



First Lutheran Church

Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are nurtured, prepared, and sent to be the light of Christ in our world.

To have faith, or not have faith, that is the question.

Would you rather live a life of faith, or would you rather live your life like the people you know who are either unchurched, don't believe in organized religion, or have decided that there is no God altogether? I think that an answer to this question is strictly determined by our discipleship practices and how devoted we are to Christ. If we respond that living a life of faith isn't easy, but is something we can't live without, then we are probably willing to make sacrifices for God and give him the higher priority.

Perhaps like a number of Christians these days, who identify as believers in God but live as if they have somehow set God aside, the question I posed doesn't seem to matter one way or the other. In this day and age it seems that there is just so much to do: so many different people, things, places, events, fighting for our time and attention, that the best we can hope for is to make it to church on Sunday mornings, and even this can be difficult to do. If this is the case, then perhaps we need to take some time to think about and reflect on what having faith in Jesus actually means for us. Do we live our lives as if we have been changed, influenced, and inspired by what he did for us on the cross and what he continues to do for us daily through the countless blessings we receive? Or do we claim to believe in Jesus, yet live our lives however we set fit?

I think that the author of a devotion in *Christ in our Home* sums it up best! Timothy Olson writes, "We often speak the right words about God, but we struggle to do what God commands!" This is especially true when we proclaim that we love God, that just as Jesus loves us we love him in return, but we often fail to demonstrate our love through our actions. "A spouse says, 'I love you,' and then forgets birthdays and anniversaries. A child says, 'I love you,' and then acts in ways that cause pain and show disrespect. This way of expressing love may feel disingenuous or incomplete.

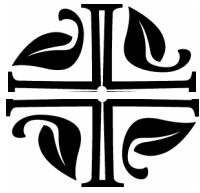
Love is as much a verb as it is a noun." I think that in some way, to some degree, at some point we have all experienced this in our lives. Someone we care about says they love us, but they sure don't act like they do. Now as hard as that reality can be for us, imagine what it must be like for us to do this same thing to our creator, our redeemer, our provider, and our savior?

This month I encourage you all to take some time to reflect on Psalm 73. In it you will discover a man who is tempted to stumble in his faith because at first glance it appeared to him that only the wicked prosper, while those who attempt to follow God's ways seem only to suffer. It wasn't until the Psalmist went into the sanctuary of God that he actually began to understand that faithless individuals are headed for disaster and ruin.

It is my hope that First Lutheran can be a place where people can experience and discern, this very same truth! Even if living out our lives for God takes work and sacrifice, in the end it will all be worth it. After all, is living a life of faith all for nothing? I don't believe it is, and hopefully you have come, or will come, to this realization as well.

God Bless,
Pastor Ryan

Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ...



Join us for Worship this Summer!

Indoor Worship (for those who have their COVID Vaccine)
 Sunday Morning at 9:00

Drive-up worship (An outdoor service—open to all)
 Sunday Morning at 10:30
 Feel free to bring a lawn chair to enjoy the sunny weather.



YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL COMPARISONS REPORT			
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH	May 2020	May 2021	May 2021 Budget
Total Income	102,766.86	93,688.39	109,875.08
Total Expenses	106,806.14	100,060.98	119,127.77
Income compared to Expenses	(4,039.28)	(6,372.59)	

Thank you for your financial contributions to FELC. As of May 2021, we received a total of \$93,688.39 and spent \$100,060.98 so the balance is negative **-\$6,372.59**. (This is better than last month-getting closer to a positive balance. Any amount you are able to give really helps and is very much appreciated.)



Celebrating the end of Katie Faber's term as Sunday School Superintendent this year, we look forward to selecting the next Superintendent for a more normal routine next year! The superintendent's role with the Christian Education Committee is to help create the overall structure for the year, plan and lead the Christmas Pageant, choose curricula, and scheduling. All the families with Sunday School age students then take turns leading lessons each Sunday. Prayerfully consider how you can help our youngest saints learn about and enjoy all that God has given us!

Christian Education Committee

We are nurtured, prepared...



Book Discussion Group



Join us in Welcoming
our New Members

Kathryn Birch

Kathy is a retired registered nurse who likes to spend her free time reading, walking, sewing, and spending time with family. Kathy says she has lived in Michigan, South Carolina, Colorado, Alaska, and Washington. Kathy and her husband Melvin have recently moved to Mount Vernon from Oak Harbor, where they attended Oak Harbor Lutheran.

Jerry & Penny Westendorf

Jerry is a retired principal who enjoys golf and fishing. Penny, who has also worked as an educator, enjoys walking, gardening, and reading. Jerry and Penny have lived in Kent and Longview Washington. They were most recently members of Trinity Lutheran in Longview, WA.

Timothy & Alison Dickinson

Tim comes to us as a former teacher, and presently serves as a principal, k-8 teaching and learning coordinator at Conway School. He enjoys family time and spending time outdoors. Alison is a Math teacher who loves spending her free time reading, hiking, and doing house projects. Tim and Alison have lived in Bellingham, Longview, and Mount Vernon Washington. They were most recently members of Trinity Lutheran in Longview, WA.

If you are looking for a good **read** this summer, and would like to join us for a book study at the beginning of August, perhaps you will consider picking up a copy of the, *Same Kind of Different As Me*, by Ron Hall and Denver Moore. Currently the paperback is on sale at amazon for \$11.36 and the Kindle edition is \$6.49. We will be meeting in the fellowship hall on Thursday August 5th at 12:00pm to discuss what we read. And if reading isn't your cup of tea, but you enjoy movies, please consider joining us for a screening of the film at our church on Thursday August 12th at 12:00pm. Please see a summary of the book from Amazon's website below:

"Meet Denver, raised under plantation-style slavery in Louisiana until he escaped the "Man" – in the 1960's – by hopping a train. Non-trusting, uneducated, and violent, he spent another 18 years on the streets of Dallas and Fort Worth.

Meet Ron Hall, a self-made millionaire in the world of high priced art deals -- concerned with fast cars, beautiful women, and fancy clothes.

And the woman who changed their lives -- Miss Debbie: "The skinniest, nosiest, pushiest, woman I ever met, black or white." She helped the homeless and gave of herself to all of "God's People," and had a way of knowing how to listen and helping others talk and be found – until cancer strikes.

Same Kind of Different as Me is a tale told in two unique voices – Ron Hall & Denver Moore – weaving two completely different life experiences into one common journey where both men learn "whether we is rich or poor or something in between this earth ain't no final restin' place. So in a way, we is all homeless-just workin' our way toward home."

TIP- Because of the popularity of this book, it should be fairly easy to find second hand.

Sent to be the light of Christ in our world.



Living into our Welcome

As you may or may not know June is pride month! Pride Month is where many LGBTQIA+ people celebrate all we've accomplished, mourn the lives we have lost, and advocate for all the things that still need to be done. Throughout June there will be many fun and educational events online so I invite you to go learn something, have fun, and respectfully participate with a community that may not be yours. I also invite all of you to reach out to me, through the church office, if you want to know ways to support LGBTQIA+ people locally or even if you just want to learn more about LGBTQIA+ terms and identities.

I hope, as a congregation, we continue to educate ourselves and fully embrace all people in our present and future congregation.

Happy Pride Month Everyone!

Hannah Oliver
They/Them

Hannah is a life long FELC member with a BA in both political science, & gender & sexuality studies. In the fall Hannah will be pursuing a Masters of Education. Hannah also has a proud mom....Go Hannah!

RIC -The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program, recognizes congregations and Lutheran organizations that declare themselves welcoming to all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Because First Lutheran created a welcoming statement (in 2017) affirming and welcoming all of God's children, we are listed on their website as a welcoming place for members of the LGTBQ+ community and their families & friends to worship. RIC also creates & shares a variety of educational resources with congregations to help inform us of how to better live into out welcoming statements. The following, "Clunky Questions" is an example of one of the many resources that they offer.

Clunky Questions— From our Lutheran partners at RIC ...

In our work, we often hear people with good intentions feel they aren't able to ask questions about what it means to be LGBTQ because they are afraid of offending someone or they don't have the right words with which to ask. If this sounds familiar, or if your faith community is interested in how to better support LGBTQ Lutherans, then the "Clunky Questions" series is for you. **Click [here](#) to read Lutherans answer some of the most common questions asked about their LGBTQ+ identities.**

PFLAG– Support Group

PFLAG is a support group for individuals and families in the LGBTQ+ community, their friends and allies and those wanting to honor diversity and grow their understanding in a respectful, helpful setting. Learn more about the Skagit Pflag organization on their [Website](#) There is also a PFLAG group that meets in Bellingham. [Here](#) is a link to their website. Pete Olson shared a little of his experience with Pflag: As a previous board member for B'ham I found the meetings to be extremely valuable for community members who just needed to talk, needed contact information for other LGBTQ+ friendly resources, or were really in dire need of support and kind intentions. This applied to both LGBTQ+ people and their families trying to be supportive.

Gender Revolution- In 2018 members of First Lutheran viewed the film Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric, at the Lincoln Theater. If you are curious and would like to learn more about gender, you may find this National Geographic documentary very interesting. It can be streamed for free, using this [link](#).

Quilt Blessing

P: Gracious God, as we place our hands on these Quilts, we join giver and receiver, recognizing the unity of all your people in the body of Christ.

C: We celebrate being the children of God.

P: We give thanks for the variety of gifts that compose these Quilts: donations of fabric, thread and sewing machines, the faithful people who cut the squares, design the patterns, sew the tops, iron the fabric, make backs and fillers, tie and stitch the bindings, provide publicity, donate boxes, pack the Quilts, bring food to sustain the quilters and contribute the money for the shipping of these Quilts.

C: We celebrate generosity.

P: We give thanks for the fellowship of all who work together to make the Quilts, the laughter, the shared stories, the joy of crafting something with one's hands and heart for another and the time to reflect and wonder about the recipient.

C: We celebrate community.

P: We send these Quilts as a sign of God's love and blessing for each person who receives one, trusting that their Quilt will be a source of comfort and hope in the midst of disaster and fear, a symbol of Christ's love to those who suffer, a reminder that each recipient is a beloved child of God.

We pray that these Quilts will serve a useful purpose in the life of the recipient; that they will bring warmth in the cold, shelter from the sun and heat, a wall for a home, or a carrier for a few precious belongings. May it be a step in recovering one's life and a message of care from someone they may never meet.

C: We celebrate hope in the midst of life's trials.

P: We remember those who have received our Quilts in the past and pray that their lives have returned to stability.

C: We celebrate the gift of life.

P: We ask that you bless the fruits of our labor and the mission of outreach to our local community, that together we may minister to our neighbors in need. Bless all who give and all who receive, as we are sewn together in the unity of your Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen



FELC Quilting Ministry

Our Quilting Ministry meets Thursday mornings at 9:30 am. You are invited to join us in ministry. You do not need to have sewing skills to help. Throughout the morning we are tying knots in yarn to secure the quilts, ironing fabric, sewing quilt tops and enjoying each others company. Come and see!

On Tuesday, we blessed 19 quilts that have been layer and tied since the quilters started meeting again last month. Our quilters pieced and sewed over 40 tops while home during Covid shutdown. These are in addition to 31 quilts that had been finished earlier and were donated to local organizations, Friendship House and Family Promise last fall.

This week we delivered 14 Quilts to Skagit First Steps Center in Burlington, a new facility opening this month, which will provide housing to folks in our valley with housing insecurities. We will be completing more quilts to deliver to this organization over the next few month. Additionally, we have earmarked another 5 quilts to be delivered to Mary's place, a special shelter for pregnant women and their infants.





We give thanks to our church family for your prayers. We felt your presence and support while doctors diagnosed me (Carolyn) as having Atrial Fibrillation. It is now under control with new medications until an electrophysiologist chooses the best option for treatment. Praise be to God for His ever presence.

Carolyn Ihde

Flowers for the Sanctuary

As plans are being made to reenter the sanctuary for worship, Altar Guild is gearing up as well.

A beautiful tradition of the Lutheran Church is a bouquet of flowers in the sanctuary. Anyone in the congregation is welcome to donate. Flowers can honor life, death, family, blessing, thankfulness and always to the Glory of God. The dedication can be printed in the bulletin or you may donate anonymously.

Flowers can come from a garden, greenhouse, farmers market or florist. Flowers or plants can be a single display or for both sides of the Altar, a single flower or bouquet. Altar Guild has vases available, or you may use your own. If you have flowers to donate for us to arrange, that can be done as well.

A sign up sheet is available in the Narthex of the church. Until we can sign up in person, you are welcome to contact Altar Guild about the date you would like and how we may help you actually get the flowers into the church.

Thank you, Cindy Faber
Temporary Flower Lady



A Note from Preschool...

Look for our new sign and our new phone number as you pass by the church! Meyer Sign did a nice job of replacing our faded red lollipop sign. It just makes you want to smile.

We are proceeding in hopes that our church and the Education Wing will be open to occupy students in September. Protocol required by our state and local governments as well as our church will be our guidelines. We are doing a lot of research and envisioning the changes that will be necessary. It is an exciting challenge.

Registrations are being accepted. Children ages 3 to 5 years old who are completely toilet trained are eligible. Families can find more information and registration form on our Face Book page or by going to First Lutheran Church's Facebook page and click on the Preschool link. They can also call our Administrator, Chelsey Olsen.

We have an opening for a Preschool teacher as well. Anyone interested should call Chelsey Olsen for more information

It's going to be an adventure to reunite after an entire year away from school, but we are up to the task. Please pray for the children, staff, and board. If you know little ones who would like to have fun learning about Jesus' love, our wonderful world and enjoy getting ready to continue successfully in the next phase of education, please share our name and number. If you know someone who might like to teach these children... share with them, too!

Happy Summer!
First Lutheran Preschool Board and Staff

First Lutheran Preschool ... 360-391-8581
Chelsey Olsen, Administrator



FELC's Social Ministry is very thankful for all your support this year. Because of you, First Lutheran has provided WIC with new diapers and baby supplies. First Lutheran also assisted Little Mountain Elementary's recent plea for calming tools. As you might imagine, the pandemic has been challenging for children and the school reported that there has been a great need to help students with behavior issues this year. And lastly, your help assisted Skagit County Family Services fill a need for pajamas for children.

Thank you, dear congregation, for your help spreading the love of Christ in our community.

Summer Sales on School Supplies

This summer, Social Ministry will start collecting school supplies for our neighbors at Jefferson and Little Mountain elementaries. If you are out shopping and you see a great sale on school supplies, please consider helping out your neighboring elementary schools.

The most commonly requested items are plain backpacks (without logos), Ticonderoga #2 pencils, glue sticks, boxes of 12 Crayola colored pencils, boxes of 24 Crayola crayons, boxes of 10 Crayola markers, wide-ruled composition notebooks, and Fiskars scissors.

Social Ministry will post a list of all requested school supplies in upcoming e-bulletins as summer approaches. We appreciate all you do to help our neighboring school children.



Friendship House Ministry

Another huge **'thank you'** to all of you who have kept Friendship House in your hearts during the Covid-19 pandemic. With your donations and support, we have faithfully continued to provide the ***Tuesday Sloppy Joe Monthly Meal***.

As always- we provide this monthly meal **the last Tuesday of each month** and truly appreciate all of our congregation members to help us with this wonderful church mission. Please be sure to check the weekly e news for the **"SignUpGenius"** link.

You can also sign up by using this [link](#) .

If you have any questions- please contact Barb Sneva or me.

Blessings to you all,
Debbie Lisser



First Lutheran,

Little Mountain Elementary wants to say a HUGE Thank you!!! We were able to purchase enough sensory tools to replenish our classrooms' calming corner kits! The students are already feeling calmer and more regulated thanks to your amazing congregation!

Sallie Miller
School Counselor
Little Mountain Elementary

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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here!

The ELCA is the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person-questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

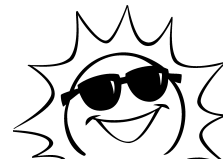
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Mailing: PO Box 777
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Church Office—office@firstlutheranmv.org

Website w/calendar www.firstlutheranmv.org

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Phone: 360 424-6832 - For Pastoral Emergencies, please listen to voicemail message for phone number of on call pastor



You are created uniquely by
God and you are welcome here.

Your Abilities· Age· Culture· Economic Status·
Gender Expression/identity· Life Circumstances·
Marital Status· Questions· Race· Sexual Orientation·
are welcome here.

To reach our Staff:

Pastor- Pastor Ryan Rouse

Pastorryan@firstlutheranmv.org

Holly Oliver,

Parish Administrator-office@firstlutheranmv.org

Pete Olson,

Worship Accompanist-peterdonne@yahoo.com

Janna Beecher,

Parish Assistant-parishassistant@firstlutheranmv.org

Preschool Administrator- Chelsey Olsen

Preschool@firstlutheranmv.org Preschool Phone-391-8581

Our Congregational Leaders

President— Bob Ramborger

Vice President— Donn Hollenbeck

Secretary— Jennifer Johnson

Treasurer— Jeanette St. Germain

Trustees

Donn Hollenbeck, Jeff May, Vacant Position

Deacons

Doug Carter, Bill Simon, Heather Romano

Parish Activities

Frances Wraspir, David Jones, Vacant position