

**BELT OF TRUTH
BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
SHOES GOSPEL OF PEACE
SHIELD OF FAITH
HELMET OF SALVATION
SWORD OF THE SPIRIT
WORD OF GOD**

**Be strong
in the Lord.**

Ephesians 6:10

**September 8, 2024
Sixteenth 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

(Dwelling in God's holy Word builds a shield around our lives and fortifies our heart so that we stay close to the Lord. Our worship today focuses upon staying connected to the Savior and growing strong in faith. Welcome to God's house today!)

WELCOME

(put prayer requests on yellow cards)

HYMN LBW #522 "Come, Thou Almighty King"

Come, Thou Almighty King

522

1 Come, thou al - might - y King, Help us thy name to
2 Come, thou in - car - nate Word, Gird on thy might - y
3 Come, ho - ly Com - fort - er, Thy sa - cred wit - ness
4 To thee, great One in Three, E - ter - nal prais - es

sing; Help us to praise; Fa - ther all - glo - ri - ous, O'er all vic -
sword; Our prayer at - tend. Come and thy peo - ple bless, And give thy
bear In this glad hour! Thou, who al - might - y art, Now rule in
be Hence ev - er - more! Thy sov - 'reign maj - es - ty May we in

to - ri - ous, Come and reign o - ver us, An - cient of Days.
Word suc - cess, And let thy righ - teous - ness On us de - scend.
ev - 'ry heart, And ne'er from us de - part, Spir - it of pow'r.
glo - ry see, And to e - ter - ni - ty Love and a - dore.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESSp. 56

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P: 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.

P: 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

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray.

C: Eternal and everlasting God, keep us diligent in our faithfulness that we might not fall into practicing hollow rituals and traditions but always worship you and you alone in purity and holiness; through our own life's journey; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9
(Moses instructed the Israelites to listen and learn the statutes of the Lord. By keeping them they would become wise. The same is true for us today.)

¹{Moses said,} “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ²You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you. ⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? ⁹Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children ...”.

PSALM (Read responsively)Psalm 119:129-136
(The Word of the Lord gives light, wisdom, and understanding to those who seek it and are obedient to it.)

¹²⁹Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.

¹³⁰**The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.**

¹³¹I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.

¹³²Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.

¹³³Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.

¹³⁴Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts.

¹³⁵Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.

SECOND READING Ephesians 6:10-20
(Like us, the early Christians were living in the midst of a culture that was fighting against their faith. Like them, St. Paul's words call us to "Put on the whole armor of God," so that we might stand against the attacks of evil.)

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

VBS STUDENTS SING

INSTALLATION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS & SUBS

ALLELUIA



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.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7th chapter.



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

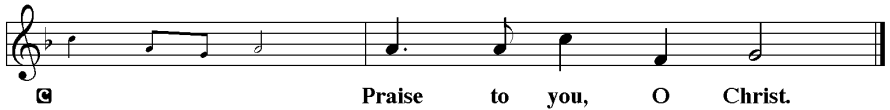
GOSPEL READINGMark 7:14-23

(Jesus helps the religious leaders of the day see that the real source of evil thoughts and actions is not from without, but from within the human heart. It is the heart that needs to be made clean by the Gospel.)

¹⁴{Jesus} called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." ¹⁷And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft,

murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.



SERMON Pastor Paul Krueger
“Be Strong in the Lord” – Ephesians 6:10-20

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

HYMN LBW #439
“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

439

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
 3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, Cum - bered with a load of care?

What a priv - i - lege to car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged— Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge— Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; Oh, what need - less pain we bear—
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful Who will all our sor - rows share?
 Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

All be - cause we do not car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness— Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In his arms he'll take and shield you; You will find a so - lace there.

OFFERINGS ARE RECEIVED

OFFERTORY



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the
seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Merciful Father,

C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

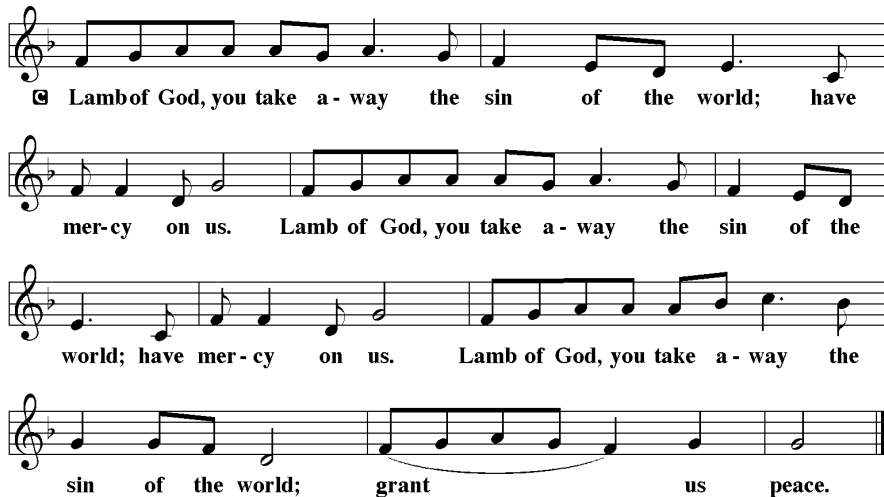
Do this for the remembrance of me.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION (2 Aisle Floor Stations)

VBS SLIDE SHOW BEGINNING OF COMMUNION

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION:

Lamb of God – p. 72



☐ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

LBW #518 – “Beautiful Savior”

LBW #479 – “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

Beautiful Savior

518

1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion, Son of
 2 Fair are the mead - ows, Fair are the wood - lands, Robed in
 3 Fair is the sun - shine, Fair is the moon - light, Bright the
 4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions, Son of

God and Son of Man! Tru - ly I'd love thee, Tru - ly I'd
 flow'rs of bloom - ing spring; Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is
 spar - kling stars on high; Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines
 God and Son of Man! Glo - ry and hon - or, Praise, ad - o -

serve thee, Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
 pur - er, He makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.
 pur - er Than all the an - gels in the sky.
 ra - tion, Now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

479

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

1 My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,
 2 May thy rich grace im - part Strength to my faint - ing heart,
 3 While life's dark maze I tread And griefs a - round me spread,
 4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, When death's cold, sul - len stream

Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray, Take all my
 My zeal in - spire; As thou hast died for me, Oh, may my
 Be thou my guide; Bid dark - ness turn to day, Wipe sor - row's
 Shall o'er me roll; Blest Sav - ior, then, in love Fear and dis -

guilt a - way, Oh, let me from this day Be whol - ly thine!
 love to thee Pure, warm, and change - less be, A liv - ing fire!
 tears a - way, Nor let me ev - er stray From thee a - side.
 trust re-move; Oh, bear me safe a - bove, A ran - somed soul!

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-1887
 Tune: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

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P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

☐ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.

Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is - es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy with
 shouts of thanks-giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

LORD’S PRAYER

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.

HYMN LBW #343
“Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer”

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

343

1 Guide me ev - er, great Re-deem - er, Pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain Where the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; Hold me
 wa - ters flow; Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar Lead me
 fears sub - side; Death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, Land me

with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es,

Feed me now and ev - er - more, Feed me now and ev - er - more.
 Shield me with your might - y arm, Shield me with your might - y arm.
 I will raise for - ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

P: 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

USHERS/GREETERS Luke & Emily Retterath

READER Deb Wisdom

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS Deb Wisdom, Sarah Kadrmaz
Margaret Rasmussen

ORGANIST LeAnn Richard

VIRTUAL SERVICE Dwight Rasmussen

ALTAR GUILD..... Sonja Bergstedt & Carla Bickert

FELLOWSHIP/COFFEE HOUR FLY

SERVICE GROUP COORDINATORS Emily Retterath
Suzy Jacobson, Beth Knutson

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.

What a glorious day as we return to a full program schedule! Welcome back to worship, Christian education and fellowship today!

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, September 1st

Attendance – 100

Online Viewing – 26

General Fund & Plate Giving - \$7,783.00

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.

Holy Communion

All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Receive the bread into your open, flat palm. Ask if you wish to receive grape juice or a gluten free wafer. Alert an usher if you, or someone you know, needs communion served in the pew.

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: Randy Hall

Prayers of Christian Sympathy:

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: Helen Samuelson, Sande Wagner, Arlene Schwarz

Friends & Family: Komal Petersen (Brent & Theresa Petersen), Clara Olson (Sharon Chrest), Steve Reynolds (Brad & Cathy Sheldon)

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
 - SGT Tom Heidelberger – Army
 - 2LT Tony Heidelberger – Air Force

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.

Large Print Bulletins

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

Rally Sunday

Today is Rally Sunday. During the worship service we will have Sunday School teachers and subs installation, blessing of backpacks, VBS students will sing and a VBS video will be played at the beginning of communion. Sunday School will begin at 10:45 am in the sanctuary.

Sunday School Teachers and Subs

The following Sunday School teachers and subs will be installed during the worship service today:

Preschool: Haylie Bentz & Brooke Knutson

Kindergarten: Julie Bentz, Chloe Erber, & Kylee Fiedler

First grade: Mandi Wimer & Bekka Bentz

Second grade: Sarah Ternes & Kellie Sheldon

Third grade: Patty Winn & Gracie Omlid

Fourth grade: Sadie Lauf

Fifth & Sixth grade: Sarah Kadrmas

Music: Jada Vetter & Sadie Lauf

Subs:

Kesia Boeshans

Stacy Boeshans

Kacy Hardt

Samantha Swanson

Pamela Vetter

Kristi Wachendorf

Kathy Wuolu

Rally Sunday Breakfast

Join us after worship today for a Rally Sunday Breakfast served by our youth. They will be serving egg bake, muffins, coffee and juice. Freewill offering.

Church Council

Church council will meet on Monday, September 9th, at 6:30 pm.

Confirmation

Confirmation begins this Wednesday, September 11th, with a meal from 5:30 – 6:15 pm. Class begins at 6:15 pm.

Sunday Morning 8:30 AM Bible Study

Bible study led by Cathy Sheldon on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am will begin next Sunday, September 15th. Study will be “A Life God Rewards” by Bruce Wilkinson w/David Kopp. Study guides are \$8.00 each and can be picked up in the church office from Jeannette. More information on the study can be found in the August & September newsletter.

Confirmation Meal Signup Sheet

We are looking for volunteers to make and serve a meal on Wednesday nights for our confirmation students and volunteers. A signup sheet is in the narthex on the big poster board. Thank you to those who have already signed up.

Altar Flower Signup Sheet

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

Connections Magazine

The September/October 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 September/October/November 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		Grandparents Day
	9:30 AM	Worship w/Holy Communion Sunday School Teacher and Subs Installation Blessing of Backpacks
	10:30 AM	Rally Sunday Breakfast
	10:45 PM	Sunday School Fireside Bible Study
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting
MON.	10:00 AM	Chat & Sew Quilting
	6:30 PM	Church Council Meeting
TUES.	10:00 AM	Mommy's Group
WED.	5:30–6:15 PM	Confirmation Meal
	6:15 PM	Confirmation
	7:00 PM	Bell Choir
	7:45 PM	FLY
	7:45 PM	Choir
SUN.	8:30 AM	Bible Study
	9:30 AM	Worship
	10:30 AM	Fellowship/Coffee Hour
	10:45 AM	Sunday School Fireside Bible Study
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 17) – September 1, 2024

“Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit ...”

–Ephesians 6:16–18a–

Testimony and Transformation

Julius Caesar first declared that January 1 be celebrated as New Year’s Day in the year 46 B.C. However, in my house—even though Julius and I share a birthday—“new year” always begins in September. It’s illogical, what with leaves turning and sunlight shortening, but culture-wide we spend a lot of autumn energy pressing the reset button: back to school, election day, and the annual full-court press into the holidays.

For Christians, all these new beginnings can be the season for good intentions, especially for public witness to our faith. “This year,” we say, “we want our light to shine so that others see Jesus in us.” The courageous among us may even think boldly, “We want our words to sound so that others hear God’s word through us.” Would that it were so.

Sadly, too many times we position ourselves and open our mouths, and all the world sees and hears is what’s inside us: self-righteousness, arrogance, and condescension. Our attempts to speak and act for God — at school, in the voting booth, and even in our holiday celebrations — are sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, absolutely at odds with God’s word.

Will we ever get it right? No, not this side of our resurrection. But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t keep beginning again. Praying at all times in the Spirit and meditating on the written and incarnate Word of God shape us from the inside out, as God’s word enlightens our way and informs our understanding. Jesus tells us that it is not so much the darkness outside that we should fear, for against that we have the shield of faith. Instead, we should be wary of the darkness within, lest we further defile ourselves and dishonor our Lord in public witness.

The psalmist said, “Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them” (Psalm 119:129) — not perfectly, but in the strength of God’s might. We stand firm not in our righteousness but in the Lord’s alone. God is glorified when his word becomes our word and people see his character in us.