



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CHIMES

Sharing Christ's Love

November 2025
Volume 64, Issue 11
www.firstgeneseo.org

WORSHIP WITH US THIS WEEKEND!

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

Festival of All Saints



The Festival of All Saints will be observed on Saturday, November 1 at 5:30 p.m., and Sunday, November 2 at 9:30 a.m. During worship, a bell will be rung as we read the names of the saints from our congregation who have died in the past year, and their family members will be invited to light a candle in remembrance of their loved one. Afterward, there will be an opportunity for anyone in the congregation to come forward to light a candle in memory of a loved one. Worship will be in the Sanctuary both Saturday and Sunday. We remember and honor the following saints:

<i>Ray Rogers</i>	<i>Gail Hutchinson</i>	<i>Glen Anderson</i>
<i>Donna Gotthardt</i>	<i>Pastor Arthur Bergren</i>	<i>Doris Dirck</i>

Commitment Weekend *November 8 & 9, 2025*



Recently, we kicked off our 2026 stewardship campaign—Hit it Out of the Park for First Lutheran. This time of year, we *touch base* and ask you to think about how you plan to give of your time, talents and treasures for 2026 as it helps us have a *ballpark figure* for budgeting and planning next year's events and activities. You should have received a two-sided commitment card by mail. We ask that you complete it and bring it with you to Worship on **Commitment Weekend, November 8 & 9**, or return it to the church office any time. Alternatively, you can submit your commitment online. Please visit www.firstgeneseo.org/giving and fill out the form or scan the QR code.

HELP US HIT IT OUT OF THE PARK FOR FIRST LUTHERAN

We're *swinging for the fences* and are striving to get 160 commitment cards by November 30, 2025. Don't let us *strike out* on our goal:

- 150 commitments = Vicar Madelyn gets pie in the face!
- 160 commitments = Pastor Laura gets pie in the face!

Why pie? Well, there is nothing more quintessentially American than apple pie and baseball! Our youth will be *getting in the game*, too. They received their own version of a commitment card and those will count toward our goal. We will keep you updated on our progress toward that goal with a display in the Fellowship Room. Thank you in advance for *stepping up to the plate!*

Scan for online
commitment form



Lingering with Thankfulness

Fall is a season of change – changing temperatures, colors, and patterns, just to name a few! Fall is also a season of familiarity, of visiting family and hometowns as well as harvest and homecoming. In fall, we hold both the familiar and the changing with thankfulness, especially as we celebrate Thanksgiving and the end of the church year.

A familiar thing that I have come to love here at First Lutheran is fellowship after Sunday worship, as well as the lively conversations that happen before Saturday evening worship. In both of those instances, it is so fun to engage with each other about what has been happening and what is to come in the life of the community. I love hearing updates about kids, sports teams, or craft projects; nothing is too small to be held and celebrated in this community.

One of the books I have been reading over my internship is adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy*. It is a book about change, especially about the vital importance of relationships within change. One of her principles for emergent strategy is this: "Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass – build resilience by building relationships."

Building relationships is certainly one thing that the church knows how to do. We have been commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), and that command leads us to pursue ways to be intentional about community. After all, Jesus said that loving our neighbors was the second most important thing, after loving God. As Lutherans, we affirm that loving others flows out of our love for God, that God gives us the love that we need to love each other. God loves us all, so we can also love all.

One of the most impactful ways that we love each other is to linger together, to be thankful together, to rejoice and mourn together. By reaching out and being honest with each other, we create the critical connections that allow us to function as the body of Christ. In sharing time, we signal that people matter more than our next task or event; people are the church. brown emphasizes that small actions grow into big actions – so what are our priorities as a congregation? How can we live into them in big and small ways?

I hope that you will linger with intentionality this month. Stay for fellowship, if that hasn't been a part of your weekend routine. Talk with the people sitting by you or the people serving with you. Show up honestly and fully. Above all, be thankful for the people around you in this season of familiarity and change.

Lingering with you,
—Vicar Madelyn

November 1 & 2, 2025

All Saints

This weekend's texts include Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18, Psalm 149, Ephesians 1:11-23 and Luke 6:20-31.

November 8 & 9, 2025

Pentecost 22 | Commitment Weekend

This weekend's texts include Job 19:23-27a, Psalm 17:1-9, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17 and Luke 20:27-38.

November 15 & 16, 2025

Pentecost 23

This weekend's texts include Malachi 4:1-2a, Psalm 98, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 and Luke 21:5-19.

November 22 & 23, 2025

Christ the King

This weekend's texts include Jeremiah 23:1-6, Psalm 46, Colossians 1:11-20 and Luke 23:33-43.

November 29 & 30, 2025

Advent 1

This weekend's texts include Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14 and Matthew 24:36-44.

FIRST WORSHIP & MUSIC

Worship at Liberty Village

Pastor Laura and Vicar Madelyn will lead worship at Liberty Village on November 23 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. Yehiel Curry and Rev. Stacie Fidler. For our partners in ministry: Pastor Emmanuel Gideon Mollel 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: Ann Behrendt (*Phil Wildermuth's sister*), Courtney Benke (*Mindy Brown and Melissa McCarty's friend*), Linda Bloomberg, Carol Boyd, Mazie Calderon, Diane Greenwood (*Karen Cathelyn's friend*), Gretchen Jones (*Maurie Nelson's friend*), Jerry Klavohn, Lorrie Lord, Karen Myhre, Alan Novak (*Melissa McCarty's father*), Pat Reed, Pastor Scott Schmidt, Peggy Schram (*Doris Swanson's daughter*), Barbara Sigwalt (*Kathi Fluck's friend*), Stan Storm, Tracy Taber (*Barb Burghgrave's niece*) and Jim Unrath.

Joys: On the marriage of Allison & Kyle Jones.

Sorrows: On the death of Ed Ficken, father of Mike Ficken.

Thanksgiving: For peace in the Middle East, the release of the hostages and our leaders who brokered the agreement.

P.L.E.A. (Praying to the Lord Expecting Answers): For our next Director of Youth & Family Ministry. O God, you invite us to come before you persistently in prayer, asking for all that we need. Ministry with children, youth, and families is a vital part of our congregation's mission. Send us the right candidate for this ministry – a faithful disciple who will be ready to teach, equip, and serve. Continue to strengthen each staff member and volunteer through this interim period, as we teach and lead our children and youth. Prepare this congregation to receive our next leader with welcome, ready to work together for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Usher and Lector Training

Whether you are a seasoned usher or lector or newer to the team, please come to these training events. We want to continue to put forth our very best in worship for the glory of God and serve our congregation. So please come to the training immediately after worship on the following dates:

- Usher Training – Sunday, November 9 at 10:30 a.m.
- Lector Training – Sunday, November 16 at 10:30 a.m.

And if you are just craving to serve in either of these ways in worship or just want to learn more about what's like to serve as an usher or lector, you are welcome to join us.

Sacred Spaces: Anointing for Healing

"Sacred Spaces" is an opportunity for 1-on-1 pastoral care with Pastor Laura or Vicar Madelyn on Thursday, November 13 from 1-3 p.m.

The sacred space is set up in Grace Place, and our time together will focus on healing, including anointing.

You may plan to arrive anytime during the two-hour window and leave after you are finished visiting and praying with Pastor Laura or Vicar Madelyn (*you won't need to spend the whole two hours at the church*).



Advent/Christmas Choir

Come sing with the Sanctuary Singers during the Advent and/or Christmas Season. Rehearsals are Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Sing with the choir on Sunday, December 7 for Lessons & Carols and/or Christmas Eve (probably 7 p.m.). See Inger Oswald for more information or email worship@firstgeneseo.org.

First Book Club

Come and join us for discussion on the content of the book *The Lion Women of Tehran* and faith response to the author Marjan Kamali on Thursday, November 20 at 2 p.m. in Grace Place.

In 1950s Tehran, seven-year-old Ellie lives in grand comfort until the untimely death of her father, forcing Ellie and her mother to move to a tiny home downtown. Lonely and bearing the brunt of her mother's endless grievances, Ellie dreams for a friend to alleviate her isolation. Luckily, on the first day of school, she meets Homa, a kind girl with a brave and irrepressible spirit. Together, the two girls play games, learn to cook in the stone kitchen of Homa's warm home, wander through the colorful stalls of the Grand Bazaar, and share their ambitions of becoming "lion women." But their happiness is disrupted when Ellie and her mother are afforded the opportunity to return to their previous bourgeois life. Now a popular student at the best girls' high school in Iran, Ellie's memories of Homa begin to fade. Years later, however, her sudden reappearance in Ellie's privileged world alters the course of both of their lives. Together, the two young women come of age and pursue their own goals for meaningful futures. But as the political turmoil in Iran builds to a breaking point, one earth-shattering betrayal will have enormous consequences. Be sure to read this mesmerizing tale of love and courage, and a sweeping exploration of how profoundly we are shaped by those we meet when we are young.

Healing Hearts

Healing Hearts meets monthly for dinner and conversation. All widows at First Lutheran are invited to join us at Habaneros Mexican Grill on Wednesday, November 5 at **4:30 p.m.** (*Note time change*) Please RSVP to Kathy Rogers, coordinator of the group, at (309) 945-5132 or call the church office. (*Reservations necessary*)

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, November 23 at 10:30 a.m.

Come decorate the Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas right after worship on Sunday, November 23. Many hands make light and fun work. Grab a snack from the Fellowship Hall and come decorate together. **ALL** are welcome – children, adults and youth - to help in this festive opportunity!

Veteran's Brunch

First Lutheran Church greatly appreciates the sacrifice and service of all our military and veterans. To show our appreciation for their service, we will be hosting a brunch for all our First Lutheran Veterans on Saturday, November 8 at 8 a.m. All First Lutheran Veterans are invited to attend! Have a wonderful, safe and blessed Veteran's Day!

First Friends

Come celebrate 'Friendsgiving' at First Friends! Traditional Thanksgiving meal of turkey, dressing, potatoes and pumpkin pie with your FLC friends on Thursday, November 13 at 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$7. Please sign up at the Welcome Center, on the app or call the church office.

High School Youth Group

All high schoolers are invited to attend High School Youth Group on Sunday, November 2, 5-7 p.m. at church. Bring a friend and join us for dinner, fellowship, faith formation, and lively game of Spoons!

Council Highlights for October 20, 2025

- Approved insurance for Pastor Laura for 2026 via email.
- Pastor Laura to review sabbatical and prepare a revised proposal for sabbatical time.
- Reviewed Audit report, policy and insurance needs, will need continued focus.
- Approved \$800 for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center to support fall retreat for youth.
- Set date for Annual Congregation Meeting, Sunday January 25, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.
- Receiving 10 confirmands as Voting Members of the congregation: Miles Curcuru, Kane Fuelling, Emma Hofer, Madison Kuethe, Kellen Minder, Annie Reed, Violet Runty, Martez Sefton, Benjamin Simosky and Gage Steffes.

September Financial Report

General Fund Offering:

September actual	\$25,162
September budget	\$37,308
YTD actual	\$360,327
YTD budget	\$377,275

Net Income Over Expenses:

September actual	\$11,937 deficit
September budget	\$4,752 deficit
YTD actual	\$16,378 deficit
YTD budget	\$31,147 deficit

FIRST MINISTRIES



Faithtime Kids

(Wednesdays Afterschool)

All children Grades K-5

November 5 *The Plagues learning stations*
November 12 *The Ten Best Ways*
November 19 **No Faithtime**
November 26 **No Faithtime**

Milestone Ministry

Stewardship: Kids and Money

Children in fourth grade are invited to a Milestone event on Sunday, November 2 from 4-5 p.m. This will be a time to learn and remember what it means to be a steward of all that God has given us. They will receive their blessing and gifting stone during Worship on November 9.

Confirmation

Class will begin on November 5. This year, we have seven 7th graders and six 8th graders, plus 3 students joining us from Augustana Lutheran Church in Andover. Classes will be taught by Vicar Madelyn, Pastor Laura, and Pastor Liz Kuster. We meet each Wednesday, 5:45 -7:00 p.m. This year we will study the Bible. Please pray for our students, parents, and teachers as we dig into God's word and search for God's truth.

Here's the November schedule:

November 5 – *Genesis*

November 12 – *Exodus*

November 19 – *Kings*

November 26 – No Class (*Thanksgiving break*)

LOMC Fall Retreat

Middle school and high school students (6th through 12th grades) are invited to attend Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center's Fall Retreat on November 21-22. Hannah Stebly, Patrick Stebly, and Margi Ficken will accompany our kids. We will join with youth from other congregations for worship, hiking, Bible study, and all sorts of camp fun! See Pastor Laura for registration information. Registration is due by November 10.

P.L.E.A. (Praying to the Lord Expecting Answers)

For our next Director of Youth & Family Ministry

O God, you invite us to come before you persistently in prayer, asking for all that we need. Ministry with children, youth, and families is a vital part of our congregation's mission. Send us the right candidate for this ministry -- a faithful disciple who will be ready to teach, equip, and serve. Continue to strengthen each staff member and volunteer through this interim period, as we teach and lead our children and youth. Prepare this congregation to receive our next leader with welcome, ready to work together for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

At any time, please stop by the display table in the Fellowship Room to write, draw or color your prayers and dreams for this ministry's leader, for God's best for us at FLC – whatever it is from your heart.

Christmas Walk Pasta Dinner

Saturday, December 13 ~ 4-7 p.m.

First Lutheran will once again host an evening meal during the Christmas Walk. This event is an opportunity for our congregation to partner with members of our community for service, fellowship, and fun. 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. We appreciate any and all volunteers willing to help make this a successful event! If you are interested in donating a delicious homemade dessert, or volunteering to work a shift from 2:30-5:00 p.m. or 5:00-7:30 p.m., we welcome your help. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or fill out a pew slip and drop it in the offering plate. Thank you for your support and helping us *Share Christ's Love* with our neighbors!

FIRST MINISTRIES



Calling all bakers!

It's time to bring out your best Christmas treat recipes! Whether it's your grandmother's Christmas cookies or your favorites for Christmas parties, we want your baked goodies! Donations of homemade cookies and other baked goods are needed for the return of our annual Jul Gott fundraiser. Save the date and start planning now. This year, we will host the fundraiser on Saturday, December 13, the same day as the Geneseo Christmas Walk. Donated items can be brought to the church on Friday, December 12, between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., or you can contact Pastor Laura to arrange pick up. All proceeds from Jul Gott will be split evenly between the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry, Backpack Blessings, and ELCA World Hunger. Sign up at the Welcome Center or on the app to donate.

Angel Tree

Our Christmas tradition continues here at First Lutheran with the support of an "Angel Tree" which will provide Christmas gifts for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) Foster Care Children along with residents of Hillcrest Nursing Home and Allure of Geneseo. The tree will be decorated in a two-fold process with LSSI Foster Care angel tags with children's information and gift ideas. The second phase will be angels for the residents of Hillcrest and Allure with their information and gift ideas. The tree will be located at the north end of the Fellowship Room.

- **LSSI Foster Care Angels** ... Please choose an angel from the tree and purchase the gifts. This year, Lutheran Social Services has asked that we *do not wrap* the gifts but to put them in a Christmas gift bag. Attach the angel tag and leave under the tree in the Fellowship Room. LSSI would also appreciate donations of gift bags, shirt boxes, gift tags and tape. The gifts for LSSI are due by **Sunday, November 30**.
- **Hillcrest and Allure Angels** ... around the first of December the angels for the nursing home residents will be placed on the tree. Please choose an angel and purchase gifts, wrap or use a Christmas bag and place the angel tag on the gift and return to the church by **Sunday, December 14**.

Thank you for being Angels to both groups. For some this is the only Christmas gift they will receive so your generosity means more than you will ever know.

FIRST MINISTRIES

First Lutheran Preschool

The preschool children will be learning through Thanksgiving themed activities, songs and art this month. Our focus for Thanksgiving will be on sharing what we have and helping each other. We also discuss how to show we are thankful and what we are thankful for. We'll look forward to sharing songs and artwork with our preschool families through our annual Thanksgiving Sing and Share program.

- **No preschool November 22-28.**
Classes will resume on Monday, December 1.

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, November 5, 12, 19 & 26 in Grace Place. All are welcome!

Bible Study

We will gather on Wednesday, November 26 at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room A. We will be using the Lutheran magazine, "*Gather*" for our study guide. Everyone is welcome!

Mission Endowment

As of October 20, a total of \$66,646.08 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.



Christmas Poinsettia Garden

Poinsettias for our Christmas Garden may be ordered in memory or honor of a loved one. This year's plants will be large 4-5 bloom plants and will cost \$16.50. Order and payment are due by December 14.

Welcome Pastor Jeff Carlson!

The Mission Endowment Committee is pleased to welcome Pastor Jeff Carlson as our guest preacher on the weekend of November 1 & 2. Pastor Carlson is visiting as a part of our multi-year campaign: *Celebrating a Proud Past, Preparing for a Faithful Future*. He grew up at First Lutheran and was ordained here in 1995. He currently serves as Pastor at Good Shepherd LC in Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

Pastor Jeff writes, "Our daughter Isabel teaches and coaches a very successful high school Mock Trial team, among other jobs, in Glenwood Springs. Our son Isaac leads video marketing for Shure Microphones in Chicago. My wife Kristin teaches playwriting and edits books; and in the past year wrote and directed a short film that won awards from Santa Barbara to Chicago to New York; wrote a new stage play that recently had a reading in Denver; recorded voiceover characters for a novel that should soon be available on Audible; played a minor role in a feature film ("An Aspen Christmas Conspiracy") that will release in early December; is currently starring onstage at a local professional theatre company; and will perform, produce, and write a sketch for the upcoming holiday show by the local professional improv troupe. (I'm sure I've left some other things out.) For the past few years, I've participated with nine colleagues in fundraising as the "Faster Pastors" (I qualify as one of those terms), together running a 165-mile relay over three Colorado mountain passes."

We hope you are all able to join us on the weekend of November 1 & 2 to welcome Pastor Carlson and Kristin back to Geneseo.

A Special Note of Thanks

First Lutheran Geneseo Congregation:
On behalf of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois *thank you* for participating in our annual charity golf outing to benefit our foster care program. We were able to raise \$6,719.09! Your generosity and teamwork strengthen our mission and make a lasting impact in the lives of the children and families we serve. We truly appreciate your support and look forward to welcoming teams again next year on 9-12-2026.

Kindest Regards,
Andrea McClean, Resource Specialist

Thank You

Thank You First Lutheran members for supporting Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) Chip In Fore Children Charity Golf Outing. Your participation of teams of golfers, sponsorships, and donations for the raffle baskets made this fundraiser a success for the Foster Care Program! Thank you for sharing Christ's love.

Kathy Nelson
LSSI Cornerstone Lifetime Trustee

LWR Quilts and Kits

Thank you to everyone in the Cover Girls who had any part in designing and making the **138** beautiful quilts over the past year! **138!** And thank you to everyone who donated items and everyone who put together the Personal Care Kits! Thank you to everyone who donated material for the quilts. **116** of these comforting quilts are going to LWR (Lutheran World Relief) in the USA and across the globe. **12** of the quilts will go to Another Child Foundation, **4** will go to Freedom House, and **6** will go to the Galesburg Rescue Mission. What a wonderful way to share love, warmth and comfort to those in need. *The Cover Girls, who create these quilts, are happily and thankfully welcoming monetary donations to pay for batting (filler) as well as shipping costs. At this time, it costs \$2.25 per quilt to be shipped overseas. Thank you in advance for supporting this vital ministry.*

FIRST MINISTRIES



HHH Health Series

Upcoming Women's Topic: "Chiropractic Care/Dry Needling"

Women's Health Program will be offered from 12 noon—1 p.m. at the Geneseo Community Center Activity Room on Wednesday, November 19. The cost of the luncheon is \$12. reservations may be made by calling Hammond-Henry Hospital at 944-9112 or emailing a response to hfhfound@hammondhenry.com.

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, 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.



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 November 8 & 9 to benefit Helmets of Hope. Bring your nickels and dimes!

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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, November 10
Ministries — Monday, November 10
Council — Monday, November 17

**NEXT CHIMES DEADLINE:
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6**