



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.



Digging the Gospel

Those of us who grew up attending Sunday school are most likely familiar with the parable of the Sower famously preached by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Even if you weren't given the opportunity for a faith-based education as a child, most likely you have heard it read in a sermon or a Bible study. In it, a sower goes out to plant seeds, and he spreads them everywhere. The seeds fall on a path, on rocky ground, they end up among thorns, and eventually they end up on good soil.

After Jesus has finished telling the story, his disciples ask him to explain it to them, and he teaches them that the seeds are the word of God and the different types of ground represent people's hearts! Now, depending on how you receive God's word, if it isn't allowed to be planted deep within your heart and to take root in your soul, then the evil one, the troubles, cares, and the wealth of this world, will snatch it away from you. In other words, Jesus tells this parable to help explain why some people believe in Him and bear fruit (good works) because of their faith, and why some choose to doubt or deny him.

This summer, it is my hope to plant the seeds of God's word into the hearts of the people of First Lutheran in a variety of different ways. After all, as I'm sure you are aware, we can experience God speaking to us through a multitude of opportunities. We hear from the Lord when we read or study scripture, listen to a sermon, discuss our faith with others, and when we serve people who are in need. So, in this article I would like to briefly share with you some of the things that will be happening at our church (explore this newsletter for more details).

First, please note that I will continue to offer weekly Bible study on Wednesday mornings at 9am. If you aren't able to come at that time, feel free to email or chat with me about days and times that work better for you. Also, if you would like to know what texts we will be studying, check out our weekly E news for more details (including the Bible study questions that we will be discussing).

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

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Next, I invite you to consider joining me for a book study on, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, by Brennan Manning. In it the author helps us understand that our Heavenly Father beckons us to Himself with a "furious love" that burns brightly and constantly. Only when we truly embrace God's grace can we bask in the joy of a gospel that enfolds the most needy of His flock - the "ragamuffins." Please note that we will have some copies available for purchase for \$10 and/or you can also find it on Amazon in paperback, kindle, or you can even listen to it using the audible app on your computer or smart device. We will discuss the book after worship on Sunday, August 25th.

Also, if you aren't a big reader, or struggle with Bible study, I would encourage you to watch the series *The Chosen*. It is a binge worthy show, and it does such a wonderful job of bringing the New Testament stories about Jesus and his followers to life! In June the church will be hosting watch parties for season 4 on Fridays at noon and on Sunday mornings after worship. We will also have some discussion after each episode and in the Fall, we will have a Bible study based on Scripture and the series.

Next, this summer I am hoping to pilot a special program (for families and/or game lovers) that I would like to call "Game Church" or "Bibles and Board games." Basically, the idea would be to gather at church on a Saturday afternoon (perhaps once a month) for some food, fellowship, and fun as we play different board games together and discuss what God is up to in our lives! Currently I am recruiting a few people to help me with this project, but my hope is that we will meet either on a Thursday evening, or a Saturday afternoon, sometime in the middle of July (more details will be provided in the weekly E news when a date is finalized).

Finally, I am happy to report that yet again our church is joining Fir Conway, Burlington, Edisson, and Salem Lutheran in hosting Vacation Bible School! Currently we are finalizing the details regarding the location and the dates and times, but I can tell you that most likely it will be during the first week in August (on a Sunday through Thursday) and it will be held at either Salem Lutheran or Fir Conway Lutheran. The cost for this event will be \$20 a child, but no more than \$50 per family. More information will be provided in the E news and/or announced at church when we have more news to share with you.

I look forward to sowing God's word and receiving it with all of you this Summer!

God Bless,
Pastor Ryan

Summer Worship

This summer, beginning on June 2nd, we will be switching to a different liturgy (how our worship is conducted/followed in the bulletin). Each week there will be a static summer bulletin that will contain the order of worship, with an added text sheet. We will also be using the *Renewing Worship* hymnal and trying out some new songs for the Hymn of the Day. Please note that instead of using the alternate version of the Lord's prayer, we will be singing it until Rally Day in September. Also, the baptismal font is going to be temporarily moved to the Narthex so that people can remember their baptisms as they enter the Sanctuary. Finally, keep your eyes peeled for the hymn suggestion box and consider writing down some of your favorite hymns that you would like to sing in the Fall.

Living into our Welcome



June is (LGBTQ+) PRIDE MONTH

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. There are many different PRIDE events happening throughout June and July across our Synod. You are invited to go have fun and respectfully participate with a community that may not be yours. **One of our members generously purchased 10 Pride bandannas from the Synod. Please let Pastor Ryan or Holly know if you would like a complimentary bandanna to celebrate Pride Month.**

WHY SHOULD RIC COMMUNITIES ATTEND THEIR LOCAL LGBTQ PRIDE FESTIVAL?

Although Pride participation is not a requirement to becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) community, it can be an effective form of outreach to the LGBTQ community. Marching in a Pride parade or hosting a booth at a Pride festival can be an incredibly powerful experience for both the LGBTQ participants as well as members of your community. Keep your eyes and your heart open! You may encounter an LGBTQ youth who has been told by their family or church that God no longer loves them. Or you may meet an LGBTQ person who hasn't stepped foot in a faith community for years and has never heard a specific invitation with their identity. The only requirement for a Lutheran community to be listed as RIC is for them to pass a welcome statement which specifically includes "people of all sexual orientations and gender identities" or "LGBT" people Happy Pride Month Everyone!

Here are just of the few of the events in our area...

Stanwood/Camano Island Parade – June 1

Whatcom Youth Parade – June 1

(Plan to meet outside Habitat for Humanity to cheer the youth on!)

Arlington Pride Event – June 2

Mount Vernon Walk & Picnic-Saturday, June 8 watch for more info from Pastor Ryan about gathering together at 11am for the walk.

Anacortes Parade – June 22

Bellingham Parade – July 7

[Click here for a complete list, details & updates.](#)

PFLAG

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 PFLAG Skagit here.](#)

We are nurtured, prepared...



The summer season is upon us. During the summer many of our congregation take our vacations when the weather is warm and usually good. Of course, during the summer, we are still worshipping here at First Lutheran. We still need communion assistants, those who read the lessons, those who read the "prayers of the people", ushers, and those who serve coffee and snacks after the worship service. When you're not on vacation, hopefully the Spirit moves you to worship and possibly serve in worship which is a blessing.

God does not need our money, but it is a blessing to you to give to our church and other charities. In the summer, all the Church expenses continue as usual.

Have a great summer, stay safe, have fun, and God be with you.

Donn Hollenbeck, Council President



Communion Class

If you feel like your child is ready to start taking communion, and you would like then to receive instruction, please contact Pastor Ryan. Please keep an eye out for additional information about our 1st communion class.



Summer Camp will be starting soon. If Sunday school parents would like to benefit from scholarship monies to help offset the cost of camp please contact the church office for a coupon code. Please remember to contact the church office, before signing up for camp, if you wish to use scholarship funds.

Holden Evening Prayer

June 10th, July 8,
& Aug 12th at 7pm

Join us this Summer for
Monday Evening Services



New Member Class

If you are interested in becoming a member, or know of someone who might be interested, please let the pastor know. Typically the class entails: meeting together to get to know one another, talking about opportunities available at our church, planning a date for an installation, and usually last around an hour or hour and a half.

Congregational Care Team

During the summer a majority of people are either on vacation or they make plans to do all kinds of wonderful things with friends and family while we experience the wonderful sunny weather here in Washington. With that being the case, if you are interested in visiting some of our home bound members and would like to bring them communion, and or have some ideas of ways we can care for the friends and members of our church, please talk to Pastor Ryan or send him an email. Currently he is working on a list of people who are interested in being on this team and there will be a meeting in the Fall after Rally Day.

Hymn Sing

June 2, July 7, & Aug. 4

Come at 9:45 and sing your favorite hymns before worship! Look up your favorite hymns and be ready to sing.

Quilting News

Winter - Spring Quilt Distribution 2023 -2024

The church quilters completed 60 twin size quilts from December 2023 through April 2024. The quilts were blessed on April 21 and packed for delivery.

The following agencies were given quilts:

8 to Skagit Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services

5 to Family Promise

12 to Kendall Court

(the new Habitat for Humanity homes)

6 to Love, Inc (Love in the Name of Christ)

11 to Lutheran World Relief

12 to New Earth Recovery 6 to Teen Oasis

Anyone is welcome to join us on the second and fourth Thursdays to help finish the quilts. We will be meeting monthly during the summer on the regular schedule. 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 at home create 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.

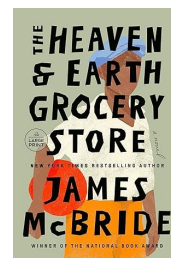


Dear First Lutheran Quilt Group,

We are so delighted with your very blessed quilts! So lovely & appreciated.

Thank you so much!

Jodine & Jan
Love Inc.



Our next book discussion book is The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store: A Novel by James McBride

We will meet at the church on July 18th @ noon for discussion. Consider picking up a book and joining pastor Ryan for discussion.

Using Your Gifts to Serve in Worship

There are many ways that you can serve in worship. Please take a look at the sign up sheet and see what is needed.

Usher– We are especially in need of ushers at this time. Hand out bulletins, help seat people, collect the offering, direct communion, take care of worship details as needed, and help worshippers with their needs.

Special Music– Play preludes, offertories, and special music. All instruments and voices are welcome. Contact Pete Olson (391-0936)

Reader– Read the lectionary text during worship.

If you are curious and have questions about serving in any of these ways please feel free to call the church office.

Sent to be the light of Christ in our world.



In October 2013, the late Russ Wells, David Johnson, and a couple of other men thought it might be fun to emulate Martin Luther and hold a Bible study once a month in a local tavern. Over the years, they've met in a few Mount Vernon taverns (and once in Stanwood), as well as the occasional private home, with as many as 15 or so attending, with as few as three or four. On a few occasions, men who have overheard the group asked if they could join and they were more than welcomed.

Their current favorite location is Temperate Habits, at the corner of First and Gates in downtown Mount Vernon. Usually, the group meets on the third Sunday of each month at 3:00pm, with occasional deviations, such as June, when the third Sunday is Father's Day, so they'll meet the fourth Sunday, June 23. Some of the guys drink soda, some wine, some beer, and some cider and they often pitch in for tots.

A tradition begun several years ago is to add a little to the kitty each month for KIVA, an international nonprofit with a mission to expand financial access to help underserved communities thrive. Over the years, the group has funded some 44 loans in 20 countries to the tune of about \$3000, mostly supporting women farmers in Central and South America, as well as the USA.

The guys take turns leading the monthly study (David Jones led in May) and it's very informal. For more information, contact David Johnson at luteman74@hotmail.com, or simply join the group. Here's the schedule through September, each starting at 3:00pm and lasting about an hour or so: June 23, July 21, August 18, September 15

Crop Walk Save the Date

Once again this year, we are participating in the annual CROP Walk, in the afternoon of Sunday, September 29, at Mount Vernon Christian on Blackburn Road.

The Crop Project began in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops to our hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia

CROP Hunger Walk is the community-based fundraising and awareness building appeal of Church World Service, a coalition of 37 Christian denominations (including the ELCA) and a major force in the fight to end hunger here at home and around the world. Each year, roughly 2000 communities participate in local CROP Hunger Walks.

More information will be coming as we get closer to the Walk, but mark your calendars now to take part in the Walk or donate to the cause. Of the money donated, 75% goes to international efforts while 25% stays with Friendship House.



Friendship House Continues to Serve Many Needs

“The mission of Friendship House is to reflect the heart of God by feeding, sheltering, clothing and healing...to empower those in need.

First Lutheran Is a consistent part of serving our homeless neighbors. Thank you for faithfully providing meal items for our Friendship House Meal Ministry!

Effective May 2024 our Friendship House ministry will transition from preparing and delivering the meal to donating funds each month to enable their staff and clients to not only shop for the items but to also prepare and serve the meal. This will help transition our church ministry from simply providing food once a month to helping to fund programs. These programs help teach life skills and skills needed for employment, through their innovative employment training program.

To continue to monetarily support this ministry please consider donating toward “Friendship House Meals”. We need \$300.00 monthly to keep this ministry going. If you give online, please choose the down arrow that specifies Friendship House. [You may give online here.](#) If you’re donating by check, please specify, “Friendship House meals” in the memo portion of your check.

Watch for envelopes stating, for “Friendship House Meals” placed in the pews for people to place their special offerings in.

Thank you for joining us in ministry!

Catch up on The Chosen!

This summer our church will be hosting watch parties for The Chosen (Season 4) on Fridays at noon or on Sunday mornings after worship.

Currently it is only available online, as an amazing opportunity for outreach, for churches and prisons to stream for free! If you haven’t had a chance to watch this amazing series, about Jesus and his earthly ministry, you have some time to catch up and/or binge the first three seasons. Thankfully there are only 24 episodes and nowadays there are several different ways for you to watch (see instructions below).

1. Amazon Prime (Free for Subscribers): If you have Amazon Prime on your computer or have the App on your Smart TV, tablet, mobile device, you can watch all 3 seasons for free. Just search for the Chosen and start with season 1 (episode 1).

2. Hulu (Free for Subscribers): If you have Hulu on your computer, or the Hulu App on any of your devices, you can watch all three seasons by doing a quick search for the Chosen.

3. The Chosen App (Free): Download the Chosen App on your smart device (tv, tablet, phone) and you can watch all three seasons for free. You can also watch it on your computer by navigating to www.watch.thechosen.tv.

4. Netflix (Free for Subscribers): At the moment, sadly, Netflix only has the 1st season of the Chosen. All you need to do is do a search for the show and you can start watching.

We will meet to watch the first episode of season 4 beginning on June 14th (Friday) at Noon. If you aren’t able to join us, because you work during the week, please note that there will always be a second showing on Sunday mornings after church. Please see the church calendar for details or mark your calendars for the dates.

Need a Ride?

If you aren't able to drive anymore and would like help learning how to use Paratransit (formerly Dial-A-Ride), Roberta Windham has graciously offered to be our transportation coordinator. Please feel free to call her if you have questions or need assistance in how to get started with the service. If you need her contact information, please contact the office.



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

The Month of April 2024

Income	\$23,757.39 (5 Sundays)
Expenditure	\$20,841.14 \$2,916.25

Year to date through April 2024

Income	\$78,441.85
Expenditure	\$81,061.81 - \$2,619.96

Watch for updated financial information in the weekly e news.



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

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

David Jones,

Choir Director

First Lutheran

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.

Our Congregational Leaders

President— Donn Hollenbeck

Vice President— Bob Ramborger

Secretary— Yvonne Carter, Sandy Simon

Treasurer— Brad Pickett

Trustees

Bob Ramborger, Brad Clifton, Manny Gomez

Deacons

Frances Wraspir, Doug Carter, _____

Parish Activities

Ann May, Sue Holmes, and Jana Svendsen