

Sunday, September 20, 2026
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost



Faith Lutheran Church

Mission Statement

*"Building a welcoming, nurturing faith community that
is guided by Jesus and shares the Gospel."*

MINISTERS

SENIOR PASTOR

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Every Member

Derek Harkins

Sylvia Bull

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

WELCOME

GATHERING HYMN: "Light of the World" *

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

GREETING

KYRIE - ELW Setting 4 (pp. 147-148)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Word: God speaks to us through scripture reading, preaching and song.

READINGS: see next page

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW Setting 4 (pg. 151)

GOSPEL READING: see next page

CHILDREN'S SERMON & SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW 720 "We Are Called" *

GIVING OF BIBLES

SHARING OF THE PEACE

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING

Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING and HOLY HOLY HOLY: ELW Setting 4 (pg. 152-153)

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION HYMNS:

ELW 483 "Here Is Bread" *

Sounds of Faith Special Music *

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Sending: God blesses us and sends us into the world to love and serve our neighbors.

BLESSING

SENDING HYMN: ELW 538 "The Lord Now Sends Us Forth" *

DISMISSAL

**ELW = Red Hymnal; ACS = Purple Hymnal*

READING(S)

First Reading: *Jonah 3:10-4:11*

Second Reading: *Philippians 1:21-30*

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 18:21-35*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 18th Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the

first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ!**

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

Monday - Prayer of the Day

The prayer of the day, inspired by #720 in the seventh-century Gregorian Sacramentary, praises God for showing us mercy and asks for the ability to embody Christ’s generosity of spirit.

Tuesday - Connections with the Liturgy

The last sentence of the Book of Jonah indicates that God cares also for the animals. Following the outline of the intercessions in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, we pray every Sunday for the well-being of creation. Much of that well-being is our responsibility, but we pray also for God’s continuing creative power over the earth, for divine mercy granted to “many animals.”

Wednesday - Let the Children Come

Children are familiar with the etiquette of waiting in lines. Even in church, most congregations use some form of line to come forward for communion. In many churches, these procedures are announced weekly either in the service folder or aloud. This week, in your invitation to communion, remind worshipers that while lines may be necessary and useful for humans, God isn’t interested in sorting us or lining us up. God loves us all, even when it requires breaking the “rules.” In Jonah,

God forgives the Ninevites after their deadline (3:10). In the gospel, Jesus says, “The last will be first, and the first will be last” (Matt. 20:16). To demonstrate, reverse your communion line. If the pastor usually communes first, commune last and vice versa. (Maybe even ask a child to serve communion to you.) If the front row usually comes forward first, invite the back row forward first instead.

Thursday - Reflection on Philippians Reading

Paul wrote a letter to the church in Philippi from prison, that, depending on which imprisonment, could have been in 53 or after 60. The letter is filled with Paul’s sense of joy in the faith of Christ and includes the beloved Christ Hymn of 2:5-11, which confesses what much later came to be termed the two natures of Christ: his humility as a human and his exaltation as Lord of all. Introducing one of the letter’s themes, today’s excerpt urges the community to live together in unity.

Friday - Reflection on the Gospel

According to standard outlines of Matthew, the allegory of the laborers in the vineyard is in the fourth section (16:13—20:34), which focuses on preparation for the death and raising of Jesus, God’s Son. For Matthew, “heaven” is a circumlocution for God, and “the kingdom” refers to the eschatological end of all things, the way it will be in God. Today’s allegory, with the generous landowner being God and the laborers embodying the varying commitments of believers, makes the biblical point that in God all earthly values are reversed. Divine mercy is not fair. It is likely that by the time of the writing of Matthew’s gospel, contemporary church leaders were being negatively compared with ones closer to the time of Jesus, and the evangelist wishes to negate such criticism.

Saturday - A Hymn for the Day

The words of “As saints of old” (ELW 695) complement not only today’s gospel parable, but also many congregations’ fall stewardship campaign. Whether we are the first or the last to give of ourselves to God and the neighbor, we make “our life an offering to God” (st. 2). Frank von Christerson, a Finnish-American Presbyterian minister, wrote this hymn in 1960, meeting a request by the National Council of Churches in the USA for new hymns that dealt with stewardship.



CHURCH
Announcements

Thank you for your offering of **\$11,677.44** for the week of **September 20th!**

Altar Flowers for the week are provided by KennaDee Carlson, in memory of Keith Hanson. **Thank you!**

Join us in giving thanks for Pastor Sylvia's ministry at FLC!! We will be hosting a potluck and celebration for Pastor Sylvia on her last Sunday with us, **September 27th at 12:15pm** directly following the 11am worship service in the Fellowship Hall. Please come and wish her well as she enters into the new calling of parenthood with her spouse, Seth. **Bring a dish to share as well as a favorite memory or words of what Pastor Sylvia has meant to you** over her almost 10 years of service to Faith Lutheran Church!

Faith Lutheran will be putting together **Baby Kits and School Kits** on **Monday, September 21st at 6:30pm!** We are especially in need of donations for our Baby Kits, including **shirts and T-shirts, jackets, and sweatshirts in sizes 6 to 24 months.** Thank you for your generosity and support!

Attention **8th–12th grade parents!** If your student is interested in **attending the 2027 ELCA National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis next summer**, please let Kenny know **by September 30.** Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity!

The October Men of Faith meeting (**October 1 @ 9AM**) will include a presentation from **Kari Hausauer, the lead ambassador for Forever Memory Keeping**, which specializes in cloud storage of photos and other personal data. Please “store” this in your memory banks and make plans to attend.

Church School and Confirmation Registration is now available! Go to our Forms page at faithbismarck.com/forms to fill out our Google Forms for your Church School Age (3 Year Old-5th Grade) and Confirmation Age (6th Grade - 9th Grade) children! **We appreciate parents filling these out each year to help keep our records up to date.** If you have any questions about our programs, you can always talk to Kenny or one of the pastors!

Want to learn how to be a more engaged citizen in your community? Interfaith Alliance of North Dakota is partnering with the Palm Sunday Path to offer a series of workshops to help you feel equipped to speak about your values - with friends and family, policymakers, and at the upcoming North Dakota legislative session. This **Voicing Your Values** series will be offered Sept-Dec on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6-8pm at Lord of Life Lutheran Church (1143 N. 26th St). Join for any or all of these sessions as you learn not *what* to say, but how to share effectively about the issues and concerns that are important to you! Questions? Talk to Pastor Sylvia or email wndpalmsundaypath@gmail.com.

October 15 - Voicing Your Values: Speaking with Policymakers

Ross Keys and Sonda Sauers lead this session to help you build skills for speaking about your values with policymakers at all levels.

November 19 - Voicing Your Values: Letters to the Editor and Written Testimony

Steve Andrist leads this session on how to communicate your values effectively through letters to the editor and written legislative testimony.

December 17 - Voicing Your Values: Testifying at the ND State Legislature

Rudie Martinson leads this session on the process for testifying in person or online at the ND Legislature.

Message: Pastor Derek Harkins

Liturgy: Pastor Sylvia Bull

Music: Sounds of Faith

Worship Assistants:

8:30 -Team F: Bert Mayer, Sharon Mayer, Jenell Loftesnes, Karen Ely, Steve Ely, Matthew Ely, Robin Schumacher, Al Schumacher, Myron Fischer, and Bev Fischer

11:00 - Team 1: Janica Sabot, Lyla Timm, Sue Rydberg, Greg Hoffman, and Anita Hoffman

CALENDAR

Monday, September 21

7:00 AA

Tuesday, September 22

9:00 Quilting

2:00 Crafts

6:00 Compass Group

7:00 Executive Comm.

7:00 Scouts

Wednesday, September 23

10:00 Bible Study

5:30 Handbells

6:00 3rd Grade P/S

6:00 Church School &
Confirmation

7:00 Worship

Thursday, September 24

6:00 Knit & Crochet Group

Friday, September 25

5:45 Improv Workshop

8:00 NA

Saturday, September 26

Sunday, September 27

8:30 Worship

9:45 3rd Grade P/S

9:45 Church School

11:00 Worship

12:15 Pastor Sylvia Farewell Potluck

4:00 Cub Scouts

MISSION
Focus



SEPTEMBER: LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF KITS

Throughout the year, our Quilters collect items to put in Personal Care, School, and Baby Kits, sent to people in need around the world through Lutheran World Relief. Full lists are available on the Concierge Table and under our Serve tab on our website, but they are currently in need of shirts and T-shirts (sizes 6 to 24 months), jackets, and hooded sweatshirts for their baby kits. For their personal care kits, they are looking for towels (no larger than 27" x 52") and metal nail clippers. Thank you for your generosity!

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you... you should open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Deut. 15:7-8