

First Lutheran Church

November Newsletter

First Lutheran Staff

Pastor

Rev. Phil Leer
663-3594
701-341-7784

Pastor

Rev. Adam Barden
663-3594

Parish Administrator

Jackie Klein
663-3594

Financial Administration

Curtis Peterson

Worship Accompanists

8:30
10:30
6:30 (Wed.)

Bell Choir Director

Cathy Long

First Lutheran Is A Mission Partner
with Camp of the Cross Ministries



Friends in Christ,

Some of you may recall reading a couple reflections I recently wrote and posted on my personal Facebook page, as well as our church's Facebook page. Sadly, my Facebook-posting muse was awakened from its slumber by the horrific and deadly crash on October 2nd that claimed the lives of Mandan kids Ben Moch and Taylor Fisher and badly injured their friend Cade Satnan (who thankfully is now home recovering from his injuries).

Tragedies are nothing new to the Mandan community, but wow, this one draped a sad pall of grief over the whole Bismarck metro area and then some, unlike anything I have witnessed in my almost six years here with you. So, kindly allow me to re-visit post #2 from my muse's poetic output the past couple weeks; the second part, specifically, in which I reflected on a walk I had taken the Monday evening after Ben and Taylor's joint funeral at the High School earlier in the day.

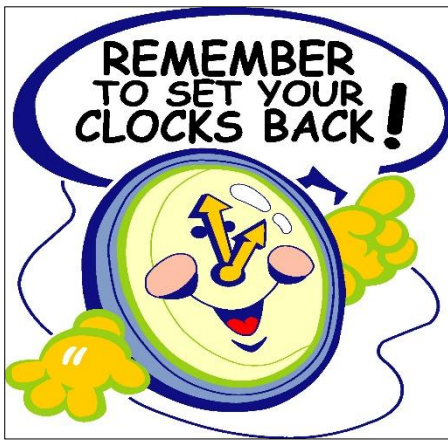
If you didn't get a chance to read it, here's the short version: I tend to pick up random pieces of litter when I go for walks, and towards the end of my walk that night I picked up a small white envelope lying on the grass (my first and only litter-grab of the walk). Upon turning the "hideous thing" over to the front of the envelope, I see one hand-written word: "Phil." Of all the words in the universe that could have been on a piece of litter lying on the ground, *that* was written on it?? As I said on that second Facebook post, *I swear I am not making this up*.

And now here is an addendum to that little story. A day or two after the envelope mystery unveiled itself to me, and to all the kind folks out in Facebook land who took time to read my telling of the story (bless you all), I go for another walk, this one up a grassy hill on the property of the BSC campus, just a half-block from my house. I like this little incline, because it gives me an opportunity to greet my non-human best friends, whom I call "the cottons" and "the limbers."

Yes, my name was on that envelope I picked up that Monday night, and yes, I talk to trees (they're fabulous listeners, I must say). Almost at the peak of the hill, I spy more litter and am, as always, disgusted. But—given the recent envelope mystery—more than a little curious. This hideous thing is smaller than the envelope and looks like it could have been used as a wrap for an ice cream cone. This, too, has only one word on it: "Joy." And so, I repeat: *I swear I am not making this up*.

Until I decide otherwise, both "Phil" and "Joy" will hold a prominent place on my kitchen counter as a visual reminder that, despite all the horror, tragedy, suffering and pain in this harrowing and hard world, there is still this sturdy, steady, steadfast, stunning thing called joy at the heart of *everything*. I try not to smile when I walk by that prominent counter place, but it doesn't work. Even the melancholy, fun-hating dark guest that resides in my soul cannot compete with my spirit-lifting-litter-love-letter.

(Continued on page 7)



Be sure to set your clocks back 1 hour before you go to bed on Saturday, October 31st.



Thank you to Dakota Community Bank & Trust for grilling, providing all the food & serving LAF on Thursday, October 8th. It was greatly appreciated!

Deck the Halls... Literally!

We're gathering a joyful crew to decorate the inside of our church for Christmas!

Saturday, November 28th starting at 10am

Why You Should Join:

- Free coffee and donuts
- Christmas tunes to enhance your holiday mood
- Step ladders, laughter, and lightbulbs galore
- Limited time commitment (we're usually done by lunch)
- **No experience needed. All ages welcome.** If you're willing to help, we can find a job for you. Bring the whole family and start a tradition! (Kids are good at running the extension cords.)



Bring your holiday cheer, a warm heart, and maybe an extra step ladder if you have a sturdy one.

Call or text Sarah Bradford at 471-9801 with any questions.

We also will need help after the Christmas season to take the decorations down again. That will happen on Saturday, January 9 at 10am. You can help with either one or both.

November Youth Page

Mark Your Calendar...

5th: LAF ~ Hot Dogs
12th: LAF ~ Sloppy Joes
19th: LAF ~ Pulled Pork
26th: No LAF

Youth Group & Bible Study –

Starting this month, we will be switching things up a bit with our youth groups. Before each youth group session, we will be offering a time for Bible Study from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm. From 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm, we will have food and fellowship. Youth group will start at 6:30 pm and end at 8:30 pm.

We are also going to try something a little different with Youth Group this month. 8th graders will be welcome to attend the high school youth group session instead of the middle school session. So, for this month's youth groups, Confirmation students and older will meet on November 8th and C-Squad students will meet on November 22nd.

Local Mission Event Meeting –

There will be an initial planning meeting for the Local Mission Event this summer on November 15th at 7:00pm. We will select dates for the event as well as discuss what the event will be like. Anyone that is in 8th grade or older is welcome to attend this and future meetings and help with the planning of the event.

Area Mock in –

The next mock-in will be held on November 20th from 6:00 to 10:00 at Lord of Life Lutheran Church. You can sign up for the event using the following weblink: <https://form.jotform.com/262644641082153>.

If you have any questions regarding any of the upcoming youth activities, please contact Pastor Adam

What
ARE You
Thankful
for?

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms:

Johnathan Jason Morrell
Justice Lee Morrell
Jameson Michael Morrell
Finley Mitchell Halvorson
Chloe Kay Tweet
Jettediah Jerald Quam

Funerals:

Chris Holwagner

Memorial Fund

In memory of Jan Grabinger given by Jim & Donna Mellmer,
Leona Keidel (for quilters).

November ~ Mission of the Month

Weekend Meals for Mandan Kids

Items needed are Chap Stick, Canned Tuna, Canned Chicken, Canned Ham, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Fruit Cups, Canned Fruit, Granola Bars, Cereal, Pudding Cups, Applesauce, Chef Boyardee', Mac & Cheese, Soups, Hamburger Helper, Spaghetti Noodles, Spaghetti Sauce, Pop Tarts, Instant Mashed Potatoes, Rice A Roni, Pasta Roni, Pork and Beans, Baked Beans, Pancake Mix-no eggs required such as Krusteaz Brand, Syrup.

NO GLASS JARS PLEASE!

You may put your items in the boxes in the Narthex. Thank you!

Special Thanks

Thank you to all the greeters, ushers, communion servers, readers, communion set-up, coffee hour workers, and to all who have supplied goodies for the last month. Your help is greatly appreciated!

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Deadline for articles
for the December
Newsletter will be
November 18th.

Worship Schedule

Sunday ~

8:30 am ~ Traditional Worship

9:30 am ~ Church School

10:30 am ~ Contemporary Worship

Wednesday ~

5:45 pm ~ Church School

6:30 pm ~ Worship

7:30 pm ~ Confirmation

First Lutheran Church Council Minutes
Date: October 15, 2026

Members Present: President Kenton Holle, Vice President Tim Faller, Cara Mitzel, Greg Grube, Travis Schmidt, Lori Meyers, Pastor Phil, Pastor Adam

Members Absent: Veronica Barnick, Kristy Mindt, Sue Ziemann

Additional Present: Jackie Klein, Curtis Peterson

Meeting was called to order by President Kenton Holle

- Motion to approve the agenda was made by Tim. Greg seconded. No one opposed it. Approved.
- Motion to approve the September minutes was made by Travis. Tim seconded. No one Opposed it. Approved.

Correspondence:

- Mandan Golden Age Club thank you for donations for home delivered meals program
- Missouri Slope thank you for donation to the M-fund

Devotion: Pastor Phil – Philippians the Fourth Chapter – Lifting up the women of faith

Pastor Phil's Report: Official Acts: 1. Funerals/Memorial Services: I took a vacation day and led a funeral in Harvey 9/24. Pastor Adam led a service at Dawise this past Saturday for Dean Werner and a service on October 2nd for Chris Holwagner. I attended the funeral for Taylor and Ben at the high school this past Monday. Kudos to the staff of MHS, Weigel Funeral Home, and St. Joe's Catholic Parish for serving our grieving community with their love and skills. 2. Weddings and Rehearsals: Five weddings in a row conclude this weekend! 3. Baptisms: We have had a busy last month (around 5!), which Pastor Adam and I have shared.

Pastor Phil report continued:

--Multiple pastoral care contacts after the tragedy 10/2. The sole survivor of the accident [in the car Taylor and Ben were in], Cade Satnan, has relatives here at First, including Grandpa Don and Grandma Bev Satnan. Cade's dad, Chad, is also on our rolls, and I spoke to him at the funeral. Cade is out of the hospital and came to the funeral.

--Exec Team meeting.

--Two pre-marital meetings.

--Hosted "We're Here for You" open house gathering for kids and parents last Thursday as a response to the accident. Smallish gathering of kids, but a beautiful evening for us all. Thanks to the multiple people who provided treats and to the 6-7 of our members who volunteered to help that night. The girls even serenaded us in song (with mics, of course)

--Confirmation Sunday pics and rehearsal

Other

--Attended Fall Theological Conference 9/21-9/23.

--Pastor Adam and I are tentatively planning an Advent Bible Study on Mondays for four Mondays in Advent beginning November 30th (lectionary-based) from 12:15-1:00p.m. Might be called something like "Advent (ure) in God's word."

-Confirmation Sunday is October 25th at 2:00. We will get to try out our brand-new red banners that day courtesy of the Howard Moldenhauer family!

--Christmas worship schedule forthcoming; probably just two Christmas Eve services, but brainstorming adding one in the morning, either this year or next. No Christmas Day service, as per last year. Planning Holden Evening Prayer for Advent Wednesdays.

--Johann Stenslie "Norwegian Christmas Songs" concert Thursday December 10th @6:30. Working with Heart River Lutheran on further details. We will play host, while HR will do advertising, etc.

Pastor Adam's Report: Pastor Phil and I attended the Fall Theological Conference at Metigoshi Ministries. I attended Taylor's Visitation and Prayer service. Pastor Phil was able to attend the funeral of Taylor and Ben. I have had one session each of middle school and high school youth groups.

Coming Up: 1. The confirmation service will be on the 25th at 2:00. 2. Trunk or Treat is on Saturday the 31st. 3. I will have a Youth Gathering meeting on 21st. This will be an opportunity to see if we will have a group to go to the gathering. 4. Pastor Phil and I came up with an idea to have a Brown Bag Bible Study for Advent this year. It will be a lunch time bible study on Mondays in Advent following the lectionary.

Youth/Mission Trip News: 1. LYO is this weekend (October 16-18) at the Baymont Inn here in Mandan. Kama and I will be chaperoning for the middle school group Friday and Saturday. Kama will stay for the High School group as there are only a few girls that are signed up. 2. The next Middle School Youth Group will be on the 25th from 7:00 to 9:00. The next High School Youth Group will be on November 8th. I will coordinate with Cara regarding the start time as she has mentioned offering a youth bible stud that would take place before youth group. 3. I am coordinating fundraising efforts with Kama and Cara. The money raised by selling in church will go towards a general youth fund that will be for major trips or events that any kid that helps to fundraise will be able to access.

Financial Report: Financial Report by Curtis Peterson.

- A motion was made to approve the September financial report as presented was made by Tim. It was seconded by Travis . No one opposed. Motion carries.
- A motion to approve renewal of the Portico Insurance for staff was made by Travis. It was seconded by Lori. No one opposed. Motion carries.
- Asked council members to bring forward budget items to the November meeting
- A motion to renew the CD was made by Travis. It was seconded by Lori. No one opposed. Motion carries.

Jackie's Report:

- Trunk or Treat will be held October 31, 2026 3:00-5:30 with hotdogs and chips.
- Volunteers will be assisted by Lori and Greg.
- Lindtech Services was here and completed items addressed in September meeting.
- Our new AED has arrived
- Mr. Squeegy here and cleaned all windows
- Intercom placed on 9/22/26 and is working well
- Women's Bathrooms have noted stain which may be under tiles. Will assess this and have discussion on professional cleaning vs. Remodel at November meeting.
- LAF: participation is increased. 124 participated this week.
- River City blew out sprinklers. They found two sprinkler heads which were broken. They placed flags next to the broken heads. It was decided to wait until spring to fix these heads at this time.
- Dakota Pest found a bat on a sticky trap. Jackie wanted us to be aware as it is noted that area bats have been found to have rabies.

Team Reports:

- Executive Team: All items covered in the agenda
- Worship Team: nothing new to report
- Evangelism & Outreach: Trunk or Treat
- Property Management: Meeting for Wall Project scheduled for 10/20/26
- Stewardship: Nothing new to report
- Youth & Parish Education: The Education Team met on Monday, October 5, 2026. Topics of discussion where to close the loop on Background checks, confirmation, 2nd Grade Bibles, youth gatherings, mission trip, youth fundraising and Christmas programs. Delegation of volunteers to head these activities were determined at the special education meeting which included Kama Hoovestol and Britany Barden as well as Pastor Phil and Pastor Adam earlier this year. Kama has taken over the background checks. A request was submitted to Kama to forward communication from Oxford to Curtis for payment. All other events are planned and/or running well. Pastor Adam has had up to 14 middle school participants at his monthly youth event. The High School events have no attendees. LYO events this month will have 3 high school attendees and 14 middle school attendees. Youth Bible study will begin in November led by Cara Mitzel. The plan is to

have this Bible study preceding the youth activities on the Sundays which Adam will hold the events. Darryl Nitschke has started the adult Bible study. He has had high attendance. Pastor Phil and Pastor Adam plan an additional Bible study to add in the Advent season. We are excited about the youth and parish education events at First Lutheran Church of Mandan.

Old Business:

- Youth Room improvements- changes are taking place which are positive

New Business:

- D&E Supply: Motion to set up maintenance agreement for the floor scrubber made by Tim. Travis seconded. No one opposed. Motion carried.
- Pizza was not covered by donations one Wednesday. This will be monitored and sign will be set out that pizza is \$1.00 per slice.
- Wall Project: Meeting regarding this will take place 10/20/2026
- Bathrooms: Access the stains and determine needs for care.
- Volunteer Appreciation: Lori will plan volunteer appreciation on November 8th and 11th

Lori requested that New Business for next month contain discussion regarding Mission Trip participants, who are seniors this year, getting the monies which they earned to participate in a mission of each student's choosing. At this time, the senior students who attended the past ELCA Youth Gathering 2023 are not wanting to participate in the ELCA National Youth Gathering 2026.

Next Meeting: November 19, 2026

Lord's Prayer

Meeting Adjournment - A motion was made to adjourn by Lori. Seconded by Tim.

Friday, October 16, 2026, it was brought to the council's attention via email by Jackie Klein that one of our missions, Aid Inc., is dissolving. She stated that Curtis and she needed to know how to proceed with the monies allocated for this mission. Motion was made by Veronica to split the amount equally among our other six missions. Seconded by Greg. None opposed it. Motion carries.



And now there are just two more things, patient reader: First, the day before Ben and Taylor's funeral, we heard in worship on that Sunday morning from Apostle Paul's joy-drenched Letter to the **PHIL**ippians that we are called to "*Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say 'Rejoice'.*" Hmmmm. And secondly, I just dug out one of my few office Christmas decorations that I typically put out on display a few minutes ago (it's early, but it's cute). It's a little eight-inch Hallmark "Bunnies by the Bay" stuffed bunny in Christmas suspenders and a cool hat that would make Charles Dickens jealous. It was a gift from a former parishioner who thought of me when she walked by the thing in a store and couldn't resist. *Bless her soul.* And now, a dozen or so years later, it appears in my newsletter article for this month because I can't help seeing some kind of grace in all of this. Oh, the bunny's name, you might ask? "Joy Phil." And so, one more time: *I swear I am not making this up.*

What does all this mean, as good old Martin Luther taught us to ask? Who knows. Maybe you can help me analyze all of this, before Joy Phil and all the other Christmas bunnies burst onto the scene as Advent approaches, singing "Joy to the World." In the meantime, I'll keep finding ways of putting "Joy" and "Phil" in the same sentence, especially as the days get darker, the nights get colder, and my dark guest inside gets busier. Until then, pay attention, good people of God. The universe is talking to you (and so are the trees).

Grace and Peace,
Pastor (Joy) Phil

“Thankfulness” Baskets

First Lutheran is collecting fall/winter/early spring items and personal care items for our homebound, assisted living, and nursing home residents.

Please consider being a blessing to these precious members by donating items, assisting in the assembly of baskets, and/or delivering them.

There are boxes in the narthex for donation items.

Questions? – please call Lori 701-471-9436.

“Thankfulness Baskets”

will be assembled & delivered on Sunday, November 22nd, 2026.

If you would like to help with assembly and/or delivery, please come to the First Lutheran Church chapel after the 10:30 AM service on Sunday, November 22nd, 2026.



 **AURACAST™**
Assistive Listening System installed



Broadcast Name: First Lutheran

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Compatible with Auracast hearing aids from Phonak, ReSound, Oticon, Starkey, Signia (Auracast-enabled models)

Scan for Step-by-Step Setup Guide

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- Hearing aids (t-coil loop)
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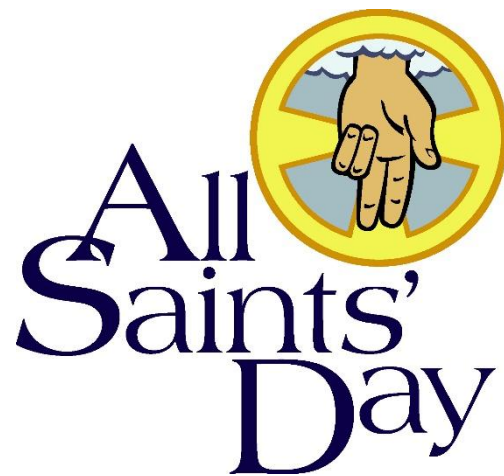
VENUCAST™

There is a new hearing assistance system at First Lutheran.

Most brands of hearing aids have the “Auracast” connection feature that can connect your hearing aids directly to First Lutheran Audio during the church service.

If your hearing aid brand does not have “Auracast” you can use one of the Auracast receivers located in the Narthex.

**The Saints who have departed from our congregation since our last All Saints observance on
November 2, 2025:**



Emily Barnhart

Margie Stradinger

Sherry Lillis

Jacqueline Oberlander

Tim Anderson

Debra Will

Joann Stork

Tom Frank

Jake Pertile

Eugene Eckholm

Fran Boehm

Chloe Leingang

Howard Moldenhauer

Kevin Kautzmann

Peggy Schafer

Bob Bahm

Monte Chase

Vernon Vietz

Paul Heinle

September	Sep-26	YTD	2026	Percentage
FINANCIAL GIFTS	2026	2026	ANNUAL	2026
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET	%
Total Receipts	44,122.35	433,449.26	665,225.95	65.16%
Total Disbursements	44,948.12	468,689.17	665,225.95	70.46%
Receipts Over or (Under)				
Disbursement	(825.77)	(35,239.91)		
BUDGET 2026				
ACTUAL INCOME vs. BUDGET				
	Received	Weekly	Difference	
September 6, 2026	12,758.42	12,792.81	(34.39)	
September 13, 2026	10,009.99	12,792.81	(2,782.82)	
September 20, 2026	12,295.89	12,792.81	(496.92)	
September 27, 2026	8,457.60	12,792.81	(4,335.21)	
			-	
Interest Earned on Checking	\$ 600.45			
	44,122.35	51,171.24	(7,048.89)	
BUDGET 2026				
DEBT RETIREMENT				
BUILDING FUND	Received	Weekly	Difference	
September 6, 2026	939.44	1,153.85	(214.41)	
September 13, 2026	2,367.03	1,153.85	1,213.18	
September 20, 2026	1,181.69	1,153.85	27.84	
September 27, 2026	712.44	1,153.85	(441.41)	
			-	
	5,200.60	4,615.40	585.20	
IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 *		ATTENDANCE FOR SEPTEMBER 2025		
September 2, 2026	27	September 3, 2025	34	
September 6, 2026	142	September 7, 2025	160	
September 9, 2026	32	September 10, 2025	49	
September 13, 2026	163	September 14, 2025	198	
September 16, 2026	98	September 17, 2025	85	
September 20, 2026	149	September 21, 2025	176	
September 23, 2026	104	September 24, 2025	88	
September 27, 2026	199	September 28, 2025	185	
September 30, 2026	110			
*These numbers do not include our online worshippers.				
Total Attendance for Month	1,024		975	

Thanks to all the workers listed below for all the help with the packing of Lutheran World Relief on October 22nd. Through all of your help, we can help others. We packed 140 School Kits, 7 Health Kits and 109 Quilts. Also thanks to Rod Skytland, Keatyn Skytland & Ethan Hauff for pickup and delivery of boxes. God's love —Leona Keidel.

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Leona Keidel | Faye Rodgers | Jim & Donna Mellmer |
| Muriel Soule | Jean Thompson | Calvin & Sandie Kohler |
| Corby Rachel | Terry Meyer | Sidney Fleck |
| Maggie Abraham | Mike Haggen | Mike Adams |

If you are not using your offering envelopes, please call the church office and let us know so we can save money on sending them out! The church office number is 663-3594. Thank you!

Thank you to Adam Klein Chapter 3 Disabled American Veterans for your donation of money to our LAF program & serving LAF on Thursday, October 15th. It was greatly appreciated!



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**Building Faith and
Transforming Lives
in Christ.**

www.firstlutheranofmandan.org
We're on the web!

ADDRESS LABEL

Happy Thanksgiving



**Happy
Thanksgiving
to you and
your family
from First
Lutheran
Staff!**