



First News

October 2023

The Monthly Publication of First Lutheran Church, Portland, ME

FLC Fuel Assistance Fall Bake Sale Sunday, October 22nd

All FLC past bakers and new bakers are welcome. This event was very successful in the past — it added \$600 to the Fuel Assistance fund for our church members, their families and community. We hope this year's event will be as successful.

Through October 15th, signup sheets will be posted in the entrance hallway for all FLC bakers to sign up to contribute their goodies.

On sale day, October 22nd, please join us after the service and grab a cup of fellowship coffee and then shop for goodies to take home to share with family and friends.

Email Laura Page at fair@flcme.org with any questions about the bake sale or speak with Laura or Susan Bollman at Sunday services, or contact Joleen in the church office.



Stewardship Campaign

This is a preview of our fall Stewardship Campaign that will begin on October 29th and continue through November. This year our theme, titled “We Are Called”, will emphasize how each of us have been blessed. Please be thinking about people who are generous with their time, talents and efforts around the church, community, family, work and school. We will experience a wonderful opportunity to share these blessings on a unique bulletin board; there will be more details to be announced in the coming weeks.

Commitment Sunday will be held on November 19, 2023 — mark your calendars!

Thus says the Lord, the one who created you, O Israel, who formed you, O Jacob: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” — Isaiah 43:1

We Are Called



There will be a Fair Planning meeting on Sunday, October 1st, in the Centennial Room following the worship service. Please join us!

Council Notes

It's been a very busy and active time for the Church Council. We are working very hard to keep things running smoothly during our transition period. Here are some of the things that have been a priority for us:

- * We now have a signed Building Usage agreement with the Mystery of the Cross Church. They will be using our building twice a week. They are a very dedicated group of Christians and have a strong mission that includes outreach to the homeless and hungry. They also have an active youth/children's program.
- * Members of the Mutual Ministry Committee and Executive Board of the Council met with Jenna Hoffman to conduct her exit interview. It went very well and was a positive experience for all.
- * The Council voted to explore becoming a RIC church. See the article on page 9 with an initial explanation of this process.
- * As many of you probably noticed, some of our committees have been very active. We are grateful for their dedication and hard work. If anyone would like to join or learn more about a committee, feel free to contact a committee chair or any council member.
- * We would like to send a special THANK YOU to Phyllis Kilfoil for her hard work in re-doing our bulletin boards in the Fellowship Hall. They look great!

As always, if anyone has any questions, concerns or suggestions, please speak to any council member and we will be happy to address them at our next meeting. If you would personally like to address the Council on any issue, please contact me and we will welcome you at our next scheduled meeting.

In Christian Fellowship,

Coleen Walther
Council President

Financial Update

FLC had a net operating deficit in August 2023 of \$5,971. We had expected a deficit of \$4,100 so the result was unfavorable to our budget. Our receipts were about \$4,316 under budget and our expenses \$2,500 under budget leading to the \$1,871 unfavorable variance. Our operating account maintains a healthy balance, but will be under increasing pressure as we continue the rest of 2023.

If you have questions, please contact me by e-mail or on my cell phone, (207) 939-0820.

--Ed Daggett, Treasurer

ed.daggett@flcme.org

	Actual August 2023	Actual YTD
Operating Income	\$22,509	\$210,683
Operating Expenses	\$28,480	\$260,264
Net Operating Income (Loss)	(\$5,971)	(\$49,581)

“Our Story in HIS-Story” Heritage Sunday Celebration!

On Sunday, September 10th, the Transition Team, alongside the Fellowship team, held a wonderful pot luck luncheon and workshop. The goal of the event was to look back at the history of the last few decades and what was happening at First Lutheran Church, while looking forward to our future. The event was well attended (about 60 people) with a lot of valuable input. An enthusiastic *thanks* goes out to all who made the day possible, including our Worship Team featuring a fun ukulele & voice choir, the Fellowship Team, led by Barb Daggett, and the FLC Transition Team, which led the initial planning. Barb’s potluck team included Susan and John Bollman, Sue McIver, Sarah Pesa, Bill Mills, Phyllis & Fred Kilfoil, Ann Brown, Lauren Cormier, Yvonne Jumper, Lorna Leo, Linda Perry, and Kate Thompson. The Transition Team consists of Susan Bollman, Ann Brown, Barb Daggett, Phyllis Kilfoil, Sara Pesa, and Pastor Perry.

Out of this process surfaced these priorities and foci:

Top phrases to describe FLC in different decades:

1. We were a robust, active church encompassing all age groups in the congregation.
2. The church provided a sense of stability for families, amidst a chaotic world, and the church provided support and guidance, values for the youth through confirmation, Luther league and Sunday School.
3. Fellowship opportunities, active youth, group, and Sunday school.
4. Surviving transitions, cultural, financial, leadership, pandemic.
5. Family oriented and feeling societal and cultural pressures.

Top words to describe what FLC is about:

1. Family Feeling
2. Open to change
3. Outreach community
4. Christ centered
5. Warm and welcoming

Top things we want to continue at FLC:

1. Music
2. Warm and welcoming
3. Family feeling and focus
4. Continue to adapt and change
5. Include youth and teens

Patterns we have seen throughout history at FLC:

Family Strength when church is active
Ready to take the Leap in Faith

What we need to let go of moving forward:

Controversy over worship
Only including adults

You can readily see from these observations and reflections that a significant emphasis on the involvement and building up of ministry with all ages was and is what FLC sees itself to be about! Your continued questions, input and feedback are welcomed by Pastor Perry and our Transition Team.

This information will be added to the results of the CAT and other transition processes to be incorporated into the “Ministry Site Profile (MSP)” of First Lutheran Church. That MSP will serve as a kind of “resume” for the congregation, identifying what we see as our main mission and purpose. This will become a tool by which the best match possible can be made with your future pastor.



Our Community Involvement

Upcoming Outreach Committee Projects

Join the Outreach Committee in helping to restock the supply closet for Greater Portland Family Promise. There will be a clothesline in the Fellowship Hall during October with needed items. Pick a card or two and help us provide these families with some essential items.

In November, we will once again be participating in Operation Christmas Child. We have supported this project in the past and look forward to doing it again. There will be more information on how you can provide a Christmas gift box to children throughout the world.



—The families had 2 summer outings: Deering Oaks Splash Park and East End Beach. Great fun was had by all.

—There have been 4 recent moves: One in August and three in September and currently one scheduled for October.

—The current static shelter at Williston Emmanuel needs to close by February 1, 2024 due to a City of Portland 180-day rule. Staff at GPF are looking for options for shelter for our families.

—Looking to donate? GPF is in need of twin mattresses and box springs, small dressers, and end/bedside tables.

—We will be supporting a new family soon. Elza is the mom and 3 girls: 14, 7 and 2 1/2 years old. They have an apartment in Portland. Elza speaks Portuguese, French and Lingala and is learning English. We look forward to meeting our new family and getting to know them.

If you are interested in helping with GPF and/or with our new family, please contact me. (207) 595-2462 or wjbarmore@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for all our GPF families.

Wendy

Upcoming Quilting Dates

The Quilting Group meets on the first and third Saturdays of each month from 9:30am to Noon. We put together quilts to donate to various charities and groups.

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

October 7 and 21

November 4

December 2 and 16

Please stop by and join us—no experience is needed!



Meal includes all you can eat:

Choice of Soups
Bread & Crackers
Hot & Cold Beverages
Dessert



Saturday, October 14, 2023
In Recognition of

World Food Day

Altrusa International of Portland is hosting our

15th Annual Empty Bowl Meal

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
First Lutheran Church
132 Auburn Street, Portland ME

Choose a ceramic bowl to use for your meal & to keep as a reminder that there are always Empty Bowls in the world

In exchange for a meal & the bowl
Adults \$15
under age 10 \$10
Tickets available at the door

This fundraiser benefits **Project FEED** an emergency food depot located at Woodfords Church in Portland ME

If you can't make it, but would like to help support Project FEED, visit our website to donate!!

altrusaportland.org



Give a Child a Chance

HERE COMES OCTOBER!

Reserve Thursday, October 12th for our Dine-Out at Applebee's on Brighton Avenue in Portland. Bring a flyer and enjoy supper at Applebee's between 4PM and 9PM. They will contribute 15% of the food bill to Give a Child a Chance when you use a flyer. The fundraiser includes Take-out, as long as you present the flyer.



Flyers will be available in the bulletin, e-mailings and in specially marked boxes in church and at the mailboxes.

Want a bigger bang for your buck? Purchase RaiseRight Applebee's Gift cards during our RaiseRight sale events on the first and second Sundays of October. Give a Child a Chance receives the rebate for the sale of the gift card **and** the 15% return on the Applebee's Dine-out event!

RaiseRight also sells See's Candies Gift Cards. The holidays are coming and See's Candies make wonderful gifts. Visit the GACAC storefront at See's Candies to purchase some delicious candy. Send them to family and friends wherever they may live.

As we have from the beginning of this ministry, 100% of the proceeds raised go to support children in need to attend our nationally accredited preschool program. What could be better than that?

Team: Ann Brown, Susan Bollman, Wendy Carey, Karen Johnson, Colleen Taylor.

ec-fund@flcme.org

Education Update

The Education Committee concentrates on teaching the word of God, whether it is via Sunday School lessons, Vacation Bible School, Bible Study classes, or other programs. Although our committee has not been active recently, the Church Council is committed to rebuilding this area of our church life.

Over the next couple of weeks, parents or caregivers of families with children or youth ages 2-16 will receive a call from Gene Kucinkas or Pastor Mark, touching base with each of you and inviting you to a meeting on October 8th following the church service. The intent is to discuss ideas and bring together interested parties to reinvigorate and restart this critical part of our church mission.

If this newsletter reaches you, but you do not receive a call, please feel welcome to reach out to speak to Gene Kucinkas at (207) 415-9609 or call the church to speak with Pastor Mark. If the 8th is not a convenient time, we will arrange for another date and time or meet with you individually to gather your input. We appreciate your patience during this time of transition.

Respectfully,

Gene

"WHY US?" Bible Exploration – October 29th

The Transition Team invites all to come to the next congregational transition time activity following worship and light refreshment fellowship on Sunday, October 29, in the Fellowship Hall. Referring to familiar biblical stories and characters, we'll reflect upon where we see the life of FLC reflected in Scripture, how a particular bible story, character or image speaks to where our congregation is right now, what that story suggests God's purpose is for us and our values and beliefs, and how it might connect to our congregation's "Why:" Why do we do what we do? Why did God plant us here? Why do we exist in this time and place? All this also will be incorporated into the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) of First Lutheran Church. Watch for more information to come! You're welcome to pick up a list of possible bible stories and characters from the bulletin board and church office to review beforehand.

Worship Survey

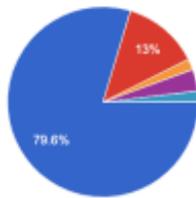
The Worship Committee would like to thank everyone that took the time to complete the survey that was sent out in September. 54 responses were received, and we appreciate the thoughtful answers and opinions that were shared.

Overall, the responses showed that folks are happy with the current worship style and with one service. The Worship Committee will continue to incorporate contemporary songs using the Praise singers and more traditional styles such as the communion liturgy.

Below is a summary of responses to some of the questions.

How often do you worship at FLC?

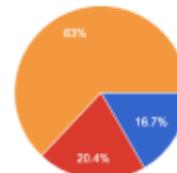
54 responses



Acknowledging that worship is not just traditional or more contemporary because of the music, but also in using alternative elements, which do you prefer to sing?

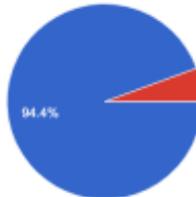
54 responses

- A) Almost every week
- B) About twice a month
- C) Once a month
- D) Occasionally
- E) I only attend online
- F) I don't attend anymore



When you attend First Lutheran do you feel welcomed?

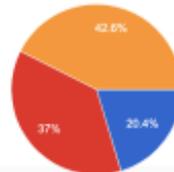
54 responses



If two worship services were offered, one more contemporary and one more traditional, which would you be more likely attend:

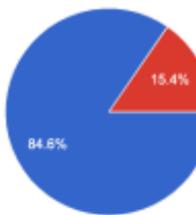
54 responses

- Yes
- No



In general do we do a good job of welcoming newcomers to First Lutheran?

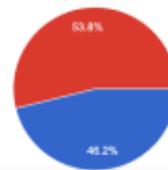
52 responses



Would you be comfortable if we were to introduce intinction communion (dipping the wafer into the chalice of wine) again?

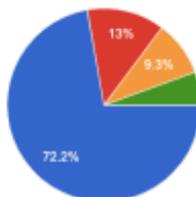
52 responses

- Yes
- No



In order to help build and maintain unity in this transition time, we've been holding one worship service with a blend of both more "traditional" as well as some "contemporary" styles. Has this been:

54 responses



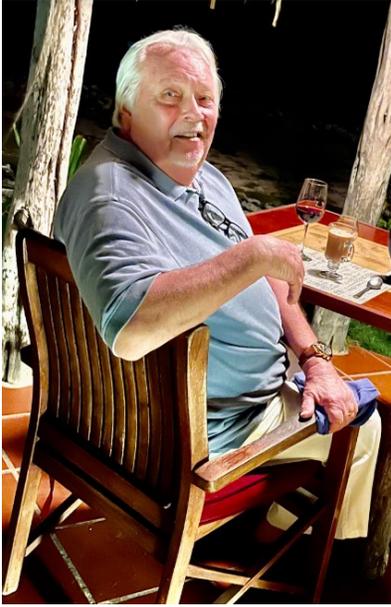
If you worship online, how would you rate the streaming quality?

30 responses

- Helpful for the sake of experience
- Unhelpful
- Unsure
- No opinion



Getting to Know Us



Fred Walther

Fred Walther and his wife, Coleen, have been attending First Lutheran Church for a little over 25 years. When their original Lutheran church went through trying times, they decided they wanted a more stable, peaceful environment, which they found at FLC. As Fred recalls, “Our first visit to FLC made us feel that this was the place, and it has been.” Fred and Coleen currently live on Thompson Lake in Poland, Maine, in what started out as their summer “camp” that they built in 1987, while living in South Paris. They then decided that they liked camp so much that they added on, sold their house, and moved permanently to the lake. Fred’s first job was sanding newly built boats at a local boat shop for the minimum wage of \$.50 an hour. While attending high school, Fred would do jobs around the building. He even had his own key, working 40 hours a week. On the weekends he was a disc jockey on public radio station WGHM-1150 in Skowhegan. As an adult he worked as an IT headhunter in a business that he began in 1979 until his retirement in 1999. His wife Coleen still runs the business to this day. Fred has never hated work and was grateful for the jobs. “Work was what you were supposed to do, and if you wanted things, you worked.”

When he reflects on his life, Fred says he could never have imagined in his wildest dreams that he would have had the life he has enjoyed. “A boy from Solon, Maine, population 625, doesn’t have expansive dreams. I have been blessed immeasurably and I wouldn’t change anything. I’ve been fortunate to have such a contributing partner, and the Lord smiling down on me.” When he’s not at FLC, Fred can be found doing a wide variety of activities. He likes hunting with his bird dog, fishing, reading (250 books/year) or just being content to sit and watch the world go by. One activity he misses is flying his own plane. Fred has a Brunswick pool table and likes to “run a rack” every once in a while. When asked if he would like to do this activity with others in the congregation he replied, “Sure! I think it is time our church put in a pool table and had draught beer!”

One of Fred’s favorite fun memories of FLC that has made him laugh the hardest is when Clayton Clarke told of when Clayton was playing the bells in the choir loft and accidentally let one go, sending it flying out into the congregation.



From the Editor

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."

Matthew 18: 21-22

The first and chief article is this:

Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification. He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all. All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works or merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood.

This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit.

Therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us.

Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls. Upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine. Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us.

Martin Luther

The Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article 1, The Chief Article (1536)

Hearing the Gospel lessons for September got me thinking about forgiveness. Every Sunday, in both the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, we talk about the forgiveness of sins. It is easier for us to think about God forgiving our sins. It is more difficult, at least for me and I'm sure for many of you, to think about us forgiving others.

We live in a transactional society. We go to work and expect to be compensated in some way. We take the money we earn and swap it for food, clothing, shelter, material goods. When we donate money to a cause, we expect those funds to be used to help others. Even when we love someone, we hope they love us in return.

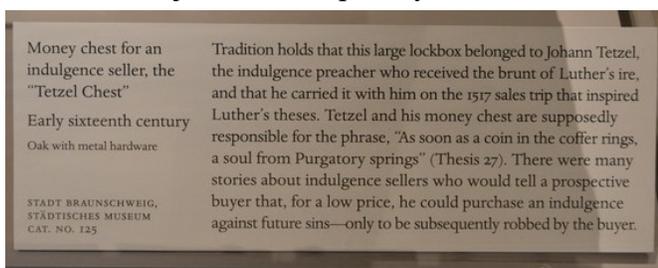
When we forgive someone, as humans we often expect something in return. We want the other person to ask for forgiveness. We want them to be sorry or feel remorse. We want them to acknowledge that they have wronged us or hurt us. We want the forgiving to fix what the problem is.

Not only does it not always happen that way, it doesn't need to. Forgiving someone doesn't mean you have to accept the wrong; it doesn't even mean you need to keep that person in your life. You can forgive someone, release the person to God, and try to not let the hurt stay in your soul.

When Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses in 1517, he was hoping to start a debate about the pope's claimed authority to distribute forgiveness, and the selling of forgiveness (in the form of indulgences) to build the cathedral in Rome. Imagine what it might have been like. Why would you try to follow Christ's example and serve others, why would you forgive your brother or sister, why would you ask for God's forgiveness, if you could simply buy pieces of paper that would erase your sins and get you into heaven?

Thankfully, we confess and believe that we are saved simply through faith and by the grace of God. We don't have to buy our way into heaven—whether with money or with works. No matter how many times we stumble; no matter how many times we fail to serve others; no matter how many times we fail to forgive others, or even ourselves—God does not turn away from us. Christ will always welcome us, invite us to the table, and call us his own. In that assurance we rejoice, and hopefully we can be better at forgiving someone “seventy-seven times.”

In +His Service,
Bill Mills





Once Upon a Holiday Fair November 18, 2023

Please join us following the service on October 1st in the Centennial Room (take stairs by coat rack, first room on left). We will be discussing the fair and explain all the areas that will need coverage. We have had a late start this year, but are very enthusiastically preparing for a successful event! The following is a list of areas we hope to find coordinators for.

All that Glitters (jewelry)

Bake House

Book Nook

Café

Chic, Unique and Antique

Decorating

Grateful Greeters

Handicraft Boutique

Kids' Korner

Kozy Korner Knits

Music

Photographer

Publicity

Sweet Shop

Lorna Leo & Barb Daggett, Co-Chairs

For more information please email Fair@firstlutheranportland.org or text or call Barb at (207) 838-1427.

RIC — Reconciled In Christ

At its September meeting, the Church Council voted unanimously to enter into a time of learning about what being RIC (Reconciled In Christ) may mean for our congregation. This discovery phase will feature educational meetings and discussions on various topics to help us learn more about the unique obstacles LGBTQ+ people face, see what scripture says (and doesn't say), express our own thoughts and feelings, and seek to understand how God sees these marginalized people. This process will take several months and will require a special task force to facilitate the process.

If your heart already has compassion for this group and you are interested in the possibility of serving on the task force, please speak to Pastor Mark, Council President Coleen Walther, or Council member Emily Cole. There will be more information in upcoming newsletters and emails. For more information about RIC, go to www.reconcilingworks.org.

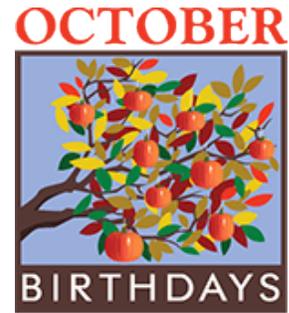
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4



Ethan Olson & family
Abbott Knowles
Ned Long
Joy Carr
Wendy Carey
Steve Barmore
Judy Horn
Bob Mitchell
Dave Deuben
Sue Hayden
Lynne Fishburn
FLC Call Committee

FLC Sunday School
FLC Church Council
Bev Beliveau
Jen & Brian Hazelwood
Paul & Sharon Aube
Victims of racism and hate, especially those in the LGTBQIA+ community
All victims of violence



- October 3 Marlene Christensen
- October 12 Madison Hooper
- October 14 Doris Warren
- October 21 Wendy Barmore
- October 22 Kris Conant
- October 26 Patricia Olsen
- October 30 Kathy Condon
- October 31 Calvin Conant



In Christian Sympathy

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Lois Barter, who passed away on September 16. Lois was a member of First Lutheran for many years, and was a fixture at the 8am service. May God continue to comfort her family, especially her niece

Sue McIver.



e-mail prayer chain

Prayer is such an important part of our daily Christian lives, and sometimes extra prayers are needed. If you have any special prayer requests and you would like to have our "Prayer Warriors" praying as well, please send an email.

prayer-request@flcme.org



PASTOR SERGIO BOYILIMPO GUEST PREACHER ON OCTOBER 8TH

As many know, our sanctuary is shared on Sunday afternoons with the “Mystery of the Cross of Christ” African immigrant church. Pastor Perry had the joyful privilege of preaching for them on July 30, 2023. Now their minister, Pastor Sergio Boyilimpo, will be our guest preacher on Sunday, October 8th, at our 10 am Worship service. They use three languages during their worship service so a translator will assist Pastor Boyilimpo with the delivery of his message. Come and be part of this special day of celebrating with our siblings in Christ!

Give A Child A Chance Fundraising Event
Present this flyer on October 12th!



Dining to
DONATE

**APPLEBEE'S WILL DONATE 15%
OF YOUR CHECK TO:**

GIVE A CHILD A CHANCE

Date: 10/12/23	APPLEBEE'S
Time: 4pm – 9pm	1072 Brighton Ave.
	Portland 791-2810

Present this flyer to your server at time of order

Valid on dine-in and To Go orders, not valid on delivery. Valid at location listed above on scheduled date only. 15% donation excludes tax and gratuity.

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
132 AUBURN STREET
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103-2145**

October 2023



First News is a monthly publication of First Lutheran Church. Articles can be submitted to the church office, or by email to news@flcme.org.

**Worship Service is at 10:00 am
Sunday School for all ages is at 9:00 am**

Church Office Hours are Monday thru Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (797-2525)

www.FLCME.org

STAFF

Transitional Interim Pastor Rev. Mark Perry (mark.perry@flcme.org)
Church Secretary.....Joleen Knowles (joleen.knowles@flcme.org)
Church Organist..... Brenda Morneau (brenda.morneau@flcme.org)
Director—FLC Children’s Community Ministry Sherryl Eastman (flcpinfo@flcme.org)

OFFICERS

President Coleen Walther
Vice-President..... Ann Brown
Secretary Ken Conant
Treasurer Ed Daggett
Financial Secretary Cheryl Cyr