


FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
MISSOURI SYNOD • KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE



First Hearts February 2026

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From the Pastor

In person worship matters.

Dear brothers and sister in Christ,

Over the past few years, we've grown accustomed to virtual worship attendance. Livestreams and sermon recordings can be valuable gifts for the sick, those who are

shut-in, and individuals temporarily unable to gather. These tools, though, were never meant to be a replacement for in-person worship.

The Church is the body of Christ. As a single body, we gather where the gifts of God are located. When we gather in person, Christ comes and serves His people in physical and embodied ways.

In the Divine Service, the Lord proclaims His Word into our ears as a promise given to sinners. He places His forgiveness into our mouths in the Eucharist. He joins our voices into one confession, one prayer, and one song. Christianity is not a disembodied faith. The Son of God took on flesh. He comes to us in that flesh and blood.

The author of the Hebrews, “Let us not neglect meeting together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another.” This encouragement is found in singing the same hymns, saying Amen, sitting, standing, and praying with the gathered saints. When we worship, we are teaching our children that the Church is not an optional thing, but an essential part of being human.

Being together forms us into a greater people. It teaches us to be receivers of God’s gifts. It forces us to learn to listen and to be a people of love. Gathering together, we are pulled out of our isolationism because we belong to Christ and to each other.

If you are able to attend in person, I cannot encourage you enough to do so. Isolating yourself from God’s gifts not only hurts you, but it diminishes the body of Christ in the process. Removing yourself from Jesus and His gifts hurts everyone.

So, if you have been missing, remember, it’s never too late to come back. Jesus wants you home. He wants you to receive His gifts so much that He has located Himself with the forgiveness of sins. There is no substitute for that.

Amen.

Weekly Events

Sunday - Divine Service 9:30 am; Sunday School & Bible Study following

Evening Services

2/18 - Ash Wednesday Service 6:30pm (Fellowship Meal 5:30pm)

2/25 - Lenten Service 6:30pm (Fellowship Meal 5:30pm)

Board Happenings

2/10 - School Board 6:00pm

2/17 - Planning Council 6:30pm

Other Church Activities

- 2/7 - Men's Bible Study 8:30am
 2/8 - Young Adult Bible Study 12:00pm
 2/11 - Ladies' Bible Study 5:45pm
 2/15 - Youth 12:00pm
 2/21 - Men's Bible Study 8:30am

	Feb. 1	Fourth S. after the Epiphany	Micah 6:1-8	Psalm 15	1 Cor. 1:18-31	Matt. 5:1-12
	Feb. 8	Fifth S. after the Epiphany	Isaiah 58:3-9a	Psalm 112:1-9	1 Cor. 2:1-12 (13-16)	Matt. 5:13-20
	Feb. 15	The Transfiguration of Our Lord	Ex. 24:8-18	Psalm 2:6-12	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matt. 17:1-9
ASH WEDNESDAY	Feb. 18	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12-19	Psalm 51:1-13 (14-19)	2 Cor. 5:20b-6:10	Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
LENT	Feb. 22	First S. in Lent	Gen. 3:1-21	Psalm 32:1-7	Rom. 5:12-19	Matt. 4:1-11

In Other News

Stewardship

Table of Duties: The Forgotten Stewardship Tool

Luther's Small Catechism is a magnificent tool. Joined with a well-used copy of the Holy Scriptures and an orthodox hymnal, and the Christian is well equipped to live a life of faithfulness to the Lord and service to the neighbor. First in German and now in English and just about any language known to man, this handy masterpiece has introduced generations of people to the central doctrine of justification by grace, through faith, on account of Jesus Christ. The Six Chief Parts have proven to be a faithful framework for a clear confession of the truth of the Gospel for nearly five hundred years!

But more than a textbook, the Small Catechism also serves well as a handbook for Christian living. As a part of its treasure, there is an element that teaches an extraordinarily strong message of stewardship. That hidden treasure that needs to be rediscovered is called the Table of Duties.

The Table of Duties is really nothing more than a categorized gathering of Bible verses. These verses are set apart for "various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities." Addressing pastors and

people, government and citizens, husbands, wives, children, youth, workers and so many more, it very clearly lays out what faithful stewardship looks like. Even better, these assembled passages teach one important truth: we are stewards of one another!

The Table is much more than a “how-to” tool; it also lays out the interconnectedness that exists within the body of Christ. Pastors are described by what they are to be as stewards of the Word. 1 Timothy 3 highlights the characteristics of a faithful pastor. Even more, Titus 1 highlights the need for the pastor to be faithful for the sake of those under his care.

Those who hear the faithful preaching of the pastor are stewards of the pastor as well. 1 Corinthians 9 talks about the need for the people to support the livelihood of the pastor. Galatians 6 talks about how the hearers share in the good things that the pastor teaches. 1 Timothy 6 talks about the honor that is owed to the pastor, not because of WHO he is, but rather WHAT he is teaching! Hebrews 13 shows the impact of this stewardship on the pastor, that they perform their duties with joy. Joyful pastors and people are always going to be better stewards of the Gospel!

Outside the church this interdependent stewardship is on display as well. Romans 13 highlights the respect necessary for the governing authorities. As citizens, the faithful steward is called to pay taxes (Matthew 22), pray for their leaders (1 Timothy 2) and that they should be ready to serve in the civil realm (Titus 3), because they are in these positions by God’s direction (1 Peter 2).

These steward duties are in the home too! 1 Peter 3 and Colossians 3 shape the husband steward. Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 3 shape the wife steward. Ephesians 6 form parental stewards and child stewards.

The Table of Duties is a wonderful place for the individual steward to learn how much our stewardship is more than just a “me and Jesus thing!” In fact, it ends with these words: “Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well share fare.” This is interdependent stewardship on clear display. As each learns stewardship in this way, the more faithful we will be as a family, congregations, communities and the church at large.

The Heart Behind Our Offering

When we give our offerings, we are doing far more than supporting a budget—we are participating in God’s work among us and for future generations. Scripture reminds us, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Matthew 6:21). Our giving is an expression of gratitude, trust, and faith.

Through your faithful generosity, our church continues to be a place of worship, care, and outreach. Your offerings support vital ministries, serve those in need, and sustain our church school, where children are nurtured academically and spiritually. Investing in our school is an investment in the next generation of faith leaders, and your support makes that mission possible.

At this time, we also face important financial needs. Our church is working through a budget deficit, and we must undertake significant repairs to the foundation of our sanctuary—work that is essential to preserve our sacred space for years to come. To help meet these needs, we are inviting the congregation to participate in a special **Super Abundant Offering**. Our goal for the Super Abundant Offering is \$80,000. Additional funds will also be needed to repair the foundation under the sanctuary. We are currently collecting quotes for this project. First Lutheran Church will need a loan for any shortfall from the Super Abundant Offering and for the foundation work.

Offering is not meant to be a burden, but an act of worship. As Paul reminds us, “*God loves a cheerful giver*” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Whether through regular giving, special offerings, or prayerful support, each gift matters and is used by God in powerful ways.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness, generosity, and love for this church and its ministries. Together, with God’s help, we will meet these challenges and continue to grow, serve, and worship as one community.

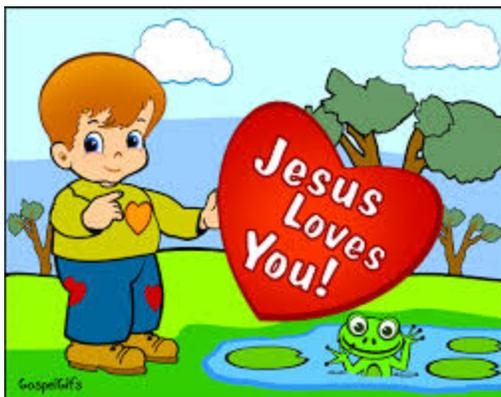
Sunday School - Just a reminder that we have Sunday School available from Pre-School through High School. We look forward to having you!

Young Adult Bible Study - please join us on the second Sunday of every month.

Youth! Mark your calendars, join in fun and fellowship after Sunday School on the third Sunday of every month.

Online Services: Please visit the church website www.firstknoxville.org to view our worship services and to participate in worship at your home. There are also links for Bible study and other resources.

Facebook Page: Follow First Lutheran on Facebook for all the latest updates: <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxFirstLutheran/>



News from First Lutheran School

February brings thoughts of Valentine's Day and, with it, reflections of love. Teachers, parents, students, and staff all know that Christ's love is at the very heart of everything we do. Because God loves us first, we are called to love one another (1 John 4:19) and that love is felt throughout our school. As a result, First Lutheran is a place where everyone feels valued and knows they can flourish and thrive.

It is especially meaningful to hear about this sense of love and belonging from our students themselves. When asked to reflect on what a talent is, one of our third graders made a unique observation, one that beautifully captures what makes FLS so special:

"If you are really good at something, that is a talent. I am very good at climbing and singing. That makes me unique. Unique means special in a weird way, but that doesn't mean you stand out in a bad way. Someone may have a talent that makes them feel different. It can be hard to feel different from everyone else. God makes us special for a reason."

We all feel a little "weird" at times, and that is okay. In our classrooms, we intentionally look for opportunities to celebrate the gifts and talents God has given each of us. For some, that may mean winning the spelling bee or reading 20 books in a month. For others, it may be athletic skill on the basketball court or being a kind and loyal friend who sees the good in everyone.

Whatever your gifts and talents may be, it is okay to stand out. It is okay to be different. God made each of us exactly as we are for a reason. He loves us just the way we are and here at First Lutheran School, we strive to reflect that love every day.



Birthdays:

Feb. 3: Joshua & AnnMarie Cooper

Feb. 16: Larry & Kim Mabe

Anniversaries:

Feb. 2: Luke Buckner; Canda Kandt

Feb. 3: Denver Slifka

Feb. 5: Dave Wheat

Feb. 7: Dawn Johnson

Feb. 9: Kari McClanahan

Feb. 10: Kara Eimmerman; Judy Kelley; Kate Maanum

Feb. 13: Morgan Lyke

Feb. 14: Elizabeth Davis

Feb. 18: Shawna Anderson; Seth Nutter

Feb. 20: Lynda Elmore

Feb. 22: Easton Sternberg

Feb. 27: Lindsey Blair

Feb. 28: Emily Blomenberg; Erin Rodgers