He is created to be a steward of the perfect and beautiful creation that the Lord has made! In fact, this is THE reason that man was made. He — and we — were created in the image of God to be stewards of God’s creation.

This purpose is spelled out in verse 15 of Genesis 2. The steward has one job, with two purposes. It is fitting that in the month that our nation marks Labor Day, we consider the task of steward. The first purpose of the job of steward is to work. The steward is the caretaker of the Garden. Being a steward is work! Before the fall into sin, this was not an onerous task. But it was an active thing.

But there is a second task in verse fifteen. The word “keep” is not just a synonym for work. This second task is related to defending. This garden, holy by virtue of its being called into

existence by a holy God, needed to be defended. Here is where the vocation of steward becomes priestly. The steward was to defend the perfect and holy garden from that which was unholy. Later in the Old Testament, this was the task of the priests in the



tabernacle and temple. They were to defend with their lives the Holy of Holies. This too is the labor of stewardship. It is a labor that calls the steward to be willing to put the garden before life!

Stewardship was always work. It only got burdensome after the original steward, Adam, failed to defend the garden from the alien word of the serpent. But this was not a failure of harvest. It was a failure to defend the garden! As a result, all work that followed that failure became burdensome.

The steward failed but was never

fired. That is why we have such an issue with stewardship to this day. We continue to live out a pre-fall vocation in a fallen world as failed stewards. That is why we in the church need to be reminded of our vocational call to be stewards. We so easily forget that this world is not ours to do with as we please. Nothing is ours. We are but stewards entrusted with managing the creation for the glory of God and the benefit of the neighbor.

It is a daunting task. But it is the one to which we have been called. We cannot do it on our own. Apart from the grace of God shared with us through Jesus, we would be burdened to the point of temporal and eternal death. But the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel! This Gospel connects us to the fertile garden of Christ’s Work on our behalf. Now we are stewards of that grace! The Holy Spirit works this in and through us today and every day.

This is the work of the church. It is also the work of the individual steward. The Lord has placed us in the “garden” with the same twofold purpose: work and keep! Enjoy your labor. For in the Lord, our labor is never in vain!

— LCMS Stewardship Ministry



Can you hear the choir singing? We are starting up Chancel Choir in September after summer break. What does this mean?

It means that beginning **September 10**, 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.

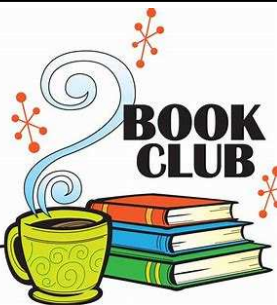
Are you a “shower singer?” Are you interested in joining us this year? Our choir just might appeal to you. We’ll have exciting music and really hope that you will join us.

Please contact Shari Miller if you are interested. Please share your musical gifts with us!

First Edition Book Club members *will NOT* meet in September due to conflicting events at the church.

The first meeting of the year will be held on Saturday, October 4, at the home of Eileen Burns, beginning at **9:30 a.m.** (*This is a **time change** from our normal schedule.*) For the October meeting, members will read — and discuss — *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte.

The November meeting will be held on Saturday, November 1, at the home of Joyce Burgett, beginning at **9:30 a.m.** For this meeting, members will read — and discuss — *The Secret War of Julie Child* by Diana R. Chambers.



HIS Kids

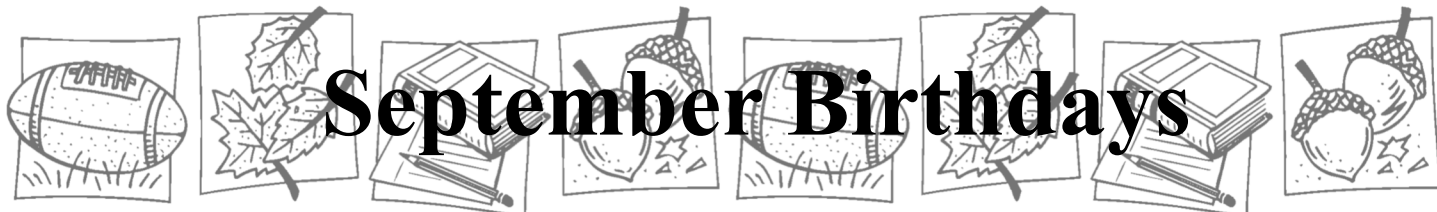


If you are in first (1st) to eighth (8th) grade, **YOU** are invited to be a member of **HIS Kids!** We have a LOT of fun and practice to sing in church about one Sunday a month.

Our first **HIS Kids!** rehearsal is **Wednesday, September 10**, promptly at 5:15 p.m. I invite the parents to this rehearsal, as we determine our best plans for this small group.

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



September 1
Asher Woehl

September 2
Shari Miller
Gary Walker

September 3
Chase Moxley
John Onstad

September 4
Stephanie Cable
Lisa Olson

September 5
Loren Anderson
Joel Ebert

September 6
Charlotte Goodson
Kelly Shields
Carol Smith
Robert Veach Jr.
Tamara Ziegler

September 7
Aurelia Klapmeier
Amanda Miller
Connie Young

September 8
Kaitlyn LaForge
Margie McKeever
Natasha Peterson
Shannon Walker

September 10
Emma Hall
Larry Larison

September 11
Kenzie Criswell
Carla Cross
Caleb Wareham

September 12
Karla Greer
Tom Smith
Caleb Sparks

September 13
Rachel Matthews
Augusta McIntosh

September 15
Heidi Hultin

September 16
Sus Everson
Dave Kraft

September 17
Jacob Blokzyl

September 18
Wesley McIntosh

September 19
Adam Cole

September 20
Charlie LaForge

September 21
Faye Myles
Dylan Reichert

September 22
Shadron Frank
Jim Leitzke

September 23
Nancy Bowe
Lauren McGrane

September 24
Leola Beatty
Daniel Kluth

September 26
Lincoln Nettleten

September 28
Mary Ann Tramp

September 30
Tom Cook



Sweet little sheep treats

Create adorable sheep using graham crackers, marshmallows, and a little imagination!

What you need:

- Graham cracker squares
- White frosting or marshmallow fluff
- Mini marshmallows
- Large marshmallows
- Candy eyes or mini chocolate chips
- Black gel icing or mini Oreo cookie

What you do:

1. Spread white frosting or marshmallow fluff on each graham cracker square.
2. Stick mini marshmallows all over to make the sheep's wool.
3. Cut a large marshmallow in half and stick it near the top for the head.
4. Add candy eyes and a dot of black gel for the nose. Or use a mini Oreo cookie half for a more defined face.
5. Let kids decorate their sheep however they'd like!

Lesson tie-in

Use this treat to remind kids that Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

John 10:11, KJV

Just for KIDS!

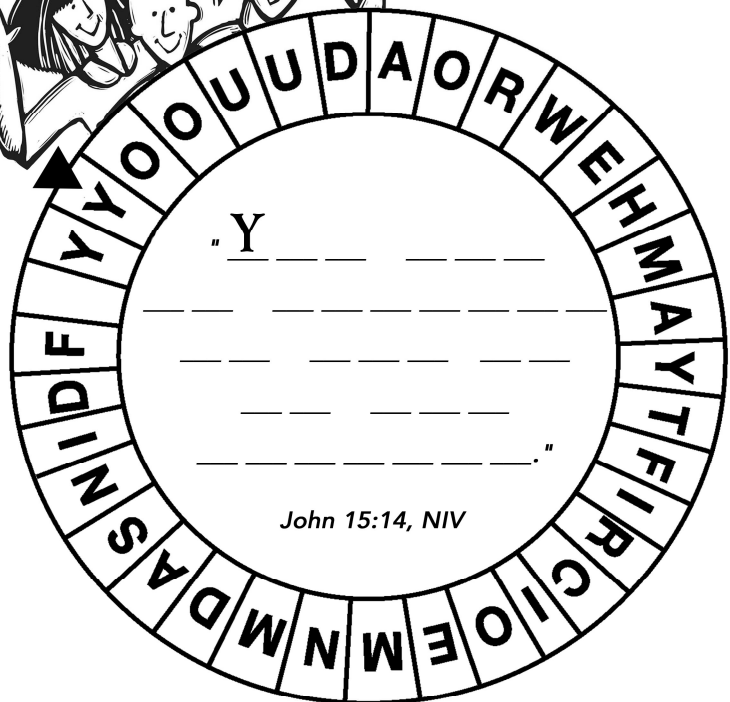
PUZZLE

WHO WERE JESUS' FRIENDS?

Jesus spent a lot of time with his friends. Whom did Jesus consider his friends?



Beginning at the arrow and moving clockwise, write every other letter on the spaces below.



Answer: "You are my friends if you do what I command." John 15:14, NIV



"Nobody can do for little children what grandparents can do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children."

— Alex Haley



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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”

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

Women of the Word



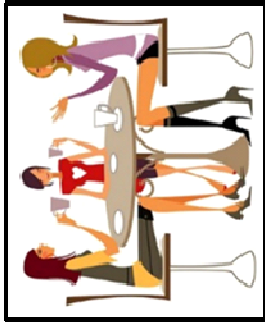
The Women Of the Word (WOW)
 group meets this fall beginning
September 9, 2025. We meet at
 the church and we'd love to have you
 join us!

***Gifts, Chosen for You*, an LWML
 Bible study, is the six-session study
 we will be doing.**

- Session 1: The Gift of Administration
- Session 2: The Gift of Faith
- Session 3: The Gift of Generosity
- Session 4: The Gift of Service
- Session 5: The Gift of Teaching
- Session 6: The Gift of Wisdom

**September 9 and 23
 October 14 and 28
 November 11 and 25**

WOW! Bible Study,
Gifts, Chosen for You,
 begins September 9, 2025,
 at 7 p.m.



**The Women's Christmas Event will
 be held on Thursday, December 11.
 Mark these dates on your planners,
 tablets, phones, calendars, and join us!
 Talk to Shari Miller for more details.**