

First Impressions

First Lutheran Church

JULY 2023

Rev. Sean Esterline

Lead Pastor

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

sesterline@msn.com

Mark Gawura

Specific Ministries Pastor for Care Ministry

Phone 517-667-6853

mgawura@gmail.com

Daniel Longden

Specific Ministry Pastor for

Youth & Family Ministry

Phone 517-543-4360 ext. 229

daniellongden@gmail.com

Rebekah Simmons

Preschool/Daycare Director

517-543-3828

flpddirector@gmail.com

First Lutheran Church

550 E. Shepherd St., Charlotte, MI 48813

Phone 517-543-4360

Email: flcchurchoffice@gmail.com

web: firstlutherancharlotte.org

Amy Garnsay, Office Manager

517-543-4360 ext. 221

flcchurchoffice@gmail.com

Worship Times

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

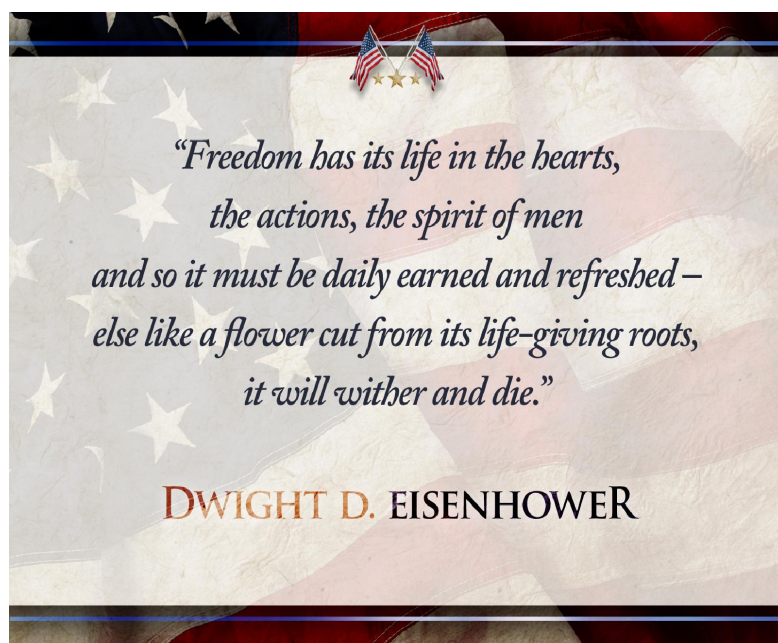
Worship 2nd & 4th Sundays @

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 JUNE 2023

Confirmed Membership	246
Baptized Membership	320
Child Baptisms ... (4) Gypsy and Ariel Knickerbocker, Theodore and Vincent Stuck	
Adult Baptisms	(0)
Jr. Confirmands	(0)
New Confirmed Members	(0)
New Baptized Members	(0)
Transfers Out (Confirmed)	(0)
Transfers Out (Baptized)	(0)
Releases (Confirmed)	(0)
Releases (Baptized)	(0)
Deaths	(0)
Weddings	(0)



Brian Knickerbocker	July 2
Tom Little	July 2
Tammy Mire	July 2
Ed Allen	July 3
Barry Goff	July 4
Ben Stambaugh	July 6
Jane Steinke	July 7
Daniel Longden	July 8
Zach LaGuire	July 9
Dylan Rasmussen	July 9
Dylan Bryan	July 11
Jake Kregel	July 13
Sebastian Miller	July 14
Sue Smith	July 14
Kenneth Stults	July 16
Natalie Crooks	July 18
Ryan Converse	July 19
Patrick Flynn	July 20
Marney Lovaas	July 20
Colleen Ells	July 21
Lindsay Murray	July 23
Ryleigh Raymer	July 23
Steve Hackney	July 25
Andrea LaGuire	July 25
James Usitalo	July 25
Zachary Raymer	July 29
Caleb Kregel	July 30
Reaghan Kregel	July 30



Joseph & Chandra Hause	July 1
Bob & Karen Schlueter	July 9
Gene & Kay Reppuhn	July 10
David & Carol Luukkonen	July 11
Charley & Leann Green	July 14
Kalvin & Rachel Miller	July 16
Gary & Lisa Hamilton	July 24



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

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 15th day of the month.

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. Thank you.*

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Our nation will pause this year, even in the midst of the economic slowdown, to celebrate our national independence. There will be fireworks - you can buy your own at any of the dozens of tents that have popped up in parking lots here in Charlotte - there will be parades, picnics, speeches, and a day off for many in our nation, for us to celebrate the glorious days of yesteryear when the giants of our history fought off the embrace of empire and established a place of liberty and opportunity and hope. Not everything has remained as it was - and that is for the good as much as for the bad - but Independence Day remains a day well worth our celebrating, and even pausing to give God thanks for His blessings. But we Christians have an independence day to celebrate of far greater worth, and one that does not fade or diminish. It is a day that we can celebrate our true freedom - freedom from sin and death and hell. That day, which marks our liberty from the greatest tyranny of history is the day we should celebrate - and not just on a single day of the year!

Actually, the problem might be to decide which day we ought to celebrate. Our true Independence Day is Good Friday. That is the day the battle was joined and the victory was won! Jesus took up the cross to set us free from sin and death and hell. When He spoke that final word, *tetelestai*, the world translated "It is finished", He won for us perfect liberty. St. Paul calls it the freedom of the Gospel. The Church has called it "Christian Liberty." It is the day we threw off the shackles of sin and death and slavery to the devil and became the free people of God. We actually set a day aside to celebrate Good Friday. We call it, "Good Friday". We celebrate it, like the Fourth of July, once a year.

Of course, we could also say that our true Independence Day is the day the Jesus rose from the grave. Easter proclaims our freedom, as it is the announcement of God that the payment of Good Friday was sufficient, and more than sufficient. The resurrection of Jesus proves that the death of Jesus was enough and more to meet the justice of God for sin. It also proves that Jesus truly is the Son of God, and that He has the power to do all that He promises. His resurrection also proves to us that everything that Jesus taught is true! He proved that by taking the most difficult thing He taught (that He would rise from the grave, having been put to death) and doing it. The simpler things must also, then, be true - Jesus must have been right in what He said, if He was right in predicting His own resurrection! Because it shows that Jesus has the power to do everything He has promised, and that He is true and correct, it also teaches us that we, too, shall rise from our graves in connection with Jesus, and shall live before Him throughout eternity.

Easter is the day, you might say of the Declaration of our Independence. We celebrate Easter on, well, "Easter", of course, but we also celebrate it on a special day each week, called "Sunday". Since Jesus rose from the grave on the first day of the week, the early Christians settled on the first day of the week as the day we would worship and celebrate the good news of the resurrection, and all that it won and all that it teaches us. They originally seemed to worship every day - but then they decided (more by practice going that way than a deliberate change in plans, I think) to establish just the one day, and the weekly "week-iversary" of the resurrection became the day. It was similar to the pattern of the Sabbath of Judaism, from which many early Christians came, but on a different day, and that for a number of reasons.

So, on Sundays we celebrate our Independence. Too often, many modern Christians seem to celebrate their Independence from worship, which might be seen as Independence from God Himself and from the need for His constant blessing. It also suggests a sense of Independence from the fellowship to which they belong, and which depends on them, but that is another article, eh? All of life is theological.

The day I had in mind when I began writing this, however, is a day that doesn't appear on many calendars, and which doesn't often find celebration, although it richly deserves such attention. And Luther actually says that we should at least remember it daily! Our own and personal Independence Day is the day of our Baptism.

My day came six weeks after my birth. My Independence Day was March 5, 1972. I remember celebrating my birthday over the years, but I do not recall ever celebrating my Baptism - except on March 23, 1986. I was confirmed on that day, or rather, I confirmed the promises spoken for me at my Baptism. Even at that, I did not learn to treasure my Baptism or celebrate it and remember it until later in life.

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("Independence Day" Continued)

Luther taught it to me, but only when I got old enough to actually pay attention to what I had memorized as a teen-ager. He wrote: "What does such Baptizing with water signify? It signifies that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

According to Luther, our Baptism should play a part in our lives every day. We are to confess our sins each day and ask God's forgiveness, and then turn daily to the comfort of our Baptism. We are to remember and believe that there, at that moment, God claimed us, calling us by name and making us His very own. Does that mean that once someone is Baptized that they cannot fall from the faith and be lost? Sadly, no. Each year we hear of someone who turns to the pleasures of the world, or is led astray into some more seductive beliefs, and they turn from Christ, and find no comfort in Him, seek no forgiveness, and place no confidence in Him for their eternal salvation. I know some who have been deceived, and some who simply have cast Christ and the hope of eternal life aside for fame, or wealth, or popularity, or under the powerful delusion of what is so-called "learning" or "wisdom".

Usually, all we can do for such people is pray, for they have turned their ears away from the truth and will not permit us to speak with them about such things. Nevertheless, if they turn back, by the grace of God, their Baptism still retains its power. Then they, like us, may turn daily to face the caterwauling of the devil against them and say simply, "I am Baptized!"

There is no greater comfort than to remember that God has chosen you, personally. How do you know? Because His servant took you into his arms at the behest of God the Father, and God spoke through the voice He had called for that holy purpose - calling you by name and claiming you as His own child and heir. It wasn't a group event in which you may have slipped by, but you were addressed personally, by name. For me, Pastor Aulick said, "Sean Michael Esterline, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I know it is so, even though I cannot remember the events of that day, because my parents, and God-parents, my Grandma and Grandpa, they were there and witnessed it, and told me about it!

That was about me! And your Baptism was about you! All that Christ has won for us was poured out on us, each in our own turn, as we were adopted into the family of God. And we were set free!

Happily, I died that day. It is "happily" that I can report such a thing, because I know it means that I shall never die again. I died with Christ in His crucifixion. The Apostle Paul said, "We were buried with Christ by Baptism into death." And then comes the good part, "in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so, too, we might walk in newness of life." That means that I, and each one that has been baptized, not only died with Christ in His crucifixion, but we also rose with Him in His resurrection! That is the meaning of the "born again" language of Scripture. We died in our baptism - in a very real way - and then we were born again to a new and eternal life with Christ in His resurrection. That is why the hope we have in Christ is called a "living hope".

Of course, we don't see it with our eyes or experience it with our senses because it was our spirit that died with Christ, not our flesh. As far as I am aware, there are no nerve endings in the soul, only in the flesh. So, our flesh awaits the experience of death and resurrection. That is what is held in store for us on the last day. On that day, our flesh will rise - and those who have not died yet, physically, shall experience the transformation in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, just as our souls did in the miracle of the Sacrament of Baptism. Then we shall be reunited, body with soul, to live out the reality of the resurrection and the new and eternal life which we possess, but do not experience right now.

That day will be our Independence Day as well! But while we await that day, we can and we ought to celebrate the great day of our freedom which we know as the day of our Baptism. That is the day that the freedom won by Christ on Good Friday (Independence Day) and proclaimed for us on Easter (Independence Day) was made our own, individually, and sealed to us with the Holy Spirit, as a gift, making that day also Independence Day.

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("Independence Day" Continued)

Finally, it is also quite appropriate for us to celebrate the Independence of our nation - the political Independence Day on July 4th. It is a great gift of God, one to be cherished and which wise men will endeavor to preserve (those individual liberties). It is appropriate to celebrate because it is good. It is appropriate to pause and give God thanks, whether we have special worship service in the church or not, for with it has come the freedom to worship Him openly and confess Christ to our neighbor. We see those liberties endangered today to some degree, and that is likely because too many have taken them for granted and not given thanks - or clearly confessed Christ. The best way to truly celebrate Independence Day is to do both: give thanks, and confess! To realize that we have been saved, and that (thanks to the person and work of Jesus Christ) all of our sins have been forgiven – in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

In Him,

-Pastor Esterline

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 - *(recessed for the summer)*
- † JR Confirmation Classes - 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays *(recessed for the summer)*

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 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 8:30 a.m.

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

All Sunday services include communion.

☞ PLEASE NOTE: ☞

SUNDAY, JULY 2 - ONE service at 10:00 a.m.

Church Picnic to follow the service on July 2 - all are invited.

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.



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 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.



FLPD NEWS

July marks an exciting time at our church and at FLPD—Vacation Bible School! Our daycare kids will attend VBS during the week of July 17-21 and many of our daycare staff will help facilitate this outreach event. Getting involved with VBS would be great way to connect with families from our community and our daycare. There are many opportunities to help out with VBS; it will be a Stellar week! Contact Pr. Dan for more details

Did you know that Michigan is home to 17 species of snakes, 10 turtles, 13 frogs and toads, 10 salamanders, and 2 lizards? Want to learn more about Michigan's reptile population? FLPD is having Nature Discovery come and give a Live Reptile Presentation on Friday, July 28th from 3:00 PM—5:00 PM and you're invited! This FREE presentation will take place in the FLC Fellowship Hall and will feature live specimens for close inspection. No registration necessary, just come and enjoy!

The FLPD Summer program field trips are in full swing! Here are the field trip dates for July. Please contact Pr. Dan, Rebekah or Kyle at the daycare (517-543-3828) if you are interested in driving a bus or your personal vehicle for any of these dates:

Weds 7/5: 11:30 AM—1 PM
Thurs 7/6: 11:30 AM—3 PM
Mon 7/10: 10:30 AM—3 PM
Weds 7/12: 11:30 AM—1 PM
Fri 7/14: 11 AM—2 PM
Weds 7/26: 11:30 AM—1 PM

FLPD is in the process of hiring a preschool lead teacher. If you are interested in learning more about this position, give FLPD Director Rebekah Simmons a call at 517-543-3828.



FLC COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be held on **Thursday, July 13, 7:00 p.m.**



FLC ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC

There will be ONE worship service at 10:00 a.m. on **Sunday, July 2.**

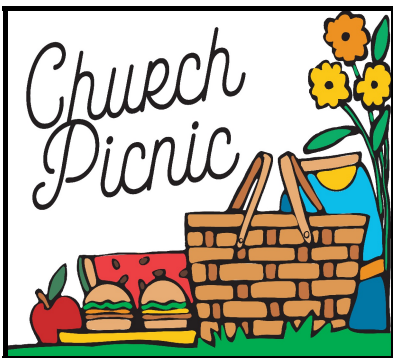
The Annual FLC Picnic will follow the worship service on July 2. Hot dogs with buns and fixings as well as beverages will be provided.

Please bring a dish to pass if you are able.

We will be playing old-fashioned relay race games at the picnic (three legged race, egg-in-a-spoon race, water balloon race, etc.).

If it rains, we will hold the picnic and games in the fellowship hall.

If you would like to help with the picnic, please speak with Kathryn Conrad 517-652-9133.



FLC ELISABETH GUILD

The Elisabeth Guild will be meeting at First Lutheran.

Thursday, July 6, 1:30 p.m.

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





VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Monday, July 17 - Friday, July 21, 9:30 a.m. - Noon.

We are excited to invite you to participate
in our annual Vacation Bible School.

This year's theme is Stellar,
and we hope to "shine Jesus' light" with the community.

We welcome all FLC members to join us in this outreach week. There are different ways to get involved, such as inviting children from Kindergarten to 5th grade to participate or signing up as a crew leader or rotation helper if you are 12 years or older and enjoy working with kids. If you prefer behind-the-scenes roles, we have various positions available, such as kitchen help, greeting, and checking-in kids, taking photos, providing breakfast and snacks for volunteers, preparing activity supplies, decorating the church, leading volunteer staff devotions, and cleaning up at the end of each day. We will find the best fit for you!

If you can't help during that week, there are opportunities to help set-up before the event and tear-down afterward. Even if you cannot help in person, please pray for this event that the love of Christ may reach all those who participate. Here are a few ways to register online:

Register as a Volunteer

Register as a Participant

Scan or share the QR code to register:



We hope that you will consider joining us as we minister to the children in our community. The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these! Please call or text 248-892-2392 if you would like to get involved.

EATON COUNTY FAIR

Sunday, July 9 - Saturday, July 15. Help is needed on Saturday, July 8, 9 a.m.,
to set-up the FLC booth under the grandstands at the fairgrounds.

Please speak with George Hatter (517-213-1939) about helping set-up the booth
(help may be needed getting supplies to the fairgrounds), or just come to the grandstands at 9 a.m.

Volunteers are needed to help man the FLC fair booth Sunday, July 9 - Saturday, July 15.

A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board or in the FLC narthex.

Admission into the fair is free the day of your shift.

Those manning the booth will hand out bottled water, goodies, and pamphlets to those visiting the FLC
booth and will help them sign-up for a drawing for Bibles/DVDs.

Come enjoy the sights and sounds of the fair, enjoy meeting people, indulge in some yummy fair food,
all while helping introduce people to First Lutheran.

Help cleaning up our fair booth will be needed on Sunday, July 16 (time TBA).

Please speak with George Hatter if you will be available to help close the booth. Thank you.

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 at any time. If you will need someone to let you into the church with your items Monday - Friday, please call ahead and confirm with Amy in the office to see if she will be there on the day you plan to stop in (517-543-4360 ext. 221). Please place items in the Sunday School Room closest to the library. Remember to check your items/boxes to make sure there are no mice or 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!



2023 GRADUATES

Our 2023 Graduates:

Rhian Hackney - Rhian, a graduate of Eaton Rapids High School, is the daughter of Steve and Rebecca Hackney. Rhian is graduating with her HS Diploma as well as PCT Certification. She was a member of the National Honor Society and received the Silver Scholar Award (for GPA). Rhian participated in LINKS, and LCC in school, and enjoys helping out with the annual FLC Rummage. Rhian is graduating with her PCT (Patient Care Technician) and will be going to LCC in the fall to obtain a degree in Nursing.

Logan Gingrich - daughter of Brad and Stacy Gingrich, Logan has received her high school diploma from Charlotte High School. In school Logan participated in varsity golf and soccer - winning All District, MVP, All Conference, and All State academic awards. She is also a member of the National Honor Society, was on the Student Council, is a Junior Rotarian, and participated in Relay for Life. At First Lutheran Logan went on three mission trips with the FLC Youth Group and has helped with VBS every summer. She plans to attend Western Michigan University for business.

Micah Daniel Longden - Son of Pastor Daniel and Kimberly Longden, Micah will be receiving his high school diploma as a home school graduate. Throughout his high school years, Micah has been active in numerous ways at FLC: serving at community dinners, leading at VBS, running the Sunday service livestream, helping prep for Midnight Madness, and assisting in many other service projects around the church and the Charlotte community as opportunities arise. Micah has been a faithful attender of Sunday School, and has completed an in-depth study of the Bible over many years through Bible Study Fellowship. He has also served at Camp Arcadia the past two summers, helping in the transition from summer to fall programming. Micah loves building and designing new things. He has dabbled in woodworking, 3D printing, and creating original ideas for LEGO. He is a talented writer and has received recognition in a national writing competition. Micah's plans for the future involve taking one step-at-a-time as the Lord reveals. He hopes to travel and get some work experience as he seeks God's will for his life. Please continue to pray for Micah as the Lord directs his future path.



FLC ELDERS MEETING

The next Board of Elders' Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, July 18, 6:30 p.m.**



FLC COMMUNITY DINNER

Our next Community Dinner will be held on

Monday, July 17, 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.



COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Volunteers are needed every Sunday at 9:45 a.m. to provide and serve refreshments, and to make and serve coffee.

(Volunteers provide the refreshments, the church provides coffee/juice.)

A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the office hallway for those wishing to sign-up to provide and serve refreshments. Thank you.



JUNE BAPTISMS

We celebrate with the family of

Theodore Asher Stuck and

Vincent Dietrich Stuck

sons of Ryan and Christina Stuck

who were brought into God's Kingdom through the Holy Waters of Baptism

Sunday, June 4, 2023.



We celebrate with the family of

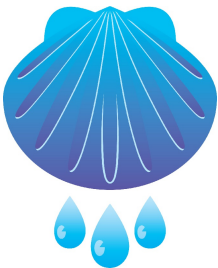
Gypsy Lorelei Knickerbocker and

Ariel Raine Knickerbocker

daughters of Bryan and Keely Knickerbocker

who were brought into God's Kingdom through the Holy Waters of Baptism

Sunday, June 25, 2023.



FIFTY-TWO WEEK BIBLE READING PROGRAM

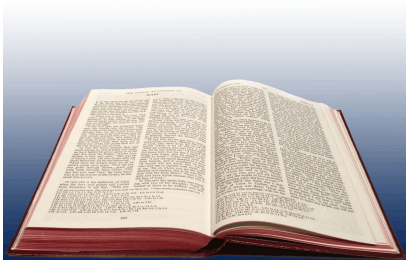
It's never too late to join in the 52 Week Bible Reading Program!
Bible readings for July:

Week 27

July 2	Psalm 68-72
July 3	Psalm 73-78
July 4	Psalm 79-85
July 5	Psalm 86-91
July 6	Psalm 92-102
July 7	Psalm 103-106
July 8	Psalm 107-112

Week 28

July 9	Psalm 113-118
July 10	Psalm 119-124
July 11	Psalm 125-138
July 12	Psalm 139-147
July 13	Psalm 148-150; Proverbs 1-4
July 14	Proverbs 5-8
July 15	Proverbs 9-13



Week 29

July 16	Proverbs 14-17
July 17	Proverbs 18-22
July 18	Proverbs 23-26
July 19	Proverbs 27-30
July 20	Proverbs 31; Ecclesiastes 1-3
July 21	Ecclesiastes 4-8
July 22	Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Solomon 1

Week 30

July 23	Song of Solomon 2-8
July 24	Isaiah 1-4
July 25	Isaiah 5-8
July 26	Isaiah 9-11
July 27	Isaiah 12-16
July 28	Isaiah 17-21
July 29	Isaiah 22-25

Week 31

July 30	Isaiah 26-29
July 31	Isaiah 30-32
Aug 1	Isaiah 33-36
Aug 2	Isaiah 37-40
Aug 3	Isaiah 41-43
Aug 4	Isaiah 44-46
Aug 5	Isaiah 47-49

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.



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 2nd worship service.

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.



USE OF FLC FACILITIES

If you would like to use the FLC fellowship hall, kitchen, or Pastor Olson Room for your private non-FLC event, you must sign-up through the church office (see Amy in the office).

Use of the building is a \$150 refundable deposit for members and no-charge to non-profits.

No event held at FLC can be a for-profit event

(rummage sale, sales of tupperware, sales of good baked or cooked at FLC, etc.).



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.



PLEASE BE SURE TO LOCK ALL EXTERIOR DOORS AFTER YOUR EVENT AND ON SUNDAYS.

We have been arriving in the morning to find exterior doors unlocked lately.

This presents a security risk for both our building and equipment, as well as staff and volunteers.

Thank you for your help

GO . . . SELL ALL YOU HAVE?

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” asked the rich young ruler. Jesus said, “You know the commandments.” And he replied, “All these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:18-22)

When we hear this story, this question comes to mind: is Jesus speaking to us also, or only to the rich young ruler? In other words, is Jesus telling us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor?

As good Lutherans, we answer, “No!” But why? Why should we not sell all that we have and distribute it to the poor? The simple explanation is this: if we sold everything we have, our wife and our children would be neglected. In other words, to sell everything we have and give it to the poor would ignore, even abandon, those whom God has placed in our care. Our money, everything we have, is not to be used solely for the church. But that doesn’t excuse us from using our money for the purpose God intends.

Everyone has three stations in life, three spheres in which we live and are to be of service to our neighbors. These stations are the church, the family, and society. We are members of all three of these by birth. We are born into the church by water and the Word of God, and our duties to others in the church arise from our Baptism into the church. We are born into a family, and our duties to others stem from our birth into that family. Finally, we are born into society, which is simply a further extension of our birth into our family. The duties we have toward other members of society come from either our own birth or the birth of others into the same society.

All that we have and all that we are ought to be pressed into service for the church, the family, and the society. If we were to sell all we have and give only to one, the other two would be neglected, and we would falter in fulfilling our duties.

So, consider your life and all that you have in light of these three stations. You pay taxes to support and help those in society. You save for college for your children, and provide food, clothing, and shelter for the members of your family.

But the station that is usually thought of last is the church. Since the needs of the family and society are more immediate, the church is often given what is left over. This is not how it should be. Rather, we are to give of our first fruits, from off the top, the best, even as Abel gave the best of his flock.

This requires forethought. It means that you sit down and make a plan of what you will give from the beginning. It means sticking to it even when it seems that there are other more immediate and pressing things.

And this is all the more necessary now as we enter into periods of time where giving is low due to high unemployment or where restrictions on meeting in church limit opportunities to give. If we love God and His gifts of forgiveness given through the means of grace, which we receive at church and only at church, then we will support it, just as we love our country and our family. For all that we have and all that we are is given to us by our gracious God. He spared no expense for us and our salvation. He gave up His Son to death so that our sins are forgiven, and we will live. What’s more, He provides for all that we need for this body and life. And our lives in this world, among these three spheres of church, family, and society are to mirror the generosity of the one who gave us life in all three at birth.

Don’t let the church, your divine family, be an afterthought or even ignored. It is nurturing you, bringing you up in salvation through Word and Sacrament.

– *LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship*

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.



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.