



# First Lutheran Church

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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.

## What are you doing this Summer?

It is hard to believe that summer is almost upon us and soon, along with no school for our kids or grandkids and nicer weather, people will be enjoying a much-needed vacation or will get caught up in things like family reunions, camping, 4th of July celebrations, and other fun activities that we can only enjoy when the sun is shining regularly here in the beautiful state of Washington. That being said, I invite you to consider marking your calendars and joining us for some fun activities here at FELC and beyond. And please note that you are encouraged to invite your friends and neighbors to join us as well.

First of all, I know that there are lots of individuals in our congregation who enjoy reading, so I thought it might be nice to offer a theological summer reading program (similar to the ones offered at public libraries when we were kids). Each month you will be encouraged to read a certain book (the title and description of each suggestion can be found elsewhere in this newsletter) and afterwards at the end of each month we will discuss what we learned. And just like the summer reading programs you may have enjoyed when you were a child, for each book you read and for each discussion you take part in, you will have the opportunity to earn a prize. On the last Thursday of each month, we will meet at church at 12pm to share what we learned. *(If anyone is interested in hosting an evening book group, please let us know).*

Second of all, if you haven't had a chance to watch the second season of *The Chosen* television series, you are invited to join us on Fridays at Noon to watch an episode per week. And being that most of us know the New Testament pretty well, you can always come and see what it is like. After each episode we discuss what we saw and learned, and we reflect on how the show brings the different Bible characters to life. Yes, popcorn is provided.

Next, along with watching *The Chosen*, we will be starting a Bible study based on the second season beginning on Sunday June 4th at 11:30am. Now, although I can't speak for everyone who attended the season 1 study, I feel that I need to let you all know that it was probably one of my favorite Bible Studies I have ever led. The director and writers of the show have done a fabulous job connecting the Bible and the characters we encounter in Scripture with the ones presented in the show. Again, if you have a good understanding of Scripture, you are welcome to participate in the study at any time.

Another event I invite you to consider participating in, that involves caring for the members and friends of FELC, is a visitation/communion giver group training on August 16th at 6pm (it should be still light outside.) If you would like to meet with some of our shut-ins, I'm certain many of them would enjoy having a few more visits than I am able to do on my own. During our time together we will discuss how you are to handle the blessed elements (wine/grape juice and bread) and where you can find them each week after worship. We can also talk about other opportunities or fun ways for us to stay connected with those who aren't able to make it to church anymore.

*Continues Pg. 2*

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

And if you are looking to do something fun with your kids or grandkids this summer, there are a number of activities being offered on Fridays at Edgewater Park (see details pg.6). Also, several churches in the area (including FELC) will be joining together to offer a Vacation Bible School from July 31st to August 3rd. Each day a meal will be offered at 5:00pm for the children and volunteers, an opening ceremony will be held around 5:30pm, the kids will then rotate to different classes (Bible time, Crafts, Games, Snacks), and we will end by 8pm after a brief closing ceremony.

Finally, since we are celebrating 50 years of being inside our beautiful church building and this gorgeous part of Mount Vernon, we hope you can join us for a church picnic on August 27th after worship. Members and friends of the church will be encouraged to bring a hotdish, snack, or salad to share, and hamburgers, hotdogs, cake, and beverages will be provided. And aside from enjoying some good food and fellowship, there will be Bingo with prizes and some outdoor games for the kids to play.

Hopefully, like me, you are looking forward to having some fun this summer! I don't know about you, but I can't wait to read some good books to help me grow in my faith and I am eager to explore more of *The Chosen* with you. Not to mention the fact that last year I enjoyed the excellent food and the stimulating conversations that were offered at our church picnic! So, please mark your calendars and don't forget to invite your friends, family, co-workers, neighbors to join us.

God Bless,  
Pastor Ryan

### High School Senior Celebration May 21

On Sunday, **May 21st** we will be honoring our high school graduates at the coffee hour following worship. Join us in celebrating this important milestone in the lives of Matthew Cole, Kaitlyn Cook, & Megan Henning. There will be baskets available for cards and well wishes.



A reminder, Pentecost is May 28th this year, and the color of the day is red!



### Hymn Sing

June 4 & July 7 @ 9:45 am

Come and sing your favorite hymns before worship! Look them up and be ready to sing.



### Sharing Musical Gifts

Are you interested in providing a musical offering? Pete would like to encourage you to share musical gifts in worship. If you are interested in providing music, please contact our Music Accompanist, Pete Olson.



## Holden Evening Prayer Services

Our Holden Evening Prayer Services are returning on June 12th. These Monday Evening services will continue on the 2nd Monday throughout the summer.

### Upcoming Holden Prayer Services

June 12th, July 10th, and August 14th

## New Member Lunch

Have you ever considered becoming a voting member of First Lutheran, or do you know someone who might want to become one? If so, please consider joining Pastor Ryan (or encourage the individual you know) to attend a new member lunch on July 16th at 12:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. This opportunity will be a great way for us to get to know each other and it will give you an opportunity to find out more about the exciting opportunities offered at FELC. Please email Pastor Ryan, or add your name to the sign-up sheet on the church bulletin board in the Narthex if you are interested.



## There are a lot of good, Spirit inspired, things happening at First Lutheran.

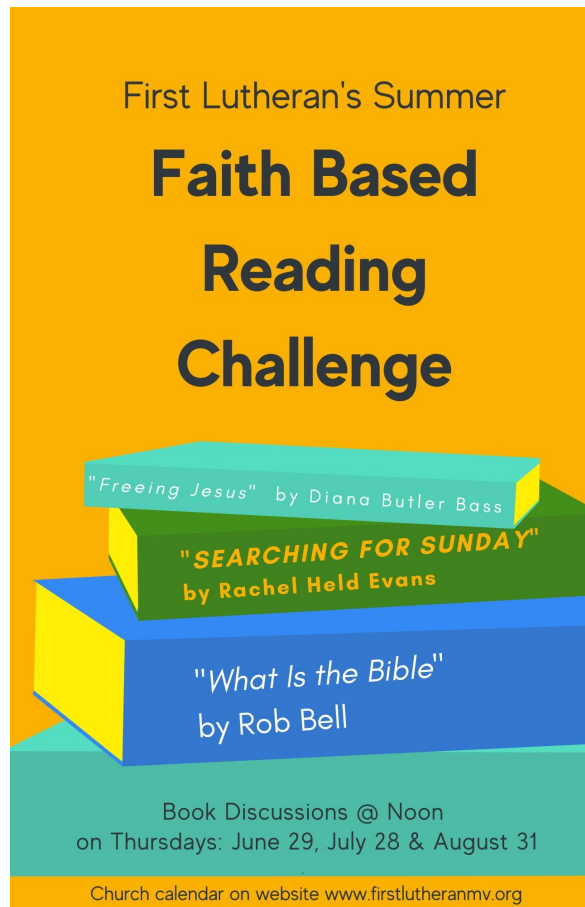
The following: We have more people serving our Congregation in worship. Jana Svendsen is very active in asking many to serve as well as others and there have been many great responses. However, there are still many opportunities for others to serve, and not only is it appreciated, but it is also a blessing to those who serve. So, if you want to serve as an usher, reader, reading the "prayers of the people", or communion assistant, contact a Council Member, Holly (Our Parish Administrator), or Pastor.

There has been great participation among those who want to sing in the "Drop In" Choir. Pete Olson, our Music Director, has put a great effort into bringing this group together. The Sundays that they are singing has enhanced our worship experience. There are so many singers that they fill the choir area. They have taken on some regular Choir Anthems and have not only sung from our hymnal. Just possibly, we might be able to have a choir director in the fall.

There is something our Church Council has done which I believe is very important. We have acquired a defibrillator. Heather Romano researched it, Holly, our Parish Administrator, purchased it, and Bob Ramborger installed it in the Church. We hope we do not have to use it, but if we have a cardiac emergency of someone in our church, it very well could save a life.

Summer will be here soon, and that is a time for vacations and other warm weather activities. We want people to do their summer activities, but you cannot forget we also have a need to worship and fellowship at church. Although I cannot speak for our Lord, I am sure He would appreciate your attendance at church.

Donn Hollenbeck, Council President



## Summer Reading Program featuring Books of Faith

If you would like to participate in the Summer reading program, please note that we will be purchasing some used copies on Amazon to help those who may not be able to purchase a copy at full retail price. Below you will find a list of the books we will be reading with a description provided by Amazon.

### Book for June: *Freeing Jesus* by Diana Butler Bass

"The award-winning author of *Grateful* goes beyond the culture wars to offer a refreshing take on the comprehensive, multi-faceted nature of Jesus, keeping his teachings relevant and alive in our daily lives.

#### *How can you still be a Christian?*

This is the most common question Diana Butler Bass is asked today. It is a question that many believers ponder as they wrestle with disappointment and disillusionment in their church and its leadership. But while many Christians have left their churches, they cannot leave their faith behind. In *Freeing Jesus*, Bass challenges the idea that Jesus can only be understood in static, one-dimensional ways and asks us to instead consider a life where Jesus grows with us and helps us through life's challenges in several capacities: as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence. *Freeing Jesus* is an invitation to leave the religious wars behind and rediscover Jesus in all his many manifestations, to experience Jesus beyond the narrow confines we have built around him. It renews our hope in faith and worship at a time when we need it most."

## **Book for July: *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans**

"Are you struggling to connect with your church community? Do you find yourself questioning the core beliefs that you once held dear? *Searching for Sunday*, from *New York Times* bestselling author Rachel Held Evans is a heartfelt ode to the past and a hopeful gaze into the future of what it means to be a part of the modern church.

Like millions of her millennial peers, Rachel Held Evans didn't want to go to church anymore. The hypocrisy, the politics, the gargantuan building budgets, the scandals--to her, it was beginning to feel like church culture was too far removed from Jesus. Yet, despite her cynicism and misgivings, something kept drawing Evans back to church.

Evans found herself wanting to better understand the church and find her place within it, so she set out on a new adventure. Within the pages of *Searching for Sunday*, Evans catalogs her journey as she loves, leaves, and finds the church once again.

Evans tells the story of her faith through the lens of seven sacraments of the Catholic church--baptism, confession, holy orders, communion, confirmation, the anointing of the sick, and marriage--to teach us the essential truths about what she's learned along the way, including: Faith isn't just meant to be believed, it's meant to be lived and shared in community. Christianity isn't a kingdom for the worthy--it's a kingdom for the hungry, the broken, and the imperfect. The countless and beautiful ways that God shows up in the ordinary parts of our daily lives. *Searching for Sunday* will help you unpack the messiness of community, teaching us that by overcoming our cynicism, we can all find hope, grace, love, and, somewhere in between, church."

## **Book for August: *What is the Bible? How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything* by Rob Bell.**

"Rob Bell, the beloved author of *Love Wins* and *What We Talk About When We Talk About God*, goes deep into the Bible to show how it is more revelatory, revolutionary, and relevant than we ever imagined—and offers a cogent argument for why we need to look at it in a fresh, new way. *What Is the Bible?* provides insights and answers that make clear why the Bible is so revered and what makes it truly inspiring and essential to our lives.

Rob takes us deep into actual passages to reveal the humanity behind the Scriptures. You cannot get to the holy without going through the human, Rob tells us. When considering a passage, we shouldn't ask "Why did God say . . .?" To get to the heart of the Bible's meaning, we should be asking: "What's the story that's unfolding here and why did people find it important to tell it? What was it that moved them to record these words? What was happening in the world at that time? What does this passage/story/poem/verse/book tell us about how people understood who they were and who God was at that time?" In asking these questions, Rob goes beyond the one-dimensional question of "is it true?" to reveal the Bible's authentic transformative power. Rob addresses the concerns of all those who see the Bible as God's Word but are troubled by the ethical dilemmas, errors, and inconsistencies in Scripture. With *What Is the Bible?*, he recaptures the Good Book's magic and reaffirms its power and inspiration to shape and inspire our lives today."

## Sunday School Dates to remember:

**May 14: No class, Mother's Day**

May 21: Final Class of the School Year

Don't miss the final Sunday School class of the year taught by Pastor Ryan. Please join us as we honor the graduates and celebrate our year together.

## Sunday School Wrap-Up & Planning

Please join Pastor Ryan on May 21st at 11:30 am to discuss our 2022-23 Sunday school year and plan for our 2023-24 school year.

## Looking Ahead

We are in need of teachers, and festive day leaders next year. Is God calling you to this important ministry? Please contact Pastor Ryan to learn more.

## Join the Truth and Healing Movement

The ELCA has launched its participation in the Truth and Healing Movement, an initiative to increase the church's understanding of the impacts of colonization on Indigenous people in past generations and in the present. Areas of focus will include: development of an appropriate settler narrative from a Lutheran perspective; encouraging the ritual practice of land acknowledgement; understanding Lutheran participation in Indian boarding schools; and supporting communities impacted by the ongoing crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.

## Family Fun Nights

If you are looking for an exciting lineup of activities to enjoy with your entire family this summer, you are encouraged to participate in Family Fun Nights at Edgewater Park on Fridays from 5pm to 7pm (Free for all ages).

Please talk to Pastor Ryan if you are interested in attending any of these events together as a church family.

June 2nd (Great Outdoors)

July 21st (Let's Go Fly a Kite!)

August 1st (Tuesday, National Night Out)

September 8th (Alex Zerbe, Family Entertainment)

## Family Game Day and Pizza Party

Are you a fan of board games or card games? Do you like Pizza? If you answered yes to either of these questions, please consider joining us for a Game Day at First Lutheran. We will have games for all ages and there will be people at the church to help teach you how to play. There will be games like Potion Explosion (easy to learn), Skyjo (easy card game), Roam (fun strategy/card game), Splendor (chip collecting/card development), Apples to Apples (card/party games), etc. Also, please feel free to bring your own game to share and teach others.

Watch your E news for more detailed information, including a date.

Please feel free to invite your friends and neighbors (a sign-up will be offered in June so we can have enough food and beverages).



Thank you to those who sent cards or attended Yvonne's memorial service. I really appreciate it.

Fred Robbins



## Vacation Bible School (July 31<sup>st</sup>-August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5pm to 8pm)

After reading Pastor Ryan's article, hopefully you were excited to hear that the churches in our area will be joining together to offer a Vacation Bible School this summer! That being said, please know that in order for us to help our little ones grow in their faith, we will need your support in all kinds of ways. So, you are invited to prayerfully consider how you might assist us with such a big, but rewarding, endeavor. And this little article is being written to plant the seed and to help you think about how you might be able to participate.

If you attended a VBS program as a child, or if you have been a helper in the past, you are probably aware that it practically takes a village to make it happen. Not only do you need lots of people willing to perform specific tasks (see list below), but to help offset costs there will most likely be a need for donated items such as: t-shirts, craft supplies, food, snacks, (a list will be made available in the church Enews soon). And of course, there wouldn't be a program without children, so it is vital that we spread the word and do our best to encourage our kids, grandkids, and the parents we know to participate.

**Volunteers Needed:** Director or Co-directors (to organize and run the event).

Large group leaders or a master of ceremonies willing to lead the kids during the opening and closing sessions.

Teachers to lead crafts and games/activities.

Decorations Crew to help transform the church and meeting space.

Snack Crew to provide a special snack each day.

Publicity team to advertise and handle registration for the program.

Guides/Chaperones to lead small groups of children through different class rotations (such as crafts, games, Bible time)

Setup/Clean up Crew

Dinner Crew will provide a meal for the kids and volunteers. (*We are hoping that each church can take one night*).

Although this all may seem a bit overwhelming, we are certain that with multiple churches joining forces we can make it happen! And please know that even if you can't assist us physically as a volunteer, perhaps you can donate some needed items, help us invite others, or pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. After all, Vacation Bible School programs can be an excellent opportunity to connect our children with God and help them experience his love and forgiveness through fun Biblical stories and activities.

# Synod News



## June is Pride Month

Hello RIC Congregations & Rostered Ministers!

Please read the following message from Pastor Gina Herman, who will be facilitating our Pride Participation efforts this year! We hope YOU and your congregation will be involved in your community!

As you know, June is PRIDE month, and there are a variety of different PRIDE events going on all around our synod (*see the list of PRIDE events near you below*). Here are a few initial things to know about how our NWWA Synod will be involved in PRIDE this year:

1. We will be marching in the Seattle PRIDE parade again on **Sunday, June 25th**. There is once again a 200 person limit, so if there are folks in your congregation who would like to march with us, **we ask that you find someone in your congregation to be a contact person who will keep track of those from your congregations who would like to march**. More info to come soon.
2. This year, we will be ordering and selling **NWWA PRIDE t-shirts!** That way, wherever and whenever you are involved in a PRIDE event near you, you can represent your church and our synod. Again, more info to come soon.
3. There will be an initial **planning meeting on Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm via Zoom**. All who are interested in helping to plan and organize are welcome to join! Here's the Zoom link for the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84097176895>
4. Though we will be participating in the Seattle PRIDE parade, **there are many other PRIDE events around our synod that need our support**. Please check out the dates and events and go to as many as you can! Here are the ones we currently know about:
  - Whatcom Youth Pride – June 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Anacortes – June 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Kirkland – June 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Everett – June 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Capitol Hill Trans-PRIDE Parade – June 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - Seattle – June 25<sup>th</sup>
  - Sedro-Wooley (4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade)
  - Bellingham – July 9<sup>th</sup>

If you have questions, contact Pastor Gina Herman at [pastorgina@hslckirkland.org](mailto:pastorgina@hslckirkland.org).

Hope to see you around the Synod in June!



## May 2023 Edition of the Spirit

The May 2023 edition of The Spirit includes articles from our Synod Vice President, Kay Edgerton and Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee. Their articles feature thoughts about lay leadership and the upcoming synod gatherings - read them [HERE](#). Find archived editions of The Spirit [HERE](#).





## Social Ministry Focus

### May is for Mothers

Actually, it should be written that May is for babies, but it didn't roll off the tongue the same way. The month of May we are asking the congregation to consider donating diapers, baby wipes, onesies, burp towels, baby food, and formula. These items are in high demand and are very costly (especially diapers!). Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and guardians could really use your help to ease their financial burden.



### Lenten and Easter Outreach Offerings

Social Ministry would like to thank you, the congregation, for your generosity in donating kitchen items for the new housing unit in Mount Vernon. Martha's Place, which is run by the Catholic Community Services, received two truckloads of donations because of First Lutheran. One truckload was full of kitchen items and the second was filled with quilts from the quilting group. Another thank you needs to be sent directly to the quilting group, for all their hard work sewing and quilting over 50 quilts to keep people warm at Martha's Place.

We were also very blessed to make a donation of \$1338.68 to Martha's place, which came from the Lenten and Easter Offerings. Thank you for helping our community!

## Spring Quilt Distribution

The church quilters completed 56 twin size quilts, 8 baby quilts and one lap size quilt from November 2022 through April 2023. The quilts were blessed on April 30th and the twin size quilts were packed for delivery to Martha's Place. I am grateful to the following people who stayed after the worship service to help pack - Kathy Birch, Margie Holdt, Sharon Lauch, Carl Libbey, Heather Romano, and Barb Sneva.

It is still to be decided who the recipients of the baby quilts and the lap quilt will be.

Anyone is welcome to join us on the second and fourth Thursdays to help finish the quilts.

We are called the church quilters but no complicated sewing is involved on Thursdays; if you can tie a simple knot you possess all the qualifications needed. ( If you really enjoy piecing quilt tops we have wonderful donated fabric to take and create at home, a 60"x80" quilt top for us.) Please consider helping in this worthwhile ministry of providing warm quilts for various agencies in our valley as well as contributing to Lutheran World Relief.

## Friendship House Meal

First Lutheran has a consistent role in serving our homeless neighbors. Once per month, we gather supplies for a dinner to be served at both the *Friendship House Cafe* and now at *Skagit First Step* in Burlington. Thanks to your generosity!

Watch for a sign up sheet in the e news or on the refrigerator in the kitchen. We will be serving the evening meal at the Friendship House on May 3th, and again on June 27.



As spring and summer arrive we hope that you are able to get out and enjoy the beauty of God’s Beautiful Creation. Sometimes when people are able to get away for the weekend they like to mail in their offering. We also have members who give routinely using a bill pay type system with their bank. If you choose to mail in your offering, we ask that you use our Post Office Box address, which is the most secure way to send mail to the church. Our mailbox at the road is not a locking mailbox. Thank you

**Our Post Office Box address is:**

First Lutheran Church  
 PO Box 777  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

2015 E. Blackburn Rd.  
 Mount Vernon WA 98274  
 Mailing: PO Box 777  
 Mount Vernon WA 98273

**Worship Services**

Sunday Worship 10:00 am

**Church Office**—office@firstlutheranmv.org

Website w/calendar [www.firstlutheranmv.org](http://www.firstlutheranmv.org)

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Church Phone: 360 424-6832

Direct number for Pastor Ryan Rouse: 360 603-6379

**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



Save the date August 27th for our Church Potluck Picnic

**Church Calendar**

Remember that we have a calendar attached to our website [www.firstlutheranmv.org](http://www.firstlutheranmv.org)

We do our best to keep it updated with all the church happenings & community building use. If you would like to add a meeting or event to the calendar, please email the church office at Office@firstlutheranmv.org Thank you for helping us keep the calendar up to date!

**First Lutheran**

All are created uniquely by God and all are welcome here.

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

**Our Congregational Leaders**

**President**– Donn Hollenbeck

**Vice President**– Bob Ramborger

**Secretary**– Vyonne Carter, Sandy Simon

**Treasurer**– Brad Pickett

**Trustees**

Jeff May, Bob Ramborger, Brad Clifton

**Deacons**

Heather Romano, Bud Fish, Doug Carter

**Parish Activities**

Ann May, Sue Holmes, Jana Svendsen