

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CHIMES

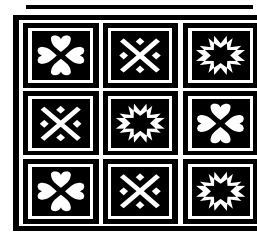
October 2025
Volume 64, Issue 10
www.firstgeneseo.org

Sharing Christ's Love

WORSHIP WITH US THIS WEEKEND!

Worship Saturday 5:30 p.m.
Worship & Livestream Sunday 9:30 a.m.

Lutheran World Relief *Kits & Quilt Dedication* October 11 & 12



Come and admire the beautiful quilts on October 11 & 12. Every Wednesday morning, the Cover Girls meet to make quilts to comfort those in need around the world. This service fulfills the Lutheran World Relief Mission: *Affirming God's love for all people, we work with Lutherans around the world to end poverty, injustice, and human suffering.* These colorful quilts will be displayed before being packed. The quilts will be delivered along with the 63 Personal Care Kits that were packed at the God's Work Our Hands event. These quilts and kits will be blessed during both Worship services.



Rite of Confirmation Sunday, October 26

Please join us at 9:30 a.m. Worship on Sunday, October 26, in person or via the livestream, as our 9th grade students who have completed their Confirmation program will celebrate this Milestone on their journey of faith as Christians. Everyone is welcome to enjoy a special fellowship time after worship that day in honor of these confirmands.

An Eventful Season

This summer has been full of transitions for us as a congregation. Pastor Matt, Melinda, and Abbey each concluded their ministry here at First Lutheran. We've welcomed Vicar Madelyn and Inger to our congregation. And now, we are pleased to welcome Heidi Fleming to our staff as our Interim Faithtime Director.

Heidi and her husband Adam have been members of our congregation for over 10 years. They have 4 kids – Davian (2nd grade), Deklan (Kindergarten), and Danikka and Dayla (Preschool). They live here in Geneseo with their dog, RJ. In this new role, Heidi will be responsible for directing the Faithtime Kids program each Wednesday afternoon.

Our program year has begun in earnest! We are moving forward with all the plans, despite having an open position on staff. Each of our staff members and so many committed volunteers, including the members of our newly formed Christian Education & Youth Ministry team, have stepped up to make sure that our ministry with children and youth can continue during this interim period. Please pray for Heidi, for the rest of our staff, and for all our volunteers who make this ministry happen!

I am excited for the return of some traditions this year that we have enjoyed in the past: Boo-4-Food, Trunk or Treat, Jul Gott, and the Spaghetti Dinner!

Our Confirmation and High School Youth will be invited to participate in Boo-4-Food, which is a collection to benefit the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry. On Wednesday, October 29, we will meet at the church at 5:45 p.m. and then divide into teams and head out into the neighborhoods of Geneseo to “trick-or-treat” for food items. Youth are encouraged to wear costumes and have fun! Each team will collect as many items as they can and then return to church at 7:00 p.m. for a little friendly competition.

Trunk or Treat is a community-wide event, hosted by First Lutheran Church during Geneseo's trick-or-treat hours on October 31. Everyone is invited to make our church a stop along their trick-or-treat route. Families and kids can stop here for trick-or-treating, potty breaks, and a free hot dog and cup of hot chocolate. I want to thank Diane Olson and Loretta Dick, who have stepped up to help plan this event, and all the volunteers who will make First Lutheran a welcoming place on Halloween.

Jul Gott will return this year! For many years, First Lutheran Church hosted this fundraiser in December to benefit several hunger ministries. This year, Jul Gott (Swedish for “Christmas Goodies”) will happen on Saturday, December 13 as a part of the Christmas Walk festivities. More information is coming soon!

On that same day, we will once again host an evening meal during the Christmas Walk. Jim & Mary Jo Brummet will lead a team of volunteers to host a Spaghetti Dinner on the evening on December 13. This year, all the funds raised will be used for Easter baskets this coming spring for children in foster care, in partnership with the LSSI office in Moline.

Each of these events is an opportunity for our congregation to partner with members of our community for service, fellowship, and fun. These events help us Share Christ's Love with our neighbors. As we work side by side with our brothers and sisters in Christ, old friendships are strengthened and new friendships are formed.

—Pastor Laura

October 4 & 5, 2025

Pentecost 17

This weekend's texts include Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm 37:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:1-14 and Luke 17:5-10.

October 11 & 12, 2025

Pentecost 18 | Blessing of the LWR Quilts & Kits

This weekend's texts include 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c; Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2:8-15 and Luke 17:11-19.

October 18 & 19, 2025

Pentecost 19

This weekend's texts include Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 121; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 and Luke 18:1-8.

October 25 & 26, 2025

Reformation

This weekend's texts include Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 46; Romans 3:19-28 and John 8:31-36.

Reformation Red

It's time to pull out your *red garb* for the annual celebration of the *Reformation!* Red is the color for Reformation (and Pentecost). For worship on *Saturday, October 25 and Sunday, October 26*, we invite you to wear red to celebrate the day and on Sunday, we also celebrate the confirming of faith of our confirmation students. We are saved by grace through faith. Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world.

FIRST WORSHIP & MUSIC

Worship at Liberty Village

Pastor Laura, Vicar Madelyn and Inger will lead worship at Liberty Village on October 26 at 1 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help lead singing, and all are welcome to worship with our members and friends!

Please keep the following Lifelines petitions in your prayers:

World and Community: For the people of Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza. For our leaders: President Donald Trump and Governor J.B. Pritzker. For health care workers. For all who work for peace and justice. For those serving our country in the military, especially Karl Flynn (*Maurie Nelson's friend*), Brian Hanshaw (*Jan & Steve Weber's son-in-law*), Jacob Hartman, Christopher Unrath, Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

Church: For our bishops: Rev. Elizabeth Eaton and Rev. Stacie Fidler. For Presiding Bishop-elect of the ELCA Rev. Yehiel Curry. For our partners in ministry: Pastor Emmanuel Gideon Mollé and the people of Ilkiding'a and Osupuko Parishes in Tanzania; Rev. Dr. Peter Paul Thomas, Bishop of the Arcot Lutheran Synod, India. For missionaries who share the Gospel around the world. For Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center. For our pastor, parish staff, Preschool staff and Church Council (names listed on pg. 10).

Health and Wellbeing: Jenny Anderson, Ann Behrendt (*Phil Wildermuth's sister*), Courtney Benke (*Mindy Brown and Melissa McCarty's friend*), Carol Boyd, Frank Collins (*Mike & Ethel Pries's friend*), Gary Daniels, Ed & Sandy Ficken (*Mike Ficken's parents*), Levi Hermann (*Norm & Judy Carbiener's family friend*), Gretchen Jones (*Maurie Nelson's friend*), Karen Myhre, Alan Novak (*Melissa McCarty's father*), Peggy Schram (*Doris Swanson's daughter*), Barbara Sigwalt (*Kathi Fluck's friend*), Gene Stees, Stan Storm and Tracy Taber (*Barb Burghgrave's niece*).

Joys: On the marriage of Naomi Terpening and Curtis Hanson. On the marriage of Kurt & Emily Nelson. On the births of Lennox Anita Brieser, daughter of Wyatt & Hannah Brieser and granddaughter of Rich & Linda Sheley; and Jack Jacob Camp, son of Lance & Katelyn Camp. For the beauty of the sunrises and sunsets, God's pallet of color.

Sorrows: On the deaths of Kay Heatherly, friend of Maurie & Brenda Nelson; Delores Mason, mother of Judi Denys; and Doris Dirck, member.

Thanksgiving: For a good report from my cardiologist and for the prayers for healing! —Janet Larson

If you wish to submit a prayer request, please visit www.firstgeneseo.org and use the password First! to access the prayer request form in the Member Access Section. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or are admitted to the hospital, please call the church office. In the event of an after-hours emergency please contact Pastor Laura at 703-505-8710.

FIRST PRAYER

FIRST MINISTRIES



Milestones Ministry

This month, ten freshman students are busy preparing to say “yes” to their baptism and continued life of faith.

- On Sunday, October 5, the students, Pastor Laura, and Vicar Madelyn will get together for a Faith Statement Retreat. We will explore what it means to live out your baptism by working together through various stations and begin working on faith statements.
- On Sunday, October 19, students will profess their faith statements to their friends and families, and we will enjoy dinner together.
- On Sunday, October 26, we celebrate with those students ready to say “yes” to their baptism and continued life of faith. These students have completed two years of Confirmation classes, served as worship participants, volunteered in and out of the church, and professed their faith to their peers and family. Everyone is welcome to enjoy a special fellowship time after worship that day in honor of these confirmands

*Miles Curcuru
Kane Fuelling
Emma Hofer*

*Madison Kuethe
Kellen Minder
Annie Reed*

*Violet Runty
Martez Sefton*

*Benjamin Simosky
Gage Steffes*

Faithtime Kids (Wednesdays Afterschool) All children Grades K-5

| | |
|------------|------------------------------|
| October 1 | <i>Creation</i> |
| October 8 | <i>The Holy Family</i> |
| October 15 | <i>The Ark and the Flood</i> |
| October 22 | <i>The Great Family</i> |
| October 29 | <i>The Exodus</i> |

Boo-4-Food

On Wednesday, October 29 the Confirmation and Sr. High youth are invited to participate in Boo-4-Food! We will gather at the church at 5:45 p.m. and then divide into teams and head out into the neighborhoods to “trick-or-treat” for food items for the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry. Youth are encouraged to wear costumes and have fun! Each team will collect as many items as they can and then return to church at 7 p.m. for a little friendly competition between the groups!

First Book Club

Come and join us for discussion on the content of the book *The Indigo Girl* and faith response to the author Natasha Boyd on Thursday, October 16 at 2 p.m. in Grace Place.

The story begins in 1739, on a small plantation in South Carolina. Eliza’s family recently moved there from Antigua, but her father soon returns to Antigua for military duty, leaving 16-year-old Eliza in charge of their home plantation and two others they own. It was unheard of at the time to leave a woman in charge of anything, especially one as young as Eliza, and she faced plenty of sexism as she tried to run the three properties. As Eliza digs into things, she discovers that her father has mortgaged two of the properties to pay for his military commission (*thank goodness you no longer have to be rich to be an officer!*). This has left the family finances in a precarious position, which only gets worse with time. Eliza decides that indigo is the solution to the family’s financial woes. At the time, France cornered the market on producing indigo dye – they grew the plants in some of their colonies and extracting the dye was a complicated process. All of this made indigo very lucrative. Be sure to read this incredible story of love, dangerous and hidden friendships, ambition, betrayal and sacrifice and join our discussion!

Trunk or Treat!

This annual event returns to First! The whole community is invited to make First Lutheran a stop of their trick-or-treat route. We are seeking volunteers to help pass out candy or serve hot dogs and hot chocolate on Friday, October 31 from 4-7 p.m. It's a night that volunteers have just as much fun as the trick or treaters, and it's all inside out of the cold and weather. Come join the fun! If you are interested or would like to learn more, please contact Diane Olson, Loretta Dick, or the church office. You can also sign up at the Welcome Center.

- Another way to participate is by donating candy. Please bring your donations to the church and place them in the "pumpkin" container located in the Fellowship Room.

FIRST MINISTRIES



Healing Hearts

Healing Hearts meets monthly for dinner and conversation. All widows at First Lutheran are invited to join us at Sweet Peas on Wednesday, October 1 at 5 p.m. Please RSVP to Kathy Rogers, coordinator of the group, at (309) 945-5132 or call the church office. (*Reservations necessary*)

First Friends

Celebrate fall at First Friends! Join us on Thursday, October 9 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Room for a meal of meatloaf, sides and dessert. Invite a friend who may need a 'nudge' to come join us! Cost is \$7 and reservations are appreciated...sign up at the Welcome Center, on the App or call the church office.

Attention Bakers and Dessert Lovers

Your culinary gift is needed to help us celebrate staff members' birthdays with treats. The month of a staff member's birthday, we honor them with a little delectable offering at their monthly all-staff meeting. If you are interested in showing the staff some love and generosity for all the hard work that they provide on a daily basis, or if you just need a reason to do some baking, call or text Jodi Barnhart at (309) 945-6573 to sign up. We have a terrific staff and let us show them how much we appreciate them.

"A Sherlock Carol" An Afternoon with Richmond Hill Players & First Lutheran

Date: Sunday, November 16

Time: Fellowship at First beginning at 1 p.m.

Show at 3 p.m. at Richmond Hill Theater

Tickets: \$12 each



Congregational Life invites you to attend the holiday production of *A Sherlock Carol* with us! Plan to meet at the church for a time of fellowship (*light snacks*) at 1 p.m. and then head over to Richmond Hill Theater as a group to watch this fun play together at 2:15 p.m. Hurry and sign up at the Welcome Center and pay by **Sunday, October 5** or use the QR code to register and pay online!



FIRST MINISTRIES

Music Ministry at First Lutheran

The door is open. There is an empty chair for you to fill to sing God's praises with others. There is a need for 4-5 more bell ringers and you can have one-on-one training with the director in advance before rehearsing. We want to grow this vital ministry. Maybe you are an empty nester or are recently retired; maybe you are looking for a way to serve Jesus that is very community oriented. High schooler needing service hours? Play an instrument? Ring some bells? Sing soprano, alto, tenor or bass or a melody- even sing for a season?

We love to share Jesus with our music; to give Jesus all the praise and glory for his unconditional love, and share that joy with the congregation in worship. We would love for you to be a part of sharing that joy.

Sanctuary Singers meets Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the choir room. Come on in!

Glory Ringers Handbell Choir meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the choir room.

- *Please see Inger Oswald first before attending, as we may not meet every Thursday.*

Play an instrument? Guitar, clarinet, afuche, zither, flute, bass, krummhorn, drums, brass, others?? It adds so much to our Worship!

Questions? Please feel free to call Inger Oswald, Director of Worship & Music at (309) 944-3196 or email at worship@firstgeneseo.org

Stewardship Campaign

The weekend of October 18 & 19, we will **TOUCH BASE** during Worship about our Stewardship Campaign for 2026. We will ask you to begin thinking about how you plan to give of your time, talents and treasures next year. Then on Commitment Weekend, November 8 & 9, we'll ask you to bring your Commitment Card to Worship with a **BALLPARK FIGURE** of what your commitment will be for 2026. We're **SWINGING FOR THE FENCES** this year! Stay tuned to find out more about our campaign and goal.

Update on Columbarium Survey

As part of the work of the Swanson Trust Fund Task Force, we received suggestions from our membership of using part of the money to create and build a columbarium on the church property. To get a feel from the congregation as to the practicality of it, we sent out a survey to specifically ask people if they would ever consider purchasing a niche. Thank you for your comments and responses to the survey! It was much appreciated. While there was some interest from members, it was not the overwhelming interest that we felt we needed to pursue the idea. Thank you again for your participation!

Hospitalization

Due to Federal guidelines, known as HIPAA, hospitals are no longer able to contact the church about the hospitalization of one of its members. If you or your loved one is taken to the hospital, be sure to contact the church office at 944-3196 so that Pastor Laura, Vicar Madelyn or a member of the Care Ministry Team can call on you.

A Special Note of Thanks

Dear First Lutheran Family,

Yes, family – already –because you have made me feel so welcome and cared for. You have been so kind to reach out and introduce yourselves with a hand shake, a smile or an email. The Helping Hands have been a huge blessing, helping me move my Michigan things from my car into my apartment – twice! The staff has been such a blessing, with great training, patience, and fun, as I learn new processes. I thank God for you all and I look forward to continuing to grow in faith in Jesus together as the body of Christ.

God's peace,

Inger Oswald, Director of Worship & Music Ministries

FIRST MINISTRIES

Thank You!

A special *Thank You* to Deb Beyerlein for delivering all the beautiful flowers and the small pumpkin. I really enjoyed them!

—Bev Carius

Thank you for the weekly flowers we enjoy as we are unable to go to church on Sunday. We're living at Liberty Village but are now able to join you online. We feel blessed and appreciate all your prayers.

God Bless you all,

—John & Joan Elden

Mission Endowment

As of September 22, a total of \$63,401.08 has been received toward our Mission Endowment Fund Campaign: *Celebrating a Proud Past, Preparing for a Faithful Future* goal of \$170,000. Give a gift anytime in the offering plate at Worship, mailed to the church, or submitted online at www.firstgeneseo.org/giving.



Council Highlights for September 22, 2025

- Discussed health insurance selection for 2026 for Pastor. Will review more information and complete by early October.
- Swanson Task Force received Council feedback and will seek additional information and bids from Streamline Architects and other vendors.
- Discussed Pastor's sabbatical for 2026, dates to be confirmed.
- Jul Gott and Trunk or Treat events: Jul Gott is set for December 13 as a Cookie Walk, proceeds to be split with Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry, ELCA World Hunger, and Backpack Blessings. Trunk or Treat Facebook event has been launched.
- Reviewed Audit Committee report.
- Accepted and approved Preschool Board members Nancy Cassens and Brigitte Fitzpatrick for another 2-year term.

August Financial Report

General Fund Offering:

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| August actual | \$55,308 |
| August budget | \$37,308 |
| YTD actual | \$340,623 |
| YTD budget | \$345,967 |

Net Income Over Expenses:

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| August actual | \$15,859 surplus |
| August budget | \$5,407 deficit |
| YTD actual | \$4,441 deficit |
| YTD budget | \$26,395 deficit |

FIRST MINISTRIES

First Lutheran Preschool

Both of our classes will continue to learn about the autumn season as we observe the changes taking place outdoors. We will also learn about fire safety. The three year old class will be learning with the color orange and the triangle shape. They'll explore pumpkins and use them for many experiments and activities. The four year old class will focus on autumn, friendship, sequencing and patterning. They will also take a walking field trip to the fire department. All classes will be learning through Halloween themed songs and projects near the end of the month.

Cover Girls Quilting

Come see what Cover Girls are all about! Join us for a time of fellowship and fun tying quilts for LWR on Wednesdays, October 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 in Grace Place. All are welcome!

Bible Study

We will gather on Wednesday, October 22 at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room A. We will be using the Lutheran magazine, "*Gather*" for our study guide. Everyone is welcome!

HHH Community Health Series

Upcoming Men's Topic: "*The Services of Hammond-Henry Hospital*"

Men's Health Program will be held at Hammond-Henry Hospital in the first floor conference room on Wednesday, October 1 from 7 to 8 a.m. Those attending may purchase breakfast in the hospital dining room.

Upcoming Women's Topic: "*Swallowing/Speech Therapy*"

Women's Health Program luncheon will be held at the Geneseo Community Center Activity Room on October 23 from noon — 1 p.m. The cost of the luncheon is \$12.

Reservations for either of these programs may be made by calling Hammond-Henry Hospital at 944-9112 or email hhhfound@hammondhenry.com.

Geneseo Breast Cancer Support Group

We would like to welcome anyone who is currently in their breast cancer journey or is a breast cancer survivor to attend our Breast Cancer Support Group (BCSG) dinner meeting on Monday, October 20 at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. Please contact one of us if you have interest in attending. Thank you!

Pam Martens: 309-507-1201

Chris Ward: 563-529-4515

Dee Menendez: 309-945-2555

Food Pantry Collection

The Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry is collecting *juice, coffee, chips, sugar, spaghetti sauce, pancake mix, syrup, cake mix, flour, jello, cooking spray and all kinds of soups, toilet paper, paper towels, men's body wash, toothpaste, toothbrush, cleaning supplies, baby wipes, diapers, shampoo, conditioner and deodorant* to share with those in our community. Donations may be left in the basket by the church office.

Did You Know ... A Hammond-Henry dietitian will present a class about healthy cooking and eating on October 14 at 1 p.m. at the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry. Learn how to prepare healthy dishes, try new foods, and receive recipes to take home! This class is free and open to the public.



2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Overall Reflection

By Bill Westcott, reprinted from the Northern Illinois Synod

**FIRST
MINISTRIES**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ;

I am writing to share the elements of the Churchwide Assembly that I was blessed to both attend and participate fully in with other voting members of our Northern Illinois Synod. This was my first such experience at a Churchwide event. Our team was very diverse and worked collaboratively in every facet of our decision-making process before votes were cast. That is not to say that we all voted the same way each time; in fact, our being able to agree to disagree on several main issues was, in my opinion, one of our biggest strengths.

Each day we were gathered by the Holy Spirit around the means of grace in worship, we were rooted and nourished by God's grace through Word, Sacrament, and raising our voices to the Lord. Our theme for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly was, *For the Life of the World.*

Overview of our week-long work in Phoenix, Arizona:

- Transitions occurred in two key leadership roles as the assembly voted in multiple ballots to elect our new Presiding Bishop (Bishop Yehiel Curry – Metropolitan Chicago Synod), as well as a new Secretary (Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills – North Carolina Synod) of the ELCA.
- The voting members were called upon to consider a new social statement: Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All. This is necessary as we continue to address civic engagement, the role of government, Christian nationalism, and the public responsibilities of rostered ministers.
- We made editorial changes to the Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust to bring the statement in line with current law and inclusive understandings of family.
- As voting members, we were also called upon to review, discuss, and consider Memorials and Justice Issues from throughout our synods. These included the following: missing and murdered Indigenous women, Indian boarding school remembrance, Israel-Palestine and ending occupation, end-of-life decisions, and restoration of USAID funding. A large part of our deliberations was centered around racism and church reform.
- The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) presented a report examining the ELCA's identity, purpose, and structure with a primary focus on dismantling racism. Volumes of the 800+ voting members rose to speak for or against these issues and offered amendments. Voting members of our NIS were recognized and participated in offering up amendments to several of the documents. Not all the items for consideration were achieved, because of time constraints and lack of enough votes for passage. Those not passed will be reviewed and returned to the appropriate committees for more considerations prior to voting by the ELCA Church Council. Many will return to the Churchwide Assembly in 2028 for reconsideration.

Once again, I am so thankful for the opportunity to have represented the Northern Illinois Synod at the Churchwide Assembly.

Bill Westcott, Voting Member
Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church – Rock Falls, IL



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Noisy Offering

A *Noisy Offering* will be collected the weekend of October 4 & 5 to benefit ELCA World Hunger. Bring your nickels and dimes!

STAFF DIRECTORY

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday

8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Wednesday

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday

Office Closed

Closed for Lunch ~ Noon–1 p.m.

COUNCIL

Jeff Boyer—*President*
Sam Marshall—*Vice-President*
Julie Kunkel—*Secretary*
Matt Simosky—*Treasurer*

Chris Ahlstrand, Chase Anselmi,
Cindy Groene, Jamian Haser,
Kathy Heller, Lorrie Lord,
Eli Palmer, Linda Sheley

Meeting Schedule:

Cabinet — **Monday, October 13**
Ministries — **Monday, October 13**
Council — **Monday, October 20**

**NEXT CHIMES DEADLINE:
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9**