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*The next
Property
meeting will be
September 3rd
6:30 Pm.*



If church isn't on the calendar, does it exist?

This title to an article recently caught my attention. The article was good; here is a reflection of my own.

You know how important it is to put doctor's appointments, birthdays, and family gatherings and even vacations on the calendar. If it is not there, blocked out on the calendar to remind you, it is quite possible it won't happen. We'll be busy with routine things, or an alternate activity when you should be on your way to the doctor's office.

I rely quite heavily on the calendar app on my phone, with its reminder feature. But I would not forget the times and places I want to be on Sunday morning – the people I look forward to visiting with on Sunday. Yet, that is just me – a pastor.

Most of us grew up knowing and anticipating Sunday morning's expectations and looked forward to things church participation offers us, even if the encounter with God was more passive than active. But not all of us, some have come later in life to appreciate the opportunity to encounter unmerited love in worship, fellowship, prayers, and service.

Encounters with the divine happen without our scheduling or expecting them.

One of the things which helps us seek to know and interact with God is startling evidence of God's presence and activity for the world today. I recently reflected with some parents on the change of outlook and priorities that occurs when a newborn arrives. Inexplicably the new parents don't have to be directed; from within their otherwise self-focused mind and schedule they voluntarily commit their hearts to the needy newborn. I observe and, as encouragement remind parents, it will be up to six months before they will receive significant reciprocal interaction from their newborn.

Much longer before they get close to the interaction they expect from attentive children and adults. An attentive youth is both attempting to please the authority in their lives and behave in ways that will get them things they feel they want. When a newborn arrives the parents have to set aside their wants to please and be pleased in favor of what the helpless and sometimes demanding infant needs. Amazingly they find grace and patience to do this. I believe this is God showing up for the family, within the family system.

If church isn't on the calendar there are other activities believed to satisfy spiritual needs which may be so routine that they do not need to be blocked out on the calendar. Could be reading, nature, exercise such as yoga or walking, sports, intentional conversations with friends and family or even voluntary service to resolve social injustice.

Continued on pg. 2

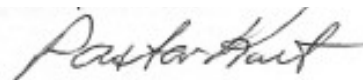
To acknowledge that our Lord can be active and present in all of these, and want a relationship with you, is to give God a more intrusive place in our lives than our ego and sinful nature are comfortable with. Even without participating in church life.

Throughout our lives we make bargains with the give and takes of imperfect human systems. No church has perfected human systems of interaction, that is not the purpose. The reason to dedicate your heart and time into church life is because God already loves and values you even more graciously than healthy parents can't help but respond to their newborn.

At our best, the purpose of the church is to nurture relationship with the Holy and Loving Creator, the Son who has redeemed you with His own blood, and the Holy Spirit which works alongside you own spirit to give you peace through faith in God's goodness and mercy. And helps us to pray when we do not know how.

Let us pray asking the Lord of Love to make us bold to invite and cajole friends and family to encounter God's love with us, and for our congregations be renewed in revealing the presence and Trinitarian activity of God for the sake of the world they love.

There are options to explore besides Sunday morning worship. I wrote this to help us understand our unchurched family and friends – the importance of letting the light of God love at work in you shine before them. Faith that makes you hopeful and strong.



September Choices in Mission

In September our Choices in Mission offering will benefit Salvation Army. Salvation Army helps many people in Jasper County with many different needs from food, to help with clothing, rent & utility bills as long as there is funding. This is where churches and community organizations like First Lutheran come in. When you donate during the month of September First Lutheran will match all of the donations up to \$2,500.00. Your contribution is greatly appreciated, and we thank you for supporting this amazing organization which does so much for this community.

Reminder in October/November a hygiene supply collection will support the middle school, high school and West Academy hygiene closets.

God's Work Our Hands September 7th!

September 7th we will be participating in God's Work Our Hands Day. We will have both Indoor and outdoor projects. Those who will be staying at the church will work on hygiene kits for Lutheran World Relief. These kits go to individuals- both adults and children- who have experienced a traumatic loss of their home. These kits are distributed world wide- including in Los Angeles during and following the fires. We are still collecting the following items through 9/7:

- Light weight bath size towels
- Bath size bars of soap
- Adult size tooth brushes
- Sturdy combs
- Metal nail clippers

All these items need to be new- most will remain in their packaging. Details on how to package will be provided on God's Work Our Hands day.

Chihoni Calling!

When you read this, Paula Lofstrom and Dr. Charles Powell will be on the ground in Chihoni, celebrating the progress Sele's team has made and preparing for the grand opening. While the building is on track to be completed by the originally scheduled date of September 17, funding for the furnishings is lagging a bit behind, and the long-awaited event has been delayed. Charles will be returning for the opening ceremony, while Paula and David will be sharing the good news back in the States, starting here at First Lutheran on October 5!

As Charles says about the delay in the August Update, **“Not to worry; God has a plan and we will continue to move forward. All things considered, the project has moved ahead with remarkable speed.”**

Last year, our October Choices in Mission focus was to help furnish the Surgical Suite of the Outpatient Department. In order to open as a dispensary, the law requires that ten rooms be complete. The plan was always to start seeing patients as soon as the essentials were in place, and to open the remaining rooms as funds were raised. The building will open with the required rooms. Then, as furnishings can be for our Choices in Mission focus this More on that next month.



The Outpatient Department is ready for finishing touches

building will open with the required surgical suite, pharmacy, lab, and consultation and evaluation rooms. Then, as furnishings can be purchased, more rooms will open, including a dental suite. Look for our Choices in Mission focus this year to be the basics needed to open more examination rooms! More on that next month.

Read about the progress at Chihoni at <https://www.ihptz.org> , clicking on IHP Monthly Update>August 2025.

Honoring the Gift of Work

The Bible affirms both the value and dignity of work. From the beginning, God placed Adam in the garden “to work it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15, ESV). In the fourth commandment, we are reminded not only to observe the Sabbath, but also to labor diligently throughout the week: “Six days you shall labor, and do all your work” (Exodus 20:9, ESV).

Work is more than a routine obligation; it is an opportunity to engage our God-given abilities in meaningful ways. Whether using our hands, minds, or hearts, we reflect the image of our Creator—bringing order, care, and creativity into the world.

Our labor allows us to contribute to the common good, find personal fulfillment, and practice faithful stewardship of the talents and strengths God has entrusted to us. As Paul writes, “We are God’s fellow workers” (1 Corinthians 3:9, ESV).

On this Labor Day, may we take time to recognize the blessing of work and celebrate those who serve, build, teach, lead, and labor with purpose and care.

—Author unknown





As the 24th anniversary of 9/11 approaches First Lutheran remembers Jim Cleere. He was a man with such joy and an amazing voice. Jim blessed our church with his voice many times and you can still find a CD of his songs in our church library next to a memorial made in his honor.

Jim was on the 15th floor of the Marriott World Trade Center — part of the complex after a plane hit the center's North Tower.

He was an executive at Seabury & Smith, an Urbandale-based insurance division of New York's Marsh & McLennan, he was in New York for his first annual meeting at the head office as an assistant vice president.

The company's offices were on floors 93 to 100 of the 110-story North Tower, exactly where the hijacked plane piloted by al-Qaida terrorist Mohammed Atta struck at 8:45 a.m.

"It's lucky I wasn't over there because I could easily have been right in the section that got hit," Cleere said in a message to his wife. Just 18 minutes later a second plane struck, leading the eventual collapse of the twin towers, Cleere would be among those who lost his life when the hotel was crushed.

Now known as Marsh McLennan, the company lost 358 employees and consultants that day, and although Cleere wasn't in the office, he was among those who lost their lives. He was the only person residing in Iowa at the time of the attacks to become one of the 2,977 people who died that day in New York and Washington and in the crash of a hijacked jetliner in Pennsylvania.



Jim Cleere is remembered by so many here at First Lutheran for his love of Christ, his beautiful voice, and his gift of music.

September 14th, 2025

Join us during worship for

Baptism Sunday



As we celebrate the baptisms of
Leonard Maxwell Rose & Brynna Tish Rose

Starting in October

Pastor Kurt will be leading a new Bible study every Sunday morning at 8:30 Am.

We will be focusing on the epistle lessons for the week. So mark your calendars now and be ready to dive in to a new journey with these epic books of the bible written to instruct, encourage and guide us in our faith.

We look forward to seeing you there.!



Seasons of Change, Signs of Grace

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22, NASB).

As autumn begins, we watch the world transform before our eyes. Leaves change color, the air turns crisp, and a new rhythm settles in. In these seasonal shifts, we are reminded of God’s faithful hand over all of creation.



Genesis 8:22 assures us that the cycles of nature—seedtime and harvest, summer and winter—are part of God’s ongoing promise. Each season speaks of His order, care, and presence. Autumn, in particular, invites reflection. Just as the trees release their leaves, we are called to let go of what no longer serves us and make space for renewal.

Special dates & times

- * Labor Day (Church office closed),
September 1, 2025
- * Sunday Worship time resumes to
9:30Am.
September 7th, 2025
- * Gods work. Our hands. &
National Grandparents Day,
September 7, 2025
- * Hispanic Heritage Month,
Sept. 15-Oct. 15, 2025
- * Lois Circle resumes 9:30Am.
September 17, 2025
- * Church Council Meeting 6:30Pm.
September 17, 2025
- * First Day of Autumn,
September 22, 2025

This season also marks a return to routines—school schedules, church programs, and community events. As we step into new responsibilities or revisit familiar ones, may we do so with gratitude and trust. God is not only present in the harvest but in the quiet letting go.

Let this autumn be a time to embrace God’s steady rhythm, find beauty in change, and rest in His faithful promises that never cease—even as the world around us shifts.



Connie Lucas 09/02
Mary Obersteller 09/02
Belinda Birkenholtz 09/12
Jim Lammey 09/15
Josh Cantu 09/18

Food Pantry Donations

The Food Pantry would like us to emphasize a specific item each month.

Remember, you may bring any item you wish, but spreading this among the contributing congregations keeps a steady supply of their most basic needs coming each month.

For the month of September

Canned Soups, Mac & Cheese, & Dried Pasta are requested.

There is a basket located in the Narthex for you to place your donations in.

The Gift of Music!

I wish to see all arts, principally music, in the service of Him who gave and created them.

Music is a fair and glorious gift from God. I would not forego my humble share of music. Singers are never sorrowful, but are merry, and they smile through their troubles in song.

Music makes people kinder, gentler, more staid and reasonable. I am persuaded that after theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of heart ... the devil flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God.



—Martin Luther

Bible Quiz

Timothy was a young man who became a trusted companion and co-worker of the apostle Paul. Which of the following statements is not accurate?

- A. Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures.
- B. Paul considered Timothy his spiritual son.
- C. Timothy was born in Rome and raised as a Roman citizen.
- D. Paul wrote two New Testament letters addressed to Timothy.

Answer on pg. 2



Christian symbol

BURNING BUSH — In Exodus 3, God speaks to Moses from a bush that is burning but not consumed. When Moses asks what he should say if the Egyptians questions who sent him to lead the Israelites out of slavery, God states, "I AM

WHO I AM." Centuries later, when people wonder who Jesus is, his answers hint at his divinity: "I AM the light of the world; I AM the good shepherd; I AM the bread of life" and, perhaps most profoundly, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). On Pentecost, God's Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles as fire. Thus the burning bush is a powerful symbol of God's presence echoed through time.



Create adorable sheep using graham crackers, marshmallows, and a little imagination!

What you need:

- Graham cracker squares
- White frosting or marshmallow fluff
- Mini marshmallows
- Large marshmallows
- Candy eyes or mini chocolate chips
- Black gel icing or mini Oreo cookie



What you do:

1. Spread white frosting or marshmallow fluff on each graham cracker square.
2. Stick mini marshmallows all over to make the sheep's wool.
3. Cut a large marshmallow in half and stick it near the top for the head.
4. Add candy eyes and a dot of black gel for the nose. Or use a mini Oreo cookie half for a more defined face.
5. Let kids decorate their sheep however they'd like!



Lesson tie-in

Use this treat to remind kids that Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:11, KJV



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God's work. Our hands.



September 7, 2025

September Choices in Mission—Salvation Army

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|-----|---------------------------------|---|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 Property Meeting 6:30PM | 4 Dorcas 9:00 am | 5 | 6 |
| 7 Worship Service 9:30 am God's Work. Our hands. | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 Worship Service 9:30 am Baptism Sunday | 15 | 16 | 17 Lois Cr. 9:30 Am | 18 Council Meeting 7:00 pm | 19 | 20 |
| 21 Worship Service 9:30 am | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Worship Service 9:30 am | 29 | 30 | | | | |

Pastor Hoover's Hours:

Monday & Tuesday
 9:00Am- - 12:00 pm

Office Hours
 Monday—Friday
 8:30 am—12:30 pm

Meetings with Pastor Hoover by Appointment.

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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**Watch Past and Live
services !**

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**Sunday Morning
Worship
9:30 am.**

**Coffee Hour
10:30am**