First
Lutheran
Church
Colorado Springs
ekklesia
11.04.26

FROM THE PASTOR

OUR FALL GENEROSITY campaign focuses on the words of Jesus when he tells us that we are called to "bear fruit that lasts." We aim to live that out in our ministry together at First Lutheran by doing sustainable work that blesses people for generations. Our Music Ministries, Serving Ministries, Youth and Family Ministries and Adult Faith Formation all aim to help each successive generation follow Jesus and bear the light of Christ to our community. Our Inspire Faith building project is also part of that fruit that we trust will last for many decades as a permanent gift to the people of First Lutheran that come after us and the city of Colorado Springs.

This Sunday we will make our individual commitments to share some of what God has given us with this shared ministry He has called us to serve. We are asking each other to consider increasing our giving in 2027 by 4%. So if you give $100 per month, consider giving $104 in 2027. If you give $1000 per month consider giving 1040.00. Some of you may be able to do more than that, others may need to cut back next year. Either way, thank you for considering the request and praying about it. I'm confident that God will work through us to accomplish everything God wants us to do in 2027. Please return your commitment card, if you haven't already, to church by this Sunday, November 8.

First Lutheran is a generous congregation. I define generosity as giving freely and lovingly a significant portion of what God has given us to the ministry God has called us to. You give generously and without strings attached. I'm grateful for the trust you place int eh leadership of this congregation and the ways you support our shared direction.

We live in a world that is not generous. We live in a world that teaches us to accumulate for ourselves and distrust others. But Christians live counterculturally. We give freely what is "ours" because we actually don't believe anything belongs to us. We see ourselves as stewards of God's property and we use what portion he has given us to be part of his work in the world. We use our portion to take care of our families, to enjoy this life and to further the mission of the church. We give freely and trust others to use our gifts for the good of the mission.

I'm so happy to be part of God's work with you and to freely give a portion of my income to the work of First Lutheran. God is doing good things through this congregation and that makes it even more fun to give generously.

PASTOR TRAVIS NORTON, SENIOR PASTOR

Sunday's Message

NOVEMBER 1, 2026

REVELATION 7: 9 – 17

PASTOR TRAVIS NORTON

WHAT DO YOU think heaven will like? I love that worship song; I Can Only Imagine where the singer tries to guess what heaven will be like. He asks some of the questions we have: will I stand in your glory or to my knees will I fall, will I sing hallelujah or be able to speak at all? He asks questions about how we will feel and how we might react to heaven. We want to know what heaven will be like.

There are all sorts of stories out there about people who have had near death experiences and caught a glimpse of heaven. There are some common themes, seeing light, feelings of peace, being welcomed by relatives who have gone before us. In the book Heaven is for Real, a pastor's son dies and comes back to life, and then seeing pictures of long dead relatives knows who they are because he met them in heaven. My favorite movie about heaven is the old Robin Williams movie, What Dreams May Come. Heaven is described as what we make it; our dreams come true. And that's often how we talk of heaven, don't we? We talk about what we hope is in heaven. We hope our loved ones are there, and we can be reunited with them. We hope our favorite things are there, mountains and rivers and golf courses and great food. It's funny that when I talk with youth about heaven they always worry about getting bored. What are we doing to do in heaven? I remember feeling that way when I was young. My least favorite part of church worship was the prayers of the people. We had to stand for those, and they just seemed to go on forever. I knew that I didn't want heaven to be like that, like an endless church service.

But what is heaven really like? The scriptures do encourage us to imagine heaven. This isn't one of those questions where we are told not to worry about it or don't think about it. From the Old Testament prophets to Jesus himself to Paul's letters and the book of Revelation, we are given descriptions of heaven and prompted to look around and pay attention. We are given strange details of heaven that are consistent over the centuries. Heaven is often described as having a throne room with God on the throne in the center attended to by angels and other creatures. There are these four beasts, these strange creatures with multiple faces depicting all of creation with the face of a lion, ox, human and eagle. There are angels covered in eyes which might help us understand why people are always afraid when they see an angel. Heaven is a place where everything is seen and clear, nothing is hidden any longer. The scripture asks us to imagine a heaven that is probably very different from the one our culture imagines. Heaven is not a place of our dreams coming true but of God's dream coming true.

I said last week that in our lives we are really only making one choice; do we trust God or ourselves? It's the choice that goes back to the Garden of Eden and the heart of creation and what God hopes for us. Do we trust in God and His commands, his instructions, his ways. Do we believe that what he says is meant for our good, not to harm us but to help us prosper and thrive? Or will we trust ourselves instead, what we want, what we think is best. There are two imaginations of heaven, one is centered on our hopes and dreams and desires believing that we could make heaven best for ourselves and there is an imagination of heaven that is centered on God's hopes and dreams and desires where His vision is fully realized.

Look at this description in our passage from Revelation, what do you notice right away? The first

line that stood out to me, "I saw a multitude, more people than I could count from every tribe and nation and language." Now that's a vision of heaven! I imagine I'll be overcome with relief and joy when I see that crowd. It's a vision of what God wants, all people from every country, from every background, every skin tone and every language together in unity. And think about what they are doing in this vision, they are waving palm branches and declaring God's victory. Salvation belongs to our God. This moment in heaven is a celebration that God wins over the great ordeal. That God brings us out from the ordeal, the suffering of this life. The great multitude is full of joy that God has saved them through the blood of Jesus shed on the cross and brought them all to this place of joy. And notice that it's not just a worship service of singing hosanna and hallelujah, God is active in heaven, attending to the saints. It says he wipes away every tear, actively serving the saints in heaven just as Jesus did on earth.

Revelation says that the Lamb is at the center of the throne. Jesus is there serving as the good shepherd fulfilling the promises of Psalm 23. In heaven the hungry are fed; the saints are led to the springs of the water of life. And those with tears in their eyes find the savior in front of them, gently wiping the tears away – comforting and loving. The vision of heaven given to us in Revelation and throughout scripture is a fulfillment of all the promises God made to us. And our response will be natural worship, "For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them."

That heaven is where our loved ones are, the ones we remember today on this All-Saints Day. God gives us these visions of heaven to comfort us in our grief – and we need that comfort today. I know for me, here at First Lutheran every All-Saints Day gets harder. The names we read today are my people, my friends, and congregation members I loved. This Friday we had to add one more beloved to the list, Lannette Abbey who died in her sleep. We grieve her today with her daughter Betsy and sister Leslie and take comfort that God has prepared heaven for her. She and all the saints are heaven bound and that takes the sting away. I look forward to the day when I get to stand side by side with them in that great multitude. I can't wait to lift my voice with theirs and hear their voices singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever, Amen." I imagine singing that with Lannette, Mike and Diane, Ralph and Larry, and Jim and Ron and Bill and all the rest and hearing their voices again and seeing their faces. Just seeing them in the care of our Good Shepherd will fill my heart with joy and overwhelming gratitude to the God who saved them and me.

God gives us this vision of heaven to comfort us and give us hope but also the scriptures paint the picture of heaven for our lives today. We pray in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This vision of heaven shows the goals we are aiming for in this life. Heaven is inclusive, all tribes, languages, nationalities and people groups are welcome before the throne of God. So, we are inclusive now, identifying our own biases and prejudices, confessing them as sin, repenting and asking God to change us. Our work in this life is to become the kind of people who welcome differences the way God welcomes all kinds of people into heaven. Our work is to make our businesses, and schools and churches and neighborhoods places of diversity where all of God's people are celebrated and loved. Heaven is a place where our sins are forgiven, where the blood of the lamb, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross makes us clean, makes us saints. So, we dedicate our lives to Christ here on earth putting our faith and confidence in him alone for our salvation. And inviting others to receive God's grace and love through Christ.

We are to be a people who tell the good news, who proclaim to the world that salvation belongs to God, and he gives it freely to all who believe. And if we have been forgiven and received such a generous

gift from God then we offer forgiveness to those who have sinned against us. We don't hold grudges, we don't bear ill will to those who have hurt us, we forgive and love and give second and third and fourth chances. And we are generous, giving freely to others in need without expecting anything in return. We have heaven waiting for us, why would we withhold anything from anyone here?

Do you see how this works? We let our destination dictate our values. In heaven tears are wiped away so what does that mean when we see people crying? We move toward the tears so we can offer the hope that God has given us. We are a tear-drying people. Maybe Christians should be known for carrying tissues around. But not just that, we look for those who are sad. We look for those who are hurting. We look for those in despair and mourning and pain. And just as Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead, we come alongside them and share their pain and offer the hope we have. We offer hope the same way Jesus did, through our presence with the hurting. We can't fix every pain here, but we know there's a heaven, so we are able to come alongside those in pain, knowing Jesus will heal whatever hurts, feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, forgive those who have sinned against you. And dry the tears of those who weep.

This is what it means to be a saint, what it means to be a follower of Jesus. One day we will be in heaven, and our God will finally get everything he wants. His creation gathered together, his people full and happy, healed and whole. That is God's dream and we are living for it now until that day when all the Saints are gathered around His Throne waving palm branches of victory and singing with one voice. Amen.

Crafting Music for Worship

WITH ERIC WICKS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15
12:15 P.M. IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM

Join our Minister of Worship and Music, Eric Wicks, for a Lunch & Learn in the Fireside Room on November 15th. He will be hosting an interactive, behind-the-scenes look at what goes into planning the music for our Sunday morning traditional services. Please RSVP if you plan to attend so we can be sure to have plenty of food!

https://bit.ly/3VkEfjE

WHERE SHOULD OUR NEXT ADULT STUDY TRIP GO?

GERMANY/PRAGUE OR EGYPT?

VOTE BY NOVEMBER 30

https://bit.ly/4hYKZeP

Pastor Michaela's

BOOK CLUB

3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH MEETS IN LIBRARY 7:30 – 9 P.M.

NOVEMBER 18
The Power and the Glory
by Graham Greene

Dive into some religious fiction with Pastor Michaela during this monthly book club!

CHERYL'S CORNER

MEET CATHY SIGLER

I sat down with Cathy Sigler and Mike Johnson on October 5. Using my deck of cards from the podcast *Wild Card with Rachel Martin*, I got to learn a little more about these two brand new First Lutheran members. This month, I'll share Cathy with you. Here's what she told me...

Memories – What was your form of rebelling as a teenager?

"I took care of my mom when she was in her late 90s. My mom was a former Army sergeant. She thought that we would always fall in line. I didn't really rebel until I was in my 60s. I bought a little bungalow in Ann Arbor, Michigan without consulting her and she didn't speak to me for two weeks."

Insights – What emotion do you understand better than all the others?

"Compassion. My father was a rehabilitator of blind people. He got his GI degree in kinesiology. He and four other men started a whole program of orientation and mobility instructors to help blind people. Her parents also took us as kids behind the Iron Curtain to see our relatives in Poland."

Beliefs – What truth guides your life more than any other?

"I think one of the frustrations of life is when people you interact with aren't doing what you think is the right thing. I think the truth that I've learned over time is that we would better understand people if we knew more about what had happened to those people in their early years."

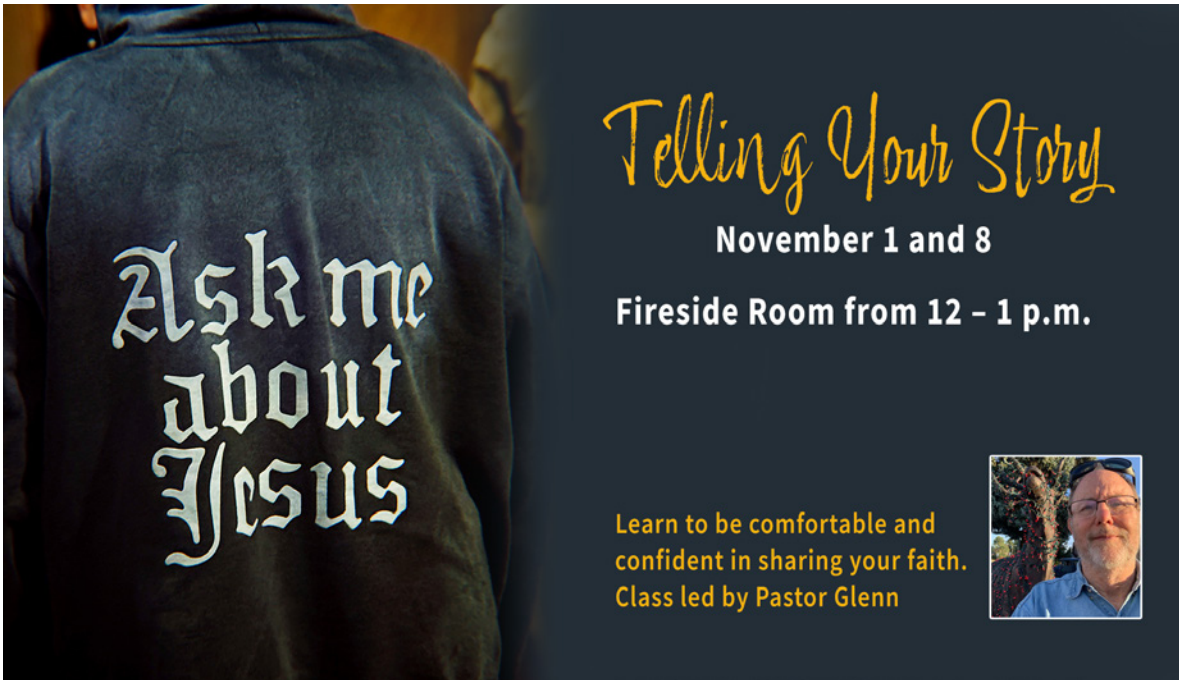
Cathy was born in Chicago, but grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan and was raised Catholic. She visited First Lutheran and was impressed by the warm welcome from the clergy, staff, and members. She loves the energy from each of those groups. She and Mike, who she's dated since February, joined First Lutheran on September 13, 2026. They each moved to Colorado to be near their families. Cathy's daughter's family, including her nine-year-old granddaughter, lives in Colorado Springs.

Cathy retired from having worked as a small animal practitioner and later as an epidemiologist. She has lived and worked in many states including Michigan, Washington state, Tennessee; Maryland and New York City.

Cathy said that when you are retired, every day feels exactly the same. She likes the rhythm of starting the week at church. She especially appreciates how Pastor Travis interprets the Bible and relates it to us. She is interested in volunteering at church and establishing friendships through small group activities.

Contact **cheryl@flccs.net** if you'd like to have coffee with Cheryl and share your First Lutheran experience!

https://bit.ly/3Um9v1z



Thanksgiving
AT FIRST LUTHERAN

Sign Up

NOVEMBER 26 AT NOON

https://bit.ly/4z2xAKb

Join us in the Peel House! Bring a side to share.
Doors open at 12 p.m. and we will eat at 1 p.m.

COMMITMENT SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 8

Please return your commitment cards,
which you received in the mail, on November 8 at any of the four services.

DINING OUT WITH FIRST LUTHERAN

SELECT TUESDAYS | 5:30 P.M.
VARIOUS RESTAURANTS

All are welcome to join this group, which meets at local restaurants on two Tuesdays of each month to enjoy various cuisines and fellowship. Reservations will be made two weeks in advance, so be sure to sign up early. To register, visit **https://bit.ly/41Rh4ff**

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

November 24	Mexico Real 4375 Sinton Road
December 8	Thai Mint 1725 Briargate Blvd
December 22	Colorado Mtn Brewery 600 21st St, Suite180
January 12	Saltgrass Steakhouse 1405 Jamboree Drive

2027 ALTAR FLOWER DESIGNATION FORM NOW AVAILABLE

Purchase an altar bouquet in honor or memory of loved ones. This gift is three-fold. Not only do you remember someone's birthday, anniversary, etc., but you decorate our Sanctuary for our Sunday morning services, AND two volunteers break up the arrangement to deliver vases of flowers to our hospitalized or homebound members. Designate flowers for 2027 using this link: **https://bit.ly/3VwJJIi.**

MEET YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER IN CHRIST

Cheryl Mahon would love to get to know you better over a cup of coffee, her treat! As part of a new feature called "Meet Your Brother or Sister in Christ," Cheryl will visit with members of our First Lutheran family to learn about their faith journey, church involvement, volunteer activities, interests, and life experiences. She will then share a brief article so that we can all become better acquainted with one another and strengthen the bonds of our congregation. **Schedule coffee with Cheryl here: https://bit.ly/4xGDUW8**

NOVEMBER OWLS

THE LEGENDARY READERS THEATRE GROUP PRESENTS *HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS CAPERS*

Thursday | November 19 | Peel House
Potluck Lunch 11 a.m.; Presentation 12 – 1:15 p.m

Welcome to the holiday season, OWLS! Please join us for a holiday potluck dinner followed by a fine presentation by the LEGENDary Readers Theatre Group as they perform vintage radio shows from the 1940's and 1950's. Your radio voices from the past will highlight four capers: *The Not-So-Wise-Men* (parody of Three Wise Men), *The Case of the Missing Holiday Brick* (high stakes culinary mystery), *The Real Wise Ones* (parody of the wives of the Not-So-Wise-Men) and *The Case of the Crimson Carat* (parody of a private eye who narrates his own life as he helps solve the case of a missing family heirloom).

Sign Up Deadline: Monday, November 16. Please sign up by using the following link: https://bit.ly/4skf7WQ or by calling the church at 719.632.8836.

THE EMMAUS WAY

"Repentance meant changing my mind and coming to accept what was already in existence. Instead of trying to persuade God to move toward me, I was beginning to recognize that he's already moved toward me in Christ."

–Barton Breen

As we continue traveling the road of repentance toward agreeing with God about reality, I ask you to try this exercise. I've found that many of us visualize Jesus as somewhere up above us. So, imagine yourself standing outside your home, looking up; picture Jesus up above – amongst the clouds, perhaps. Now watch as he begins to descend, moving toward the earth, toward you. See him come closer and closer, until he is on the ground, standing right in front of you. What expression is on his face? What emotions do you think he's feeling? What emotions rise within you as you stand face-to-face with your Savior?

No emotional response is wrong. Just notice what it is. I think it's natural to perhaps experience a bit of fear as God stands right in front of you, looking into your eyes. But hear these words said over and over in Scripture, "Do not be afraid." Remember these words, too, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son... God did not send the son to condemn ... but to save..." In other words, every movement of God toward you is in love, to save. So lift your eyes again to gaze upon the One who is gazing upon you, and allow God's saving love to flood into every part of you. That, my friends, is humbly agreeing with God about reality.

God is endlessly coming to us in love to save, not in judgment to condemn. Can we agree with that reality? When our friend Barton aligned with this truth, accepting that God was not upset with him and waiting to punish him if he did not "repent" properly, he said this powerful phrase, "It was almost like opening a box and finding treasure when I'd assumed for years that the box held weapons." That is profoundly good news, indeed.

Join me this coming week in meditating on the truth that God has moved, is moving, and will always move toward us in Christ. We'll close with words from theologian Evelyn Underhill, *"Our spiritual life depends on his perpetual coming to us, far more than on our going to him. Every time a channel is made for him he comes; every time our hearts are open to him he enters, bringing a fresh gift of his very life, and on that life we depend."* Let's walk together.

LORI DUNCAN, MINISTER OF SPIRITUAL CARE

RAINBOW TRAIL LUTHERAN CAMP SUMMER REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Summer registration opened on Sunday, November 1, 2026. Family camp and Intro Camp spots fill up early. Find "Summer Camp Availability" posted on the bulletin board to the left of the elevator. You can also find brochures for Summer Camp Jobs, Bridging Borders, and Compass Points backpacking.
Register at www.rainbowtrail.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR BLUE CHRISTMAS AND CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas services at First Lutheran are filled with beautiful music, candlelight, and a spiritually uplifting message. Many visitors come to worship with us during this season, so it is important that we have members to welcome them with a handshake and a smile! This is a great activity for families to do together. We welcome greeters and ushers of ALL ages! No experience required. **Sign up to serve here: https://bit.ly/3UR5D98**

ADDITIONAL NAMES FOR ALL SAINTS LIST

Frankie Patton and Robert Sapp

WOMEN'S ADVENT TEA AND COOKIE EXCHANGE

DECEMBER 5 | 10 A.M. – NOON
PEEL HOUSE PARLOR

Join us for a beautiful time of fellowship, friendship, and reflection as we prepare our hearts for the Advent Season: *In God's Time*.

Reserve your seat: All women are invited to attend. Please sign up to reserve your place for the tea.

Host a table: Would you enjoy decorating and hosting a table? We welcome volunteers who would like to share their creativity and hospitality to make this gathering extra special.

Whether you host a table or simply come as a guest, there is a place for you.

Register here: https://bit.ly/3WbBvpx

SEEDS OF JOY GARDEN GROUP

Seeds of Joy garden group will be starting a project "Leaves Fall, We Rakem" starting the later part of October through the end of November. The purpose is to help members of the congregation who would like help raking leaves on their property. Members of the congregation who would like to help will be connected to a member requesting help and arrangements can be made based on mutual schedules.

Please contact Cheryl Mahon at **cheryl@flccs.net or 719.447.6064** who will connect you to a member of Seeds of Joy for additional information.

WAYFARER'S

THURSDAY | NOVEMBER 19 | 11:30 A.M.

The Berries Basket Cafe
4925 N. Academy Blvd

Hostess: MaryHartwell: **719.641.0983 and/or GrammyMary@aol.com**

HOPE EVENT AT LIMON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

For many incarcerated individuals, the holiday season can be one of the most difficult times of the year. Join Pastor Travis and our Contemporary Worship Team share the hope, love, and grace of Christ with the residents of Limon Correctional Facility on Thursday, December 17. Volunteers will assist with set-up, snack service, and hospitality throughout the evening. The volunteer bus will leave church at 3:15 p.m. The Hope Event is scheduled from 6 to 7:30 p.m. **Sign up here to be a part of this very special ministry: https://bit.ly/3WDoPHS**

In the Life of the Church …

Birthdays

November 8
Jan Doyle
Diane Millburn
Linda Wilson Holt

November 9
Sandy Halla
Lance Nelson

November 10
Mary Buchanan
Kay Lee
Victoria Norton
Erin Tate

November 11
Russ Kester
Jillian Peel
Starr Wise

November 12
Debbie Auten
Shanah Leaf
Rachael Molinelli
Dennis Shoemaker
Harvey Schweiger

November 13
Su Dewey
Helen Meyer

November 14
Randy Kosley
Debbie Long

Anniversaries

November 12
John and Jeanne Smith *54 years*

November 14
Jack and Rosemary Anderson *67 years*
Matt and Tasha Friedell *17 years*

Prayer Requests

The Lannette Abbey Family
Joan Abrahamsen
Beth Allen
Kim Arnn
Fred Bachmeier
Gail Backlund
Elmer Bauman
Tana Beall
Joan Boehm
Carrara Boone
Shari Brian
Brittany
Bill & Barbara Brown
Bryon
Karl & Pam Cartwright
Tanya Charbonneau
John & Debbie Chlebus
Nell Clowder
Linda Collier
Tim Croft
Robert U Ilene Cullen
The Al Eckley Family
Alan Flinn
Julie Furstenau
Corinne Gibson
Nola Gosch
Krista Grant
Bob Haines
Private Steven Harris
Doug Hering
Ginger Hipszky
Jake Hodnett
Randy Hollar
Bill & Doreen Hulka
Jeff Ipson
Sarah Iskra
Alan Jacobsen
Craig Johnson
Kinsley Johnson
Josh Jones
Shirley Jones
Ann Junk
Jonas Kagarise
Kyong Kelley
Tami Kephart
Gaye Lynn Kielcheski
Cindy Koger
Marilyn Knutson
Preston Lauscher
Jesse Lawrence & Family
Timothy Lillich
Dayne Lindquist
Irene Lopez
Garry MacCormack
Jim Matthews
Ayla McCluster
Nick McKibben & Family
Hugh McNeely
Brandon Miller & Family
The Marilyn Miller Family
Paul Moe
Michael Morarie
Tricia Muehlbauer
Wilma Nicolaisen
Robert Nielson
Sam Norton
Gwyn Miller-Olson
Owen & Family
Jack & Judy Peterson
Darlene Radke
Jeff Rapp
Cindy Stanley
Matthew Stark
Becky Sternal
Barbara Swan
Michael Taylor
Doni Vest
Gudrun Vest
Lily Juemei Wang
Christine Welch
Suzanne Wilkinson
Greg & Carolyn Young
Beth Zautke
Julie Frank Zeeb

Please keep these members – and family and friends – of First Lutheran in your prayers this week. If you are requesting to have a name added to the prayer list, please consult with that person prior to making your request. Prayer requests may be submitted by using a Connection Card (in church) or by emailing **teri@flccs.net.**

In Remembrance of

Marilyn Miller

Lee Miller's wife; Kyleigh and Tanner's mother; Andrew's mother-in-law; grandmother of two; whose service will be at a later date.

Date of death: November 2, 2026.

In Remembrance of

Lannette Abbey

Betsy & Ben's mother; John & Tanna's mother-in-law; Leslie & Jeff's sister; Mary's sister-in-law; grandmother of eight; whose memorial service will be November 24 at 1 p.m. our Sanctuary.

Date of death: October 29, 2026.

Worship and Study

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP
SUNDAYS IN THE SANCTUARY
8, 9:30, AND 11 A.M.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP
SUNDAYS IN THE WORSHIP CENTER
10:15 A.M.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT
WEDNESDAY SMALL GROUPS
6:30 - 7:30 P.M.

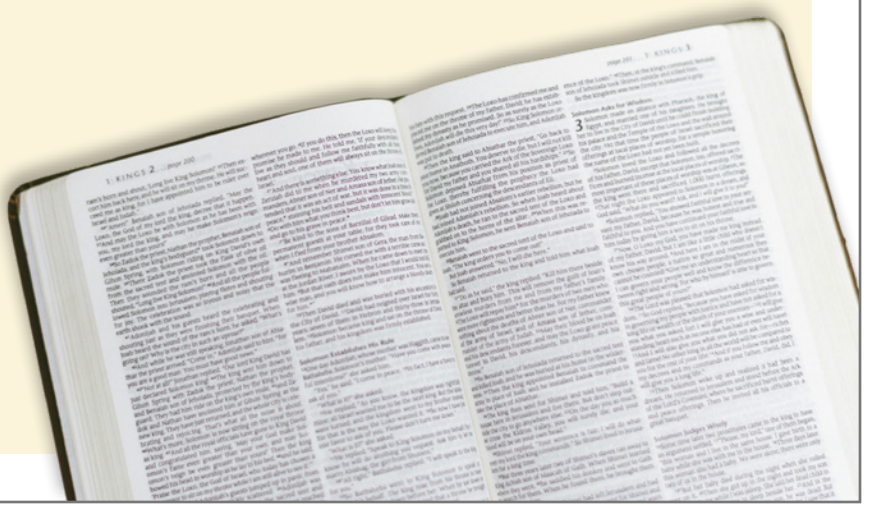
ONLINE WORSHIP
STREAMED LIVE AT 9:30 A.M AND 10:15 A.M.(CONTEMPORARY)
Tune in on First Lutheran's YouTube channel, on the church website, or in the church app.

QUARTERLY ADULT EDUCATION
Four times a year, we offer Adult Education classes at a variety of times and on a wide range of interesting topics. Be sure to read the *Ekklesia* for announcements and information about upcoming programs.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY
LUTHER HALL | 10 A.M.
Led by the preaching pastor for the week

GENERATION TO REVELATION
FIRST LUTHERAN'S NEW PODCAST!
Find our podcast on YouTube, on the church website, or anywhere you get your podcasts.

PASTORAL TEAM
The Rev. Travis Norton, *Senior Pastorr*
The Rev. Michaela Eskew, *Associate Pastor*

NEXT SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURES
Amos 5: 18 – 24
1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18
Matthew 25: 1 – 13x

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
1515 N. CASCADE AVE.
COLORADO SPRINGS,
COLORADO 80907
719.632.8836
FLCCS.NET