

First LUTHERAN



OCTOBER 2025

2025
Newsletter

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*The next
Property
meeting will be
November 5th
6:30 Pm.*



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

As our congregational meeting approaches, and you are asked to make stewardship commitments, questions may arise: "who is steering this ship? Where are we going? Why aren't we growing in numbers, and other visible ways? What is our future as a 'downtown' church among so many who also suffer from decline?"

As we talk with friends in other congregations, we learn it is a mixed bag for them also; uncertainty and going forward with the things we have done before – the activities that are meaningful for us, expected and supported.

I have visited with two other downtown pastors, and it is the same mix of cherishing the familiar and prayerful about increasing and retaining participation in the present ministries of our congregations.

I respond to the question, "Who is steering this ship?" with, "We are." As we follow familiar patterns I am pointing out how our lord is present and at work among us. I uplift encouragement from the Gospel and lessons learned from the challenges the early church experienced (found in the Epistles). The early church faced social and official opposition. Despite this the faithful continued to gather, each bringing their talents and gifts to contribute to and participate in the mission of the church. They gathered to praise and pray, learning and service with gratitude for what God has done and is doing.

Faith and the Holy Spirit provide the wind in our sails.

Our destination is God's Eternal Kingdom, yet while we journey this earthly plane, we have for generations engaged in teaching and serving in ways that reveal the Creator's pursuit of healing relationship with all humanity. Jesus, the Son of God and our brother: He revealed God's compassion and mercy in personal ways through His earthly ministry culminating in His death for the forgiveness of our sins, and resurrection opening the way to eternal life. So that no one is excluded on account of their sin.

This is the Good News the church on earth proclaims! Life empowered by God's mercy and love. In and out of the building we are marching in the light of God. Family, friends, and neighbors take notice.

As God's Holy Spirit works in, on, and through us, we, the members of the church, demonstrate God's presence and activity in this hurting world, and love for the whole of creation.

In her 2025 state of the Church address, Rev Karen Georgia A Thompson, United Church of Christ General Minister and President asked, "who do people say your church is? Having referenced Matthew 16:13-20 where Jesus asked, "Who do people say that I

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am?”, and then personally, “Who do you say that I am?” These questions bring us to reflect on how the love and mercy of God are revealed through our church and personal lives? Do people see and say about us: “these are servants of God, doing God’s will.”

Rev Dr Thompson admonished congregational leader to no longer measure “the life of the church” by the ABC’s: Attendance, building, cash. These distract from the ways in which our congregations (and members) show up in the world in meaningful ways.

The present and future of the church are appropriately assessed on the basis of the good we are doing in and for society and creation. We are a witness of hope and joy darkness cannot overcome – because our hope and joy are based on eternal truth, not on things that are changing and temporary.

Your joyful contributions to the life of our church tells the story of God in and for our communities and the world. God is still speaking, and we are the evidence of the gracious presence of God.

Throughout the year our Choices in Mission Endowment matched funds you contributed for local and international aid and assistance to the poor and vulnerable.

We also establish physical reminders of God’s work through us as we bury the altar behind food donations. We gather and bless school supplies. Bless the quilts made by the quilting ministry of our congregation. And this year’s God’s Work our hands prepared personal care kits Lutheran World Relief will distribute to those affected by disasters.

Your congregation coordinates with Neighbors helping Neighbors and Newton’s Mission Coalition ministries supporting direct aid ministries in Newton such as the Salvation Army and laundry ministry. Also gathering and distributing school supplies and funds to aid teachers and school nurses in their care for vulnerable students.

Along with our ministries of worship and education there are numerous ways we demonstrate we are an active and vital congregation members of the community expect and want to be a part of when invited.

Pastor Hart

Unique Ukulele

Music teacher Allison Bartholmey has a student who can use only one hand. Playing a ukulele requires two hands. Allison wondered if there was anything that can

be done to adapt a ukulele for a one handed player.

Dennis Bauer took up the challenge. He built a fully functional and attractive ukulele attachment that allows a player to strum the strings using a foot rather than a hand. The student’s hand can now be used to change the

pitch of the strings on the fretboard.
Congratulations to both Allison and Dennis

for their good work.



Chihoni Excitement !

There is excitement in Chihoni! After the long-awaited groundbreaking on February 24, construction of the Outpatient Department is complete, and all that remains is to supply the essential furnishings. Paula and David, fresh home from Tanzania, kick off Chihoni Month at First Lutheran with a visit the first Saturday and Sunday in October. The community has been invited to a free Tanzanian meal Saturday night, and Paula will be sharing the latest from Chihoni that evening as well as at our Sunday worship service and Fellowship Time.

Last year, when IHP was still waiting for the building permit, our October Choices in Mission focus was on providing some of the components of the surgical suite. Thanks to the generosity of our members and the matching funds from the church, we were able to send \$13, 228 to help meet this need.



Selemani's crew finished the Outpatient building in record time. Let's help get it ready to open!



This birds-eye view from July shows the enclosed courtyard waiting area

A minimum of ten rooms, including the surgical suite, pharmacy, and laboratory, must be ready for use before the Outpatient Department can open to serve the public. Our focus this year is to move the Chihoni Medical Center toward this goal by doing what we have done every year in the past: generously sharing what God has first given us. The goal is to enable a "soft opening" in January, and to celebrate with a Grand Opening in April.

First Lutheran through Choices in Mission generously matches our gifts dollar for dollar in support of the Chihoni Medical Center, up to \$5000. Checks should be written to First Lutheran Church with IHP or Chihoni on the memo line. You will find envelopes in the pews.

The kangas, or Tanzanian cloths that form the background for the IHP bulletin boards in Fellowship Hall, proclaim: Kazi ya Mungu haina makosa. 1 Cor. 15:58. (In the Lord, your labor is not in vain.) Please keep Paula and David, those faithful laborers, in your prayers as they travel to spread the word about the Chihoni Medical Center!



The front lobby hallway

Mission Coalition Bake Sale

Mission Coalition will be selling baked goods at the annual McCann Market Day on Saturday, October 18 2025 from 9:00 to 2:00. If you have any baked goods to share, please drop them off at McCann Center (Sacred Heart Church) between 8:00 and 9:00. All proceeds will go to the Salvation Army Food Pantry. Any questions, call Corinne.

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 October

Canned Soups, Mac & Cheese, & Dried Pasta.

Life in Arizona

Dear 1st Lutheran,
Life in Az is different, but we do enjoy being closer to our grandson Matthew who is almost 2.

It was pretty hot when we got here, but is getting less hot quickly.

We've been going to Christ Evangelical Lutheran and plan to join. They are getting involved in a homeless ministry, so we hope to help in that.

I am doing Home Instead and Rocky hopes to do Barber work again.

Miss you guys and the smaller Newton Community.

No doubt we'll visit next year. Look us up if you come to Az, we are not in Pheonix, but close.

We plan to get a PO Box and will update you on that.

God Bless, Maria and Rocky



Hy-Vee receipts

The Mission Coalition is collecting Hy-Vee receipts again. Due to the closure of OB services in Des Moines, The Prgnancy Center in Newton is looking for funds to support rides to prenatal doctor visits. Please save and bring your Hy-Vee receipts to church. They must be from the Newton Hy-Vee and they must be for 2025. If they reach their goal of \$100,000, then HyVee will donate \$1,000.

Annual Crop Walk for Hunger

As The 2025 CWS/CROP Walk will be held Sunday, October 5 at 2:00.

Please let Corinne know if you are interested in walking. Contributions for the walk can be made payable to First Lutheran or CWS/Crop Walk on or before October 5.

Starting in October

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

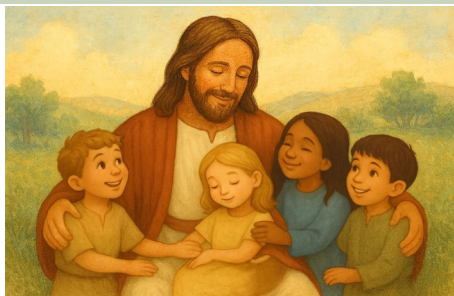
We will be focusing on the epistle lessons for the week. So mark your calendars now and be ready to dive in to a new journey with these epic books of the bible written to instruct, encourage and guide us in our faith.

We look forward to seeing you there.



Special dates & times

- * **Pastor Appreciation Month**
- * Free African Meal & Auction
October 4th 6:00 pm
- * IHP Sunday W/Paula Lofstrom
- * World Communion Sunday,
October 5, 2025
- * Pastor Appreciation Sunday,
- * Columbus Day,
- * Indigenous Peoples Day,
- * Canadian Thanksgiving,
October 13, 2025
- * Reformation Sunday,
October 26, 2025
- * Reformation Day,
October 31, 2025



Christine Breuer 10/04
 Bradley Portner 10/06
 Alicia Troen 10/09
 Brenda Hodnett 10/17
 Marie Quanbeck 10/22
 Laird Trusler 10/26
 Jodi Portner 10/27
 David Troen 10/27
 Matthew Coyle 10/28
 Aaron Bartholmey 10/30
 Emmeline Ketcham 10/30
 Tom Sharp 10/30

The Beauty of Stewardship

Stewardship has to do with how we manage our time, talent, resources — basically our entire lives. It's a beautiful concept when properly understood. Here are the basics of good stewardship:

God is the source of all creation, including our lives. God is the primary owner of all that exists.

We are blessed by being given the task of managing well all that we have influence over: our lives, our abilities, our minds and bodies, our time, our part of the earth, our finances, our children, our church buildings, our automobiles, etc.

Although we can make decisions regarding each of the above, ultimately we are responsible to God. Sooner or later, we must give an account of our management of God's creation and of God's gifts.

When we properly use the talents, resources and property that God allows us to manage, we find great joy. Think of planting a garden which soon overflows with colorful flowers, wonderful vegetables and flavorful herbs, etc. God gave us the plot of ground, God gave us the seed, God gave us the wisdom and strength to bring forth such beauty, such good things to see or eat, or smell. Yet we did the work, with God's help, to make it a reality. Like Adam we tilled it and kept it. But God gave the increase. God's provisions and our labor brought the garden to its fulfillment.

Good stewardship enables us to do something positive and wonderful with the money God has allowed us to have. What feels better than knowing one has managed money well? Our bank account, our checkbook and our portfolio tell the story. When money is handled well, we have enough for ourselves and are still able to give to God's work.

That is the beauty of stewardship.

**Commitment Sunday is
 October 26th, 2025!**



IHP Free African Meal and Silent Auction

First Lutheran's Choices in Mission recipient during October will be International Health Partners. To celebrate the new Outpatient Building in Chihoni, Tanzania, IHP is inviting you, your family, your friends, and anyone else interested in Africa and eating, to a free African meal in Fellowship Hall on **Saturday, October 4, at 6:00 pm.**

Paula Lofstrom, managing director of International Health Partners, has just returned from Tanzania, and will be available to provide us with the latest information on the quest to improve the quality and availability of healthcare in Tanzania. She will also be at worship with us on **Sunday, October 5th.**



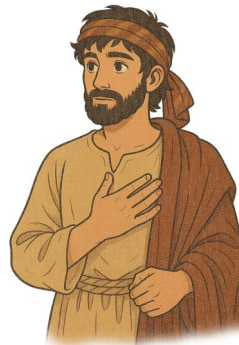
We look forward to seeing you at the meal and worship service.

Beautiful and unique crèche that will be in the silent auction

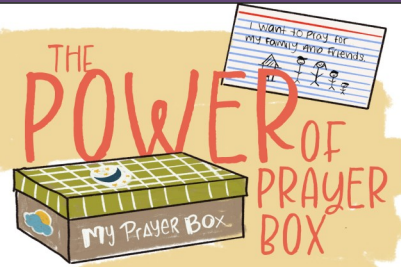
Bible Quiz

The book of Jonah tells the story of a prophet who ran from God, faced a storm, and learned about God's mercy. Which of the following statements is true?

- A.** Jonah told the sailors he was running from God, and they threw him overboard.
- B.** The fish that swallowed Jonah washed up on the shores of Joppa.
- C.** Jonah preached in Nineveh for forty days and forty nights.
- D.** After the city repented, Jonah rejoiced and built an altar to the Lord.



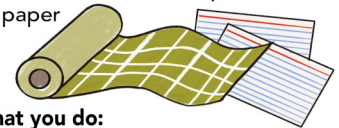
Answer on pg. 2



Create a simple and meaningful prayer box your family can use to share requests and pray together all week long.

What you need:

- Shoebox with lid
- Wrapping paper or decorative paper
- Scissors & tape
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers and other craft material (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- Index cards or small pieces of paper



What you do:

1. Wrap the shoebox like a gift, wrapping the lid separately so it can be opened.
2. As a family, decorate the box with drawings, favorite Bible verses, photos, or stickers.
3. Place the box somewhere central, like the kitchen or living room.
4. Keep index cards and pens nearby. When someone has a prayer request, they can write or draw it and drop it in.
5. Throughout the week, take turns praying over the requests as a family, or have a parent lead prayer time.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

—Colossians 4:2, NIV



First Lutheran's Property Committee chairman Stan Kirchhoff has been mowing the church lawn for decades. He leads a team of volunteers who choose tasks within their capabilities to maintain and improve church property. Stan is a frugal man, not wanting to spend church money on jobs we can do for ourselves. Thus Stan has been involved in all kinds of church property improvement work, like cleaning, painting, trimming, repairing, tearing apart, rebuilding, planning, delegating, and supervising the work of contractors to do work beyond the capabilities of volunteers. Here Stan is pictured operating a core aerating machine on the church west lawn. Thank you Stan for working to keep church property something we can be proud of.

October Choices in Mission— International Health Partners

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Property Meeting 6:30PM	2 Dorcas 9:00 am	3	4 Free African meal w/Paula 6:00pm.
5 Worship Service 9:30 am I.H.P. Sunday Special Guest Paula Loffstrum	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Worship Service 9:30 am Pastor Appreciation Day	13 Columbus Day Indigenous Peoples Day Canadian Thanksgiving	14	15 Lois Cr. 9:30 Am	16	17	18
19 Worship Service 9:30 am	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Worship Service 9:30 am <u>Reformation Sunday</u> & <u>Commitment Sunday</u>	27	28	29	30	31	

Office Hours

Monday—Friday
8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor Hoover's Hours:

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

Meetings with Pastor Hoover by Appointment.



Pastor Kurt Hoover

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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**