


FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
MISSOURI SYNOD ▪ KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE



First Hearts May 2026

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From the Pastor and Principal

“One Mission, One Ministry: Church and School Together in Making Disciples”

He is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we continue our series on tithing and cheerful giving this year, we do so in the joy of the resurrection. Our risen Lord commissions us to one mission: making disciples. And in our congregation, that mission unites our church and school as one ministry.

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus shows us that this mission and ministry are connected. We are called to "make disciples." How? By "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This calling connects the sanctuary and the classroom. Wherever God's Word is faithfully taught, the Great Commission is being lived out.

We, church and school, are united in forming disciples of Jesus. Living out this shared mission requires clarity on our roles and how each is supported.

The school is supported by tuition. Yet tuition does not equal education. Tuition makes it possible to provide Christ-centered academics, safe classrooms, and excellent instructors. Tuition supports the day-to-day working of teaching everything from math to reading, and even daily catechesis. Math, for example, is not just learning numbers. It's also about revealing order as a reflection of the Creator.

The church is run on tithes and offerings. Together with the tuition, these gifts and sacrifices go beyond maintaining operations. They fund Gospel work in various forms from daily exposure to God's Word in school-wide morning devotions, chapel services, and faith formation. Because of this, giving is not an extra. It's part of the Gospel.

There is a temptation to view church and school as separate. When we do, the school is just another private education option. The church is not part of the daily formation of our children. But when we see them as one mission, every lesson becomes an opportunity to proclaim Jesus's salvation and love to our children, especially for the many students with no church home. As a mission, we provide children the opportunity to hear the gospel not just on Sunday morning but every day, multiple times a day. Students who may not have an active faith life at home graduate with the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, and various bible stories, verses, and songs written on their heart. Through the love and grace shown here, the Holy Spirit is working in and through them.

Your giving of tithes and offerings is a participation in the relay race of faith. It's part of how we pass on the faith we are entrusted with to our children and the generations after them.

So I encourage you, don't view your tithes and offerings as a Law. Instead, view it

as placing God's Word into young hearts. You're helping to form future Christian leaders and parents. You are helping to share Christ with the next generation.

This is not temporary work. This is an eternal work.

This month, I encourage you to prayerfully consider how God might be leading you to participate more fully in this shared mission: whether through consistent giving, increasing your offering, or simply committing to praying regularly for our school families.

Amen.

Weekly Events

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

Board Happenings

5/5 - Planning Council 6:30pm

5/12 - Planning Council 6:00pm

Other Church Activities

5/2 - Men's Bible Study 8:30am

5/10 - Young Adult Bible Study 12:00pm

5/16 - Men's Bible Study 8:30am

5/17 - Marion Samuel Retirement Celebration

5/17 - Youth group 12:00pm

5/20 - Youth Rummage Sale Drop off 12:30pm - 8pm

5/21 - Youth Rummage Sale Drop 8am - 8pm

5/22 - 5/23 - Youth Rummage Sale 8am - 3pm

5/24 - Men's Bible Study Group to Smokies Game

5/31 - Voter's Meeting 10:45am

School Happenings

5/19 - Kindergarten and 8th grade graduation 6:30pm

5/20 - Last Day of School (Dismissal at 12pm)

5/27 - Summer Camp Begins

	May 3	Fifth S. of Easter	Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60	Psalm 146	1 Peter 2:2–10	John 14:1–14
	May 10	Sixth S. of Easter	Acts 17:16–31	Psalm 66:8–20	1 Peter 3:13–22	John 14:15–21
	May 14	The Ascension of Our Lord	Acts 1:1–11	Psalm 47	Eph. 1:15–23	Luke 24:44–53
	May 17	Seventh S. of Easter	Acts 1:12–26	Psalm 68:1–10	1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11	John 17:1–11
PENTECOST	May 24	The Day of Pentecost	Num. 11:24–30	Psalm 25:1–15	Acts 2:1–21	John 7:37–39
TRINITY	May 31	The Holy Trinity	Gen. 1:1–2:4a	Psalm 8	Acts 2:14a, 22–36	Matt. 28:16–20

In Other News

Stewardship

Follow Him in Generosity

Originally published in May 2023

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God, that job is already done! But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow His example of generous giving. And Jesus’ generosity is not merely an example. Our Lord also commands us to act according to our gifts: “The one who contributes, [let him give] in generosity” (Rom. 12:8).

So, when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. We should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought — He gave according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world. So, when it comes to our own offerings, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability, and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3), we should honor the Lord by giving a generous portion of the income that God provides us.

We should also give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. We do not give grudgingly, but willingly and cheerfully, each “as he has decided in his heart,” as the Lord says (2 Cor. 9:7). There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us!

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of our love for Him and

for our neighbor. Jesus shows us that genuine love is always love “in deed” (1 John 3:18). It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we support His Gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle, for that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly, so abundantly that they had to be told to stop giving! (Ex. 36:5–6). In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work. We support our congregations in the preaching of His Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which bestow His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, and we take care of those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.

Voter's Meeting - There will be a Voter’s Meeting following Divine Service on Sunday, May 31st.

Retirement Celebration. There will be a retirement celebration to honor the years of service Marion Samuel has provided to our school on Sunday, May 17 immediately following church. We hope you will join us!

Graduation Open House: We would like to invite our church family to celebrate the high school graduation of Levi Sprecher, May 16th, 2-5pm at our home. Further information is on the bulletin board across from the church mailboxes.

Men's Bible Study. Our Men’s Bible Study group is organizing a trip to the Knoxville Smokies baseball game on Sunday, May 24. If you are an adult male and are interested in joining, please let John Hofman know by May 11.

You are invited to a Hymn Festival featuring Rev. Dr. Stephen Starke on May 17, 2026 at 3pm at Praise Lutheran Church (315 Southdowne Dr., Maryville, TN 37801). Refreshments will be available afterward at a meet-and-greet with Pastor Starke. Mr. Caleb Hesse, Director of Worship Arts at Praise, will serve as the hymn festival organist.



WHERE PRAISES NEVER END

A Hymn Festival featuring
Rev. Dr. Stephen Starke

MAY 17, 2026
3:00 p.m.

Praise Lutheran Church
315 Southdowne Dr.
Maryville, TN 37801



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.

Website: Please visit the church website www.firstknoxville.org for Bible study and other resources.

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



Anniversaries:

May 3: John Ackley & Jessie Irwin
May 17: Brian & Brooke Rodriguez
May 26: Mike & Melissa Sanders
May 27: Kevin & Vicki Broyles
May 28: Doc & Kelly Sternberg

Birthdays:

May 1: Barb Eisold; Owen Lear
May 4: Clara Cox
May 5: Morgan Slomski
May 6: Jim Roberts
May 9: Emily Rodenbeck; Jim Scarlett
May 10: Chuck Baum; Carmine Capparelli; Harrison Killian
May 12: Larry Mabe
May 13: Greg Buckner
May 14: Miranda Witt
May 16: Mike Jones; Kim Mabe
May 18: Heidi Bartholomay
May 19: Joe LaDue; Aaron Wade
May 21: Taylor Day; Cutter Tillman
May 22: Penny Wright
May 24: Grant Hofman
May 26: Jeff Wheat
May 27: Olivia Killian; David Norton; Jeffrey Turner
May 28: Liam Milbourn; Benny Samuel
May 30: Harper Mitchell