



9th Sunday after Pentecost

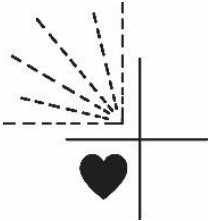
July 26, 2026



Mission Statement

*Living God's love through our devotion to
service, worship, and one another.*

WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



First Lutheran Church has been serving Strongsville, Ohio for nearly 70 years, ministering to its members and friends and supporting community, as well as regional and world ministries.

First Lutheran is a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The ELCA pursues God's work in the world with 3 million members in more than 8700 congregations across the United States and in the Caribbean region. The ELCA works with Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, Global Refuge, Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, schools and colleges, seminaries, camps, and ecumenical and interreligious companions, as well as numerous global church partners and organizations across the world.

We invite you to our website, firstchurchalive.org for more information about First Church.

In addition, we also invite you to download our app by searching for FLC Strongsville in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

And please don't forget to scan the QR code to view our Connections Page where you will quickly find all of our current news and ministry sign-ups.



GATHERING

PRELUDE

“Priere”

David Gooding

Charles Markam

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

OPENING HYMN

ELW #842 (VS. 1-3)

“Oh, Worship the King”

GREETING

P 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

P Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son
you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us
your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our
Savior and Lord.

C Amen

WORD

LESSON

Romans 8:26-39

The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

R: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

ELW #599

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13th Chapter

C Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SHARING TIME

SERMON

“Small Beginnings”

SONG

Dream Small

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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**

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. Please scan the QR code for the option to give online.



MUSIC

“He Leadeth Me and All Creatures of Our God and King”

Trumpet Duet

arr. B. C. Dockery

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Altar flowers are given by Pat Sauernheimer in celebration of Ryan and Kate’s 1st Wedding Anniversary, and the Jenkins Family in celebration of Debbie and Jeremy’s 12th Wedding Anniversary.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

P Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.

C Amen

SONG

“Do Something”

DISMISSAL

P Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C Thanks be to God.

MUSIC

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WELCOME TO THE TIME AFTER PENTECOST

In the ELCA, the Time After Pentecost is the long, green season of the church year (often called "Ordinary Time"). Rather than a break from the action, it is viewed as a period of being "sent out" by the Spirit to live out the Gospel in our daily lives, routines, and communities.

Based on the appointed scripture passages during these weeks of the post-Pentecost season, the ELCA emphasizes several core themes:

- **Living Out the Spirit's Fire:** Having celebrated the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this season focuses on actively sharing God's love, seeking justice, and serving neighbors. The fire of the Spirit is meant to guide daily Christian practices, not just Sunday worship.
- **Empathy and Unity:** ELCA reflections on this period emphasize that the Spirit was sent to push the church out of its comfort zones. It is a time to break down human estrangement, build connections with people who are different from us, and advocate for the common good.
- **Ordinary as Sacred:** The word "ordinary" comes from the word "ordinal" (counting). The season is an invitation to see the sacred in our everyday, ordinary routines. It focuses on gradual, sustained spiritual growth over 27 weeks as we learn to follow Jesus in real life.

Overall, it is a time for us to see Pentecost as a call to include, seek understanding and broaden circles, to see what we can do individually and, in our churches, and communities. A time for us to be builders, preparers, tenders, nurturers, stewards and protectors.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

First Lutheran Church Staff

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