



THE Branch

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2023

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Mark Your Calendars

On September 10th we will return to two services at 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. with Sunday School between the services (for children and adults) from 9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

As we transition from summer to fall, God leads us, steady in love and care, even as our seasons change. Let us worship.

Recognizing Barb Hillman, Sept. 3

After her many faithful years of service, we will bid farewell and godspeed to Barb after her latest stint as the interim church administrator on Sept. 3. We will bless Barb in worship and then celebrate following service with a social hour.



Jesus said to them, "... **You** give them something to eat."

Dear Church,
How you did indeed, as the hands and feet, the heart and mind, of Christ Jesus, feed the people. And with this feeding at the Cass County Fair, this investment in the mission and outreach of First Lutheran Church, you will continue to feed the people, to reach out in love as the Body of Christ that you most certainly are. Thanks be to God.

And thank you.

As has been said—as will be said—there is so much thanks to go around. For me, the enduring image of our time in the food stand will be the pitch and hum of the place on Saturday night, when seven windows were open for service and two dozen saints flew around the place, taking orders, filling orders, doling out taco meat, nacho cheese, flipping and wrapping burgers, making change... and doing it all, all of it, with delight, with kindness, with joy, with love.

When we first agreed to take on this endeavor, one of the main components that sold the council on it was the potential for fellowship. The number of people who worked in the stand who have told me what a good time it was attests to just this fellowship. Even if you only saw the flurry of activity from outside, I hope you saw the smiles (sometimes weary smiles), heard the joyous banter and even—on a few occasions—singing, and witnessed a church moving at the Holy Spirit's beckoning.

As we continue in this ministry, I pray you will also continue to give prayerful consideration to the ways you can support it. We learned a great deal in these five days in August, and in the months ahead, we will be looking at the best ways to continue our stewardship of this resource. There will be more to report upon in the near future, too.

For now, suffice to say, from the bottom of all the hearts of the food stand leadership team and from me, thank you and well done, good and faithful servants.

Adam



Highlights / July 2023 Meeting

New Business

- o Fair Stand updates:
 - Pie Making on August 5th
 - Volunteer sign-ups
- o Otoe County Parade on July 29th
- o Oven replacement in Parish Hall

Board Reports

Pastor's Report:

- o Completed first year in role
- o New member meeting to be held in September

Education

- o Vacation Bible School had 71 children attend

Property

- o Repair work was done on the air conditioning unit

Board of Deacons

- o Looking at the benefit package to make the Administrator role more attractive as we continue to seek applicants

A complete set of minutes is available at the Kiosk in the Narthex.

Giving Opportunities

2nd Mile Giving		
Project	Estimated Cost	To Date
Kiruweni Dispensary	On Going	\$30,350
Global Health Ministries	On Going	\$20,145
Peru Missionaries	On Going	\$17,296
2nd Mile / Shed	\$20,000	\$9,131

Treasurer's Report —

Current Fund (Pastor and Administration, Office, Building, Education, Worship)

Received through July 31: \$115,218.34
 Expenses through July 31: \$126,125.63
 Budgeted through July 31: \$135,357.90

A Note of Thanks

Church Family,
 WE DID IT!!! Through your support with your financial gifts, we were able to cover all of the parsonage repair expenses. Please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your support and kindness with these donations. May God's abundant blessings continue to be with you and our church community. *Thanks! The Church Council*

Christian Education

By: Sherri Wilson



What an amazing church family we are all blessed with here at First Lutheran!

Church Family has come to mean so much more to me over the years. I have chosen to become more involved in various areas of the church. For instance, this month working at the fair stand, I had a friend say oh that's so much work, not fun. My reaction was it was actually very enjoyable working with my church family. Was I tired at the end of the evening, yes! The fellowship with the friends from church made it totally worth it.

I would like to encourage all of you to get involved or stay involved in something in this congregation. Visit with friends before and after church, say yes to a committee, greet new faces, share the peace, faithfully pray for our prayer list, or sign up to help with the church service, Your heart will be filled with joy and you will bring joy to other members of the church family.

Most of you knew my mother-in-law, Ruby Wilson. I have been reading in her Bible/prayer journal that she wrote many special messages and verses. "Worship service will provide atmosphere in which people experience and leave with a message in their hearts. You need fellowship with other believers. It is a privilege to help carry on the word of God."

May we all know the joy the privilege of serving God brings to our heart.



Looking for DVD/VHS Combo Player

Do you have an old DVD / VHS combo player that is in working condition that you would be willing to donate? The tech team is seeking one for the church. If you have one, please contact the church office.



Giving Online

Thank you for your generosity! Giving is a part of our worship which makes the ministries of this church possible. If you would like the convenience of giving online you can do so by using the website:

<https://onrealm.org/firstlutheranavoca/Give>
 or Text NORTHBRANCH to 73256
 or Scan the QR code.





Church News and Events

OSJ Road Clean-up

Thank you to our 15 Order of Saint John (OSJ) members and the sponsors who came out to pick-up trash along the Otoe Spur on Sunday, August 20th. They worked hard in very hot and humid weather to make this busy road cleaner!



Baptisms

Korver Phillip Fischer was baptized Sunday, July 30th. His parents are Mike & Ariel Fischer, sponsors are Sara Howard & Alyssa Price.



Theo Duane Buchholz was baptized on Sunday, August 6th. His parents are Lee & Morgan Buchholz, sponsors are Lauren Peters & Jamie Juilfs.

North Branch Facebook Page has Changed

The Facebook page for First Lutheran has changed. Please "unlike" and "unfollow" the old page, which was hacked, and go to <https://www.facebook.com/FirstLutheranNorthBranch/> to like and follow the new page. Thank you and sorry for the inconvenience!

Rally Sunday

Rally Sunday is September 10th during the Sunday School hour at 9:30 a.m. Join us for fun and fellowship as we get ready for a great new year of Christian education!



Sunday Brunch

The Women of the church will be hosting a brunch on Rally Sunday, September 10th from 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall. Come and enjoy egg casseroles, biscuits and gravy, fresh fruit, cinnamon rolls, juice, coffee, and great fellowship as we begin a new season of Christian Education.



Bible Blessing

We are excited to kick off our new year of Christian education by placing God's word in the hands of our youth. The 3 year olds will be receiving their first story Bible, the 3rd graders will be getting their first Bible and the 6th graders will be receiving their Catechism Bible. Come out on September 10th at the 10:30 service to celebrate these 3 groups with us!

First Lutheran Church

BIBLE BLESSING

3 year olds, 3rd graders and 6th graders

Sunday, September 10th | 10:30 am worship service

Fair Stand Pie Updates

To The Congregation:

Thank you for supporting me as a Fair Stand Committee Member.

I was mainly the “overseer” for Pies, Yumburgers & Brownies.

Thank you to the ladies of our church for all the assistance they did and advice in planning for the pies and brownies before and during the fair. I am still calculating the final number of pies we had for the entire fair, but as of today I believe we served 155 pies (930) slices and had 11 pies we didn’t serve during the fair. If I asked you for EXTRA pies during the fair (and you did not fill out a form for pies BEFORE the fair) please contact me so I can verify my notes.

From these figures I now have a better idea for next year in planning for the number and flavor of the pies (as well as brownies). From what I learned onsite as well as advice given to me from you and others, we should have a smoother operation next year.

Thank you also to Leonard & Letha, Don & Carrie, as well as Kirby in preparing the original 5 batches of Yumburgers. Ingredients were NOT changed, but with what I learned and the advice of Letha & Carrie, the PREPARATION of the yumburgers has been updated and documented for the future. A special thanks to Kirby, JoDee, Don & Carrie for their help early Saturday morning in preparing another 3 batches of yumburgers—I could not have done it without you!

I also have so many other individuals to thank, members and non-members, but I will not try to list them all since I don’t want to leave anyone out...just know that I am grateful for whatever support you gave me and the rest of the Committee.

And finally, to the other Committee members, Alan (Chairman), Pastor Adam, Diane, Cathy & Dennis—each one of you contributed your skills, talents and TIME that ultimately made this a success. Of course, there were things that were negative with our first year of this adventure, but the positive in the end outweighed any issues that we confronted.

Cindy S. Drake
Gooseberry Pie Cult Leader
Church Historian

First Lutheran Church Youth Pies

These are the pies that the youth members helped to bake along with some generous volunteers!

(Reminder: Convection Bake (as with our new parish hall ovens) is DIFFERENT than a true convection oven. Convection Bake circulates heat better and is very good for pies, etc. but does not shorten the baking time...use same baking time as you would with bake...thank you to JoDee’s mother LuAnn Ruwe for confirming this for me when we were baking the youth pies...)

Easy Cherry Pie

1 unbaked 9” Pie Crust (in pie tin-prefer Pillsbury)
2 (21 oz.) cans of cherry pie filling (4 c.)
1 (14.5 oz.) can of red tart cherries (drained)
1 t. vanilla or almond extract (your preference)
1 T. instant tapioca
2 t. lemon juice
OPTIONAL: 2 T. Cherry Jam or Jelly

Mix ingredients and place in pie tin.

If using a crust topping, dot 2 T. of unsalted butter on filling BEFORE placing top crust over pie. Not needed if you use crumb topping (see end of pie recipes for crumb topping).

Bake 375 degrees in center of oven, 45-60 minutes until it bubbles around edge. After 20 minutes of baking time, you might want to cover crust edge with strips of foil or a metal pie crust edge cover.

Reminder: A true convection oven may be lowered to 350 degrees and MIGHT take only 30 minutes.

Easy Peach Pie

Same as above except for following:
Use Peach pie filling instead of cherry
Use 1 can of drained sliced peaches instead of cherries
Add ½ t. cinnamon
OPTIONAL: 2 T. Peach Jam or Jelly instead of Cherry

Easy Strawberry Pie

Same as Cherry Pie except for following
Use Strawberry pie filling instead of cherry
Use 1 c. of sliced strawberries instead of cherries
Optional: 2 T. of Strawberry jam or jelly AND 1 t. orange extract

Crumb Topping

½ c. softened butter
¾ c. brown sugar
½ c. flour
½ c. sugar
Mix butter, brown sugar, and flour. Sprinkle on top of filling.

From the Nebraska Synod ELCA

At the Nebraska Synod Assembly a year-long focus was launched to "Go And..." Be part of this call to GO. During the Synod Assembly, they taught how to lean in as God's people called, gathered, and sent to "Go And..." The Synod created a year of intentional themes around this focus.

GO AND...

PRAY
LISTEN
SHARE YOUR STORY
SERVE WITH NEIGHBORS
ASK
BE HONEST
BE PRESENT
REST
HAVE THE CONVERSATION
BE INTENTIONAL
TELL THE STORY
BE CHURCH

September's is Go And...*Serve with Neighbors*. Love grounds us as we engage with our neighbors. How will you serve your neighbors this month?

GO AND...

SERVE WITH NEIGHBORS

As Mr. Rogers asked us – "Who is your neighbor?" Love grounds us as we engage with our neighbors living next door, the people in surrounding communities, and those living beyond our own horizons. Accompaniment calls us to use our God-given gifts and talents as we collaborate, learn from each other, and together walk in agape love.

Questions to Consider:

- Who is your neighbor? How do you know?
- What did you discover in walking with your neighbor?
- As you GO with your neighbors, how do you describe your vocation?

Prayer: God of Accompaniment, you meet us where we are at. Help us meet our neighbors wherever they might be and walk with them. Amen.

Suggested Songs: Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love (ELW 708) & God's Work, Our Hands (ACS 1000)

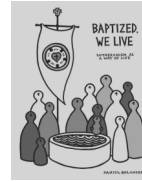
Learn More at www.nebraskasynod.org

Bible Studies Beginning Soon

A Bible study fair will be held on Rally Sunday, September 10th. Check out the materials and subjects for studies coming up this fall and winter!

Congregational Catechism Resumes Sept. 17

The all-congregational catechism class led by Pastor Adam will reconvene between services at 9:30 a.m., September 17th. We will be using the booklet "Baptized, We Live" by Daniel Erlander as our text. See Pastor Adam if you do not yet have the booklet. All are welcome to join!



Zoom Bible Study

Breathe - making room for sabbath



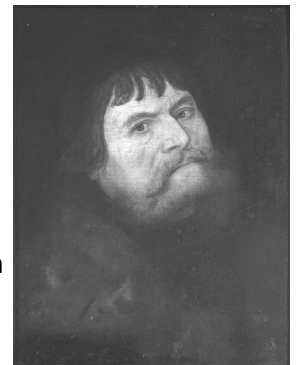
Our Zoom Bible Study led by Amanda Stubbendick will resume Thursday, September 21st at 8 p.m. with the Bible Study 'Breathe - making room for sabbath' by Priscilla Shirer. In this 5-week study we will unpack the concept of Sabbath and how making room for God in this way gives us space to breathe. We hope you'll join us for this study!

Bible Study

The Painter of the Reformation

Martin Luther's theological work was earthshaking, we all know. But in an era when not everyone could read or fully grasp the concepts Luther was writing, how did he get the message across? Enter Lucas Cranach the Elder, a court painter, an apothecary, a mayor of the city of Wittenberg, whose canvases helped bring forward Luther's message to a wider audience.

This study led by Pastor Adam will look at Biblical stories and also Lutheran theology through Cranach's brushstrokes. We will meet for the first time on Sept. 14, at 5:30 p.m., followed by a quick week off on Sept. 21, then resume on Thursdays until Advent. All you need is a Bible! Join us for a fun and informative visual and textual study.



Lutheran World Relief Kits of Care

A meaningful way to make a difference

In 2022 through the generosity and caring of our brothers and sisters in Christ members of First Lutheran donated to LWR:

- 30 Personal Care Kits
- 51 School Kits

There were also 121 quilts made and donated to several shelters and LWR.

Let's make it a personal challenge to better these numbers for this year! Now is a good time to make purchases since school supplies sales are now going on as well as frequent bath towel sales.

This project is a great opportunity to count our blessings and share with those who have so little! Please drop off kit supplies in the clear tote located in the Narthex.

The deadline to donate items is October 22nd



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



Personal Care Kits

Provide much-needed self-care and critical germ fighting tools.

School Kits

Equip a child with the supplies they need to keep learning even in a crisis



Mission Quilts

Express love to those who are driven from their homes from disasters or war.

Personal Care Kits

“When LWR distributes Personal Care Kits, it’s often to people who have lost everything. In the wake of an earthquake or having fled from violence as their homes were overtaken, they clasp a towel from a faraway place, with a bar of soap, a toothbrush...and washing up, they know that they have not been forsaken by the world. The simple gesture of giving a Personal Care Kit can give someone the encouragement to start anew, starting with a bath!” What to include:

- 1 light-weight bath-size towel (between 20” x 40” and 52” x 27”), dark color
- 2 bath-size bars of soap
- 1 adult-size toothbrush
- 1 sturdy comb (remove packaging)
- 1 metal nail clippers

School Kits

“Why school supplies? To the children who receive School Kits, these supplies mean the difference between getting an education or not. Public school is usually free, but in the places where LWR works, even a few required supplies, like pens and paper, may be more than many families can afford. And when parents can only afford to send one of their children to school, girls rarely get priority...yet the education level of mothers has the biggest impact on development.” What to include:

- 4 70-sheet notebooks (8” x 10 ½”) No loose-leaf paper
- 1 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 pair of blunt scissors
- 5 unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
- 5 black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink)
- 1 box of 16 or 24 crayons
- 1 2 ½” eraser

