

# The *First Word*

Volume 27, Issue 2

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

November 2025

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  
First Edition Book Club  
Home of Joyce Burgett

**Daylight Saving Time ends**.....Nov. 2  
All Saints Day (observed)

**ELECTION DAY**.....Nov. 4  
Dorcas Circle Quilters meet.....Nov. 5

Veterans Day.....Nov. 11  
WOW! Bible Study (9:30 a.m.)  
*Lifelight: John*

Dorcas Circle Quilters meet.....Nov. 19  
OWLS.....Nov. 20

Last Sunday of the Church Year.....Nov. 23  
Christ the King Sunday...

WOW! Bible Study (9:30 a.m.)...Nov. 25  
*Lifelight: John*

Thanksgiving Day.....Nov. 27

First Sunday in Advent.....Nov. 30

## Happiness is a warm blanket

Dear Friends of First Lutheran,

We are planning our annual Christmas dinner for the developmentally disabled group homes and independent living residents on Thursday, December 18, at 5:30 p.m. If you would like to help serve, let me know or watch for the sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall later this month.

The Human Care Ministry group will be decorating the “undecorating” Christmas tree in the Narthex again this year, and this year’s gift will be warm blankets. Because winter will soon be upon us, many stores in our area are having sales on blankets, so now is a good time to purchase one ... or more.

The December issue of *The First Word* will contain more detailed information about this special First Lutheran project, so be sure to watch for your copy.

We are providing information early so you can prepare to share your time by helping to set up the “undecorating” tree, purchasing a gift, or serving at the dinner.

Thanks be to God for those who serve the Lord!

God’s Blessings,

*Lowell Bartels*



## Why are the doors locked?

Some of our newer members may be wondering why the main doors at the church are locked after the worship service begins. It is because we want to ensure the safety of all members and friends of the church in the uncertain times in which we live.

If a person arrives after the worship service begins, he or she can ring the buzzer located near the main entrance doors, and an elder will come to the door. If the elder is unfamiliar with the person(s) wishing to enter, he is to use his best judgment in deciding whether to allow that person(s) to come in. A small sign is posted near the buzzer to explain this procedure.

For the same reason, the main doors, the church office door, and the First Lutheran School doors are also locked at all times during the day. Administrative Assistant Shari Miller has the ability to unlock the office door from her desk when someone approaches, and she makes the decision as to whether or not to allow that person to enter.

It is unfortunate that we have had to take this step, but the safety of our members, friends of the church, our staff members, and our school students and teachers is of utmost importance.

Thank you for understanding.

— Mission and Ministry Council



**REMEMBER . . .**  
**Set your clocks BACK**  
**one hour when retiring on**  
**Saturday night,**  
**November 1!**

## In This Issue

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## A shift in gratitude

When we look at what we want, and then compare that with what we have, we shall be unhappy.

When we think about what we really deserve, and then compare that with what we actually have, we shall thank God.

— The Newsletter Newsletter

# Cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie — by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Turkeys and cornucopias and pilgrim hats. Seasoned stuffing hot from the oven. Creamed onions, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. Uncles and aunts and cousins to play with. Grandmothers and grandfathers with family gathered round. Children waiting for the Great Pumpkin rise over Charlie Brown's pumpkin patch and dads watching college football. A day to relax and maybe rake leaves in the afternoon.

But Thanksgiving? How much will our family Thanksgiving celebrations have to do with giving thanks?

A glance at the first Thanksgiving brings it all back. On December 21, 1620, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth rock. Through the dead of winter the colony struggled with poor and meager food, strenuous labor, a biting wind that chilled to the bone, and the ravages of disease. Nearly half the 102 Mayflower passengers did not live to see Spring refresh Cape Cod Bay.

But God sent some Native



Americans — Samoset, Squanto, and Massasoit — to help the English settlers plant and hunt and fish. The bountiful harvest that autumn led Governor Bradford to invite the Indians to celebrate God's goodness. Ninety tall braves accepted the

invitation to join the Pilgrims in a feast of Thanksgiving to God for His blessings.

The Pilgrims lived close enough to the soil to know how dependent they were on God's Providence. They had learned to thank God in the midst of the bitterness of winter past. And they were quick to thank Him during abundant blessing, too.

We teach our children to say "please" and "thank you" as the rudiments of courtesy, yet it is so easy to be rude and unthinking toward God. How often we forget to gratefully acknowledge His goodness towards us.

This Thanksgiving let your prayers and expressions of love rise toward your Heavenly Father.

*"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord."*  
(Psalm 116:12-13)

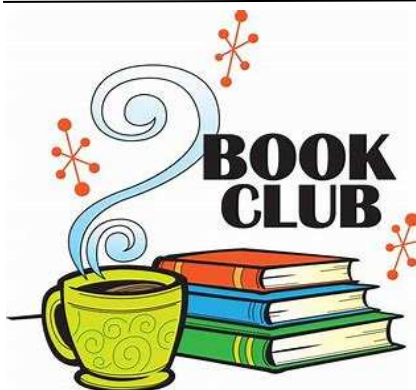
## Giving thanks for all things



It's easy to list the blessings in life: good health, family, a satisfying career, a comfortable home. We might even be thankful for things others take for granted such as freedom and clean drinking water, reliable transportation and food enough to eat. Then there are the little things, such as gardens, sunrises, pets and coffee.

But what about life's storms or unanswered prayers? Should we be thankful for these? Loss and hardship remind us of our dependence on God. He uses trials to draw us closer to Him, to show us that He is our rock and refuge. In misfortune and grief, we discover God's comfort and strength. Should we not, then, be thankful for the storms, too?

— The Newsletter Newsletter



First Edition Book Club members will meet for morning treats and beverages at **9:30 a.m.** on Saturday, November 1, at the home of Joyce Burgett, followed by discussion of *The Secret War of Julia Child* by Diana Chambers.

Members will meet for lunch at **12 p.m.** on Saturday, December 6, at the home of Bridget Michel, followed by discussion of *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman.

**Please RSVP to Bridget by Wednesday, December 3, at 406-438-6214.**

### The First Word

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**Deadline for the December First Word is Wednesday, Nov. 19. Place articles in The First Word box in the church office or email to: [lindafromm@mac.com](mailto:lindafromm@mac.com)**



## Pastor's Potpourri . . .

a mixture of comments concerning our life together in Christ!

~ Giving Thanks to Our Gracious God, for His so-MANY Blessings! ~

### + All Saints Sunday +

November 2



We'll give thanks to God  
for blessing us with the witness of those  
who have gone before us,  
and look forward to the feast to come,  
with all the saints, in heaven's glory!



### + Christ the King Sunday +

November 23

*We'll review the church year  
by working through the seasons  
(Advent, Christmas, Epiphany,  
Lent, Easter, and Pentecost)*

*and ending at Christ the King  
in about an hour  
of Word and Sacrament.*

### our Adult Bible Study

beginning at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday  
in the Fellowship Centre

### Paul's Gospel of Romans

We watch and learn and grow  
as the Good News of the risen Savior Jesus  
assures us of His forgiveness, justification,  
love, life, and salvation!

### + Older Wiser

**Loving Saints +**  
(55ish+ older)

are invited to our next gathering  
**Thursday, November 20,  
11 a.m.**

*Thanksgiving Burritos???*  
*("That can't be?")*

*Watch for the details,  
with a grateful heart!*



### + Thanksgiving Eve Worship +

November 27, 12:10 and 6:30 p.m.

*"Great is Thy Faithfulness,  
Lord Unto Me!"*

*With joy-full hearts  
we'll praise Almighty God,  
for ALL His blessings  
of body and soul!*



### + With Hearts FULL +

Shari and I are thanking God – for YOU!

For your cards and gifts,  
your love and support throughout  
Pastor's Appreciation Month  
(not to mention our birthdays)

and, even more, for sharing with us  
your trust and faith in our gracious God  
and all He has done for us  
in Jesus Christ, our Lord!

*Pas+or Miller*



# Pointing to the Rock of Ages

— from Your Board of Stewardship

*Not the labor of my hands Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone. (LSB 761:2)*

**We are called to be  
stewards of the  
Gospel!**

While the classic hymn “Rock of Ages” shows up in the *Lutheran Service Book* in the “Hope and Comfort” section, it can also teach us a valuable lesson about Christian stewardship. If that surprises you, stay with me on this one.

No Lutheran would ever dispute the fact that our work does not save us. Ephesians 2 makes it truly clear that we are dead in our trespasses and sins and would remain in that state until Christ raises us by grace. There is not a ladder on which we can climb out of the grave that our sins have dug for us.

No blood, sweat, or tears will be able to rescue us. We all know this.

Our works do not save. Christ’s work on the cross of Calvary does! He bore human flesh. He carried the burden of our sin to the cross. His body was beaten, bruised and bloodied for us. He has indeed atoned for us! This is more than enough reason for this hymn to be bouncing around in your head all day today!

But our work has a place. The place is in response to what the Father has done for us in Jesus. The Rock of Ages, who is Jesus, becomes the foundation on which our lives of faith are built. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to make us God’s workmanship that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2:10.

Our workmanship does not display our power or prowess. Like the heavens declare the handiwork of the Creator, the works of a redeemed sinner point others to the salvation that is worked only by Jesus alone. Our work is a response to — and reflection

of — a grace and glory that we ourselves could never accomplish or achieve.

We become stewards of the treasure that is the Gospel. When we faithfully support the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our financial support, we are doing the work which points to the One who alone atones. When we come alongside a struggling sister or brother for whom Christ died and we share the stewardship work of compassion and care, we enfold the treasure of God’s love and redemption. When we make it a weekly priority to arrange our schedule to be in the Lord’s House with other stewards of the Gospel to receive again and again the Gospel’s precious gift, we are stewards of the Body of Christ in the congregation that points even more people to Jesus.

We cannot do this. Jesus does it through us. We are simply stewards of this precious treasure!

— LCMS Stewardship Ministry

## Bad seeds can’t sprout in a thankful heart

There is an old European story about a traveler who came upon a barn where the devil had stored seeds which he planned to sow in the hearts of people. There were bags of seeds variously marked “Hatred,” “Fear,” “Doubt,” “Despair,” “Unforgiveness,” “Pride,” “Greed,” etc.

The devil appeared and struck up a conversation with the traveler. He gleefully told the traveler how easily the seeds he sowed sprouted in the hearts of men and women.

“Are there any hearts in which these seeds will not sprout?” the traveler asked.

A melancholy look appeared on the devil’s face. “These seeds will not sprout in the heart of a thankful and joyful person,” he confessed.

— *Holy Humor*  
By Cal and Rose Samra

## Remembering the saints



When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he addressed his letter “To all God’s beloved ... who are called to be saints” (Romans 1:7, NRSV). Paul regarded his fellow believers as people who have responded to the good news of Christ by choosing to follow and serve God.

The New Testament emphasizes that Christians are God’s beloved — special people set apart to receive His grace and to be His witnesses. All people whose minds and hearts are devoted to God are “called to be saints.”

About 700 years after the church began, leaders designated November 1 as All Saints’ Day to honor people whose lives reflect Christ dwelling within them. Because of what God has done for us, all Christians can wear the label of saint.

— *The Newsletter Newsletter*

# Thankful garland

Celebrate the season of gratitude by creating a colorful Thankful decoration.

## What you need:

- Construction paper in a variety of fall colors
- Pencil, marker, or crayons
- Yarn, ribbon, or raffia
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Real leaves (Optional)
- Wooden or plastic beads, cereal with holes (Cheerios, Froot Loops, etc.), or any dried pasta with a hole (Optional)



## What you do:

1. Draw or trace leaf shapes onto construction paper.
2. Lay the paper flat and spray with water until the paper is completely wet.
3. Crumple the wet paper into balls.
4. Open the paper and let the sheets dry flat.
5. When dry, cut out each leaf.
6. On each leaf, write the name of one person or thing you're thankful for.
7. Punch a hole in each leaf.
8. Lace the leaves, beads, cereal, and pasta onto the yarn, ribbon, or raffia.
9. Tie the ends and hang your garland.

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

# Just for KIDS!



## GIVE PRAISE

Solve this puzzle to read a Bible verse about praising God for all his blessings.

**Directions:** In each group, circle the word that doesn't belong. Then write the circled words on the lines below.

|                             |                               |                                         |                                  |                                                                                       |                              |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1<br>Give<br>Take<br>Grab   | 2<br>peanut<br>praise<br>pear | 3<br>temple<br>house<br>LORD            | 4<br>proclaim<br>past<br>present | 5<br>name<br>boy<br>lad                                                               | 6<br>ruin<br>destroy<br>make |
| 7<br>pine<br>acorn<br>known | 8<br>train<br>nations<br>bus  | 9<br>done<br>donut<br>muffin            | 10<br>Sing<br>Sleep<br>Yawn      | 11<br>she<br>him<br>girl                                                              | 12<br>sun<br>praise<br>moon  |
| 13<br>tell<br>fast<br>slow  | 14<br>red<br>all<br>blue      | 15<br>horrible<br>dreadful<br>wonderful | 16<br>acts<br>sisters<br>aunts   |  |                              |

\_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_;  
 1 2 3 4 5  
 \_\_\_\_\_ among the \_\_\_\_\_ what he has \_\_\_\_\_.  
 6 7 8 9  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, sing \_\_\_\_\_ to him; \_\_\_\_\_ of  
 10 11 12 13  
 \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_.  
 14 15 16

PSALM 105:1-2, NIV

Answer: Give, praise, LORD, proclaim, name, make, known, nations, sing, him, praise, tell, all, wonderful, acts

# Christmas is coming!

Christmas card packs will be available for sale starting Sunday, November 30. This year, each pack will include 15 cards of various themes ... all for \$5!

It is a blessing to send these to family and friends throughout the Christmas holiday season.

Many thanks to all of you who have purchased cards to benefit our YOUTH programs here at the church. If you have Christmas cards that have no writing on the picture side, I would love to have them to create new cards. Several of the cards I make are my own design as well.

— Janice Larison  
CARDS 4 KIDS MINISTRY



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



## A little Thanksgiving humor

Thanksgiving Day was fast approaching and the family had received a Thanksgiving card with a painting of a Pilgrim family on its way to church.

Grandma showed the card to her small grandchildren, observing: "It looks like the Pilgrim children liked to go to church with their mothers and fathers."

"Oh, yeah?" her young grandson replied. "So why is their dad carrying that rifle?"



### November 1

Harmony Letang

### November 2

Aries Hindman

### November 3

Joseph D. Jurenka  
Roger Schultz  
Brynn Walker

### November 4

Katya Peterson

### November 7

Claudia Cook  
Kieran Ellwein  
Toni Wollan

### November 9

Roy Bjornson  
Ethan Elvbakken

### November 10

Sauna Eccleston  
Deborah Knudsen  
Payton Mongoven

### November 11

Kathleen Blokzyl  
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

Olivia Mercer  
Belle Schmeltzer  
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 27

Debbie Williams

### November 30

Joan Fabricius







# Happenings at First Lutheran School



Director  
Shannon Champagne

Assistant Director  
Sue Taylor

Get Set Teacher  
Shannon Champagne

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher  
Lori Radtke

After Care Provider  
Emily DuPre

Lunch Assistant  
Jeannie Hubbard

Pastor  
Larry A. Miller

## *The things kids say ... it's APPLesolutely amazing!*

We made homemade applesauce with our students. Some liked it hot, some liked it cold, some liked eating the apple peels as we were making it.

Then we did Apple stories. Please take the time to check out our APPLesolutely amazing bulletin board, and if you would like to fill out a story to share with us (blank copies on the bulletin board), please do! We would love to hear your amazing story, too.



## Apple Adventure

*By the Get Set Class*

Three apples were sitting on a HEAD. One apple said, "Let's go to the ICE CREAM SHOP." "How will we get there?" asked the second apple. "We'll take a TRAIN," said the third apple.

So, the apples packed some TACOS for lunch. On their way, they saw a DRAGON and a UNICORN. They decided to stop and gather some LEGOS. When they finally got to the ICE CREAM SHOP, they felt very HUNGRY. They decided to sit down and EAT. They ate some ICE CREAM and TACOS. Afterwards, they were ready to GO ON THE TRAIN. At the end of the day, they felt very GOOD. They had a great adventure!

## An Apple Adventure

*Written by Miss Lori's Pre-K*

Three apples were sitting in a TREE. One apple said, "Let's go to the train." "How will we get there?" asked the second apple. "WE'LL TAKE A MOTORCYCLE," said the third apple.

So the apples packed some STRAWBERRIES for lunch. On their way, they saw a FLOWER and a WOLF. They decided to stop and gather some MORE STRAWBERRIES. When they finally got to the train, they felt very HAPPY. They decided to sit down and eat their lunch and wait for the train. They ate some STRAWBERRIES and VITAMINS.

Afterwards, they were ready to get on the train and go to ALASKA. At the end of the day, they felt very EXHAUSTED. They had a great adventure!

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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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or listen on **“Family Talk”** on Sirius XM 131  
**“Woman to Woman”**—Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on KMTX 105.3-FM

## A Christian reflection on Veterans Day



Veterans Day, observed on November 11 every year, offers a sacred opportunity to honor the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. This day provides a moment to reflect on the virtues of courage, sacrifice, and loyalty — all qualities deeply rooted in Christian values.

These men and women have put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms and rights we cherish, mirroring Christ’s sacrifice for

all of humanity.

As Christians, it is our duty to pray for peace and to ask for God’s strength and healing for those who have served. Just as Christ sought peace and healed those who were hurt, we too should pray for the healing of veterans’ physical and emotional wounds.

The service rendered by veterans is a powerful example of selflessness. They put the needs of their country and fellow citizens above their own, reflecting Christ’s call to serve and love one another.

Veterans Day is an opportunity to strengthen community ties by coming together to support those who have served. Whether through volunteer work at veterans’ homes, participating in local parades, or simply reaching out to veterans in your community, every act of kindness is an expression of Christ’s love.

Veterans Day serves as a poignant reminder of the costs of freedom and the value of service. As Christians, we

are called to show unwavering support and gratitude to our veterans, recognizing their bravery and sacrifices as reflections of Christ’s teachings.

Consider how you might honor our veterans on this Veterans Day. Attend a local event, visit a veterans’ hospital, or write thank you cards to those who have served. Commit to ongoing prayer for their wellbeing and for peace, honoring their service not just on this day, but throughout the year.

### **Prayer:**

Lord, we lift up our veterans to You as Veterans Day approaches, thanking You for their bravery, their service, and their sacrifice. Bless them with Your love and peace, heal their wounds, and strengthen them with Your grace. May we, as a community, never forget their sacrifices and always express our gratitude, not only through our words, but also through our actions. Amen.

— *Hearing from Jesus Ministries*