



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
BOTHELL, WASHINGTON

WELCOMES YOU!

**September 27, 2026
18th Sunday after Pentecost**

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH STATEMENT OF WELCOME

As voted on by the Congregation Council and will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of FLC

We, the community of First Lutheran Church of Bothell (FLC), proclaim the message that the grace of our Lord is infinitely inclusive and that everyone is welcome. We believe that Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world of alienation and brokenness.

As a Reconciling in Christ congregation and as disciples of Christ seeking justice and reconciliation among all peoples, we at FLC welcome all into the fullness of God's love. We welcome everyone, without exception and regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, **gender expression**, physical and mental ability, age, or station in life. **We believe in and engage in antiracism as a primary way to recognize that each person is a unique creation of God, and through grace, a child of God, worthy of love and welcome.**

All are welcome at First Lutheran.

All are welcome to worship, to hear the good news, to receive the sacraments, and to share in fellowship and service. As members of FLC, we pledge ourselves and our congregation to exercise our faith in Christ, treasuring one another's similarities while embracing our God-given differences. We pledge that we will strive to live as a reconciling people, in our life together and in our outreach to the world.

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WORSHIP NOTES

- + Complete one of the cards provided in the pew card holders. For FLC members, please use the “Member Attendance Card” list each family member who is in attendance and who will receive Holy Communion. For guests, please complete the “Welcome Guests” card. Cards may be placed in the offering baskets or handed to an usher during Communion.
- + The service is printed in this bulletin. Some hymns are located in the red hymnbook.
- + Hearing enhancement receivers, large print bulletins are available. Feel free to ask an usher for assistance.
- + Our expectation is that children will be in worship. We understand, that there are times when your wiggly ones need a distraction. There is a staffed nursery as well as a “Pray Space” under the stairs in the inner narthex. Please ask an usher for directions.
- + If you would like to have a digital copy of the bulletin, go to our website and download the PDF. www.flcbothell.org
- + Public Wi-Fi: FLC Wireless—Password: MartyLuther

Serving Us in Worship Today

Piano/Organ	Lucy Kay Osborne
Drums	Joe Siebert
Acolyte	Clare Jackman
Ushers	Dan Hendricks
Lector	David Osborne
Greeter	Sandy Hendricks
Sound Tech	Linda Chapman
Camera Tech	David Shogren
Communion Assistants	Renee Lier, Tom Payne, Donna Hillard
Bus Driver	
Pew Angel	
Fellowship Host	Susan Berg
Nursery	Lila Curcio

If you would like to give electronically, please use this QR code:



GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE: Air (G.F. Handel)

WELCOME

GATHERING SONG: *How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord* (ELW 580)



- 1 How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord, when once we heed your call
- 2 But if, for - get - ful, we should find your yoke is hard to bear;
- 3 We mar - vel how your saints be - come in hin - dranc - es more sure;
- 4 In what you give us, Lord, to do, to - geth - er or a - lone,



to live ac - cord - ing to your word and dai - ly learn, re - freshed, re - stored,
if world - ly pres - sures fray the mind and love it - self can - not un - wind,
whose joy - ful vir - tues put to shame the ca - sual way we wear your name,
in old rou - tines or ven - tures new, may we not cease to look to you,



that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.
its tan - gled skein of care: our in - ward life re - pair.
and by our faults ob - scure your pow'r to cleanse and cure.
the cross you hung up - on, all you en - deav - ored done.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

God of presence, you remained fully with Joseph when he sat long years in a prison for a crime he did not commit. Help us to see that you are always with us, so that we might live faithfully in your world. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE: *Before the Waters Nourished Earth* (ACS 1049)



1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -
4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness



ag - ined morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the
still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -



u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.
gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST LESSON: Matthew 5:21-26

Jesus taught us: "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny."

Word of God,
word of life.

ANTHEM: *How Can I Keep from Singing* (A. Beck)

THE WORD: Genesis 39:1-23

¹ Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

² The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵ From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶ So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and with him there he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. ⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me."

⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, with me here, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand. ⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

¹⁰ And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not consent to lie beside her or to be with her. ¹¹ One day, however, when he went into the house to do his work, and while no one else was in the house, ¹² she caught hold of his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" But he left his garment in her hand and fled and ran outside.

¹³ When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴ she called out to the members of her household and said to them, "See, my husband has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us! He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice, ¹⁵ and when he heard me raise my voice and cry out, he left his garment beside me and fled outside."

¹⁶ Then she kept his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me, ¹⁸ but as soon as I raised my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled outside."

¹⁹ When his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, “This is the way your servant treated me,” he became enraged. ²⁰ And Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined; he remained there in prison.

²¹ But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love; he gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. ²² The chief jailer committed to Joseph’s care all the prisoners who were in the prison, and whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³ The chief jailer paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph’s care because the LORD was with him, and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

Word of God,
word of life.

CHILDREN'S SERMON: *Jacky Schnarre*

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Gentle Joseph Heard a Warning* (ACS 1060)



1 Gen - tle Jo - seph heard a warn - ing from an an - gel in the night;
2 Tar - gets of a ty - rant's ar - my, seek - ing safe - ty, flee - ing strife,
3 Give us, God, such faith and cour - age when we move from place to place,



val - iant Mar - y, maid - en moth - er, roused from sleep, pre - pared for flight:
leav - ing house and land and kin - dred, spurred by dreams of peace - ful life;
and to those who come a - mong us, make us chan - nels of your grace.



thus the Christ - child's fam - 'ly lived out what the proph - et had fore - told,
through the des - ert of un - know - ing and the night of doubt they went,
Let us see in ev - 'ry strang - er ref - u - gees from Beth - le - hem,



that he might be called from E - gypt as God's peo - ple were of old.
guid - ed by God's prom - ised pres - ence, by that trust made con - fi - dent.
help us of - fer each one wel - come and re - ceive the Christ in them.

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

Center your church in humility as we strive to follow in your way. Help us listen to the cries of those who have been unfairly hurt by the church and dare to name difficult truths. Show all your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You call us to care for your creation. Lead us into your promise of a better world through sustainable practices and respect for your handiwork. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Inspire all in positions of authority to act honorably. Remind them of their call to use their authority for the sake of the common good. Give them the gift of humility. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Comfort those who come before you in fear and trembling. Calm troubled hearts with your forgiveness. Help all those in need especially those whom we name out loud or hold in our hearts. Grant us your salvation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Change this congregation's heart when we say no to your call. Open us to courageous learning and service in our community, especially in new or challenging places. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is held for self-reflection.

Compassionate God,

we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ✝ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERTORY: *My Faith Looks Up to Thee* (L. Larson)

OFFERING: *As the Grains of Wheat* (ELW 465)

Refrain

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.

1 As this cup of bless - ing is shared with - in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore - taste of all that is to come when

Refrain

may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray:

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, Our bread of life, our table, and our food, you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance. You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life, and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.

You sent your son to eat with sinner and to become food for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life given for us and his rising from the grave, we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal: strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want, and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

COMMUNION: *We will receive the body of Christ as bread with these or similar words: The body of Christ, given for you. If you desire a gluten-free option that is available. The blood of Christ will be received as either red wine or white grape juice with these or similar words: The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

WHO MAY COMMUNE? *All are welcome at the Lord's Table. It is a free gift given to all for the forgiveness of sins. The words "for you" really mean FOR YOU! Children may commune at the discretion of their parents. If you wish to receive a blessing: cross your arms over your chest as a sign for the communion assistants.*

DIRECTIONS FOR COMMUNION: *Please come forward by the center aisle at the direction of the ushers to receive the sacrament and return to your seat down the side aisle. Register each person who will receive Holy Communion on the appropriate pew card for either FLC members or guests and hand this to an usher unless you already placed it in the offering plate.*

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

COMMUNION SONGS:

Lamb of God (ELW 336)



1 Your on - ly Son, no sin to hide, but you have
2 Your gift of love we cru - ci - fied. We laughed and
3 I was so lost, I should have died, but you have



sent him from your side to walk up - on this guilt - y
scorned him as he died. The hum - ble king we named a
brought me to your side to be led by your staff and



sod and to be - come the Lamb of God.
fraud and sac - ri - ficed the Lamb of God. O Lamb of
rod and to be called a lamb of God.



God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the ho - ly Lamb of God. Oh, wash me



in your pre - cious blood, my Je - sus Christ, the Lamb of God.

Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil (ELW 512)

Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

We Come to the Hungry Feast (ELW 479)

1 We come to the hun-gry feast hun-gry for a word of peace.
2 We come to the hun-gry feast hun-gry for a world re - leased
3 We come to the hun-gry feast hun-gry that the hun - ger cease,

To hun - gry hearts un - sat - is - fied the love of God is
from hun - gry folk of ev - 'ry kind, the poor in bod - y,
and know-ing, though we eat our fill, the hun - ger will stay

not de - nied. We come, we come to the hun - gry feast.
poor in mind. We come, we come to the hun - gry feast.
with us; still we come, we come to the hun - gry feast.

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff has three verses of lyrics. The second staff has two lines of lyrics. The third staff has three lines of lyrics. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus. Amen.

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

Amen.

The God of grace ✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: *God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven* (ELW 564)



1 God, who made the earth and heav-en, dark - ness and light:
2 And when morn a - gain shall call us to run life's way,
3 Guard us wak-ing, guard us sleep-ing, and, when we die,
4 Ho - ly Fa - ther, throned in heav-en, all - ho - ly Son,



you the day for work have giv - en, for rest the night.
may we still, what - e'er be - fall us, your will o - bey.
may we in your might - y keep-ing all peace - ful lie.
Ho - ly Spir - it, free - ly giv - en, blest Three in One:



May your an - gel guards de - fend us, slum-ber sweet your mer - cy send us,
From the pow'r of e - vil hide us, in the nar - row path - way guide us,
When the last dread call shall wake us, then, O Lord, do not for - sake us,
grant us grace, we now im-plore you, till we lay our crowns be - fore you



ho - ly dreams and hopes at - tend us all through the night.
nev - er be your smile de - nied us all through the day.
but to reign in glo - ry take us with you on high.
and in wor - thier strains a - dore you while a - ges run.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, st. 1, alt.; William Mercer, 1811–1873, sts. 2, 4, alt.; Richard Whately, 1787–1863, st. 3, alt.
Music: AR HYDY NOS, Welsh traditional

DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Trumpet Voluntary (Wm. Goodwin)*

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK of SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 4

Sunday, September 27 - Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am **Worship w/Holy Communion**
10:45 am Sunday School, Confirmation
12:00 pm New Members Class

Monday, September 28

9:00 am 4 & 5 Year Old Preschool
12:00 pm Staff Meeting

Tuesday, September 29

9:00 am 3,4 & 5 Year Old Preschool
9:15 am Chapel
9:30 am Lectionary Group with Pastor Berg
3:30 pm Weekly News Submission Deadline
7:00 pm Book Club

Wednesday, September 30

9:00 am 4 & 5 Year Old Preschool
10:00 am Peace by Piece Sewing Group

Thursday, October 1

9:00 am 3, 4 and 5 Year Old Preschool
9:30 am FLC Quilters
6:00 pm Personnel Committee
7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Friday, October 2

Church Office Closed

Saturday, October 3

Sunday, October 4 - Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am **Worship w/Holy Communion**
10:45 am Sunday School, Confirmation & Adult Education Classes

October 4, 2026
Nineteenth Sunday
after Pentecost

Matthew 2:13-15
Exodus 14:5-29
Parting of the Sea

Weekly Financial Report for September 20, 2026

Attendance in Person: 127
General Offerings: N/A

Online: 29
Capital Improvement: N/A

Praying for Our Neighbors and the World

Please include in your prayers: Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Iran and the Gulf nations, Global Refuge and Lutheran World Relief.

Those living with cancer:

Juanita (Bonnie Ahlstedt's sister-in-law), **Jen & Dave** (Baker family friend), **Shilo** (Rene & Rob Baker's great-nephew), **Al** (Clint Bastin's cousin), **Sue & Lee** (Beth Bowers' cousins), **Mark** (Dick Boyce's son), **Claire** (Bruce and Darlene Toycen's niece), **Vivian** (Jennifer Cleaves' mother), **Lisa** (Steve Coble's sister), **Tracee** (Bonnie Ahlstedt's friend), **Norma** (Kristin Smith's friend), **Pete** (Paula Glandon's friend), **Jeanne** (Justin LaFord's mother), **Robb** (Jamie Lindell's brother), **John** (Susan Berg's brother), **Gene** (Kathy Telford-Luiz' husband), **Ted** (Sue Toyoda's friend), **Kip** (Paul Desilet's uncle), **Marin** (Beth & Gordy Phelps' friend), **Sarah** (Ashley Phelps' friend), **Deborah** (Vicki Shanks' cousin), **Fern** (Surya Skjonsby's friend), **Veronica** (Nora Strothman's cousin), **Joe** (Barb Thieme's brother), **Peter** (Joyce & Carsten Thode's brother-in-law), **Arlene** (Darlene Toycen's friend), **August** (Karey Coble's friend).

Those who are ill, have an injury or who are recovering from surgery:

Deb (Ross Cook's sister), **Tom Agnew** (member), **Jose Alcaraz** (member), **George** (Kris Dersch's father), **Carolyn Becker** (member), **Dick Boyce** (member), **Doug** (Ho Brown's brother-in-law), **Susan** (Bob Berg's cousin), **Jamie** (Kathy Telford-Luiz' sister), **John** (Linda Chapman's brother-in-law), **Darrell** (Ingrid Cloud's son), **Nancy Davis** (member), **Scott Eiler** (member), **Trygve Enger** (member), **Lee** (Cheryl and Elmer Fleury's son), **Teresa & Lucy** (Baker family friends), **Zach** (Trevor Coble's friend), **Patti** (Kathy Steig's friend), **Debbie** (Sandy Hendricks' cousin), **Makayla** (Sandy & Dan Hendricks' granddaughter), **Jennifer** (Dan Hendricks' niece), **Catherine** (Jamie Lindell's mother-in-law), **Jaimie Lindell** (member), **Liz** (Marlis Pehling's friend), **Karen Johnson** (member), **Phillip** (Karen Johnson's brother), **Marlo** (Leona Keltner's friend), **Kathy Koneiczka** (member), **Richard Koneiczka** (Kathy Koneiczka's husband), **Doug** (Justin LaFord's father), **Peggy & David** (Nancy McGee's friends), **Wendy Morgan** (member), **Dennis** (Dave Shogren's brother), **Mona Shogren** (member), **Ron** (Beth Phelps' brother), **Sandy Sailand** (member), **Jennifer** (Irene Cloud's friend), **Kayden** (Karey Coble's nephew), **Harriett** (Roger Steinke's friend), **Kathy Telford-Luiz** (member), **Nick** (Kathy Steig's son), **Becky** (Ray Thomas' sister), **Kristi** (Sue Toyoda's sister-in-law), **Ron Tuck** (member), **Molly** (Haley Neff-LaFord's friend).

Those who are homebound or in extended care facilities:

Valerie (Kendahl Adjorlolo's cousin), **Bonnie Ahlstedt** (member), **Diane** (Rene & Rob Baker's friend), **Audrey Fisher** (member), **Ida Beth Morgan** (member), **Roger Wolter** (member).

Those Serving Our Country:

AIR FORCE: **Jake Peoples** (Andrea & Eric Peoples' son)

NAVY: **Christopher Whipple** (Carolyn Whipple's son)

COAST GUARD: **Gage McIntyre** (Tamara McIntyre's son)

We are honored to be able to pray for your family and friends in need. Our policy is to publish immediate concerns for 2 weeks, unless we hear from you that an illness or situation is ongoing.

A Call to be Trusted Messengers in this Election Season

August 19, 2026

Dear church,

In **an interview** after I was elected, I reflected on my experience as a mission developer, saying, “It is not about what you think you’re bringing into the community. It’s who you are in the community. The minute we showed that we cared is really when the community adopted us. People don’t care about what you know till they know that you care, and that was the biggest learning for me.”

Faithful. Informed. Engaged. This refrain captures a vision for Lutheran Christians living out their baptismal calling in the election season and beyond. Faith grounds us in God’s promises, and Christ sends us forth to love our neighbors and serve the world. Being informed equips us to address complex issues with wisdom, discernment and integrity. Being engaged reminds us that our participation in civic life is a key way we love and serve our neighbors. Our public witness is rooted in faith, guided by honesty and expressed through active citizenship.

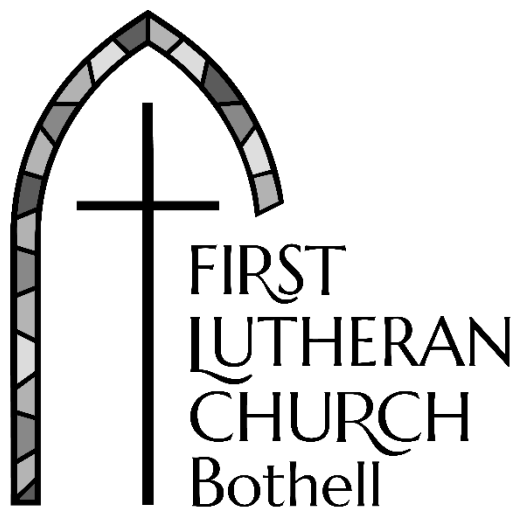
ELCA ministries and leaders already play vital roles during election seasons. You register voters, provide rides to the polls, open your buildings as polling places and advocate for voting rights. Thank you! This year, I invite you to embrace an additional role to help strengthen our democracy: serving as trusted messengers in your communities.

Our church can be “all together in one place” as a powerful witness for truth, love of neighbor and honesty. False information remains a persistent challenge during elections. It can spread rapidly, undermining confidence in the electoral process and discouraging participation. Grounded in the commandment not to bear false witness, our churches and faith leaders are uniquely positioned to help address this challenge by seeking out and sharing accurate information and correcting misinformation when it arises. In a time when trust is often in short supply, serving as trusted sources of wisdom and guidance is a meaningful form of Christian witness. By helping our neighbors access accurate information and engage confidently in the democratic process, we live out our faith through responsible civic engagement and service to the common good.

Be faithful, informed and engaged as disciples of Jesus seeking the well-being of our neighbors and the common good of the communities God has entrusted to our care. Every act of informed participation, every conversation marked by grace and every vote cast with prayerful discernment is an opportunity to bear witness to God’s love in the world.

In Christ,

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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