



# THE MESSENGER

## SEPTEMBER 2026



### First Lutheran Church

Office Hours:  
Monday—Thursday  
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Fridays  
Closed

107 2nd Street Southeast  
Aitkin, MN 56431  
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E-mail: [office@flc-aitkin.com](mailto:office@flc-aitkin.com)  
<http://www.flc-aitkin.com>



[facebook.com/flcaitkin](https://facebook.com/flcaitkin)



Dear Friends,

Welcome to Fall!

Last month I wrote about the call process starting with the MSP task force or team. I preached a sermon last Sunday that was well received and so I'm incorporating it into the newsletter. It's from 1 Kings 19, about the prophet Elijah. I urge you to read this story of Elijah in 1 Kings 18:20 -19:18. Elijah was depressed about how different things in Israel were and how he was the only decent person left in Israel. It wasn't true but he felt that way. I have heard people here mourn about the way things used to be.

Aitkin is not the same as it was 30 or 40 or 50 years ago. This county now has the oldest average age in the state. The schools classes are half the size they were back in decades past. The county has changed and the country has changed, especially since COVID.

You are not responsible for those changes. That's no reflection on them or you. Times are different, that's all. In Elijah's cases God had Elijah appoint a new prophet. You are in the process of finding a new leader, and many of you no doubt feel you are wandering in the wilderness. Those feelings are real, but they will not be the end of the story.

I believe God is calling you in this interim to reexamine the ministry for youth here at FLC and your ministry in other areas. It is necessary if this church is to continue being an effective witness for God. What worship style and time will truly attract younger members and new members?

Nostalgia for the past, as great as those times may have been, will not accomplish God's work in the present. God is calling you into a different ministry now, because times have changed. The kind of work you do with Aitkin Community meals, replacing a grant and a professional cook, the kind of work you do giving a welcome to Aitkin youth, is just as important as the work of the past. In fact, it may be even MORE important. Working together for good can spread the gospel in amazing ways.

The future of Aitkin Christian ministry may not be First Lutheran front and center, like the past, but your work today may be even more exemplary of your character, your zeal for God's work and your humility. You remain open in this challenging environment to helping Aitkin youth and giving back to your community.

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And what is ministry about anyway? It's not what YOU can do, it's what GOD can do. It was God who helped Elijah and Jesus do miracles. You may not be able to say you did it alone, any more than Elijah did.

God may be calling you to get more people involved in the church and in the community. It may not be YOUR effort, but it will be Aitkin's effort and the work will get done. I really believe that. Your faith will make it possible.

In the end, Elijah left his cave, got on with life, worked on the future and passed on the mantle of prophet to Elisha who also did great things for God. He was not the only one to do God's work. There were thousands of others who also followed God and helped.

You want new people for the ministry of this church. The trade off is though, that getting new people means getting new ideas, new ways of doing things. And that's as it should be. It is a new time with new people who are confronted with different challenges than a generation or two ago.

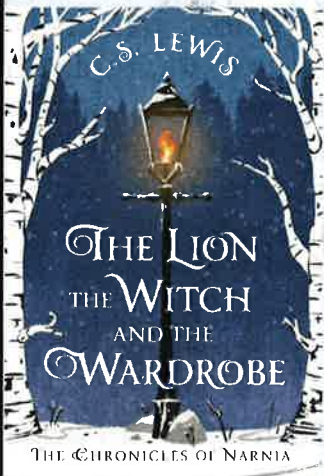
What can this church do to continue God's work in Aitkin county? What must you do differently? In the months ahead you will discover that. I urge you to move forward. A new ministry is coming. Be part of it.

**Blessings,**

**Pastor Glen**

## **CS Lewis Book Study**

**Want to learn more about theology and having fun at the same time? Reading *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis led by Pastor Glen allows you to do just that.**



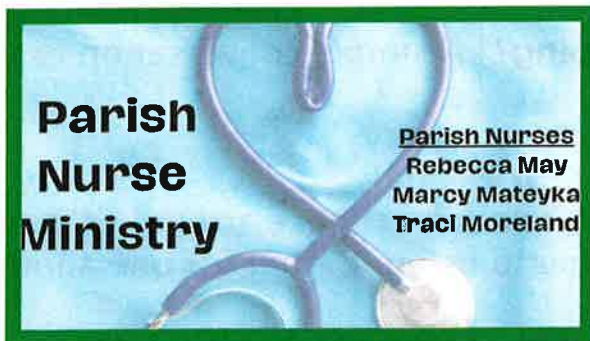
**Starting September 13<sup>th</sup>:**

**We'll meet in the library or fellowship hall every Sunday evening for an hour at 6 pm.**

**The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe can be purchased on eBay used, Amazon, or checked out from the library.**

**Cost of the book is from \$3-10.**

**This study is open to everyone**



## September Health & Wellness

September is a great time to check in on our health, schedule preventive appointments, and encourage our loved ones to do the same. Here are a few important health topics to keep in mind this month.

### Prostate Cancer Awareness

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men, and risk increases with age. Early prostate cancer may not cause symptoms, so talking with your healthcare provider about your personal risk and whether screening is appropriate is important.

**Men: Don't put off your checkup!** Know your family history and talk with your healthcare provider about your prostate health.

### Ovarian Cancer Awareness

Ovarian cancer can be difficult to detect early because symptoms may be subtle. Pay attention to **persistent bloating, pelvic or abdominal discomfort, feeling full quickly, or changes in bowel or bladder habits**. If something feels unusual or doesn't go away, talk with your healthcare provider. Knowing your family history can also help you understand your personal risk.

**Know your body. Listen to your body. Speak up.**

For more information: **American Cancer Society:** <https://www.cancer.org>

### Healthy Aging

Healthy aging is about maintaining our health, independence, and quality of life at every age.

- Stay physically active and work on strength and balance.
- Eat nutritious foods and stay hydrated.
- Keep up with checkups, screenings, and vaccinations.
- Review medications regularly with your healthcare provider.
- Stay socially connected with family, friends, and your church community.
- Make time for activities that bring you joy and purpose.

**Small healthy choices today can help us enjoy more healthy tomorrows.**

### Back-to-School Health

As children and teens return to school, remember to:

- Get needed **immunizations and physicals**.
- Establish healthy **sleep routines**.
- Encourage nutritious meals and plenty of water.
- Reinforce good **handwashing** habits.
- Watch for signs of stress or anxiety.
- Encourage safe participation in sports.

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And don't forget to ask: **"How are you really doing?"** A simple conversation can make a big difference.

### **A September Blessing**

As we care for our own health, may we also remember those around us who need encouragement, support, or simply someone to listen. Caring for one another is one of the ways we put our faith into action.

**"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."**

— 3 John 1:2

**Blessings, Traci Moreland, RN, Parish Nurse**

## **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2026**

The Mission Endowment Fund Committee and the First Lutheran Church Parish Nurse Ministry are planning a Workshop on "Transitional Thinking –Lifetime Planning" on Monday, October 5th from 1 – 4 pm. The purpose is to learn about, discuss and give more information on the following topics: End of life planning for funeral arrangements; Power of Attorney and Living Wills; Legal issues for later life situations; and opportunities to pass on financial assets for leaving a financial and ministry legacy to organizations.

The meeting will be at First Lutheran Church from 1 pm to 4 pm. It will be open to community members as well as church members. Each session will take 45 minutes to have the topic explained and questions and thoughts discussed.

The Annual Appeal Committee has begun its work for this fall. Consecration Sunday will be November 22nd. A theme based upon Scripture is being developed and presentations in worship, in the various publications and letters will be utilized. In addition, a number of members will be invited to share their thoughts and beliefs about stewardship and using their time, talents and treasure for the work of the church. Plan to be in worship as often as possible to hear these temple talks.

Looking back, on June 21st, Mission Endowment Fund sponsored the celebration of the sun on its longest day with acknowledging God's presence through the sun. At that service, the Solar Panels were dedicated and their value noted. The Men In Mission did a wonderful job of providing summer food for fellowship time. Along with that idea there was recognition of how the Mission Endowment Fund enables people to leave financial assets so that their legacy can continue to make a difference in the world.

**Stewardship Ministry Chair**  
**Douglas Larson**



# First Lutheran Church

# 2026

## Fall CYF Ministry

Join us for a great fall of community, mission  
and growing in your faith!

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### Sunday School:

- 9/13 Blessing of the Backpacks
- 9/20 First day of Sunday School
- 9/27 3-year old Bible Milestone
- 10/11 First Grade Worship Milestone
- 11/15 Pre-School Prayer Milestone

### Wednesday Night Schedule

(Begins September 23 with Leader Blessing in Worship)

- 3:15PM Coffee House
  - 4:15PM Wednesday Night Faith
  - 5:15PM Family Meal and Worship
  - 6:30PM Affirmation Classes (7th-9<sup>th</sup> Grades)
- .....

### Other Events:

- Mentor Blessing 9/30 at worship
- Banning Park Hike 10/4 (9:30AM-5:30PM)
- Highway Clean Up 10/7
- Affirmation of Baptism 10/25 9AM

# **FREE CRAFTING ITEMS**

Embroidery Floss

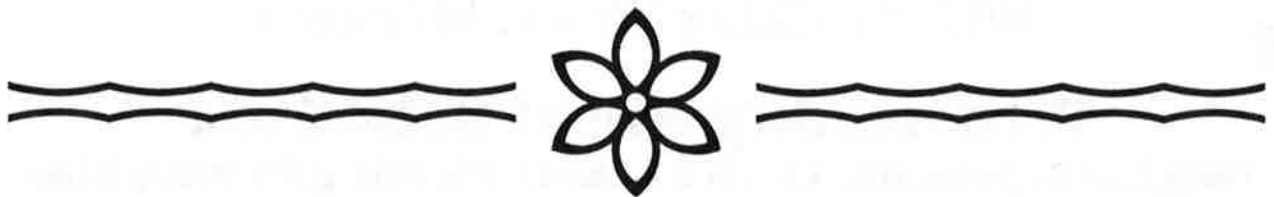
Paints

Cardstock

India Ink

Hardanger Thread

**CONTACT JAN AT 218-429-1222**



## **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**September 17th**

**1 pm**

# Financial Summary through July 2026

|                                                              | 2025      | 2026     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| General Operating Income - YTD                               | 198,586   | 188,758  |
| July Budget Expectations-YTD (Historical Average)            | 225,852   | 233,045  |
| Variance to Budget Expectations - YTD                        | ( 27,266) | (44,287) |
| Actual Expenditures - YTD                                    | 222,096   | 238,640  |
| Percentage of dollars received for period to dollars pledged | 91%       | 93%      |
| Unpledged Dollars Rec'd – YTD (Regular Offering)             | 54,385    | 65,732   |
| Building Fund Income - YTD                                   | 18,033    | 16,090   |
| Building Fund Expenditure - YTD                              | 25,489    | 20,489   |
| Campership Balance                                           | 9,997     | 9,770    |

In comparing General Fund Income with **actual** expenses, you will see a shortfall of \$49,882. This compares to last month when the shortfall was \$42,000.

In using the straight-line method of calculating the budget, general fund was about \$68,223 under budget.

Using the historical average method of calculating budget as shown above, you will see that the variance was a negative \$44,287.

Regular offering was \$43,145 under budget expectations through July, and less than 2025 by \$9,891.

General Fund offering for July was \$22,852. Historically, July results in 6.43% of general fund giving. This amount would be \$28,327.



September Extra  
Mile Mission Focus

ELCA  
Lutheran Campus  
Ministry

If you'd like to donate, please go  
to our website  
[www.flc-aitkin.com](http://www.flc-aitkin.com) or send a  
check to the church



# ATTENDANCE

| <i>Week of</i>                 | <i>8/2</i> | <i>8/9</i> | <i>8/16</i> | <i>8/23</i> |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Sunday<br>9:00 am (In-person)  | 83         | 77         | 96          | 78          |
| Sunday<br>10:40 am (In-person) | 7          | 13         | 7           | 7           |
| YouTube                        | 63         | 81         | 28          | 45          |

All YouTube attendance is based on YouTube views as of August 25.  
A view may be more than one person per view.



## Quilters Are Back!



**Quilters have resumed their work and are meeting every Friday at 9:00 AM beginning September 4th.**

**We need people who would like to tie quilts, cut squares, sew bindings, prepare packets for sewing and any other aspects of quilting. You can work at home or at church. No education required. We are a happy group that shares stories, time together and deep friendships and some tasty snacks too!**

**Call Linda Delaney with questions:  
218-820-6777.**

# SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

9/13 - NO 10:40 SERVICE

ALL OTHER SUNDAYS MORSHIP AT 9:00  
& 10:40AM, WITH COFFEE FELLOWSHIP  
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 9:00 AM  
SERVICES



Ruth Carlstrom - 9/05  
Patti Wamous - 9/06  
Eric Johnson - 9/08

SEPTEMBER  
80 PLUS

Lorraine Liljenquist - 9/11 BIRTHDAYS  
Dorothy Smeltzer - 9/14  
Paul Martinsen - 9/19  
Helen Henke - 9/25  
JanKolodji - 9/28  
Loren Rachey - 9/30

Happy  
Birthday



# GIRLS MATTER.

We are looking forward to making a difference together while enjoying each other's good company starting with our **SEPTEMBER 14th Workshop.**

## WORKSHOP DATES

**SEPTEMBER 14**  
**OCTOBER 12**  
**NOVEMBER 9**  
**DECEMBER 14**  
**JANUARY 11**  
**FEBRUARY 15**  
**MARCH 8**  
**APRIL 12**  
**MAY 10**

Every second **MONDAY** of each month at 9:00 am - Noon  
**FIRST LUTHERAN FELLOWSHIP HALL**

**\*Please note this is a different day than in the past\***

**As Always...There are many different tasks to be done,  
both sewing and non-sewing.**

**WE ESPECIALLY CAN USE PEOPLE WHO SEW.**  
**So, if you think you can sew a straight line, consider giving  
it a try.**



## ADVOCACY IN ACTION

*August - December 2026*

**Joining our Voices for Neighbors and Nature**

### PREPARE · CONNECT · ACT

Join us this Fall to learn and practice faith-based civic engagement from a Lutheran perspective. Please scan QR code or visit [ecofaithnetwork.org](https://ecofaithnetwork.org) for more information and to register for webinars.

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/2fZ2fac7rCz6BNyg8>

*(More dates and topics coming soon.)*



8/25 (3 - 4:30 pm) Stretching our Civic Engagement Muscles  
9/22 (6:30 - 8:00 pm) The Biblical Basis for Civic Engagement

Email: [ecofaith@nemnsynod.org](mailto:ecofaith@nemnsynod.org) (Pastor Beth Pottratz, EcoFaith Network)

### **Ministry opportunities at First Lutheran:**

*If you would like to participate in worship services, call any of the following people and volunteer.*

*Training provided.*

#### **Lector: Reading scriptures & the prayers of the Church):**

Contact the office (218-927-2028)

**Communion assistant:** Contact the office (218-927-2028)

**Usher:** Contact the office (218-927-2028)

**Children's sermon:** Contact the office (218-927-2028)

**Sound Technician:** Contact the office (218-927-2028)

**Power Point Technician:** Contact the office (218-927-2028)

**Video Technician:** Dave Sadlowsky (952-221-3861)

**Worship Committee:** Rebecca May (927-3481)

**Contemporary worship song leaders/musicians:** Pat Perrine (218-428-1884)

**Hymn selections:** Linda Delaney (927-6237)

**Altar Guild:** Mary Peterson (927-6820)

**WELCA:** Mary Peterson (927-6820)

**Dinner at your Door:** Carla Hakes (320-333-1876)

**Choir:** Aaron Perrine ((651)428-9005

**Please call me back** I'm one of those people who regularly calls for lectors, communion assistants, kitchen help, worship assistants, Sunday coffee hour help, etc. If you're not home, I leave a message on your answering machine. It would be most helpful if you would return my phone call with a yes or no—then I'll know you received my message and it will save me more phone calls. Thank you for making my volunteer job much easier!

**New Option:** We have a new scheduling program – Ministry Scheduling Pro. Very easy to use and to volunteer for many positions. Contact the office to get signed up.

### **Support Groups**

1. **Rides for Health** (Aitkin Co CARE) 927-4077
2. **Memory Loss/Caregivers** (Aitkin Co CARE)- 1<sup>st</sup> Wed 1230 pm 927-1383
3. **Doughnuts with Dawn** (previously memory lane cafe) – Maryhill Manor every Wed 1000-1200 pm
4. **HOPE** (healing, opportunity, provided equally) (previously AADA)- domestic violence- Wed 800-900 am for women, Thurs 400-500 pm for teens
5. **Sexual Violence Resource Center/Support Within Reach-** 927-6226- Mon and Wed 800 am-500 pm
6. **Aitkin Co Child Abuse Prevention Council** 927-6226
7. **Diabetes Resources-** Riverwood Health Care Center 927-5152
8. **Suicide Prevention-** Aitkin Co Public Health – 927-7272
9. **Crisis Line** 1-800-462-5525

### **STAFF**

**Pastor Glen Bickford**

(Interim Pastor)

glen@flc-aitkin.com

**Jill Jameson**

(Office Manager)

office@flc-aitkin.com

**Nicole Cook**

(Ministry & Media Coordinator)

mmc@flc-aitkin.com

**Barb Bendson**

(Accountant)

barb@flc-aitkin.com

**Justine Nordick**

(Sunday School Coordinator)

justinenordick@gmail.com

**Mike Purdy** ( Custodian)

**Rebecca May** (Organist)

**Sarah Grovogel**

(Nursery Facilitator)

**Aaron Perrine** (Choir Director)

### **Mission Statement**

With God's love we embrace one another,  
our neighbors, and all creation.

### **Vision Statement**

Doing God's Work with Our Hands by  
Providing:

Spiritual Growth for All

Opportunities for Living Out Our Christian  
Faith

Support of our Mission and Ministries

### **Church Values**

TRUST and LOVE in Jesus Christ

COMMIT to living God's Word

PRACTICE hospitality with welcoming and  
kindness

RESPECT and CARE for all people

SERVE our community

## Live Stream/Recording of every 9:00 a.m. Sunday Service

Can't make it to church? Watch it live.

Missed last week? Catch up by watching the recording.

Want to see it again? Or pass it on....

Go to YouTube – enter First Lutheran Church in Aitkin

Scroll thru and search for the date you are looking for.

Click on play. It's that simple.

## How do I turn on subtitles/closed captioning on YouTube?

### Steps

1. Open a YouTube video.
2. Click the gear icon in the bottom-right corner of the video player to display the video player settings.
3. Expand the combo box next to Subtitles/CC.
4. Click the desired subtitle language to begin displaying subtitles.

You will have to do this each time with any video.

9:00 a.m. worship service is  
livestreamed on YouTube at First  
Lutheran Church of Aitkin and broadcast  
at 10:00 a.m. on KKIN 94.3 FM Aitkin

NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLES  
DUE ON THE 15TH OF  
EVERY MONTH

PLEASE NOTE: The church is charged 75 cents for undeliverable mailings. If you do not want to  
continue receiving this mailing, please request that your name be removed from our list by returning  
the attached label to First Lutheran Church, 107 2nd St., SE, Aitkin MN 56431, or by emailing the  
church at [office@flc-aitkin.com](mailto:office@flc-aitkin.com) September 2025



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
107 2<sup>ND</sup> ST SE  
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