



## First Things – October 2025

Dear friends,

Many people have been feeling this way lately: the world is a very hopeless place. After all, you just have to look around – Political tensions, racial tensions, health tensions, war, disease, floods, fires, earthquakes, crime, anger, hate, and the list goes on endlessly, doesn't it? And when we think of things in these terms, it's very easy to lose hope, isn't it?

Christians, however, though we feel the weight of these burdens in the world, have a hope that no one else in the world gets to have, a hope that is not like the blind hope of "I hope it will all work out!" but a hope that will not disappoint. Christians have borne up under sufferings and persecutions since the earliest days of the Christian Church and continue to do so today, all the while following God's Word that says, "as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people." Why? Why bother? After all these years and all the evil things that have happened, why do Christians continue to have hope? Simply put, the answer is Jesus.

See, Christians understand that this world is corrupt. The evil we see around, while alarming and disturbing, is not surprising to Christians. We know that there is a reason that the world is the way it is and we know that that reason lives within ourselves: sin. Evil lives within every one of us and each person is perfectly capable of the gravest acts of evil. The only thing holding us back from utter chaos is God's grace and a self-serving self-preservation.

But that's not what gives Christians hope. What gives the Christian hope, again, is Jesus: God's answer to our failure. When God saw you and me at our most evil moment, completely lost in our sin, he had mercy. He sent Jesus, his only Son, to die the death we deserved, yes, hell. Jesus suffered hell in your place and mine. And then, because Jesus had no sin, he rose from the dead. His resurrection from the dead is the Christian's hope. Jesus' life is what let's Christians know that God still loves them. And he loves you too. Even though you didn't ask for it, even though you didn't deserve it, God still sent his Son to live, die, and rise for you.

The Christian's hope is based in historical fact: Jesus lives. And if Jesus rose from the dead, then we can hope in the face of all the hopeless things of this world because along with Jesus' resurrection is a promise. Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die." Those might be words that had a nice sentiment from any old religious teacher. However, from someone who died, was in the grave for three days, and then rose from the dead, those words take on a whole new meaning, don't they? Now they're words you can trust. Now he has

become someone you can believe in. Why do Christians carry on with hope even when the world seems hopeless? It's because when things looked hopeless for Jesus, he defeated death. Now alive, he promises that your sins are forgiven and that because he lives, you will live forever with him too.

Pastor Pilarski

## Church Council Openings

The Church Council is looking for two men to serve as members of Council. If you would be interested in serving in these roles please reach out to the office or Tony Breeser, 507-894-4054.

## First Steps News



Fall is in the air, and with that comes fun fall activities! September 23 the preschoolers visited Bauer's Market to see how apples are washed and bagged, and to sample a variety of apples. Fire Prevention Week is coming up the week of October 7th! Our preschool classes will head over to the La Crescent Fire Station for a tour and training on how to stay safe.



**Support Needed:** We are still looking for staff, specifically a full-time 3K teacher and a qualified assistant teacher. *Please pray* that these wonderful staff members join our team soon, and if you find people that would be a great addition to the First Steps team please direct them to Carol Schroeder for more information. We would love to welcome more families but first we need those positions filled. Carol can be reached via email: [director@keepchristfirst.com](mailto:director@keepchristfirst.com), or call: 507 – 895 – 5704.

Members are always welcome to assist with pick-up at Logan Middle School for First Steps' lunch program. A current calendar can be found in the church entry for easy sign-up. For any questions you can reach out to Carol, as noted above, or speak with Diana Holub, Church Secretary, for more information.



## Helpers Needed: Living Bible Night



Friday, October 31, our congregation opens its doors to the community through the *Living Bible*. Each year we register with the *Downtown Trick-or-Treat* business event sponsored by ESB Banking & Insurance. In doing so our church and childcare center is noted as an open business for families to stop by for a sweet treat. We could use your help! We are looking for members willing to: help set up the space before the event, host a bible story, and/or help clean up the space at the end of the event. No assistance is too small, all help is appreciated! A sign up is located in the entry.

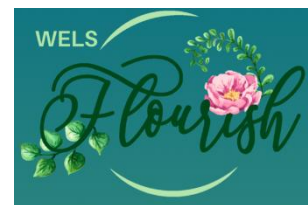
## Fellowship Opportunities and Events

### Sunday Evenings

Campfire Devotions- On Sundays at 5 pm, you are invited to Pastor's backyard for a campfire devotion! Bring a chair and stay awhile! Pastor will have hot dogs and marshmallows for roasting. You are welcome to bring a dish to pass if you like.

### Saturday, Oct. 4

WELS Flourish- FLOURISH! is an annual women's retreat is hosted by St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church in Lewiston, MN. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday October 4<sup>th</sup> at St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church in Lewiston, MN.



### Monday, Oct. 6

Women of First Meeting- Calling all ladies! This month the agenda includes: updates on great fall women's events in the area, an embroidery project, and discussion on the Living Bible event. See you there!

### Saturday, Oct. 11

Scrap-n-Craft- New Life Resource Center is hosting their fall scrap-n-craft fundraising event at Mt. Calvary Grace Lutheran School from 9 AM - 7 PM. Registration fees is \$40 for this event. This includes three wonderful meals plus treats and a 4 ft. table workspace. This is a work event for crafters, it is not a craft fair. *Join for as little or as much as you're able*. Registration Forms available in the entry.

### Oct. 13 - 14

Pastor's Conference in Red Wing, MN

### Tuesday, Oct. 18

LWMS Fall Rally: 'Networking for Jesus'- Hosted by [St. Matthew's Lutheran Church](#) in Winona, MN. This is a great opportunity to hear from our sister-n-Christ, Gwen Schroeder about her work with the organization [Friends Network](#). Come early and enjoy refreshments while checking out the Mission Partner Displays and items available for purchase from the Thai Village. All ages of men, women and children are welcome to attend. \*Note: Registration and Lunch are on the lower level and Meeting is in the Sanctuary. There is an elevator to assist those with additional mobility needs.



### Tuesday, Oct. 21

Church Council- 6:30 PM

### Saturday, Oct. 25

Men of his Word Conference in Rochester: This year's theme is *Forge Ahead In Faith!* Check out conference details at [www.menofhisword.org](http://www.menofhisword.org) (Click on "Rochester"). This year's event is held at the Mayo Civic Center in downtown Rochester MN on Saturday, October 25, 2025. Forms in the entry.



### Tuesday, Oct. 28

Early Learning Center Business Meeting-

6:30 PM

### Fri, October 31

Living Bible Night- Join members in putting classic Bible stories to life for our La Crescent community from 3:00 PM to 5:30 PM, with a potluck meal following. Good times all around sharing the Word with your families! Please contact the office via email or phone for more info. A sign-up sheet is in the entry to volunteer to help.



## August

### Summary of Financial Information 2025

Financial Summary				
	YTD	YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Difference	Comments
Net Income (Loss) Church	(\$8,253)	\$0	(\$8,253)	
Net Income (Loss) ELC	\$21,241	\$11,684	\$9,557	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,988</b>	<b>\$11,684</b>	<b>\$1,304</b>	
Grants (net)	(\$13,064)	(\$10,570)	(\$2,494)	
Without Grants	(\$76)	\$1,114	(\$1,190)	

Total Deficit of ELC	
2018	(\$17,051)
2019	(\$23,087)
2020	(\$2,544)
2021	\$39,832
2022	(\$10,484)
2023	(\$8,202)
2024	\$10,716
2025	\$21,241
	<u>\$10,421</u>

Giving Summary				
	YTD	YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Difference	Comments
Offerings	\$145,941	\$155,309	(\$9,368)	94.0%
Debt Reduction	\$0	\$0	\$0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$145,941</b>	<b>\$155,309</b>	<b>(\$9,368)</b>	

Assets				
	2024	2025		
	December	August	Change	Comments
Checking Account	\$61,664	\$71,955	\$10,290	
Money Market	\$51,540	\$63,194	\$11,655	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$113,204</b>	<b>\$135,149</b>	<b>\$21,945</b>	Net increase in cash balance

Liabilities & Equity				
	2024	2025		
	December	August	Change	Comments
Dedicated Funds Total	\$87,041	\$94,062	\$7,021	
Other Liabilities	\$1,830	\$3,766	\$1,936	
<b>Assets less Liabilities</b>	<b>\$24,334</b>	<b>\$37,321</b>	<b>\$12,988</b>	Net increase in equity
Mortgage Balance	\$258,736		Interest Rate	6.34%
Balloon Payment Due	11/1/2027		Monthly Payment	\$2,587.01
			Extra Principle	\$1,000.00

Basement Windows Project	
Total	
Est Cost*	\$14,000
Donations	
to Date	\$8,811
Amount	
Needed	\$5,189
As of September 30	

Required Offerings				
		Budget	Catch up	Total
September Offerings Needed	\$22,580			
September Offerings Received	\$17,408			
October Offerings Needed		\$22,216	\$14,540	\$36,756

\* West side \$6,000  
East side \$8,000

## First Lutheran Church

Pastor Adam Pilarski  
Church Office  
First Steps Early Learning Center

phone: 605 – 515 – 2388,  
phone: 507 – 895 – 4775,  
phone: 507 – 895 – 5704,

email: [pastorapilarski@gmail.com](mailto:pastorapilarski@gmail.com)  
email: [ChurchOffice@KeepChristFirst.com](mailto:ChurchOffice@KeepChristFirst.com)  
email: [Director@KeepChristFirst.com](mailto:Director@KeepChristFirst.com)

Church Website: [keepchristfirst.com](http://keepchristfirst.com)

Facebook: First Lutheran, La Crescent

Virtual Worship: [vimeo.com/keepchristfirst](https://vimeo.com/keepchristfirst)