

Mark 6:45

Do not be afraid.

**July 25, 2021
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
9:30 AM Worship**

First Lutheran Church
709 5th Ave. – P.O. Box 218
Washburn, North Dakota 58577
www.flcwashburn.com
701-462-3775

PRELUDE AND BELLS

AS WE GATHER

(God's promise of life in the rainbow summons us to hope in God. The apostle Paul urges us to discover and to know how real and firm is God's love. Like the fearful disciples in today's Gospel, we may have doubts of faith. But God's Word assures us: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Mark 6:50). This causes us to stop our worrying and believe. Hope in God can calm you. The love of God can convince you. Here, now, at His mighty Word, your sins are forgiven, and you have hope, love, and life. We now gather before Him, our Creator, our Redeemer, and our loving God.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(put prayer requests on yellow cards)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.....p. 56

L: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

L: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

L: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

L: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our

whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name. Amen

L: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

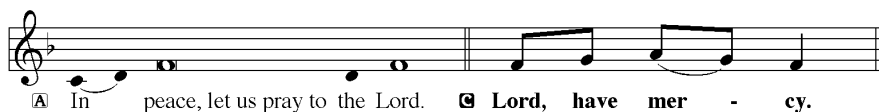
C: Amen

HYMN (On Back Page) LBW #333
“Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me”

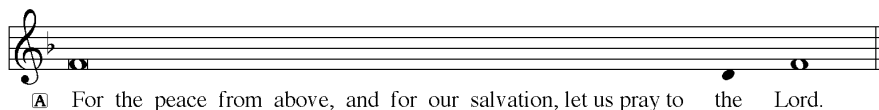
L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

KYRIEp. 57



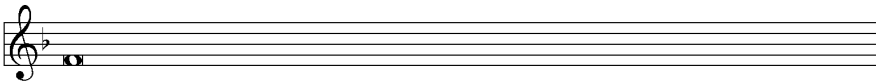
A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



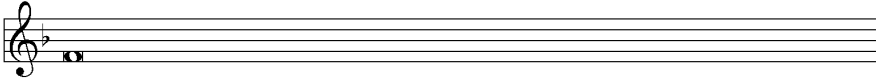
Ⓐ For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



☞ Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

☞ Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. ☞ A - men

SALUTATION



☞ The Lord be with you.

☞ And al - so with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray.

C: Almighty God, pour out upon us your Holy Spirit that we might will, think, and do that which is pleasing to you and live in holy obedience to your gracious will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READINGGenesis 9:8-17
(When one makes a contract, it is carefully considered, for one breaks a legal commitment under penalty of law. Here, God makes a covenant with Noah and all of his offspring to follow. In other words, he makes this covenant with everyone who will ever live. More than this, God makes his promise to all of his earthly creation. The promise is that he will never destroy the earth with a flood. He had just brought Noah and his family safely through the flood (1 Pet 3:20) and commits to Noah that this will never happen again. As contracts are not entered into lightly, God did not make an empty promise.)

⁸God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹²And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

PSALM (Read responsively)Psalm 136:1-9
(The psalmist tries to list the deeds of our Lord's faithfulness. His account will fall short of a full accounting of God's steadfast love toward his creation. How could the poet hope to list all of God's glorious deeds? Yet his accounting is faithful, giving credit to God of gods for the scope of his great wonders. Each verse repeats the refrain, “for his steadfast love endures

forever.” *This is the covenant that was made with Noah and the whole earth. God's steadfast love for his creation will endure as he promised.*)

136 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

**² Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.**

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

**⁴ to him who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

⁵ to him who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

**⁶ to him who spread out the earth above the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

⁷ to him who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

**⁸ the sun to rule over the day,
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

⁹ the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

SECOND READING Ephesians 3:14-21
(God's great love extends far beyond keeping the sun and moon and stars in the sky. His mercy is greater than withholding floods and destruction. His will is to create “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Pet 3:13) To accomplish this, he goes beyond his covenant with Noah. He now commits to make a way that keeps us from eternal and spiritual destruction too. He has made this happen when Christ dwells in the hearts of people through faith. God has expanded his former covenant, and done more than we could have thought to ask of him. His new covenant is that he might fill us with the very fulness of himself, and in so doing equip us for the glories of eternal life.)

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC Orlin Larson
 “Where Could I Go But to the Lord”

ALLELUIAp. 62

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
 words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 6th chapter.

Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

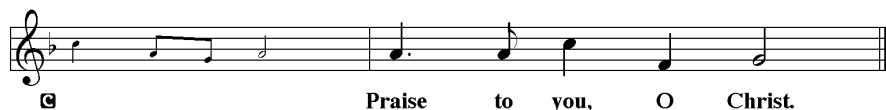
GOSPEL READINGMark 6:45-56

(We cannot begin to comprehend the great faithfulness, steadfast love, and glory of God. The disciples illustrate our inadequacy. Though Jesus has done the impossible, feeding thousands with a few loaves and fish, they were utterly astounded that he came walking to them on the sea. Nothing is impossible for God. (Luke 1:37) Since God has complete control over the elements, is he not able to calm our fears and grant us peace? Is he incapable of delivering us from this

earthly life? No! He is able and committed to do “far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.”)

⁴⁵Immediately {Jesus} made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” ⁵¹And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵²for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. ⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. ⁵⁴And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him ⁵⁵and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

L: The Gospel of the Lord.



"Jesus, Priceless Treasure"

TRUST, GUIDANCE

Jesus, Priceless Treasure

458

1 Je - sus, price-less trea - sure, Source of pur - est plea - sure, Tru - est
 2 In thine arm I rest me; Foes who would mo - lest me Can - not
 3 Hence, all fears and sad - ness, For the Lord of glad - ness, Je - sus,

friend to me: Ah, how long I've pant - ed, And my heart has
 reach me here. Though the earth be shak - ing, Ev - 'ry heart be
 en - ters in. Those who love the Fa - ther, Though the storms may

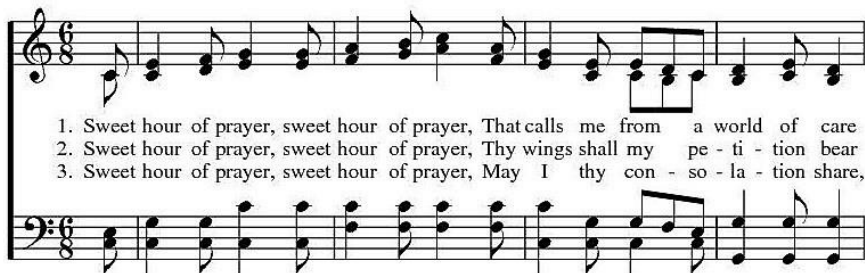
faint - ed, Thirst-ing, Lord, for thee! Thine I am, O spot - less Lamb;
 quak - ing, Je - sus calms my fear. Sin and hell in con - flict fell
 gath - er, Still have peace with - in. Yea, what - e'er I here must bear,

I will suf - fer nought to hide thee, Nought I ask be - side thee.
 With their bit - ter storms as - sail me, Je - sus will not fail me.
 Still in thee lies pur - est plea - sure, Je - sus, price-less trea - sure!

HYMN “Sweet Hour of Prayer”

Sweet Hour of Prayer

Don't worry about anything, but in everything...let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6



1. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, That calls me from a world of care
 2. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, Thy wings shall my pe - ti - tion bear
 3. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, May I thy con - so - la - tion share,



And bids me at my Fa - ther's throne Make all my wants and wish - es known!
 To Him whose truth and faith - ful - ness En - gage the wait - ing soul to bless:
 Till, from Mount Pis - gah's loft - y height, I view my home and take my flight:



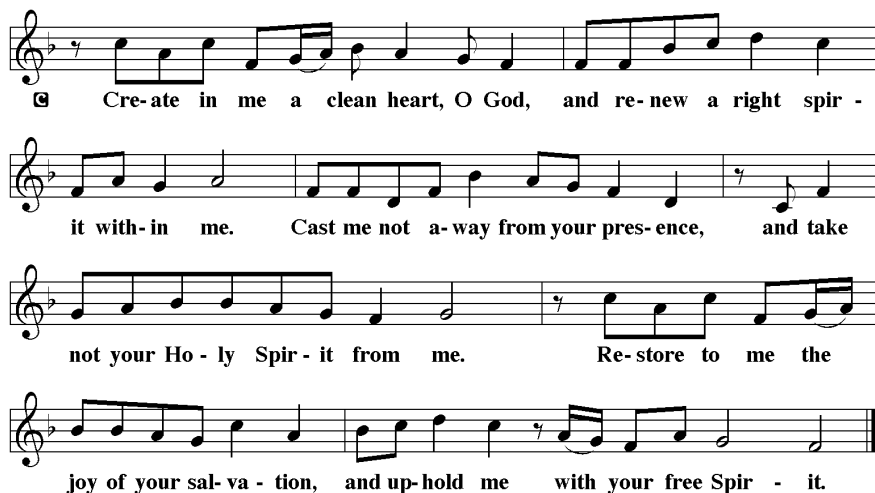
In sea - sons of dis - tress and grief My soul has of - ten found re - lief,
 And since He bids me seek His face, Be - lieve His Word and trust His grace,
 This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise To seize the ev - er - last - ing prize;



And oft es - caped the tempt - er's snare By thy re - turn, sweet hour of prayer.
 I'll cast on Him my ev - 'ry care, And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.
 And shout, while pass - ing through the air, "Fare - well, fare - well, sweet hour of prayer!"

OFFERINGS ARE RECEIVED

OFFERTORYp. 75



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spir -
it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re-store to me the
joy of your sal-va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

L: Benevolent God, you have granted us in abundance with all the good things that life has to offer. May we be truly grateful for our daily bread, even as we return a portion of what you have first given us as a sign of our humility and thanksgiving for your bounteous gifts. Let the treasures we have received from you be used to serve the world you love.

C: Amen.

APOSTLES' CREEDp. 65

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

SHARING OF THE PEACE

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYERp. 71

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

BENEDICTION *Psalm 32:10*

L: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✕ give you peace

Numbers 6:24-26

In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

HYMNWOV #711

“You Satisfy the Hungry Heart”

HOLY COMMUNION

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

Gift of Finest Wheat

711

Refrain

You sat - is - fy the hun-gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.

Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.

1 As when the shep-herd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;
 2 With joy - ful lips we sing to you our praise and grat - i - tude
 3 Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ out-poured?
 4 The mys-t'ry of your pres-ence, Lord, no mor - tal tongue can tell:
 5 You give your-self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

so when you call your fam-'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - joice.
 that you should count us wor-thy, Lord, to share this heav'n-ly food.
 Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare our one - ness in the Lord?
 whom all the world can - not con - tain comes in our hearts to dwell.
 to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.

Text: Omer Westendorf, b. 1916
 Tune: Robert E. Kreutz, b. 1922
 © 1977 Archdiocese of Philadelphia

BICENTENNIAL
 C M and refrain

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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Today's Worship Leaders & Volunteers – Thank You!

PASTOR Pastor Chuck Mann
WORSHIP LEADER..... Rick Richard
READERArden Wagner
ORGANIST LeAnn Richard
USHERS/GREETERSMike Thyberg & Nadine Berger
VIRTUAL SERVICEMatt Gardner
ALTAR GUILD..... Claudette Ness & Maybell Job
FELLOWSHIP/COFFEE HOUR.....Nadine Berger
Candace Wieger
SERVICE GROUP COORDINATORS Terry & Donna
Gunderson

First Lutheran Church
709 5th Ave. - PO BOX 218
Washburn ND 58577
701-462-3775

PASTOR Chuck Mann email: pastorchuck@westriv.com

Cell phone: 701-891-9443

Parsonage: 701-462-3774

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY: Jeannette Rost

Church Office: 701-462-3775

Email: flc@westriv.com

Website: www.flcwashburn.com

OFFICE HOURS: T-T-F 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, 1:30 - 3:30

W – 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

YOUTH DIRECTOR: Laura Gardner

Cell phone: 701-315-0212

Email: fly@westriv.com

ORGANISTS: Theresa Petersen and LeAnn Richard

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Randy Hall

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Gwen Hall

CUSTODIAN: Jeff Schmidt

Our Mission

“Working hand in hand to know Christ and make Christ known through Worship, Christian Education, Evangelism, Fellowship, Caring Ministries, and Service.”

Welcome to all who have come to worship.

Welcome! This morning may Christ “dwell in your hearts through faith,” and may you “grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (Ephesians 3:17-18).

Visitors

We welcome all visitors to First Lutheran today and ask you to sign our guestbook in the narthex.

Nursery

The nursery, located beside the narthex, is available for use for any parent feeling the need to use it during worship services with their child.

Thank you for your giving

Sunday, July 18th, Attendance – 78

Facebook Online Viewing – 83

General Fund & Plate Giving - \$2,261.50

Prayer Requests

Grandma Holiday, Corinne Kerzmann – Sister to Donna Gunderson, Brenda Human, Dick Tweeten, Dennis VanHoorn, Mastroberti Family – Family friend of Steph Mann, People of Haiti, James Tolbert, Kathy Key, Karen Goehring, Michelle & Jason Burger, Hunter Feigum, Olivia Retterath, Pat Anderson, Kristi Olson, Mardella Aanderud – Mother to Melanie Beckman, Mary Ann Monsebroten – Sister to Jackie Olson, Kathy Solomonson, Ross Lorentzen, Keith Hammerbeck – Family friend of the Kugler’s, Deborah Davenport – Mother of Laura Gardner’s friend, Virgie Emineth, Cindy Delmonico – Mother to Melissa Kugler, Ruby from Pine Ridge, Claire Boucher – Friends of Aaron & Lexie Solomonson newborn, Jamie Baumann, Taylor Gardner, Elaine Renfrow – Mother to Lynette Sondrol, Sandi Femling – Cousin to Melanie Beckman, Laren Holzmagel, Harlow Tatum – Daughter to Brea (Gutknecht) Tatum, Ruth Lund – Mother to Doddie Kuntz, John Krebsbach – Brother to Peggy Wollmuth, Arlo Omoth – Brother to Jeneen Loe, Bob Miller, Rodney Jaeger

Pastoral Care

Please call Pastor Chuck if you or a loved one are in the hospital or know you will be going to the hospital. The church does not usually get informed of your stay by any of the hospitals even if you are registered under our congregation's name. We want to make sure you get pastoral care. Thank you!

Hearing Assist

First Lutheran has some hearing assist systems to be used during the worship services. If you feel you could benefit from this, please talk to Pastor Chuck before the church service.

Thank You

Thank you, Rick Richard for filling in today while Pastor Chuck is on vacation.

Jean Sunday

Today is Jean Sunday. If you wore jeans to church today, consider donating \$1 or more to FLY to help with expenses for activities throughout the year. Even if you don't wear jeans, you are still welcome to donate. A jean's can is on the bulletin table.

Super Sunday Supper

Join us today, July 25th, from 4-6 pm for our Super Sunday Supper. Menu is Chicken Alfredo, Garlic Bread, Salad and Dessert and lots of good fellowship. Free will offering.

Picnic

Mark your calendars to join us for our Annual Catch Up Picnic this Wednesday, July 28th, beginning at 5:30 pm in the church basement. The church council will be firing up the grills and grilling burgers and hot dogs. Top that off with some scrumptious salads, bars, floats, lemonade, coffee and great fellowship and you will have a wonderful time! Free will offering. Come for the food and catch up on your FLC families lives.

FLCW Outing

Ladies. Monday, July 26th (tomorrow) we are planning a trip to Bismarck to see "FOOTLOOSE". This is an Explosive Musical. A story of a farm kid and a mother who moved from the farm to the Big City of Chicago -- Big Change -- Footloose celebrates the wisdom of listening to young people, guiding them with an open heart and a young mind. It will be a fun night. You will pay for a ticket to the play and your dinner. We will leave the church at 4:30 pm and eat at Johnny Carino's then head to the musical. If you decide not to eat with the group the musical starts at 8:00 pm.

TICKETS: Adults - \$22
Seniors +62 - \$18

If you think you might like to go, let us know so we will have an idea how many to plan for. This is not a reservation, just a head count for the planners. Call – Judy at 220-4410 or LeAnn at 460-0085.

Technology Committee

The technology committee will meet this Thursday, July 29th, at 7:00 pm.

LCMC Annual Gathering and Convention

The LCMC Annual Gathering and Convention is October 3-6, 2021 in Hilliard, OH. Early bird registration is August 15. If you are interested in going, please talk to Pastor Chuck, Matt Gardner or Jeannette Rost.

Church Doors

The council voted at their June meeting to have summer hours which the church doors will be unlocked and locked. They are:
Sunday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm
Monday thru Saturday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
If you need in the church any other time, please contact Pastor Chuck or Jeannette Rost.

Camp of the Cross Trekkers

The Camp of the Cross Trekkers are canoeing on the Missouri River. On Tuesday, August 3rd, a group of approximately 12 people will be staying at Cross Ranch State Park. Peggy Moran is organizing supper that night, breakfast August 4th and sack lunch for August 4th, along with Judy Beaudry, and requesting a couple others to assist with either meal prep and/or delivery/serving. Please call Peggy if you are interested in helping with this project. 701-462-3919 or 701-315-0568. Thank you.

Connections Magazine

The July/August issue of *Connections* is in the magazine racks. Pick up a copy today to get updates on LCMC and NALC along with other interesting articles.

Christ in Our Home

The July/August/September issue of *Christ in Our Home* is in the magazine racks. Pick up a copy today to use with your daily devotions.

The Compassion of Jesus

In a world full of hurting and broken hearts, we could use compassion. Jesus defined compassion during his life on earth. His love for people was evident in everything he did, especially in his actions towards marginalized groups. Now that he is no longer on the earth with us, it's our responsibility to carry out that care for others. Join Bill Crowder as he reveals the compassionate heart of Jesus and shows us how to use it to impact the people in our lives. A new devotion from Our Daily Bread titled *The Compassion of Jesus* is in the magazine racks for you to pick up. This book has seven sections to it.

Altar Flower Signup

There is a signup sheet in the narthex for altar flowers from now thru September 26th. Signup for the date you would like to supply flowers before your date is taken. Remember, you furnish the flowers and make sure they get to the church for that Sunday.

Landline vs Cell Phone

Have you dropped your landline phone and gone to just your cell phone? If so, have you given First Lutheran your cell phone number yet? If not, we would appreciate it so we can get ahold of you when needed. FLCW work group co-chairs need your number too! Call 462-3775 or email flc@westriv.com with your cell number. Thank you!

LBW Hymnals

There are still a few LBW books in the narthex that are no longer good enough for use in the pews, but good enough for use at home. If you would like one or more of those hymnals, please stop at the church and take as many of them as you wish. Remember, it is only the ones in the narthex for your taking.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST LUTHERAN

TODAY	9:30 AM	Worship
	10:30 AM	Fellowship/Coffee Hour
	4-6 PM	Super Sunday Supper
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting
		AI-Anon Meeting
MON.	4:30 PM	FLCW Outing
TUES.	10:00 AM	Mommy's Group
WED.	5:30 PM	Annual Catch Up Picnic
THURS.	AM	Pastor Chuck at Text Study
	7:00 PM	Technology Committee Meeting
SUNDAY	9:30 AM	Worship w/Holy Communion
	10:30 AM	Coffee/Fellowship Hour
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting
	7:00 PM	AI-Anon Meeting

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peace Lutheran Church in Hazen invites you to a concert of praise and worship by **The Rescue Tour – Dave Anderson & Roger Walck** on Wednesday, July 28th, at 7:00 pm. The concert will last about 1½ hours. A free will offering will be taken to support Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Ministries, (ShepherdsCanyonRetreat.org), a ministerial retreat center run by Dave Anderson.

2021 Annual Golf Outing



Join us for our annual Golf Outing on
Tuesday, August 3rd
at the Garrison Golf Club!

[Golf Outing Brochure](#)

[Register On Line Today](#)



Contact Camp of the Cross office at 701-337-2246 to register yourself and/or a team. See July FLC Newsletter for more information.

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost – July 25, 2021

“...for all they saw him and were terrified.” (Mark 6:50)

The story of Jesus walking on the water is not only about a miracle, but also about human beings. It is about ordinary people, amateurs who are called out by Jesus himself. The disciples find their little lives caught up in miracles of seeing five thousand people fed with five loaves of bread and two fish and then only a little while later, witnessing the same miracle worker walking on a very windy sea.

This passage reminds us that we are all amateurs at life and in the ways of following Jesus. We are terrified (vs. 50), utterly astounded, have little understanding, and have hardened hearts (vs. 51). When it comes to being a disciple, to following Jesus, there is no training other than what he says to us, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid” (vs. 50). The main thing that authorizes and grants us power is Jesus’ call to, “Follow me.” Your talents, no matter how great, are not what makes you a disciple. It is the call of Jesus to you that makes you a disciple.

Furthermore, none of us yet have successfully acquired the skills or knowledge to be anything other than an amateur when it comes to following Jesus. We constantly get it wrong and we seem to always be “making headway painfully” (vs. 48). Sure, we have good intentions, but many times we find out that our intentions are not as “good” as we had thought. Perhaps that is one reason why on most Sundays we begin worship with confession of sin followed by absolution (forgiveness).

The Gospels frequently portray Jesus’ first twelve disciples as a bunch of people who lack understanding and appear incompetent. There is not one single disciple of whom it can be said, “He really gets it.” Even Simon Peter, the “rock”, the one upon whom Christ built the church, is constantly getting it wrong, all the way to the end when he betrays Jesus by denying he even knows him.

This is a mystery at the heart of the gospel. This is the strange way God works in us and through us. Jesus offers salvation, redemption, and forgiveness in the kingdom of God to a bunch of amateurs, people like us. And yet, here we are, amateurs stumbling along behind Jesus. He would have it no other way because of his great love for us. Amen.

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Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

1 Lord, take my hand and lead me Up - on life's way;
 2 Lord, when the tem - pest ra - ges, I need not fear;
 3 Lord, when the shad - ows length - en And night has come,

Di - rect, pro - tect, and feed me From day to day.
 For you, the Rock of A - ges, Are al - ways near.
 I know that you will strength - en My steps toward home,

With-out your grace and fa - vor I go a - stray;
 Close by your side a - bid - ing, I fear no foe,
 And noth - ing can im - pede me, O bless - ed Friend!

So take my hand, O Sav - ior, And lead the way.
 For when your hand is guid - ing, In peace I go.
 So, take my hand and lead me Un - to the end.