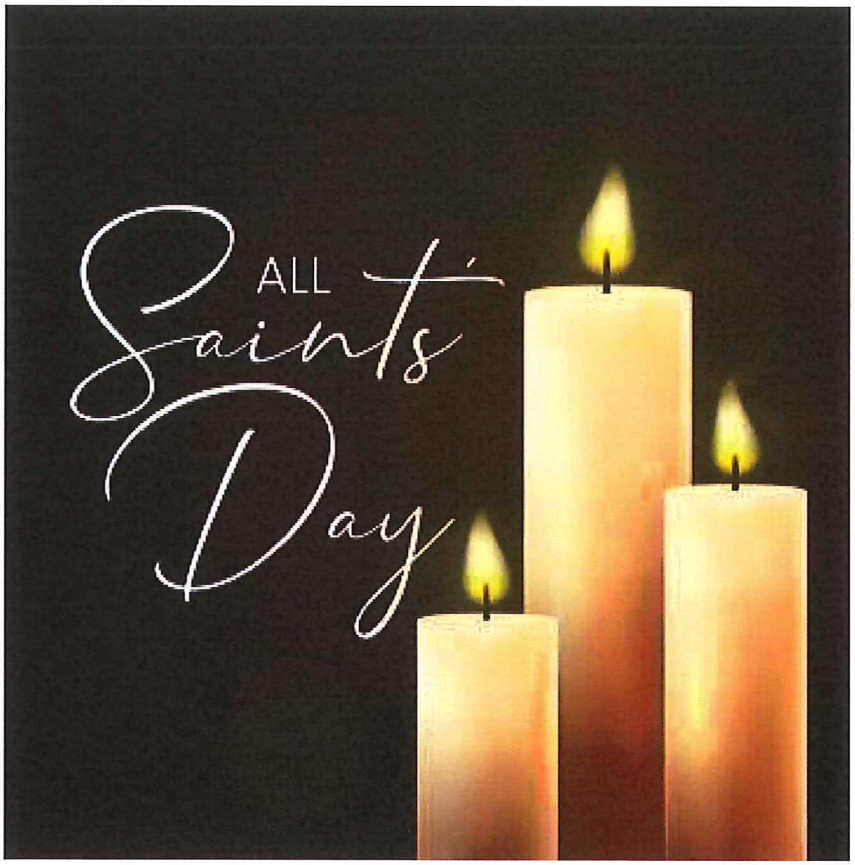
FIRST NEWS

First Lutheran Church
Freeport, IL 61032

Through worship and loving service,
We make Christ known to all

Volume 53 #11 *November 2026*

All Saints celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who are the body of Christ. As November heralds the dying of the landscape in many northern regions, the readings and liturgy call us to remember all who have died in Christ and whose baptism is complete. At the Lord's table we gather with the faithful of every time and place, trusting that the promises of God will be fulfilled and that all tears will be wiped away in the new Jerusalem.



All Saints Day is November 1, 2026

Caregivers give emotional support when a member is in need. If you know of anyone who could benefit from a caregiver's visit, don't hesitate to get in touch with Bev Herrling at (815) 235-4225 or the church office at (815)235-9790

MESSAGES FROM THE PASTOR

God Is Not Finished With Us Yet

As we enter November, First Lutheran finds itself in a season of important conversations, difficult questions, and significant decisions about our future. For some, these conversations bring anxiety. For others, frustration. And for still others, there is grief at the possibility that something they have loved for decades might look different in the years ahead.

I understand that. Our history matters. Our memories matter. The faithfulness of generations who have gathered, worshiped, served, and sacrificed within these walls matters.

But so does our future.

In a recent sermon, I reflected on Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees and Herodians in Matthew 22. They approached Jesus with a question designed to trap him into choosing between two answers. Jesus refused to accept their limited choices. Instead, he invited them to see something greater.

I wonder if there is a lesson for us in that encounter.

Sometimes we become so focused on the choices immediately in front of us that we forget to ask whether God might be inviting us to imagine something different. Sometimes our conversations become centered on what we can afford, what we might lose, or what we have always done.

Those are important questions, but they cannot be our only questions. We must also ask: What is God calling us to become?

As we move forward, I believe three practices will be especially important for our life together.

(1) Listening: Not simply waiting for our turn to speak, but genuinely listening to one another. Listening to those who carry concerns, those who have different perspectives, and those whose voices may not always be heard. Listening also means creating space to hear God's voice amid the noise of our own anxieties and expectations.

(2) Discerning: Discernment is more than deciding what seems practical or financially responsible. It is prayerfully asking where God is leading us. What ministries are bearing fruit? What might we need to release? What new possibilities might God already be nurturing among us? Discernment requires patience, openness, and the willingness to recognize that God's future may look different from our past.

(3) Making Big Decisions: We cannot avoid the realities before us. Buildings require resources. Ministries require support. Decisions have consequences. We owe one another honesty and thoughtful stewardship. But our decisions must also reflect our calling as people gathered by grace and sent in love. We are not simply managing an institution. We are participating in God's mission.

And through all of this, I want us to remember something essential:

God is with us.

God is with us in our conversations, even when they are uncomfortable. God is with us when we disagree. God is with us when the next step is unclear. God's presence is not dependent upon our having all the answers or everyone agreeing on the same solution.

We are people marked by baptism, created in God's image, and called into a ministry of love, justice, mercy, and peace. That identity is greater than any budget, building, or disagreement.

As we approach Thanksgiving, perhaps we can hold three things together: (1) gratitude for what has been, (2) honesty about what is, and (3) hope for what God may yet be doing among us.

My prayer for November is that we will listen generously, discern prayerfully, and make decisions courageously. Not out of fear of what we might lose, but out of faith in the God who continues to call us forward.

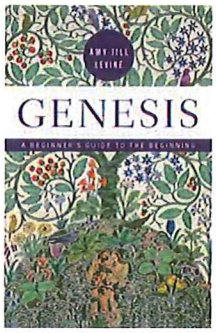
Our story is still being written. Our mission still matters. Our neighbors still need love that shows up.

And the good news?

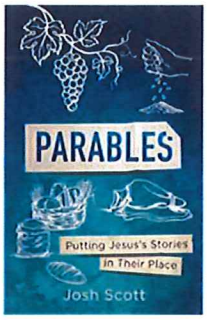
God is not finished with us yet.

Pastor Jeff

UPCOMING BIBLE STUDY



Tuesday at 12:00 p.m.
November 3: Genesis Chapter One: The Garden of Eaden
November 10 Genesis Chapter Two: Cain and Abel
November 17: Genesis Chapter Three: Noahs Ark
November 24: Week off: Thanksgiving
December 1: Genesis Chaper Four: Near Sacrifice of Isaac
December 8: Genesis Chapter Five: Stairway to Heaven
December 15: Genesis Chapter Six: Joseph Saga



Thursday at 6:00 p.m.
November 5: Parable One: Wine and Wineskins
November 12: Parable Two: Parable of the Mustard Seed
November 19: Parable Three: Parable of Leven Bread
November 26: Week Off: Thanksgiving
December 3: Parable Four: The Wicked Tenants
December 10: Parable Five: The Wedding Party
December 17: Parable Six: The Workers in the Vineyard

WORSHIP

Sunday Bible Study- The Sunday morning adult study group meets on Sunday mornings following worship. This is a relaxed group of people who are interested in learning. Everyone is welcome.

Streaming – Sunday morning services are available to watch live on Facebook at 9:00 a.m. You can view this by clicking on or typing in this address: https://www.facebook.com/firstlutheranfreeport. Once you are on the page, you must click on the video. If you cannot watch us live at 9:00 a.m., you can view the recorded version of the service at the same link or by going to the First Lutheran website www.firstlutheranfreeport.org. If you watch it on the website, scroll to the bottom of the home page and choose the service you want to view.

Ushers / Greeters Needed – We need your help. Ushering/greeting is such an important but easy job. No experience is necessary. We currently have open dates for November & December. The sign-up sheet is on the 3-tiered stand in the Galena St. glass door entrance. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Assisting Ministers – Assisting ministers are needed. No experience necessary, and no canting is required. If you would like to join our group of assisting ministers, please contact Judy Kaufman or the church office.

Noisy Offering – The second Sunday of each month, we will be taking up a noisy offering. Bring in your change and make some noise putting it into the bucket. All noisy offering money will be donated to a different worthy charity each month. For October, we collected $103.53 for the Voices. The November noisy offering will be on November 8th, and the money will be donated to FACC. We appreciate your participation.

World Hunger Sunday - World Hunger Sunday will be on November 29th. Donations received during Fellowship time will be sent to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, also you may place donations in the offering plate during worship by using a World Hunger envelope found in the pew. Checks should be made payable to First Lutheran Church, and we will send in one check for all donations. Thank you for your support of this program, which addresses hunger issues throughout the world.

Choir - The Celebration Choir meets in the balcony every Thursday at 7 p.m. We would love to see some new faces join our group. We have room and a folder for YOU! No experience necessary. If you have questions, contact Teresa or the church office.

Sunday, November 1st (All Saints Day) - Please plan to join us in recognizing our friends and family who went home to be with Jesus this year, as well as gifts purchased by memorials for 2026.

Community Thanksgiving Service

Monday, November 23 at 7:00 p.m. we will participate in the annual combined Thanksgiving service. This years service will be held at Prince of Peace Church, 2700 W Stephenson St, Freeport. We invite you all to attend.

November Worship Volunteers				
Date	**Altar Guild**	**Usher**	**Reader**	**Assisting Minister**
November 1	June Brandt & Esther Eden	Volunteers Needed	Eric Hoffman	Sharon Wall
November 8	Roger & Dena Kampmier	Eric & Pam Hoffman	Eric Hoffman	Barb Statdfield
Novmeber 15	June Brandt & Esther Eden	Volunteer Needed	Eric Hoffman	Judy Kaufman
November 22	Steve & Nancy Olson	Eric & Pam Hoffman	Eric Hoffman	Dena Kampmier
November 29	Steve & Nancy Olson	Volunteer Needed	Eric Hoffman	Judy Kaufman

On October 18th the Third Quarter financial report was presented to those present at the 10:30 a.m.coffee hour. Also presented was a proposal for an emergency distribution of 10% of the Endowment Fund's Principal, pursuant to First Lutheran's constitution section C5.05.15. A Special Congregational Meeting is scheduled for **November 22, 2026**, at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall to conduct the first vote on this proposal. This proposal requires a simple majority vote to approve. If approved a second vote is required, which will be on January 31, 2027 at the Annual meeting. This vote requires a 2/3 majority vote to pass. These are very important meetings. **All members are strongly urged to attend both meetings.**

Christmas Schedule		
Date	Time	Activity
November 29	9:00 a.m.	1st Sunday of Advent Service
December 6	9:00 a.m.	2nd Sunday of Advent Service
December 13	9:00 a.m.	3rd Sunday of Advent Service
December 20	9:00 a.m.	4th Sunday of Advent Service
December 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candle Light Service
December 27	9:00 a.m.	1st Sunday of Christmas

SUNDAY SCHOOL – Due to the Congregational Meeting on November 22nd, Sunday School classes for children will be cancelled. We will meet the other four Sundays in November starting at 10:30 a.m. in the second floor music room. All children are welcome!

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

Members and Friends who need extra prayers – Donna & Marvin Beyer, Sarah Lower Borstad, Judy Brady, Lauren Diehl, Linda Donmeyer, Laith Dougherty, Mckinley France, Mary Lee Gerbode, Connie Gogel, Ryan Griffith, Terri Hawes, Sharon Janicke, Jane Klemm, Stephanie Kohl, Jordan Larson, Bob Last, Joann LeBaron, Beth Luke, Kevin Madsen, Kay Mammoser, Raymond Marschang, Mary Meier, John Moore, Dave & Carol Netherland, Bob Neuendorf, Gary Ogren, Noni Payne, Reuben Pearson, Sue Sellen, Vic Shields, Gary Statdfield, Brian Toepfer, Caleb Wallace, Corrine Wallace, Stan Ward, Kathy Wilkin, Gail & Bob Willis, and Steve Wise.

Members and Friends who need skilled care – Margaret Althoff, Dee Burstrom, Harriett Gustason, JoAnn Kohn, Jean Sorn, Jennifer Stees, and Ruth Wardlow.

Military & First Responders – Military Personnel: Tyler Kennan, Jayce Kohn, Owen McVicker, Jeff Meiborg, Kaydin Rabey, Madison Scace, and Derrik Triem. First Responders: Officer Daniel Moore, Detective Tony Bradbury, Officer Josh Garrett, and Fire Fighter/EMT: Taylor Ramsey.

ACTIVITIES

Supper on Galena & Jackson – The next Supper on Jackson and Galena will be held on Sunday, November 1st at 6:00 p.m. The meal for the evening is Pizza Casserole, salad, and dessert. Come and join us. Doors will open at 5:00 for games & fellowship. Everyone is welcome. Sign-up sheets for attending, volunteering, and donating are on the activity sign-up board.

Luther N Brew – The Luther N Brew group will meet on November 3rd at Cannova's, 1101 W Empire St., Freeport, at 6:30 p.m. All men are welcome, and no reservation is required.

Saturday Morning Bible Study – Every Saturday morning at 7:30, a group from First Lutheran gathers at Amigo's restaurant, 306 N. Galena Ave., for breakfast and bible study. The group studies the lessons for the upcoming Sunday. Everyone is welcome to join. For questions, please contact Bob Neuendorf.

Soup-er Supper - The Evangelism team is hosting Soup-er Supper on Tuesday, November 17th from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. They are asking for people to donate soup. There are sign-up sheets on the activity board for people attending and donating. We hope you will attend and share this event with your friends and family.

Bowl Collection - The Evangelism committee is collecting bowls for the upcoming Soup-er Supper event. They are asking for any shape or size of soup bowl. The bowls can be bought, thrifted, or hand-made. Please leave your donated bowls in the designated tote in the Galena St. entrance.

WELCA

Knitting - The knitting group will meet on November 7th & 21st at 10:00 a.m. at the Wall of Yarn shop on Stephenson Street. Come join us and bring a project of your choice to knit or crochet. We are looking for people to knit prayer shawls and prayer squares. If you would like to help with this ministry, we have a supply of yarn and patterns you may use. Just contact Jan Butterfield or Bev Herrling for more information.

Project Day - Project Day meets on the second Thursday. Next month we will gather on November 12th from 10:00-3:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther Room. We can always use large pieces of material and bedsheets for quilt backings for Lutheran World Relief and for lap robes. Donations may be left in the WELCA bin next to the mailboxes. You are welcome to come for part or all of the day. Bring your lunch if you plan to stay over the noon hour.

Circle - Mary Circle and Rebecca Circle will meet for Bible Study and Fellowship on November 17th. Mary will meet at 9:30 a.m. at the home of Arleen Olson, and Rebecca will meet at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. We use the study in the Gather magazine and copies will be available for those who come. Contact Judy Castle or Nancy Holtum for more information.

Bunko - The monthly Bunko group will gather on Thursday, November 19th from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther Room. No reservations are needed, and beginners are always welcome. The game is easy to learn! Come on down and bring a friend.

OTHER NEWS

2027 Commitment Card – Enclosed in this newsletter is the 2027 Financial Commitment card. It is important that we receive these back to the church asap. These numbers help in planning our 2027 budget. We appreciate your cooperation with this. Thank you!

Altar Flowers – Thank you to everyone that sponsors the altar flowers. Your contribution to the beauty of the altar is appreciated. If you take your flowers home please be sure to return the green cup to the church by end of the day on Thursday of that week. The cups do not belong to us and the florist needs them for the next week. Thank you for your cooperation with this.

Endowment Applications - It is that time of year again! The Endowment Committee began accepting applications on **October 1st**. Applications are available on the Church's website and at the church, in the track rack and front table. They must be turned in NO LATER than **November 30th**. If you, or an organization you know, wishes to apply, please share this information. Please help us get the word out!

Flower Delivery – Occasionally, the altar flowers will be donated to the church for delivery to a shut-in. We are in need of some people who would be willing to do the delivering. All deliveries would be in the Freeport area. You can just drop off the flowers, or you can stay and visit with the recipient; that is your choice. If you are willing to help us with this, please contact the church office or Dena Kampmier.

FACC –For October, we were asked to collect peanut butter. As of October 23rd, we had collected 68 jars. That is over halfway to our goal of 100 jars, and we still had 1 more Sunday. For November we are collecting crackers and cookies. Our November goal is 100 boxes. As always, please put them in the bin near the coat racks. First Lutheran is so full of generous people. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Coffee Hour Treats – We currently have a treat sign-up sheet for Sunday morning coffee hour. If you are interested in providing treats, please sign up or contact Bob Neuendorf for more information.

REMINDER - Daylight savings time ends on November 1st. Don't forget to set your clocks back 1 hour.

Poinsettia – Can you believe it is time to place your poinsettia order for our Christmas services? Feels like we just did that. Enclosed in your newsletter and the November 8th, 15th, and 22rd bulletins, you will find your poinsettia order form. All orders are due on November 22nd. The cost is $11 for a 6" red poinsettia. Payment must be made with your order. All poinsettias left following the December 27th worship service will be delivered to one of our shut-ins.

The deadline for the December issue of First News is Wednesday, November 18th.

Office Closed - The church office will be closed beginning at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25th, and will reopen on Monday, November 30th at 9:00 a.m. If you have an emergency, please contact Pastor Jeff at (330)234-1317 directly or leave a message on the church voicemail. The voicemail will be checked periodically, and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Thank you.

FACC Hunger Luncheon
Friday, November 13th.
St. Thomas Aquinas Church
1400 Kiwanis Dr.
Freeport, IL 61032
RSVP by Friday, November 6th
$25 per seat (limited Seating) or $200 for a table (8 seats)
For questions, call (815)233-0435 Ext. 1
Checks may be mailed to:
Freeport Area Church Cooperative
514 S. Chicago Ave.
Freeport, IL 61032
Doors open 11:30 a.m. – Lunch 12:00 p.m. – Program 12:30 to 1:00 p.m.

Christmas Toys & Coats - We will be participating in the Salvation Army Christmas toys and coats drives. If you choose to participate, we are collecting toys for children from infants through 12 years old. It was mentioned that 11 & and 12-year-olds are often forgotten because they are not really interested in toys. They suggested hygiene kits, nail polish, headphones, etc., for kids that age. Please bring your unwrapped toys to the church any time before **December 4th** and place them in the red barrel in the entry way by the glass doors on Galena St. On December 16th, families who qualify will go to the Salvation Army and pick out toys for their children. These families must sign up ahead of time. Coats can be lightly used or new for all ages and genders. They can also be placed in the red barrel. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

Thanksgiving Baskets – The Salvation Army is collecting items for side dishes for Thanksgiving meal baskets. First Lutheran will collect items for this basket until November 15th. All items will be taken to the Salvation Army at that time.

Lost Bracelet – A gold bracelet was turned into the church office. If you lost a bracelet in the last month please stop in or call the church office to identify.

September Attendance			
Date	Sunday 9:00	Facebook Live	Children S/S
September 6	54	163	NA
September 13	78	238	3 (Gods Work Our Hands Sunday)
September 20	60	298	3
September 27	61	354	4
Total	**253**	**1053**	**10**

September Financials		
	Current Month	Year to Date
Total Income	$14,241.33	$179,014.22
Total Expenses	$28,714.69	$221,936.36
Income Less Expenses	**-$14,473.36**	**-$ 42,922.14**

OCTOBER REMINDERS

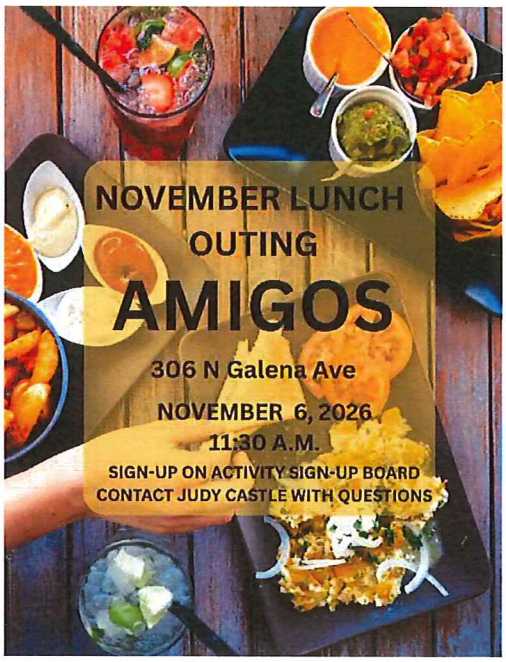
No Bible Study October 27
No Bible Study October 29

UPCOMING IN DECEMBER

Choir Cantata Date to be announced

CONGRATULATIONS to Pastor Callie Arendt and Taylor Ramsey on the birth of their baby girl, Aurora Anne Arendt Ramsey, born on October 1st at 6:06 a.m. Aurora is the granddaughter of Lorie & Conner Arendt and Niece of Kelsey Arendt.

Deloris Burstrom 1928 - 2026
May God grant peace to her memory, comfort to her family and grace to us all as we seek to live our lives to His glory.



November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **Set Clocks Back** 9:00 worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Bible Study Home Communion **All Saints Day** 6:00 Dinner on Galena & Jackson	2 7:00 Boy Scouts	3 12:00 Bible Study 12:00 NA 1:30 Caregivers 6:30 Luther N Brew	4 6:30 NA	5 **4:30 Financial Committee** 6:00 Bible Study 7:00 Choir	6 11:30 Lunch at Amigos 6:30 NA	7 7:30 Bible Study 10:00 Knitting 12:00 NA
8 9:00 worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Bible Study Noisy Offering	9 7:00 Boy Scouts	10 12:00 Bible Study 12:00 NA	11 6:00 Council 6:30 NA	12 10:00 Project Day 6:00 Bible Study 7:00 Choir	13 6:30 NA	14 7:30 Bible Study 12:00 NA
15 9:00 worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Bible Study **Thanksgiving Basket food Due**	16 7:00 Boy Scouts	17 9:30 Mary Circle 10:00 Rebecca Circle 12:00 Bible Study 12:00 NA 5:00 Souper Supper	18 6:30 NA **First News Info Due**	19 1:00 Bunko 6:00 Bible Study 7:00 Choir	20 6:30 NA	21 7:30 Bible Study 10:00 Knitting 12:00 NA
22 9:00 worship NO Sunday School 10:30 Bible Study 10:30 Congregational Meeting **Poinsettia Order Due**	23 7:00 Community Service - Prince of Peace 7:00 Boy Scouts	24 **No Bible Study** 12:00 NA	25 6:30 NA **First News Sent**	26 **Thanksgiving** **Office Closed** 	27 6:30 NA **Office Closed**	28 7:30 Bible Study 12:00 NA
29 9:00 worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Bible Study World Hunger Sunday **1st Sunday of Advent**	30 7:00 Boy Scouts **Endowment Apps Due**					

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November Birthday's					
11/6	Chelsea Rimington	11/14	Darla Kortemeier Toni Lamm	11/21	Tracy Love
11/9	Quinn Dickman			11/22	Patricia Reel
11/10	Tristan Bennett Chad Frakes	11/15	Ethan Hayenga Carol Heitter	11/24	Lennon Gerstner
				11/29	Lori Brobst
11/11	Hilary Glasser-Klein Randy Whitson	11/16	Tina Chamberlin Aaron Love		
11/12	Jeff Murray	11/19	Roger Schulz		

November Anniversary's			
11/2	Kevin & Mary Wise	11/18	Elwyn & Diana Euler
11/7	Kirsten & Trent Jones	11/26	Bob & Audrey Last
11/14	Steve & Nancy Olson	11/30	Carl & JoEllen Kunkle Teresa & Thomas Rillie
11/17	Don & Judy Kaufman Victor & Jan Shields		