



# First Impressions

First Lutheran Church

May 2023

Rev. Sean Esterline

Lead Pastor

Phone 812-431-1923 or 517-543-4360 ext. 222

[sesterline@msn.com](mailto:sesterline@msn.com)

Mark Gawura

Specific Ministries Pastor for Care Ministry

Phone 517-667-6853

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Daniel Longden

Specific Ministry Pastor for

Youth & Family Ministry

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Rebekah Simmons

Preschool/Daycare Director

517-543-3828

[flpddirector@gmail.com](mailto:flpddirector@gmail.com)

## First Lutheran Church

550 E. Shepherd St., Charlotte, MI 48813

Phone 517-543-4360

Email: [flcchurchoffice@gmail.com](mailto:flcchurchoffice@gmail.com)

web: [firstlutherancharlotte.org](http://firstlutherancharlotte.org)

Amy Garnsay, Office Manager

517-543-4360 ext. 221

[flcchurchoffice@gmail.com](mailto:flcchurchoffice@gmail.com)

## Worship Times

Sundays 8:30 & 11:15 a.m.

Worship 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays @

11:15 a.m. with live worship band

Communion Every Sunday

Mid-week Worship

Wednesdays 7:00 p.m. during Advent & Lent



“That which we have seen  
of Life, we proclaim to you.”



## FLC Statistics for APRIL 2023

<b>Confirmed Membership</b> .....	<b>246</b>
<b>Baptized Membership</b> .....	<b>315</b>
<b>Child Baptisms</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Adult Baptisms</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Jr. Confirmands</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>New Confirmed Members</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>New Baptized Members</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Transfers Out (Confirmed)</b> .....	<b>(3)</b> Rebekah Boston, Pastor James Eggert, Liz Eggert
<b>Transfers Out (Baptized)</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Releases (Confirmed)</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Releases (Baptized)</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Deaths</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Weddings</b> .....	<b>(0)</b>



Steve & Samantha Bodell.....	May 5
Mark & Louann Gawura.....	May 8
Dave & Karen Bursley .....	May 10
Dan & Marilyn Danke .....	May 15
Ken & Carol Hamilton .....	May 15
Ned & Tessa Stoltzfus .....	May 17
Tom & Angela Rasmussen.....	May 18
Gary Person & Valerie Rinks .....	May 30
Mike & Lois Flynn .....	May 31

### **Office Deadlines**

- Bulletin announcements are due no later than Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. unless otherwise advertised
- Newsletter articles and information are due no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.



Aiden Rochester.....	May 1
Crystal Vorce.....	May 2
Cheri Knickerbocker .....	May 6
Crystal Hackney.....	May 6
Dan Danke .....	May 10
Bob Schlueter.....	May 11
Jessica Geiger.....	May 13
George Hatter.....	May 14
Karen Schlueter .....	May 14
Cora Lovaas .....	May 16
Michael Lovaas .....	May 16
Steve Johncock.....	May 17
Jerry Schmidt.....	May 17
Kris Fetterman .....	May 19
Trudy Irish .....	May 19
Eileen Prkut .....	May 19
Ken Hamilton.....	May 21
Isabelle Whiting.....	May 21
Thomas Rasmussen II .....	May 26
Micah Longden .....	May 26
Mandy Whitaker .....	May 30
Tammy Alger.....	May 30

**If you have a birthday or anniversary this month and you do not see your name listed here, please let the church office know so we can update our records. Thank you.**  
**Church office: 517-543-4360 ext. 221**

### **EMERGENCIES!**

If you have a pastoral emergency such as a hospitalization, death in the family, or are in need of urgent Christian counsel, please call  
 Lead Pastor, Sean Esterline (812) 431-1923  
 OR Specific Ministry Pastor for Youth and Family Ministry, Daniel Longden at (248) 802-2392.

## First Lutheran Phone Number is 517-543-4360:

**Church Office (Amy) - extension 221**

**Pastor Esterline - extension 222**

**Pastor Daniel Longden - extension 229**

**Kitchen - extension 224**

*\*If you call the church and do not get an answer, please leave a message.  
 Please do not leave **emergency** messages on these extensions  
 as we may not access them in a timely manner.*

## **BIBLE STUDIES AT FIRST LUTHERAN**

Please join us for Bible Study . . .

- † Sunday Morning Bible Studies for Adults and Teens - 10:00 a.m.
- † Men's Monday Morning Bible Study - 7:00 a.m., Eaton Place Restaurant, Charlotte
- † Ladies Thursday Morning Bible Study - 9:30 a.m., FLC Library
- † JR Confirmation Classes - 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays (*recessed after May 17*)

## **PLEASE JOIN US . . . WEEKLY SUNDAY WORSHIP**

at 8:30 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.

Traditional worship at 8:30 a.m. every Sunday.

Traditional worship on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays at 11:15 a.m.

Worship with Live Band at 11:15 a.m. on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays.

*All Sunday services include communion.*

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**SUNDAY, MAY 28 - ONE service at 10:00 a.m.**

## **STREAMING AND ONLINE WORSHIP**

If you are immune compromised and cannot attend in-person worship,  
or if you are unable to attend for another reason, please join us for worship online by going to

<https://www.facebook.com/flcharlotte/live>

All worship services will be livestreamed.

The worship services will be available for viewing after the livestream has ended.



***NOTE: The FLC offices will be closed on Memorial Day - Monday, May 29.***

## **ELECTRONIC GIVING AVAILABLE**

First Lutheran has an electronic giving option called Kindrid.

To utilize this option simply go to our website at [www.firstlutherancharlotte.org](http://www.firstlutherancharlotte.org)  
look for the kindrid smart giving logo and click on it or go to the drop down menu  
on our website (three lines together at the top) and then click on "give."

Thank you for your continued support to First Lutheran and your church family.



## **FLC ELISABETH GUILD**

The Elisabeth Guild will be meeting at the home of Jim & Karen Usitalo

**Thursday, May 4, 1:30 p.m.**

Everyone invited. For more information please call Marj 517-543-1615.



## **FLC COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Council Meeting will be held on **Thursday, May 4, 7:00 p.m.**



## FLPD CLEANING DAY

**Saturday, May 13, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

Help is needed. Most of our cleaning will be outdoors - please dress for the weather.

Questions? Please speak with Kim Longden.



## FLC ELDERS MEETING

The next Board of Elders' Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 16, 6:30 p.m.**



## YOUTH GROUP MIDNIGHT MADNESS

The final Youth Group Midnight Madness for this school year will be held on

**Friday, May 19, 7:00 p.m. - Midnight.**

Adult chaperones are needed. Please contact Dan Longden if you would be willing to help out.



## FLC VOTERS MEETING

**Sunday, May 21, 12:30 p.m.**

Tentative Agenda: Opening Prayer, Pastors' Reports, Secretary's Report, Board Reports, Old Business, New Business (including 2023-2024 Budget), Walk-in Items, Closing Prayer.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact FLC Council President, Herman Arends.



## HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!

We wishing all of our ladies a very blessed Mothers Day - Sunday, May 14!

**Please join us for Mothers Day Breakfast prepared by the guys**

**Sunday, May 14, 9:45 a.m., FLC Fellowship Hall. Please sign-up.**

(No Sunday School or Bible Studies on May 14)



## 2023 GRADUATES

FLC Graduate Recognition Sunday will be held on June 11, with a Punch and Cake Celebration at 9:45 a.m. in the FLC Fellowship Hall, in honor of our 2023 graduates (high school, college, and trade schools/programs).

Graduates please bring your cap and gown (if possible) to wear in pictures.

**Graduate information needed:** We need information about each of our 2023 graduates (high school, college, and trade schools/programs). Information forms are located on the FLC credenza.

Please submit graduate information to Amy in the office no later than Sunday, May 28.

Thank you for your help.



*FLC Family, Denny & I want to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, & visits during Denny's surgery and long hospital stay. We really appreciate everything you did during this hard time. God's blessings to you all - Denny & Carol*



## FIRST LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL AND DAYCARE NEWS

We have several opportunities to show the love of Christ to our FLPD families in the month of May!

On Wednesday, May 24th at 6:15 PM preschool graduation will be held in the church sanctuary. Everyone is invited to attend the ceremony where Ms. Bethany will award official preschool diplomas to our fifteen graduates. Pastor Dan will also present Bibles that members of the congregation purchased for each student. After the ceremony, FLC will host a reception in the Fellowship Hall. Plans are underway for the reception, and if you're interested in helping now would be a great time to jump in!

The last day of preschool is Friday, May 26th. The end of the school year tradition at the center is an ice cream social! This would be another great opportunity to get to know some of our daycare families—everyone is invited to attend preschool that morning, and eat some ice cream too.

With the end of the school year right around the corner, our FLPD school age program will be switching into high gear! In preparation for the summer program, we will have our next FLPD cleaning day on Saturday, May 13th from 9AM-Noon. Our goal will be to get the outdoor areas spruced up for the kids—because the warm weather will return—hopefully! All are invited to help out as a service to our ministry next door.

Finally, the FLPD school age summer program includes several field trips. We will be on the lookout for bus drivers for these trips. Would you be interested in driving a church bus for our students? (Drivers must have a valid Michigan drivers license, a good driving record, their own auto insurance, and be required to pass a background check.) A schedule will be forthcoming. This is another great way to get involved!

The month of May brings a lot of change at the center; it's exciting to be a part of what God is doing. As always, please keep the FLPD families and staff in your prayers!



## FLC FREE-FOR-ALL RUMMAGE

The FLC Free-For-All Rummage will be held August 11 & 12, 2023 (times TBA).

All items will be free to both the congregation and the community.

The Free-for-All Rummage is a great way to clean out your house and bless others at the same time!

You may bring your good quality, used treasures in to the church starting Sunday, May 28.

(Please note: the church offices will be closed on Monday, May 29.)

Please place items in the Sunday School Room closest to the library.

When dropping items off during the week, please call Amy in the office ahead of time at 517-543-4360 ext. 221 and speak with her to make sure she will be here to help receive items.

Please be sure your items are free of mice and insects.

If you need help getting larger items to the church or if you have questions please call Kim Longden at 248-733-3006.

Volunteers will be needed to help sort and display items as we get closer to August.

Volunteers will also be needed to help man the rummage on August 11 & 12.

A BIG thank you to Kim Longden and everyone else who works so hard to make the rummage the blessing it is to others!



## EDUCATION BOARD UPDATE

On Easter Sunday, 23 youngsters participated in the annual **Holy Treasure Hunt**. This involves hearing parts of the Passion Story and then finding a particular treasure related to the story. For example, the last supper is represented by a grape juice pouch, thirty pieces of silver that Judas threw back at the soldiers is represented by a silver chocolate coin, and Pontius Pilate washing his hands of Jesus' arrest is represented by a small bottle of bubbles. There were seven treasures that each of the youth found this year, were able to keep and take home to help remind them of the Passion of Christ.

The last day of youth Sunday school is May 21st and then there will be a break until September. **Thank you to all of our dedicated staff** who have helped to teach our youth (and adults) about God's word, you are a blessing to our students, adults, families, and our community.

**A new bulletin for our older youth is now available** on the entry table for each Sunday. It will follow the sermon theme and help our youth connect to the message of the day. The younger children will continue to have coloring pages in the church bags aligned to the Gospel theme.

**VBS** is scheduled for July 17-July 21st. There is a sign-up link on the website for participants and volunteers. There is always a need for helpers! This year's theme is Stellar-Shine Jesus' Light. If you have any space related items, we might like to borrow them for our decorations, please let us know!

## THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS...

After the Lord Jesus' resurrection He appeared to the woman at the grave and then to His disciples and to others. For more than five weeks He was here and there, comforting and speaking peace to His followers, showing them His resurrected body, the holes in His hands and feet and side, eating with them and in many other undeniable truths showing them that He was no ghost, but the same Jesus who suffered and died on the cross, and that He had taken back up His flesh and blood, His human nature.

So it is that Jesus is comforting His disciples with His resurrection, and giving them His final teachings, and then, forty days after Easter, Jesus ascends into heaven. This year, Forty days after Easter is Thursday, May 18th, and that is when the church officially celebrates the Ascension.

We hear about Jesus ascension in the Gospel reading from Mark, **"After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and He sat at the right hand of God."** [*St Mark 16:19*]

We also hear of this in the Epistle reading from Acts, **"[Jesus] said to them, 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' After He had said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.'"** [*Acts 1:7-11*]

The Ascension, by the way, is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. One of these, from Psalm 110, says **"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"** [*Psalm 110:1*]

This verse is quoted a number of times in the New Testament, [*Mt 22:44; 26:64; Mk 12:36; 14:62; Lk 20:42-43; 22:69; Ac 2:34-35, and Heb 1:13*] and is behind the thought of this mention of the ascension in Hebrews 1, **"God, who at various time and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."** [*Hebrews 1:1-4*] (Continued on next page . . .)

("That He Might Fill All things" continued . . .)

Another prophecy of the Ascension is Psalm 68:18. It is no wonder that we confess such an important event in Jesus' life week after week in the creed: "He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." Psalm 68 has this promise: **"You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious, That the Lord God might dwell there."** St Paul quotes this verse in His Epistle to the Saints in Ephesus, and this is where we're headed, the verse that I would like to draw your attention to, **"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men. Now this, "He ascended"- what does it mean but that He also first descended in the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things."** [*Ephesians 4:8,9*]

Notice how in all of these passages, Psalm 68 and 110, and Ephesians 4 and Hebrews 1, the Ascension has great significance, great theological significance. Jesus' Ascension is not just a relocation, like a job transfer from earth to heaven. In fact, it's not about Jesus leaving us at all.

What, then, is Jesus' Ascension? What does it mean? What happens when He ascends into heaven? And what does it have to do with us, the Lord's church and His dear Christians? To answer this question we will delve into great mysteries that are wonderful, and well beyond our understanding.

The answer begins with Christmas, even earlier, when Jesus was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. Then the eternal Son of God took upon Himself flesh and blood, a human nature. So the two natures of Christ, divine and human, are perfectly and eternally united in the person of Jesus. What marvelous love that God has toward us, that He would unite Himself, God and man together, in the person of Jesus. And He does all of this for us, that He would be our Brother, that He would be tempted and suffer like us so that He could sympathize with us in our weakness, and so that He could die in our place and suffer the punishment for our sins.

This personal union of the natures means that all of the attributes of the divine nature are communicated to Jesus' human nature. The ancient church fathers used the example of fire and iron. The iron is like the human nature and the fire like the divine nature. While the iron remains iron and does not change, the fire shines and burns through the iron. The iron remains iron and the fire remains fire, but they are united in one union.

Now what does this mean? It means that all the things that we can say about God we can say about Jesus as a man, according to His flesh, His humanity. According to His human nature He knows everything, is all powerful, eternal, full of life and is in every place.

Now, in Jesus' life, from His birth to His crucifixion, we see glimpses of this union. In Jesus' miracles, His walking on water, His knowledge of the thoughts of men's hearts, His transfiguration, and at other times, we see the man Jesus doing things that only God can do, and yet, in His state of humiliation, we see that Jesus does not fully use all of the divine attributes that are His by the personal union. For example, Jesus is tired and hungry and does not know certain things. He limits Himself to one location. In this way He does not make full use of His divine nature.

But this is the significance of the Ascension, when the Lord Jesus sits down at the right hand of God's majesty, He is permanently and fully taking up the use of all the divine attributes through His human nature.

That is what Paul means when he says, **"He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things."** [*Ephesians 4:9*] Jesus fills all things, that is, He is present absolutely everywhere. And this is where the celebration of the Ascension brings us comfort.

For we often seem lost and alone, lonely, as if God is far away or that He has turned His back on us. We live in a sinful world and we ourselves are sinful, and have lives that are full of trouble, on the outside, and on the inside. Sin pushes us away from God and the devil loves this, that we think that we have to do it on our own, make it on our own, fix it on our own without God.

But we are not alone. Jesus, our Brother, our Friend, our Savior and Crucified Lord, this Jesus has ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, so that He might be near us, in the midst of us, with us. His ascension is not His leaving us, but His drawing near to us. And so it is He, He the man who has spoken with the disciples, who has endured all tribulations in His assumed human nature, and who can therefore has sympathy with us, as with men and His brothers and sisters, - He will be with us in all our troubles also according to the nature according to which He is our Brother and we are flesh of His flesh. [*See the Formula of Concord, Solid Dec. VIII*]

(Continued on next page . . .)

("That He Might Fill All things" continued . . .)

You are never alone. You might feel alone, abandoned by God and the world, but you have the promise, On Jesus' Ascension, you are never without help and aid, never apart from your Jesus. **"I will never leave you nor forsake you."** [Hebrews 13:5] He has promised it, just as He said to His disciples, in the very last words in the Gospel of Matthew, just before He ascends into heaven, **"I will be with you always, even to the end of the age."** [St Matthew 28:20] He is not with us to destroy us or crush us, but to forgive us and baptize us and comfort us and keep us in His tender care.

May God grant us His Holy Spirit, that we would rejoice in the Ascension of our Jesus, and have the confidence that He is with us always with His gifts of life and salvation.

In Him,

Pastor Esterline



## FLC COMMUNITY DINNER

Our next Community Dinner will be held on

**Monday, May 15, 6:00 p.m.**

This dinner is free to all in our community or congregation regardless of need.

Helpers are needed please. Questions?

Please contact George Hatter at 517-213-1939.



## ALTAR FLOWERS

Please consider signing up to provide flowers to beautify our Sunday altar.

Cost is currently \$20 per bouquet.. Please make checks payable to

FLC Elisabeth Guild and place in Shirley Lea's mailbox.

You may take your flowers home with you following the 2<sup>nd</sup> worship service.



Altar Flowers

A sign-up sheet is located in the office hallway.

When you sign up you may state a reason for your flowers

(this will appear in the Sunday announcements) such as celebrating a birthday or anniversary, in loving memory of someone, in thanksgiving for blessings, etc. Thank you for helping make our altar beautiful.



## DONATIONS FOR FIRST LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE

We are collecting paper products and cleaning supplies for FLPD on an ongoing basis. A collection basket is located in the FLC narthex.

Thank you for your donations.



## USE OF TABLES AND CHAIRS

Tables and chairs located in the FLC garage are available for use by members for their events off-site.

(Please note: tables and chairs from inside the church are not to be removed from the church.)

To make a reservation please contact the church office 517-543-4360 ext. 221. Please do not take tables and/or chairs without making a reservation through the church office as someone may already have them reserved. Thank you.





## USE OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH BUILDING

The First Lutheran Church fellowship hall, kitchen, and Pastor Olson Memorial Room, are available for use by members and outside groups for their private events, meetings, etc. To make a reservation please contact the church office 517-543-4360 ext. 221. Please do not make plans to use the facilities without making a reservation through the church office as someone may already have the space reserved.

A member of FLC must be present for the duration of any event/meeting held at First by an outside group.

FLC is not available for for-profit events (Tupperware, Candlelight, craft sale, etc.).

A deposit of \$150 is required for any use of the FLC facilities other than for non-profit or church events.

A list of facility use rules and a cleaning check list can be obtained through the church office.

Be sure to clean and secure the building after your event. Thank you.



## PLEASE HELP OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

Please consider donating to Helping Hands Food Bank to help struggling families.

You may drop donations directly to the food bank at 621 Jefferson St., Charlotte or you may leave donations in the collection box located in the FLC narthex.

Donations need to be in-date and unopened. Donations of non-perishable food items and personal care items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, diapers, and cleaning supplies, are needed.

You may also send a monetary donation to:

Helping Hands Food Pantry - 621 Jefferson St., Charlotte, MI 48813.

For questions please call the food bank at 517-543-8737. Thank you.



## DONATIONS FOR EATON COUNTY PREGNANCY CENTER

The pregnancy center helps women in need and encourages them to choose life.

Donations of diapers (size newborn-4), wipes, sleepers (newborn - 1 year), receiving blankets, and maternity clothes (all sizes) are needed - a box is in the FLC coat room.



## LOVE SAVES LIVES ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND AUCTION

The Pregnancy Center of Eaton County invites you to a free, fun evening of ice cream, live music, an auction, and food - Friday, May 12, 6 - 10 p.m.,

Hidden Creek Farms, 2181 E. Vermontville Hwy., Charlotte. For more info. call 517-543-7077.



## FIFTY-TWO WEEK BIBLE READING PROGRAM

It's never too late to join in the 52 Week Bible Reading Program!

Bible readings for May:

### Week 18

April 30	1 Kings 18-19
May 1	1 Kings 20-21
May 2	1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 1
May 3	2 Kings 2-3
May 4	2 Kings 4-5
May 5	2 Kings 6-8
May 6	2 Kings 9-10

### Week 19

May 7	2 Kings 11-12
May 8	2 Kings 13-15
May 9	2 Kings 16-17
May 10	2 Kings 18-19
May 11	2 Kings 20-22
May 12	2 Kings 23-24
May 13	2 Kings 25; 1 Chr 1



### Week 20

May 14	1 Chronicles 2-4
May 15	1 Chronicles 5-6
May 16	1 Chronicles 7-10
May 17	1 Chronicles 11-12
May 18	1 Chronicles 13-16
May 19	1 Chronicles 17-20
May 20	1 Chronicles 21-23

### Week 21

May 21	1 Chronicles 24-26
May 22	1 Chronicles 27-29
May 23	2 Chronicles 1-4
May 24	2 Chronicles 5-6
May 25	2 Chronicles 7-9
May 26	2 Chronicles 10-13
May 27	2 Chronicles 14-17

### Week 22

May 28	2 Chronicles 18-20
May 29	2 Chronicles 21-23
May 30	2 Chronicles 24-26
May 31	2 Chronicles 27-29
June 1	2 Chronicles 30-31
June 2	2 Chronicles 32-33
June 3	2 Chronicles 34-36

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship) Newsletter Article – MAY 2023

### FOLLOW HIM IN GENEROSITY

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God, that job’s already done! But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow His example of generous giving. And Jesus’ generosity is not merely an example. Our Lord also commands us to act according to our gifts: “The one who contributes, [let him give] in generosity” (Rom. 12:8).

So, when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. We should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought — He gave according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world. So, when it comes to our own offerings, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability, and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3), we should honor the Lord by giving a generous portion of the income that God provides us.

*(Continued on next page . . .)*

*(Follow Him in Generosity Continued . . .)*

We should also give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. We do not give grudgingly, but willingly and cheerfully, each “as he has decided in his heart,” as the Lord says (2 Cor. 9:7). There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us!

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of our love for Him and for our neighbor. Jesus shows us that genuine love is always love “in deed” (1 John 3:18). It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we support His Gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle, for that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly, so abundantly they had to be told to stop giving! (Ex. 36:5–6). In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work. We support our congregations in the preaching of His Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which bestow His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, and we take care of those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)



## HOW YOU CAN HELP THOSE IN NEED

**Here is a list of ways you can help those in need in our community and congregation:**

- ☞ **FLC Esther Fund.** This fund helps provide emergency housing to the homeless in our community. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please write “Esther Fund” and the amount you wish to contribute on your offering envelope.
- ☞ **FLC Good Samaritan Fund.** This fund helps members of First Lutheran who have a financial need. If you are a member struggling with a financial need, please contact the church office to apply for help. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please write “Good Samaritan Fund” and the amount you wish to contribute on your offering envelope.
- ☞ **Helping Hands Food Bank.** You may make donations at FLC or directly to the food bank: 621 Jefferson St., Charlotte. For questions please call the food bank at 517-543-8737.
- ☞ **Pregnancy Center for Eaton County.** The pregnancy center helps women in need and encourages those considering abortion to choose life instead. We are collecting donations of diapers (size newborn thru size four), wipes, sleepers (size newborn thru one year), receiving blankets, and maternity clothes (of all sizes). The center is also in need of monetary donations. Please send monetary donations directly to Pregnancy Center of Eaton County, PO Box 480, Charlotte, MI 48813. Volunteers are needed to help clean and organize at the pregnancy center (337 State St., Charlotte), and help greet clients, Thursdays from Noon - 3pm. Questions? Please contact Gina at 517-543-7077.
- ☞ **SIREN Eaton Shelter.**  
Please make donations directly to the shelter:  
520 Robinson St., Charlotte, MI. For questions please call the shelter at 517-543-0748.



## WHAT WE BELIEVE

### *Scripture Alone*

We believe that the Holy Scriptures in their entirety are the inspired and infallible Word of God and that they alone are the only source and norm of faith and life for the Christian. We believe that the Bible is complete and requires no additions from any other source and that it clearly reveals God's plan of salvation for mankind.

### *Faith Alone*

We believe that man was originally created holy by God but later rebelled against God and is now, by his nature, spiritually dead and blind. Only when man is brought to faith by the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God is it possible for man to be saved. Faith is God's work - not man's work - and comes only by hearing the Word of God. Man is justified before God by faith alone and not by good deeds.

### *Grace Alone*

We believe that we are saved by grace alone and that man cannot earn his way into God's favor. Grace is the undeserved love of God who sent His Son Jesus into the world to take our place under God's law and to suffer and die to pay the penalty for our sins. Whoever trusts in that redemptive act of Jesus Christ will not perish but have everlasting life.