



# First Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## September Handclasp Newsletter

### From Pastor Sami



Trust and patience seem to go hand in hand in the time of the in-between. We take the steps of change and wait to see what will happen. In movies, the time in-between the prayer and outcome, the risk and conclusion is so small. In real life, that time can seem like forever. It's easy to lose patience. It's easy to lose our trust in God. The Israelites felt the same way when they were in exile. How long will they have to wait? Isaiah urged the people to be patient and trust in God. Isaiah 40:28-31, *"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. God does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted, but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."* Being patient and trusting God was difficult for the Israelites and I don't

think we are very different from them!

One of our goals for this year was to increase our social media presence. Historically, we would reach out to television news stations and local newspapers to promote our church and events. However, more and more people are online. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, are the ways people are interacting with the world around them. It's the cheapest, easiest, and best way to reach people.

The Church Council is aware of this and has dedicated \$2000 to marketing this year. The Foundation has awarded us \$1000 as well. This past month, we ran an advertisement on Facebook for our church and increased our followers by 625 and gained 613 likes. Being a follower means when we post something to our page, it will automatically be shown to our followers. Following a page keeps you up to date on all the latest news. "Liking" a page means you support the page and the organization. Followers and likes are like endorsements, thus the more

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endorsements we have, the more likely people will choose us over other similar organizations. We are so excited that, within a month, we have a total of 683 likes and 733 followers.

So now what? Are we going to see more people on Sundays? Are we going to see more people attending our online service? We hope so, but we cannot guarantee that. We have entered that in-between time when we are patient and trust in God. The reason we are so excited about these new likes and followers is because it means people are aware of us and are interested in what we have to offer. Perhaps they will spend years following us and just watching from afar. It's their faith journey. We are called by God to welcome and be here when people are ready to begin or continue their faith journey. People are learning that we are here, that we are a supportive and loving church who loves Jesus and is engaged in our community.

Now what? Now let's continue to brainstorm ways we can serve the needs of our community. Let's keep brainstorming ways to connect with people who are worshipping and watching us online. This social media and online aspect of church is new, which means we are being church in new and exciting ways. Let's keep getting outside the walls of the church and telling people about First Lutheran Church!

## **Worship and Music**

### **Music Notes from Addy**



Worship has been so meaningful with the diverse music we have been doing. The Praise Team continues to lead us and open our hearts to the movement of the Spirit.

I enjoy playing the organ and we are so blessed to have uplifting musical offerings. We were excited to welcome Solomon to the Praise Team last month. He is the lead singer of the band The Arsonists and we look forward to his musical offerings during worship. It is so wonderful when youth get involved in the Music Ministry.

I am also excited to start the bell choir. Rehearsals will start August 27 in the choir room. No musical knowledge or skills are required, and all ages are welcome. We will spend the first rehearsal going over performances, assigning bell parts, and looking at music.

We will be having an evening Vespers service using Holden Evening Prayer on December 7 at 6:30pm. If you are interested in being a Cantor, singing in the band/ensemble, or playing a concert/orchestral instrument for the service, please talk to me or email [musicflcsj302@gmail.com](mailto:musicflcsj302@gmail.com). Vespers are one of my favorite ways to worship and I think one of the most intimate services, and I am excited to share this service with you.

## Musical Offering

Are you interested in offering your musical talent to God and to the congregation to help us worship and praise? Please let Addy know you are interested. She is still learning who people are and who has provided musical offerings in the past. She wants to start scheduling people, so please let her know you are interested. Call the church office or email [musicflcsj302@gmail.com](mailto:musicflcsj302@gmail.com).



## Worship Technology

You may have noticed this past month some new features on our online worship experience. Jonathan has been playing around with the cameras and has made it possible for the words to be on the screen without losing the view of what is happening. This way, we can see the words *and* the faces. When I first came to First Lutheran, this was a frustrating part of many peoples' online worship experience. Thank you so much, Jonathan, for figuring this out.



## From the office...

Thank you to everyone for your supportive comments and feedback on the new website. There are still several pages I'm working on but I hope to have it wrapped up in the next few weeks.



We have several goals that we hope to accomplish with the website revamp. One is for our members to have easy access to items like donating online, facility reservation forms, our calendar and upcoming events as well as our newsletter. All of these things will be just a few clicks away once the new website is fully launched.

Yet, we're also trying to create a user-friendly experience for people who are curious about our church and who we are as First Lutheran Downtown. All of the things I mentioned above are important for visitors, but we also want to highlight our service and outreach. How do we contribute to the St. Joseph community through Imagine Eleven, Grace House, Haven House, the Crossing, etc.

We also want to showcase who Pastor Sami is and the unique perspective she brings to First Lutheran. We hear time and time again that her sermons resonate with people, so we hope to dedicate some space to those sermons to reach more people and hopefully create more disciples. It's an exciting time for First Lutheran as our online presence continues to grow!

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## Imagine Eleven Concert Series

Imagine Eleven wraps up its tenth year! We averaged 410 people per concert; however, two nights were rained out and three nights were hosted by First Lutheran due to weather. Thus, our attendance was not what we had hoped. We raised \$3000 from the “passing of the bucket” donations which went to The Crossing Nutrition Center. Our goal was \$5000, which gives us incentive to create an even more dynamic event next year. We were so happy to partner with Youth Alliance in the concession stand and Community Missions with the snow cones stand. Youth Volunteer Corps of Youth Alliance made \$2,566.44 this year, which will pay for their trip to the Youth Volunteer Corp Summit in Tulsa, OK. They have agreed to run the concessions stand again next year! Our hope is to continue to partner with not-for-profit organizations in St. Joseph to help fundraise, promote, and, in the future, provide volunteer sign up opportunities.

One goal for Pastor Sami and Brooke was to double the number of followers and likes on the Imagine Eleven Facebook page. We increased our followers by 1,277 and our likes by 1,242, well surpassing our goal. We now have a total of 2,219 likes and 2,291 followers. The word is getting out about Imagine Eleven. In our advertising, we focused on connecting First Lutheran to Imagine Eleven. First Lutheran *presents* Imagine Eleven, which many people did not realize. They also did

not realize that no donated money to Imagine Eleven comes to the church. *All proceeds* go back into the community. We also wanted people to understand the mission of Imagine Eleven which is, “music that brings community and service together.”

This fall, we are putting together a board to help plan the event for next year to make it even more successful. We hope to have more raffle items, children’s activities, and not-for-profit organizations involved to help increase awareness of how we can all serve our community. We are so excited for the future of the Imagine Eleven *Summer* Concert series.

Wait, it’s not just in the summer, anymore. Imagine Eleven Concert Series is expanding. We are hosting Surfin’ USA on Nov. 11 at the Missouri Theater. We will also honor our Veterans during this concert. Proceeds will go to The Crossing Nutrition Center. Tickets cost between \$10 to \$25. Get your tickets at [jomotickets.com](http://jomotickets.com).







# YOUTH MINISTRY

## Youth Ministry Begins...

The youth had such a great time at the Soca Jukebox Imagine Eleven Concert at First Lutheran. We joined with the youth serving food in the concession stand from Youth Alliance. We also had a BLAST serving at the Haven House.

Addy and Pastor Sami are creating a new service Sunday that will include elementary students. The last Sunday of the month, we will all meet downstairs for the Church Potluck and then will do a service project, together. We will do this every month unless there is a holiday.



## September Schedule

### September 03:

No activities. Happy Labor Day!

### September 10:

7:30-8:30 p.m. at church  
Regular youth group

### September 17:

Bonfire Party at Addy's Farm. 6:00p.m.-7:30 p.m. Parents welcome. Bring bug spray! Supper provided.

### September 24:

Church Potluck and Service Project for elementary and high school youth.

Future Youth







## Building and Grounds

We would like to give a huge thank you to Pam and Jim Farrell and Dave and Ann Newman for getting rid of a lot of stuff in the church to help keep the building free of clutter. Thank you to everyone who helped move chairs for the Imagine Eleven concert series when it had to be moved into the building due to weather. Thank you!

We do have another leak in the building and are figuring out how to fix it. It is in the basement on the north side of the building. We think the leak only happens during heavy rainstorms/melting when the eaves cannot handle the amount of water. It pours over them and into the foundation. It then seeps into the building. We will keep you posted as to next steps. Right now, we are just gathering information to make the best decision on how to fix the problem.



**Reminder:**

Please make sure to put things back where you found them. That way, when anyone needs them, we know where they are Thank you!

## Council Updates

- ~Finalized the updated version of the safety plan.
- ~We will be closing the Care Portal and the money has been moved to the Good Samaritan Fund.
- ~One-Time Event Guidelines and Rental Request Forms were finalized.
- ~Chamber of Commerce membership was renewed.
- ~Youth Alliance Table Sponsorship of \$350 was approved.

## Altar Guild

### Meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

The Altar Guild meetings will resume in September. All are invited to join and help the guild support our worship experiences.

## Flowers for Altar

November 5<sup>th</sup>, December 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> are available for people to provide flowers for the altar. If you are interested, sign up outside the doors of the sanctuary by the technology corner. The calendar is on the bulletin board. The cost of flowers is \$50 paid Altar Guild. Nancy Lewis is the Treasurer and will take the payment. You are welcome to take the flowers home. We provide vases that we ask you to bring back.



## Service and Outreach

### Haven House, 700 Olive St.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month

**Cooking:** 3:00 p.m.

**Serving:** 5:00 p.m.

**Make a dessert:** Sign up outside the chapel to make or buy dessert for Haven House. We serve about 40 people. Bring the dessert to church on Sunday before or to the Haven House. Sign up in the Narthex outside the chapel on the black table.

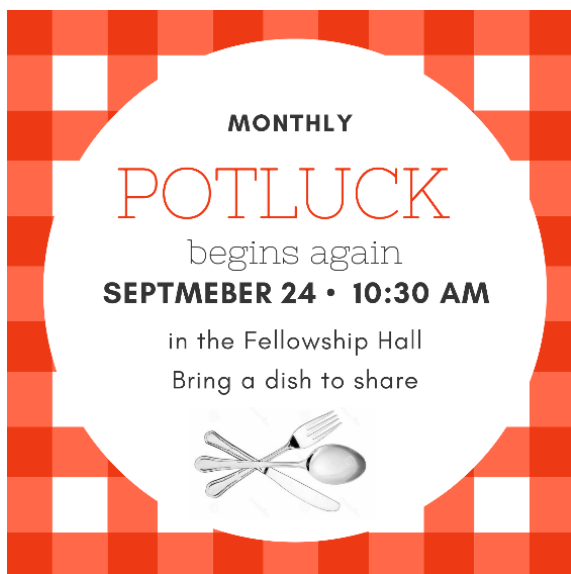
## New Service and Outreach Team

There is a new Service and Outreach Team to help us connect with and serve the needs of our community. If you would like to help, please contact Carol Bunge, [jjbunge@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjbunge@sbcglobal.net).



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## Facebook Comments About First Lutheran

I had pretty much given up on organized religion until my husband and I tried First Lutheran. We have a pastor and congregation who care about each other, and we reach out to members of our community in need. We welcome you without judgment.  
~Donna Korell

After being raised in church and being in a church for 15+years after high school, I was devastated when I went through my divorce and my church family was the furthest supportive people in my life. My ex goes there now and good for him but for the past 12 years I became a wonderer. Until I met Pastor Sami and Jeff at Imagine 11. I figured I might as well give it a try and from the moment I walked in the door, I was home. The people are loving, caring and real. Then the worship music played, and it was one of my favorites. I cried and cried because for me it was God saying Welcome Home! I've been there just a little over a year and am so in love with my church! Pastor, music, church family and ministry. I'm not Mikey but try it you'll like it! No, you will love it! ~Tami Davis

*spread the*  
**WORD**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

September 1: First Friday lunch

September 4: Labor Day, office closed; no line dancing

September 11, 18, 25: Line Dancing  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

September 14: Altar Guild meeting in Chapel 10:00 a.m.

September 14: Church Council meeting,  
6:30 p.m.

September 15: Handclasp articles due

September 19: Men's Breakfast, La Peep 7:00 a.m.

September 21: Phoebe Circle  
1:00 p.m.

September 24: Noisy Offering

## Christian Education Opportunities

### Weekly:

Scripture Study with Pastor Sami meets Mondays from 1:00-2:00 p.m. in the upstairs classroom. We discuss the scriptures to be preached the upcoming Sunday.

Scripture Study with Pastor Sami also meets Wednesdays from 6:00-7:00 p.m. online only. **Zoom ID 845 6213 2526**

Thursday Morning Bible Study meets from 10:00-12:00 p.m. in the upstairs classroom.

Sunday Morning Bible Study meets from 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Choir Room. We discuss the scriptures and sermon from worship.

### Monthly:

Phoebe's Circle is a women's Bible study group that meets the third Thursday of the month from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the chapel.



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## Anniversaries and Birthdays



### Anniversaries

Jim and Carol Bunge, 34 years, 09/02  
Terry and Sarah Cotton, 46 years, 09/03  
Randi and Roger Lenander, 45 years, 09/09  
Mindy and Brandin Erickson, 15 years, 09/13  
Ken and Janet Ruff, 46 years, 09/24  
Joy and Miles Stroud, 33 years, 09/29

### Birthdays

Jon Ledin, 09/03  
Nancy Gordon, 09/04  
Donna Korell, 09/04  
Angie Luthans, 09/04  
Ron Starks, 09/05  
Dan Chladek, 09/09  
Alan Dunning, 09/09  
Caleb Bufkin, (13), 09/10  
Mel Eyberg, 09/10  
Stephen Schmidt, 09/13  
Bob Lynch, 09/14  
Jane Nelson-Thompson, 09/15  
Trisha Viselli, 09/15  
Esteban, Pena-Arrezola, 09/17  
Nila Schneider, 09/18  
Verna Kirschner, 09/19  
Mort Bigham, 09/20  
Laurel Goforth, 09/21  
Carolyn Pearl, 09/21  
Janell O'Mara, 09/22  
Joe Mistek, 09/26  
Nora Rivest (3), 09/26  
Nathan Chladek, 09/27



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## Prayers

### Members:

**Floreen Johnson** Prayers for continued health and happiness.

**Pamela Kirkpatrick-Norton and family**, prayers for healing and continued strength to lean on God in difficult times.

**Della Schiermeyer**, prayers for good health.

**Dorothy Masteller**, prayers of strength as she deals with her cancer.

**Kay Howard** for healing.

**David Bezona** for healing and strength.

**Bob Lynch** for healing.

**Carolyn Pearl** for healing.

**Jack Pearl** for healing from leg pain.

**Nickie Casburn** for healing.

**Janet Ruff** for healing.

**Sharmyn Thompson**, prayers for healing.

**Trisha Viselli** (daughter to Howard and Janice Harmsen)

### Friends

**Bill and Sharon Patton** (friends of Dave and Ann Newman)

**Tammy** (daughter to Howard and Janice Harmsen)

**Sarah Pierce** (daughter to Jim and Juel Pierce)

**Lyryk** (Nataleigh Messimore's cousin)

**Scott Wells** (friend of Jeff Langdon)

**Darin Hinnergardt** (friend of Jeff Langdon),

**David and Cindy** (friends of Jim and Juel Pierce)

### Friends continued:

**Jill Harris Smith** (friend to Ken Korell)

**Charles Newman** (brother Dave Newman)

**Brenda Fanning** (step-daughter of Dorothy Masteller),

**Larry Kramer** (Joy Winters' brother-in-law)

**Rosa and Vivine Langdon**

(granddaughters of Kris and Jeff Langdon),

**Keira Wall** (great-niece of Irene Wall)

**Kevin and Becky Carlson** (cousins to Kathy Wessler)

**Loren Larkin** (friend of Sharmyn Thompson),

**Charles Frazer** (Friend to Irene Wall)

**Victor Johnson** (uncle of Kenny Ruff),

**Kim Durbin** (cousin of Kenny Ruff),

**Richard Palmer** (husband of Debbie Ziph-Palmer and friend of Carol Wilson)

**Patty Hansen** (Brooke's mom)

**Sunshine Amthauer** (daughter to Bob and Fran Lynch)

**Ron and Lynn Hunter** (friends of Sharmyn Thompson)

**Brie Phillips** (Charlotte Chirila's granddaughter)

**Maddie McKnight** (family friend of Laurel Goforth)



<b>Date</b>	<b>Lector</b>	<b>Communion Assistant</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>
Sept. 3	Caleb Bufkin	Kathy Wessler	TBD
Sept. 10	William Archer	Marilyn Hunt	Stetson Rush
Sept. 17	Jennifer Bufkin	Ken Korell	Caleb Bufkin
Sept. 24	Harry Archer	Steve Archer	TBD

**Ushers:** Sylvester Heeler, Larry Reder, Ron Starks

<b>Average Attendance</b>	<b>July</b>
In Person	59
Online	150
<b>Offering Year-to-Date</b>	<b>July</b>
Income	\$116,078.72
Expense	\$121,690.47
Difference	-\$5,611.75



<b>Date</b>	<b>Flower Schedule</b>
September 3	Jim and Juel Pierce
September 10	Howard and Janice Harmsen
September 17	Kathy Wessler
September 24	Diana Wright