



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.

Being a Non-Judgmental Christian?

How often in our lives do we judge other people? How simple and innocent it may seem for us to offer a few suggestions to an individual on how they might change their behavior or beliefs so they can perhaps be more like us. Maybe that person belongs to a denomination that is different from ours and he or she possesses convictions we don't understand. Perhaps they are Lutheran, but don't understand, or live out, God's grace.

Whatever the case may be, if we observe someone as being weak in the faith, or not living out their faith in their daily lives, it can be rather easy for us to pass judgment on them or to tell them what to do. This takes practically no effort on our part, especially when we encounter people we know to be Christians, who do things that we believe to be either morally wrong or sinful. We know we should not judge others. Jesus tells us this in the Gospel of Matthew, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged."

Paul writes about this in the 14th chapter of his letter to the Romans. "So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. (Romans 14:12-13.)" So...we know we should not judge others, but for some reason we do it anyways. So why do we judge others? As I was thinking about the answer to this question a thought occurred to me. Is it possible that we can become so focused on how others live out their lives that we fail to, or possibly avoid looking at how we live out our own lives?

In my newsletter article this month I would like to briefly explore Paul's reasons and concerns for writing part of his letter! In the Church of Rome there appeared to be a division or quarrel between two groups of believers, those who had strong faith and those who were weak in faith. Apparently, there were certain issues pertaining to food and holy days and these issues were dividing the two groups.

Those who were strong in faith lived their lives devoted to Christ rather than being overly concerned with what they were eating or what day it was. Those believers who were weak in faith clung to the Law, following strict rules concerning what they ate and when they worshipped. Unlike the strong believers, they did not partake fully in the freedom given to them through Christ.

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

Being a Non-Judgmental Christian? Continued....

The division between the strong and the weak was causing one group to judge the other, which lead that group to despise them for it. So what does Paul do to resolve this conflict? What would you do if you were faced with a similar situation? After all, in every church there are weak and strong believers. To help resolve the quarrel or conflict, Paul reminds the strong and the weak that they are both serving the same Lord and reminds them that they are not to judge one another. He says to them, "Who are you to pass judgment on the servants of another?" Paul assures both groups that it is God and God alone who will pass judgment on them.

I find it rather encouraging knowing that our success in the Christian life does not depend on the opinions or attitudes of other Christians. God is the Judge, and it is before God that we will stand or fall. Of course knowing that God is the final judge does not necessarily prevent us from judging one another and therefore Paul goes on to mention that we are not to live our lives for ourselves, but rather we are to live for the Lord. If we are too busy working for the Lord then perhaps we will not have the time or inclination to judge or condemn other Christians

Summer Blessings to you all,

Pastor Ryan



Hello Faithful at First,

I hope you all continue be safe and well at home during this time. Council continues to monitor the NW Synod, county/city, state, and federal guidelines and suggestions on how and when to reopen FELC. At our May Council meeting we had decided to keep our building closed through June, as Skagit County is still in Phase 1 of the Governor's reopening plan. Under the Governor's original staged reopening plan, we were not able to reopen for in-person worship until Phase 3 at the earliest. Last week he changed the plan for religious organizations and is now allowing in-person Worship to start on Phase 2, which could happen soon for Skagit County.

Even with this change to the plan, Council does not plan to re-open FELC for in-person Worship in Phase 2. We believe it is still too early to gather people together inside for a long period of time based on the science and best practice information we have been receiving. While it will be legally allowed, the state, county, and the NW Synod suggest that we continue to Worship in alternate ways for the safety of our Congregation. We will continue to monitor the information from all sources and take lessons learned from those that do re-open to see what works and what doesn't when we are ready to take that step.

In the meantime, we will continue to look at other ways that we can gather again without being inside the building. You may have seen Pastor Ryan talk about drive-in Worship in the E-news or at our online coffee hour. We have ordered the equipment that will allow us to broadcast to your car radio, so that you can come and listen/watch Worship from the safety of your car. We still have a number of things to figure out between the technology and process with drive-in Worship, but we hope to have something by the end of the month or early July. We will keep you updated as we work towards making that happen.

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We are allowed to hold outdoor Worship right now in Phase 1 under the updated rules, but as we all know, Washington spring weather isn't very conducive to that. Along with the developing drive-in Worship, we will look at adding outdoor Worship as get into better summer weather. We hope to provide them together, so that you can come and join us from your car, or if you feel safe, from an outdoor seat so that we can all be together again, even if it's different from sitting in your regular pew.

I wish I could be saying that we would all be back together this month, but the reality is that it's going to be a long time until we are all sitting together in the Sanctuary again. While the FELC building has been closed, FELC the Church has not been closed, and we will continue to adapt to this new normal together with God's help.

In His name,

Benjy St.Germain
FELC Council President

Staying Connected with FELC

We are continuing to produce weekly online Worship videos and make them available in a number of places including the [FELC Facebook page](#), the [FELC website](#), and on the [FELC YouTube channel](#). If you have a computer/tablet/phone/smart tv and are unable to access these videos, you can contact us, and we will be happy to help you with direction on how to view them. If you want to contribute to the videos (readings, prayers, music, etc) but can't record yourself, you can stop by the Church and we are allowed to record you individually. If you are interested in being recorded in-person, please schedule that with Pastor Ryan. We are also looking for anyone with video editing skills or the desire to learn to help produce these videos, so please let us know if you are interested.

Online Fellowship/Coffee hour is something we have started over the last few weeks and it has had a small but steady turnout. We have been holding it at 11:15am on Sundays so that you can watch the Worship video and then join us for Fellowship afterwards, just like a "regular" Sunday at Church. We are using the Zoom online conferencing system for this, which is really easy to use, all you have to do is click on the link and it will install for you. [See Zoom help for joining a meeting](#) if you have never used it before and look for the meeting link in the weekly E-news, and we hope to talk with you soon!

Pastor Ryan has restarted his individual phone calls over the last few weeks and is also organizing a larger calling group to stay in direct contact with our Congregation. If you want to join us in helping make some calls, please contact Pastor Ryan. I know some of you have taken the initiative and are doing this yourselves, and we thank you for that and want you to keep up anything you are doing to keep our Congregation connected.

We also continue to have our Sunday radio program at 8am on KAPS 660 AM. We have been reusing our recordings from last year on the same Sunday as a stopgap while we transitioned to online Worship. Now that we have a pretty good process going to produce the videos, we plan to take the audio from those and edit it to fit out radio program timeslot. We hope to have the new recordings broadcast on the radio in the next few weeks, so if you are unable to watch the videos, hopefully you have an AM radio that you can use to tune in and listen instead.

If you have any other ideas on how we can reach the Congregation during this time, please contact Council or Pastor Ryan, we are always looking for new ways to stay connected with all of you!

Thanks,
FELC Council

| YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL COMPARISONS REPORT | | | |
|---|------------|------------|-----------------|
| FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2020 Budget |
| Total Income | 116,504.65 | 102,766.86 | 118,212.53 |
| Total Expenses | 110,070.26 | 106,806.14 | 129,677.29 |
| Income compared to Expenses | 6,434.39 | (4,039.28) | |

Thank you for your generous giving to First Lutheran Church. As of May 31, 2020, we received a total of \$102,766.86 and spent \$106,806.14 so the negative balance of **\$9,724.81** from the April has been reduced by \$5,685.53. Our year-to-date balance as of May 31 is now negative **\$4,039.28**.

In April, we received the Payroll Protection Program Loan from the SBA through the federal CARES Act which is being used to pay 8-weeks of salary costs for both the church and preschool. If we meet the loan requirements, part or all the loan will be forgiven. We will know if all is forgiven later in the summer then the bank determines if we met all their requirements.

The Northwest Washington Synod provided a webinar in May and during that webinar, we were reminded that Thrivent Choice Dollars is one way FELC can receive funds from Thrivent. Thrivent members have the opportunity to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars to a charity of their choice and First Lutheran Church is one of their designated charities. It's online at Thrivent.com Choice Dollars. If you have any questions about it, please contact your Thrivent representative.

Jeanette St. Germain
Treasurer

Church Security

The church council and the trustees, are continuing to pursue bid information for the purpose of installing a security system in the church building. We are pursuing two bids, and have requested a little more information from both companies. Hopefully the council can take definitive action on which system to use at the June meeting. Keep in mind, once installed, there will be a new way to gain entry to the building. We are exploring motion sensors, cameras, and a new way to gaining entry to the building via key pad. In addition, as mentioned last month, new, brighter security lighting will be added at the exterior doors. Now that the weather should turn warmer and the covid-19 virus becomes more controlled, we will be able to install the lights. Safety for staff, parishioners and guests is paramount and a new security system will be a huge help in this regard.

We are nurtured, prepared...

FELC Scholarship

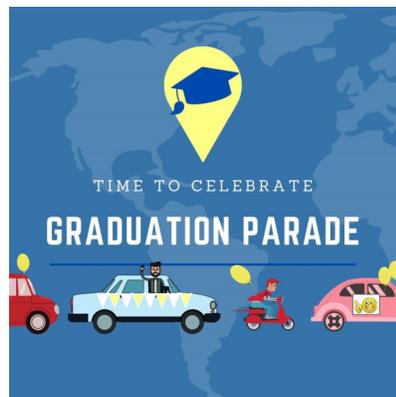
First Lutheran Church offers a \$500 one-time scholarship to young adult church members (under 22) who have left high school and wish to pursue a post-secondary education or vocational training.

Several years ago the First Evangelical Lutheran Church (FELC) established a scholarship for our church young adults. This one-time scholarship of \$500 has blessed us with the opportunity to help the young adults in our congregation who are leaving or who may have left high school to reach their educational goals.

Contributions to this fund are always appreciated as this will be a continued gift provided each year. Another way to donate to our FELC High School Senior Scholarship is through the Memorial Committee by designating a percentage or all contributions received for this fund in memory of your loved one.

Sincerely,

Debbie Lisser, Patty Norris, and Barb Lowery
The 2020 First Lutheran Scholarship Committee



Every year we have been able to acknowledge our graduating seniors during a church service in June. Now we need to get a bit creative so we can still show these students how proud we are of them and honor their hard work.

We thought it would be nice to have a drive-through parade for our graduates not only to show how much we care about them but also to bring our congregation together from a distance for the feeling of community, we are missing.

This will take place on Saturday, June 27th between 1:00 and 2:00. We will enter the parking lot from the exit and then drive to the front of the church where we can see our graduates and deliver well wishes and greetings to them. For those that wish to leave cards or gifts, there will be a box designated for each graduate. We will stay in our cars and smile through our masks.

Our graduates this year; Grace Cole, Sammy Oliver, and Jackson Reisner are highlighted on the next page.

Please watch the First Evangelical Lutheran Church enews for further updates about our celebration.

Debbie, Patty, Karmen, and Barb

FELC Congratulates Our Graduating Class of 2020!

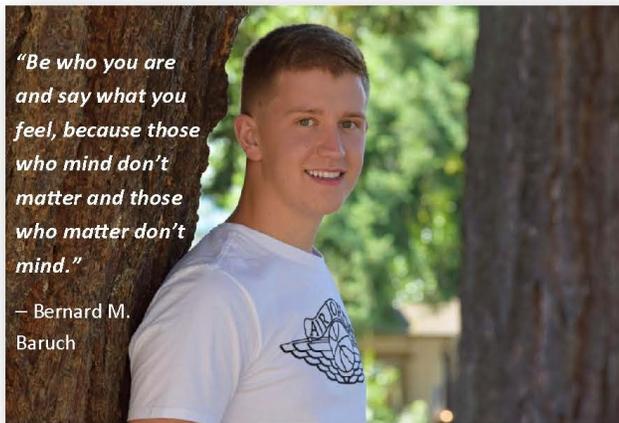
I am most proud of when I traveled to Tanzania with the Girl Scouts for two weeks and visiting schools across the country and experiencing the wildlife.

I am also proud of being involved in the MVHS girl's swim team. Next year, I will be attending the University of Washington to pursue a Bachelor's degree for Nursing.



*"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."
-Robert Frost.*

Grace Cole, Mount Vernon High School



"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

— Bernard M. Baruch

Activities: Basketball & Outdoor Leadership club

Attending Skagit Valley College



Sammy Oliver, Mount Vernon High School

Jackson is really excited to be playing basketball at his parent's alma mater, Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. He will attend on an academic scholarship and will major in elementary education.



Jackson Reisner, Burlington-Edison High School



Getting to Know...

Pastor Ryan Rouse

I was born in Santa Rosa, California and grew up in Salem, Oregon and Mukilteo, Washington.

* Hobbies? **I enjoy reading, watching movies, playing games, surfing the Internet, hanging out with my friends and family, traveling.**

* Favorite family tradition? **Going to Ashland, Oregon for the Shakespeare festival.**

* Favorite quote from movie, book tv show? **"Goonies never say die!"**

* What do you remember most about your first job? **I got the job so I could get my driver's license.**

* What motivates you? **My faith and my family!**

* What song always gets you on the dance floor? **YMCA or the Chicken Dance.**

* What's something folks would be surprised to know about you? **I played video games for Microsoft as an actual career after college.**



Lyndsay Betts-Rouse



I'm originally from Las Vegas, NV and my hobbies include makeup, swimming, laying in the sun and shopping!

- My favorite family tradition is playing cards with my parents.

- What I remember most about my first job? This is bad- I worked in a frozen yogurt shop and we had to swat flies, sometimes they'd fall into the toppings...

- Music motivates me- I have music on all the time in my house.

-A song that always gets me on the dance floor- It Takes Two by

Rob Base!

- People would be surprised that I grew up in the same church my whole life. I went every Sunday and knew every song!

I'm very young at heart- I LOVE laughing and dancing around. I'm super positive in every situation and wake up everyday happy.

Sent to be the light of Christ in our world.

Neighbors In Need

The Neighbors in Need food bank is not accepting food donations at this time however if you would like to help our community members who are experiencing food insecurity, the food bank would welcome your financial donations.

Mailing Address:

Neighbors in Need Food Bank
P.O. Box 394
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-0394



From month to month covid restrictions have changed how we are able to serve our neighbors. Please watch for current Friendship House information in the e news in mid to late June. Your support of this mission is deeply appreciated by many!

A Note From Preschool...

The Staff and Board of First Lutheran Preschool would like to thank Lori Flores for her 7 years of dedication to our school. We wish her every Blessing as she joins her husband in retirement. Her love of children and sharing of her faith have been a gift to all. We will miss her. Thank you Mrs. Flores!

These are strange times to plan for the future of our preschool. The board has decided to proceed as if the social restrictions will be lifted by September. If not, we will adjust schedules later this summer. Registration is open for children 3-5 years old. We have posted openings for 2 teachers for the 2020-2021 school term.

Mrs. Flores, Mrs. Olsen and Mrs. Scott continue to post Facebook recordings to our students.

Thank you to Carl Libbey and Jeanette St. Germain for all they did to make funding available to pay our staff for the months not covered by tuition lost in April/May. It is most appreciated.

We pray all is well with the children and families of our school and congregation at this time. We look forward to those days when we can welcome children back into our classes.. learning, playing, singing and Praising God for His wonderful world.

The Staff and Board of First Lutheran Preschool

Around the ELCA

PENTECOST DAY MESSAGE FROM BISHOP SHELLEY BRYAN WEE

"... We can't stop with only remembering. We also need to speak out, to come out, to be bold, to join our voices together. Today we are called to stand with those whose voices are unheard..."

[Watch video here.](#)

[Here is a lovely 95 second video of O, Holy Spirit, Root of Life](#) from Camano Lutheran Church's Pentecost service - featuring their remotely and digitally assembled choir.

RACISM and WHITE SUPREMACY STATEMENT

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has reaffirmed our commitment to combating racism and white supremacy following the recent murders of Black Americans.

[Read the statement here.](#)



Dear Beloveds of Northwest Washington Synod,

By the rivers of Babylon – there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. Psalm 137

When the people were exiled in Babylon, they grieved for what they once had. The practices and comfort of what they'd known through worshiping at the temple in Jerusalem were not available to them in that foreign land. In that time of exile, they were challenged by prophets and re-formed as God's people. When they returned to Jerusalem, the temple they longed to gather in did not exist anymore. Their homes were gone. Much had to be rebuilt.

This scripture speaks of our time right now.

Truthfully, we are not going to go back to what we had before. And I am grieving this as I am sure you are. The verse from Psalm 137 speaks so clearly to me as we all weep for what was. The longing to be with all of you continues and I hope for the day when we can gather bodily again.

But let me also say this: While we long for what was, we also are living now. We are in worship now. We are in community now. Yes, it feels different. Yes, it is not the same. But rostered ministers are preaching God's word, people are gathering together, the gospel of Jesus Christ is being proclaimed and prayers, singing, community and fellowship have never stopped. As a faithful people, we trust that God is with us, even in this time that we are physically separated and we are still Holy Community – joined together by Jesus.

As your rostered minister and your leadership teams begin to make plans for re-opening church

buildings, please keep in mind safety, vulnerable populations, and guidelines issued. I highly recommend listening to this online presentation hosted by the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod in which Dr. Michael Osterholm, a Lutheran, an epidemiologist and the Director of the University of Minnesota Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, presented and answered questions about COVID-19. [You can find the video here.](#)

I also strongly urge congregations and ministry sites to follow the guidelines of the CDC, the state, and each local municipality as well as recommendation from the ELCA the synod. (You can find links here: www.lutheransnw.org/covid-19.) When we all follow these guidelines, we all benefit. Remember to be in conversation with your insurance provider about their recommendations for the use of your facility. Many insurance carriers are refusing to cover churches if they are going against state or local recommendations. *Please know that the Northwest Washington Synod highly recommends following CDC, Washington state, and local guidelines as well as the guidelines set out by this synod and the ELCA.*

I close this letter with another Psalm. While we hear the despair in Psalm 137 above, we also hear the hope in Psalm 121: *I lift up my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

Dear people of God, remember that we are people of faith, trusting in God's grace and providence, informed by science, who desire to respect, protect, and care for the most vulnerable among us.

Take care. Be safe. Trust in God. Be community for one another.

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

Have you seen our Spirit Stories yet? These stories share how & where the Holy Spirit is moving & dancing in our synod. We hope these stories inspire you in your setting - to wonder, to imagine, to experiment. Find them on our synod website at www.lutheransnw.org/spirit-stories. We would love to hear YOUR story, too!



**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 Lutheran

*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.*

FIRST EVANGELICAL 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](#)

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

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

Jesse Floyd,

Choir Director- choir@firstlutheranmv.org

Janna Beecher,

Parish Assistant-parishassistant@firstlutheranmv.org

Preschool Administrators-Lori Flores & Chelsey Olsen—

preschool@firstlutheranmv.org Preschool Phone-360-941-4187

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— Benjamin St. Germain

Vice President— Brad Pickett

Secretary— Sharon Lauch

Treasurer— Jeanette St. Germain

Trustees

Blaine Wollan, Brad Pickett, Donn Hollenbeck

Deacons

Gary Wiegand, Bob Ramborger, Doug Carter

Parish Activities

Frances Wraspir,
Karmen St. Germain, David Jones