



*My grace
is sufficient
for you.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9



**July 7, 2024
Seventh 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

WOV SERVICE OF THE WORD

PRELUDE AND BELLS

AS WE GATHER

(When God calls us into faith, he not only equips us with all we need for the journey, he offers his grace in the midst of trials. By faith we are called to rely on God's word and promise. God himself will graciously work that which is needed within us to accomplish his kingdom plans. Welcome to God's house today!)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(put prayer requests on yellow cards)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS..... p. 10

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

C: Amen

L: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires know, 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: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

C: Amen

GATHERING SONG..... LBW #507
"How Firm a Foundation"

507

How Firm a Foundation

1 How firm a foun - da - tion, O saints of the Lord,
 2 Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dis - mayed,
 3 When through fi - ery tri - als your path - way shall lie,
 4 Through - out all their life - time my peo - ple shall prove

Is laid for your faith in his ex - cel - lent Word!
 For I am your God and will still give you aid;
 My grace, all - suf - fi - cient, shall be your sup - ply.
 My sov - reign, e - ter - nal, un - change - a - ble love;

What more can he say than to you he has said
 I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
 The flames shall not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign
 And then, when gray hairs shall their tem - ples a - dorn,

Who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?
 Up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
 Your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine.
 Like lambs they shall still in my bo - som be borne.

GREETING – (Season after Pentecost) p. 46

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

2 Corinthians 13:13

C: And also with you.

L: You are the treasured people of the Lord,

C: a people holy to the Lord our God.

L: Keep the words of the Lord in your heart; teach them to your children.

C: Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

L: One does not live by bread alone,

C: but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 26, 11, 8

SCRIPTURE SONG p. 47

SCRIPTURE SONG

This canticle or another scripture song or hymn may be sung.

Refrain



C Sal - va - tion be - longs to our God and to



Christ the Lamb for - ev - er and ev - er.



I Great and won-der-ful are your deeds, O God of the u-ni-verse;



just and true are your ways, O Rul-er of all the na-tions.



Who can fail to hon-or you, Lord, and sing the glo-ry of your name?



II For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One. All



na-tions will draw near and wor-ship be-fore you,



for your just and ho-ly works have been re-vealed.

Revelation 7:10, 15:3-4

L: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY (In Unison)

L: Let us pray.

C: **Beckoning God, you call us as you did the disciples of old to go forth and bear witness to your life-giving Gospel. Send us forth from this assembly by the power**

of your Holy Spirit to be the healing presence of Christ in the world; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READINGEzekiel 2:1-5
(The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel commanding him to speak the truth to God's people about their disobedience and idolatry.)

¹{The Lord GOD} said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you." ²And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. ³And he said to me, "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' ⁵And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them."

PSALM (Read Responsively) Psalm 123
(The psalmist sings praises to God who sits enthroned in the heavens.)

¹To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

²Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her

mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he has mercy upon us.

³Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.

⁴Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 12:1-10
(Paul writes to the church in Corinth declaring that in the weakness of his suffering, God's grace is made strong in his life. The same is true for us.)

¹I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³And I know that this man was caught up into paradise — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — ⁴and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. ⁵On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses — ⁶though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. ⁷So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is

made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

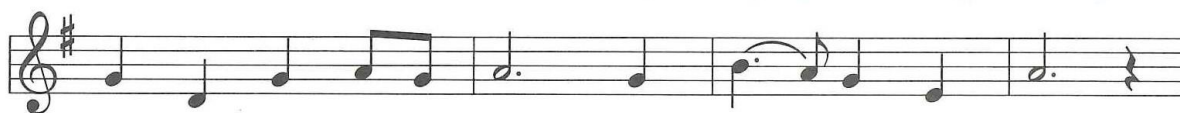
CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION p. 48

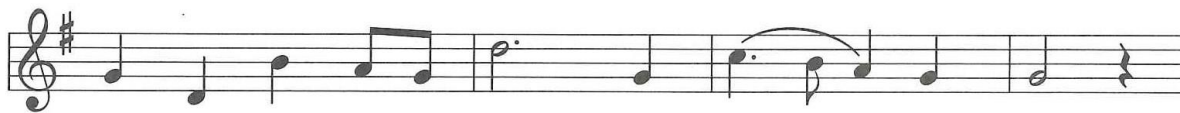
Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

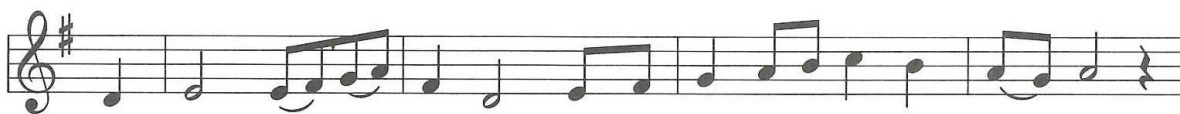
This acclamation or a hymn, song, or canticle may be sung before and/or after the Gospel:



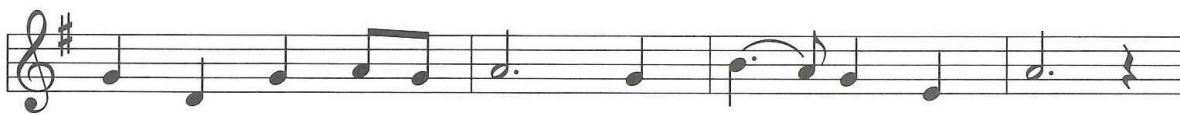
c Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all glo - ry to you!



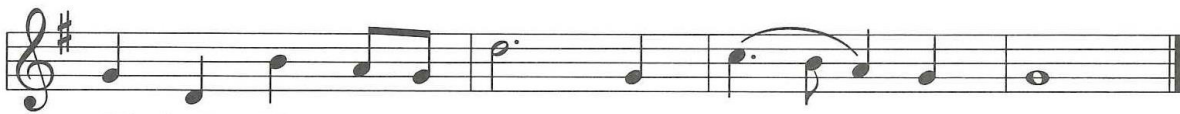
Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all praise to you!



Our hearts burn with - in us while you o - pen to us the Scrip-tures.



Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all glo - ry to you!



Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all praise to you!

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING Mark 6:1-13

(Jesus sends his disciples, two by two, to proclaim the kingdom of God to the people in the surrounding villages and towns. Followers of Christ still carry his words of hope to the world today.)

¹{Jesus} went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” ⁵And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in their belts — ⁹but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave,

shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN LBW #562

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

562

Lift Every Voice and Sing

1 Lift ev - 'ry voice and sing Till earth and heav - en
 2 Ston - y the road we trod, Bit - ter the chas - t'ning
 3 God of our wea - ry years, God of our si - lent

ring, Ring with the har - mo - nies of lib - er -
 rod, Felt in the days when hope un - born had
 tears, Thou who hast brought us thus far on the

ty. Let our re - joic - ing rise High as the lis - t'ning
 died; Yet, with a stead - y beat, Have not our wea - ry
 way; Thou who hast by thy might Led us in - to the

skies; Let it re - sound loud as the roll - ing sea.
 feet Come to the place for which our par - ents sighed?
 light: Keep us for - ev - er in the path, we pray.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
 We have come o - ver a way that with tears has been wa - tered;
 Lest our feet stray from the plac - es, our God, where we met thee;

Sing a song full of the hope that the pres-ent has brought
 We have come, tread-ing our path through the blood of the slaugh -
 Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we for - get

us; Fac - ing the ris - ing sun Of our new day be -
 tered, Out from the gloom - y past, Till now we stand at
 thee; Shad-owed be - neath thy hand May we for - ev - er

gun, Let us march on, till vic - to - ry is won.
 last Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
 stand, True to our God, true to our na - tive land.

SERMON Rick Richard

HYMN LBW #567

“God of Our Fathers”

God of Our Fathers

567

1 God of our fa - thers, whose al - might - y hand
 2 Your love di - vine has led us in the past;
 3 From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti - lence,
 4 Re - fresh your peo - ple on their toil - some way;

Leads forth in beau - ty all the star - ry band
 In this free land by you our lot is cast;
 Make your strong arm our ev - er sure de - fense.
 Lead us from night to nev - er - end - ing day;

Of shin ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies:
 Oh, be our rul - er, guard - ian, guide, and stay;
 Your true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease;
 Fill all our lives with heav'n - born love and grace

Our grate - ful songs be - fore your throne a - rise.
 Your Word our law, your paths our cho - sen way.
 Your boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.
 Un - til at last we meet be - fore your face.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD p. 49

L: In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. *Ephesians 1:13-14*

L: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

C: 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

L: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

C: pray in the Holy Spirit. *Jude 20*

L: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Jude 21*

L: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

C: Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new! *2 Corinthians 5:17*

L: God has given us the ministry of reconciliation.
Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

L: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in the newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

L: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

C: Amen

L: Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace.

2 Corinthians 13:11

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

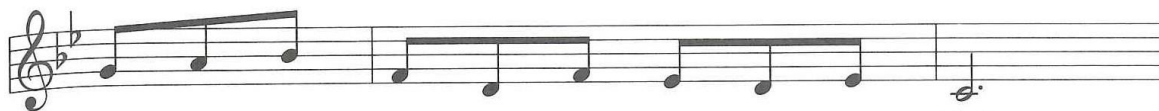
C: And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY – (Season after Pentecost) p. 50
“Glory to you”



C *(Advent to Transfiguration)* Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
(Lent to Pentecost) Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
(Season after Pentecost) Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;



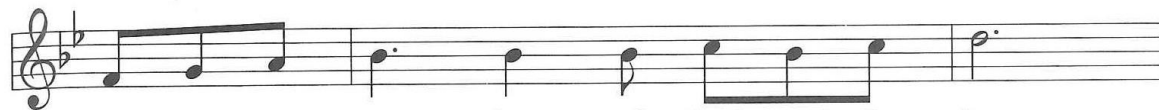
yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.
yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.



Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;
Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;



ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;



yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

OFFERTORY PRAYER – (Season after Pentecost) p. 51

L: Let us pray.

L: God, our Creator,

C: you open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living creature. With these gifts we bless you for your tender nurture and care. Help us to delight in your will and walk in your ways, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THE PRAYERS

L: As God's people called to love one another, let us pray for the needs of the Church, the human family, and all the world.

Each portion of the prayers concludes with these words:

L: Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: All these things and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, O God, for the sake of Christ who died and rose again, and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C: Amen

LORD'S PRAYER p. 52

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**C: 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**

BLESSING

L: May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ fill you
with every spiritual blessing.

C: Amen

L: May the God of faithfulness and encouragement grant you
to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with
Christ Jesus.

C: Amen

L: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in
believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of
the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

Romans 15

SENDING SONG **LBW #566**

“My Country, ‘Tis of Thee”

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

1 My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,
 2 My na - tive coun - try, thee, Land of the no - ble free,
 3 Let mu - sic swell the breeze, And ring from all the trees
 4 Our fa - thers' God, to thee, Au - thor of lib - er - ty,

Of thee I sing: Land where my fa - thers died, Land of the
 Thy name I love; I love thy rocks and rills, Thy woods and
 Sweet free-dom's song; Let mor - tal tongues a - wake; Let all that
 To thee we sing: Long may our land be bright With free - dom's

pil - grims' pride, From ev - 'ry moun - tain - side Let free - dom ring.
 tem - pled hills; My heart with rap - ture thrills Like that a - bove.
 breathe par - take; Let rocks their si - lence break, The sound pro - long.
 ho - ly light. Pro - tect us by thy might, Great God, our king.

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 Paul Krueger
WORSHIP LEADER Rick Richard
READER Kacy Hardt
ORGANIST LeAnn Richard
USHERS/GREETERS Newell & Linda Zeller
VIRTUAL SERVICE Nate Fiedler
COFFEE HOUR Julene Klosterman & Jean Braun
ALTAR GUILD Julene Klosterman & Maybell Job
SERVICE GROUP COORDINATORS..... Dick & Carla Bickert
Evangelism Committee

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

PASTOR: Paul Krueger email: revpaulkrueger@gmail.com

Cell phone: 701-240-4712

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY: Jeannette Rost

Church Office: 701-462-3775

Email: flc@westriv.com

Website: www.flcwashburn.com

COORDINATOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES: Melissa Rothe

Email: fly@westriv.com

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

W – 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

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.

As a family of faith, we come to rest in Jesus' presence, sing God's praises and be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, our Counselor. Welcome!

Visitors

We welcome all visitors to First Lutheran today and ask that you sign our guest book 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, June 30, Attendance – 92

Online Viewing – 18

General Fund & Plate Giving - \$1,980.00

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers today are from Brad & Cathy Sheldon in honor of their anniversary which is today.

Hearing Assist

First Lutheran has hearing assist systems to be used during the worship services. If you feel you could benefit from this or want to try it, please see the ushers in the narthex.

Pastoral Care

Please call Pastor Paul (701-240-4712) or the church office (701-462-3775) if you or a loved one are in the hospital or know you will be going to the hospital. The church does not 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!

This week we pray for:

This Week's New Prayer Requests:

Prayers of Christian Sympathy: Family of Frieda Maas

Long Term prayer requests:

Members: Alton Krebsbach, Howard Johnson, Karen Goehring

* The person in parenthesis is who the person is related to or friends of. Please feel free to ask these individuals how best you can pray for their family/friend.

This month we pray for:

Members:

Friends & Family: Clara Olson (Sharon Chrest)

This Quarter we pray for:

Members and Nonmembers: Corrine Kerzmann (Donna Gunderson), Marion Narum (Peggy Moran), Ty Brown (Jody & Nicole Brown), Alice Richard, Jackie Olson

Military Prayer and Card List

We pray for the Men & Women in our Military who protect our country, especially those assigned to serve overseas or away from home.

- **Members of First Lutheran on Active Duty in the Military and the National Guard:**
SGT Bryce Rost – Army National Guard
SPC Olivia Retterath – National Guard - Deployed
SPC Cassidy Sommer – National Guard
SGT Jonathan Melvard – Army National Guard
- **Friends and Family on Active Duty in the Military and in the National Guard:**
SGT Dustin Enockson – National Guard
Emily Johnson – Air Force
Bryar Anderson – Marines
1SGT Jordan Ternes – Army National Guard
Tech. SGT Andre Austin – Air Force
Hunter Feigum – National Guard
Morris Duffy – Medical Air Guard
Adam Walsvik – National Guard

Notice of Prayer List Policy

We have a monthly /quarterly prayer list cycle. When you add someone to our prayer list the request will remain on our monthly list for four weeks and then be removed. If you would like to have the request moved to our quarterly list, please contact the office and the request will be added to our “This Quarter we pray for:” list for the next three months. Please help us keep our prayer list current by communicating updates to the office at 701-462-3775. Thank you all for your faithful prayers for all of God’s people.

Sympathy

Our sympathy goes out to Elmer & Arlene Schwarz on the death of Elmer's sister, Frieda Maas. Services were last week in Beulah. May God give them comfort in this time of sorrow.

Large Print Bulletins

We have large print bulletins for those wanting or needing larger print. Ask the ushers for one.

FLCW Picnic and General Meeting

All women of First Lutheran are invited to the FLCW Annual Picnic on Wednesday, July 10th at 5:30 pm at Deb Wisdom's. Chicken, lemonade, coffee, plates, napkins and eating utensils will be provided. Please bring a potluck dish to share. A short general meeting will follow the meal. Please plan to attend.

Lewis & Clark Riverboat Cruise

FLCW will be going on the Lewis & Clark Riverboat Cruise on Sunday, July 21st. Meet at the church at 2:30 pm. The cruise is at 4:00 pm. If you are willing to drive, please talk to Donna Gunderson or LeAnn Richard. Cost is \$24 for the Riverboat ticket plus your meal. Dinner at Mayas (formerly Johnny Carino's) after the cruise. Bring a friend and enjoy God's beautiful creation as we ride the Lewis & Clark Riverboat on the Missouri River in Bismarck. A signup sheet is on the table in the narthex.

Annual Church Picnic

Mark your calendars to join us on Wednesday, July 17th, at 5:30 pm for our Annual Church Picnic prepared by our church council. They will be serving pulled pork, hot dogs, salads, bars, floats, lemonade, coffee and good fellowship! A free-will offering will be taken.

Vacation Bible School

First Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School, “The Great Jungle Journey, An Epic Cruise from Genesis to Revelation”, is July 30, 31 and August 1 from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Lunch will be provided. Please scan the QR code below to register your child(ren) to guarantee souvenirs! If you have additional questions or comments, please call or text Kellie Sheldon at 701-840-8454 or Kacy Hardt at 701-351-0742. **Last day to sign up to receive all the extras is July 1st.**



Bowls and Pans

There are a lot of bowls and pans in the kitchen from food brought for funerals, etc. Please stop and check to see if any belong to you and take them home.

2nd Annual FLC Carnival

Make sure you mark your calendars for Sunday, August 4th from 4-7 pm. That marks our 2nd Annual FLC Carnival with outdoor games, bouncy houses and wonderful food plus other games, fun and wonderful food! There are a few surprises up the committees sleeves too! More will be released as plans are finalized. They are still looking for a few volunteers to help run a few of the activities. If you are feeling the need or compelled to do so, talk to Kacy Hardt.

Altar Flower Signup Sheet

A signup sheet for altar flowers through September 29th is on the table in the narthex. Signup for that Sunday you want before it is taken. You furnish the flowers and make sure they get to the church.

Connections Magazine

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

Our Daily Bread and Portals of Prayer

The June/July/August issue of *Our Daily Bread* and the July - September 2024 issue of *Portals of Prayer* are in the magazine racks in the narthex. Pick up a copy to use with your daily devotions.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST LUTHERAN

- TODAY 9:30 AM Worship
10:30 AM Fellowship/Coffee Hour
10:45 PM Fireside Bible Study
7:00 PM AA Meeting
Al-Anon Meeting
- MON. 10:00 AM Chat & Sew Quilting
- TUES. 10:00 AM Mommy's Group
- WED. 5:30 PM FLCW Picnic & Meeting at
Deb Wisdom's
7:00 PM FLY
- SUN. 9:30 AM Worship w/Holy Communion
10:30 AM Fellowship/Coffee Hour
10:45 AM Fireside Bible Study
7:00 PM AA Meeting
Al-Anon Meeting

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9) – July 7, 2024

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

– 2 Corinthians 12:9–

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong. When I was a youngster and we sang this in Sunday School, I remember singing that last line, “They are weak, but he is strong.” I pictured Jesus as some sort of muscle-bound superhero—so strong, he could kick Satan all the way back into the Garden of Eden! As I’ve grown and matured in years, I’ve heard that line in a new light. Sure, Jesus is strong enough to wipe out anyone; he is God! But his strength is more than just physical strength like we picture in our minds as children.

Saint Paul has been dealing with a “thorn in his flesh” (see 2 Cor. 12:7). Paul has some sort of ailment; he doesn’t go into detail, but it certainly causes him pain and suffering. He has begged God to relieve him of his anguish, but God hasn’t done so. It’s in his suffering that Paul realizes how much he depends on God. And isn’t that true for us?

We go through life with its ups and downs. Some trials are just little bumps in the road we have to navigate. Others seem like mountains that we’re trying our best to climb and survive. It’s in those moments we are reminded of our limitations. Like Paul, we feel insufficient. But it’s also in those moments we are reminded of God’s strength and grace.

We are weak, but he is strong. Jesus told Paul that his grace is sufficient for Paul. God’s grace is enough for us. When Jesus hung on the cross, he said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Jesus completed what he needed to do for us. His grace is sufficient for you, for Paul, for me.

And as Paul says, that gives us reason to celebrate and boast of our weaknesses. Why? “So that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Most of the time, we don’t like to boast of our weaknesses and shortcomings. But for the life of a Christian, it’s in our weaknesses that we experience God’s grace and strength. We depend upon him for all we need: food, clothing, shelter, good health. Jesus promises that God will always take care of us. If God takes care of the birds and clothes the lilies, he will certainly take care of us (See Matt. 6:25-34).

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