



**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
142 North Date Street Mesa, Arizona 85201

**Mission Moments**  
October-November 2025  
**Volume 20 Issue 10-11**

## ***Celebrating Seventy-seven Years of God's Amazing Grace***

### **Faith and Reflection for the Fall Season**

As the vibrant **summer greens** yield to a stunning palette of **reds, oranges, and shades of brown**, the autumn season offers a unique and powerful invitation. More than just a beautiful backdrop, this gentle transition in nature provides profound opportunities for **reflection, gratitude, and a renewed sense of faith.**

The changing leaves, a breathtaking display of God's creation, serve as a vivid reminder of life's ongoing cycles—growth, change, and ultimately, a surrender to what comes next. Just as the trees release their leaves in preparation for winter's necessary rest, we, too, are invited to **shed what no longer serves us.** This act of letting go is an essential step, helping us trust in the divine plan for renewal and new growth.

### **Themes of Gratitude and Abundance**

Autumn is synonymous with **harvest**, a time when the earth generously yields the fruit of its labor. For people of faith, this abundance calls us to a deeper posture of **gratitude.** We pause to reflect on the blessings God has poured into our lives throughout the year—the provision, the relationships, the challenges overcome, and the quiet mercies often unnoticed. It's a season to deliberately acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from above.

### **Consider:**

- What "harvests" are you celebrating in your life this season?
- How can you intentionally express gratitude for God's gifts, both physical and spiritual?

### **Finding Purpose in Change**

While the beauty of fall is undeniable, it also carries the essential undertone of **letting go** and preparation for colder days. This makes it a powerful metaphor for the seasons of change and challenge we experience in our own lives.

Just as nature shifts around us, our faith calls us to find strength and purpose in life's changing landscapes—from shifts in health or academics to transitions like retirement or changes in our church community. In a world often marked by uncertainty and conflict, the consistent turning of the seasons reminds us of **God's unwavering presence and faithfulness**, which provides a foundation for positive change.

### **Consider:**

- What transitions or changes are you navigating this fall?
- How can focusing on God's unchanging nature provide you with peace and resilience?

#### **In Response to the Good News of Jesus Christ:**

##### **Our Purpose...**

Gathered to worship!  
Sent to witness and serve!

##### **Our Vision...**

To become more diverse, creative, nurturing, and welcoming within our congregation and in the wider community.

##### **Our Guiding Principles...**

We will follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

We will read, teach, and preach God's Word faithfully.

We commit to prayer and worship as a way of life.

We invite people to know Jesus Christ.

#### **Reconciling in Christ Welcoming Statement**



First Evangelical  
Lutheran Church/

Santa Trinidad commits to being a loving and welcoming community of faith, centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. We continue to proclaim this is a safe and inclusive place for all types of people. This includes all races, ethnicities, creeds, income levels, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, educational levels, family structures, political affiliations, marital statuses, physical or mental abilities. Equally important, we advocate for racial equality. All are welcome here - come as you are!

The Messenger is a bi-monthly publication of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mesa, Arizona. Please submit information by email to [felc@firstevlutheran.com](mailto:felc@firstevlutheran.com) or in written form to the church office by the **15th of the month** prior to publication.

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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Serving our neighbors is our **FIRST** priority!

### OFFICE HOURS

Mondays through Wednesdays:

8:30AM-2:30PM

### Staff

Luis Ochoa, Pastor  
Joy Petroff, Admin. Secretary

### Congregational Officers

Traci Laasch, President  
Sharon Shields, Vice President  
Kathleen Rogers, Treasurer  
Ellen Riske, Secretary

### Congregational Council

Corinne Cursi  
Traci Laasch  
Ellen Riske  
Kathleen Rogers  
Rhonda Schmidt  
Sharon Shields

### Contact Us

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First Evangelical now accepts  
contributions via the Zelle app.

Search for "felc@firstevlutheran.com"



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## **A Call to Stewardship and Connection**

As we gather with loved ones for holidays like Thanksgiving, the spirit of autumn naturally fosters **community and generosity**. It's a season to extend **hospitality**, share our blessings, and intentionally connect with those around us. This reflects a core tenet of our faith: to be good **stewards** of what we've been given and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Whether through sharing a meal, volunteering your time, or simply reaching out to someone in need, autumn inspires us to live out our faith in practical, compassionate ways.

### **Consider:**

- How can you use your time, talents, or resources to bless others this fall?
- What opportunities are there to deepen your connections with family, friends, or your faith community?

May this fall season be filled with love and peace. I invite you to **slow down, reflect, and draw closer to God**. It's a time to fully embrace gratitude, find strength in transition, and live out your faith with open hearts and generous hands, anticipating the promise of renewal that always follows. **May this be a season of rich spiritual harvest for you.**

*Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV): "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."*

**Pastor Luis E Ochoa**



Worship with us  
Sundays at 9:30 AM

Livestream link:

<https://www.youtube.com/@felutheran/streams>



**We need you and your trunk to  
make this night a success!**

**October 31, 6-8 PM**

Can't come with your trunk? We  
also need donations of candy!

Please sign up on the  
sheet on the office door if  
you plan to provide a  
trunk!



**JOIN US FOR  
SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday School is baaaack!

We'd be thrilled to have you join us!



Join the Out to Lunch Bunch as we explore Peruvian cuisine!

Tuesday, October 14

11:30 AM

1245 W Guadalupe Rd Mesa, AZ 85202  
(480) 284 - 4284



Lutheran  
Social Services  
of the Southwest

## Save the Date!

### Christmas Drive

The Christmas season is approaching!  
We'd love your support in collecting gifts.



We will distribute gifts to clients in every LSS service area,  
with your help - new slippers and robes for older adults,  
and toys and games for children of all ages.

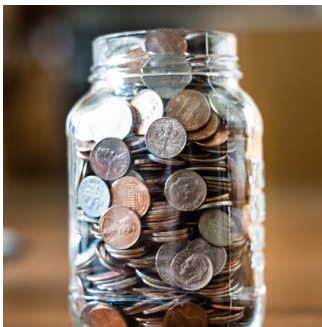
Gifts can be dropped off in Tucson or Phoenix no later than December 15.  
You can also follow the link below to access the Amazon Wish List.

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/35E007E1LVV8M?  
ref\\_=wl\\_share&vcrmeid=dPZTC0HH4USa6jXltmMagw&vcrmiid=YcstZ  
nyXokCf5FQ1hPg9NA](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/35E007E1LVV8M?ref_=wl_share&vcrmeid=dPZTC0HH4USa6jXltmMagw&vcrmiid=YcstZnyXokCf5FQ1hPg9NA)



### Spanish Bible Study followed by Fellowship

Mondays at 6 PM



### Change for Change Offering

Thank you to everyone who donated supplies and change for Rancho del Arte after school program. They are very grateful for the school supplies and art supplies. Your generosity is appreciated! Watch the bulletins for details for our next quarter Change for Change offering which will take place October through December.



# First Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Council Meeting Minutes for August 26, 2025

Present: Corrine Cursi, Traci Laasch, Pastor Luis, Ellen Riske, Rhonda Schmidt and Sharon Shields.  
Absent: Kathleen Rogers

**A. Devotional & Prayer** led by Pastor Luis at 4:30 PM.

**B. Review of Council Minutes**

Reviewed and approved minutes from April 29, May 27, June 24 and July 27 special meeting.  
Rhonda moved and Ellen seconded.

**C. Review and of Reports**

- Treasurer's Report
- Leadership Report
  - a. Rui-Xi has been hired as our new Music Director.
  - b. Sunday School will start on September 7.
  - c. God's Work, Our Hands Day of Service will be on September 7.
  - d. 1st Place Community Center continues to meet on the second Wednesday of the month.

**D. Old Business**

- Council approved purchasing Powerchurch as the new software for our accounting. It would take effect on January 1, 2026. This costs \$455/year.
- Projects for Service Sunday were selected.
- The bill for the trimming of the Courtyard trees has been settled.
- The LSS-MOU Agreement has been received, signed and sent to Pastor on July 10.

**E. New Business**

- Luis Orozco has volunteered to be our Property Manager regarding repairs.
- Repair for Concordia Charter Schools A/C cost \$16,000. First is responsible for \$8,000 of this bill. Will be an ongoing Council discussion about where to pull funds to pay this.
- Pastor David's (DEM) team has submitted its Ministry Site Review. Council will set a special meeting to review and plan how to implement this.
- Grants. Council will set a special meeting to determine possible grants, and our needs.
- Council reviewed request to place a back up air conditioner in the Food Bank to prevent loss of food due to interruption of A/C during summer months. May also be able to cool LSS offices. Will be an on-going discussion.

**F. Adjournment and Closing with the Lord's Prayer**

Sharon moves and Traci seconded that meeting adjourn at 5:33 PM.

### MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

As of 9/30/25	Actual 2025	Budget 2025	Actual 2024	Budget 2024
Offerings	77009	86497	90061	85396
Other Income	113115	107785	80096	73872
Total Income	190124	194282	170157	159268
Expenses	211866	191450	152768	159681
Inc. Less Exp.	-21742	2832	17389	-195



## **Narrative Lectionary Explained**

This Scope and Sequence for Sunday School helped me connect all the lessons to the theme for the year and to see the bigger picture for each chunk of lessons and sermons. I hope you like it!

Traci Laasch

### **Called by God, Blessed to Serve (Year 4, 2025-2026)**

The stories of the Year 4 Narrative Lectionary tell of God's invitation into relationship given to all people, and the ways in which God provides gifts of grace at every turn. While Abraham seemed too old to father a nation, Moses too quiet to lead a people, and David too young to take over Israel, we see throughout the Old Testament that God repeatedly calls the unexpected to step out in faith. As the people answer God's call, God never fails to equip them for the journey. Throughout Scripture, gifts of grace are given to those answering God's call, especially at some of the most trying moments. From gifts of manna in the wilderness to the promise of new life for the struggling Israelites, God's call to discipleship is never without God's blessing and provision each step of the way. As God chooses to dwell among us in Jesus Christ, God's commitment to relationship is distinctly clear. Jesus' invitations to abundant life reveal a relentless love that desires that all people know and serve God. His teachings reveal a kingdom that opposes traditional expectations of power and importance, always calling the least expected into God's mission of redemption. As the hope of the resurrection spreads, God's grace abounds in everyday moments and throughout the significant challenges of the early church. These early churches learn to rejoice, even in trials, always trusting in God's provision. Each of us are invited into a life of discipleship by our loving Creator. God's continued presence and abounding grace allows us to answer God's call, and through those blessings, to live in hope as we serve Jesus through our neighbor.

### **God Provides Blessings (Pentecost: Sept. 7 to Oct. 5, 2025)**

God created humans to be in relationship with their Creator and blessed them with all they would need. Desiring the best for us, God regularly calls us back into relationship and invites imperfect people to be part of God's beautiful story of redemption. This relationship with God requires trust, and often challenges us to step out in this trust. Abraham, as well as Moses and the Israelites, were called to leave all they knew and trust in God's provision. Yet, when God calls, God also provides all that is needed to live faithfully as a blessing to others.

### **Called by God (Pentecost: Oct. 12 to Nov. 2, 2025)**

God's call is often surprising to us, as God looks not on the outside, but at the heart. God continues to invite unlikely people to be great leaders and pillars of the faith. These imperfect leaders answer God's call, allowing God to work through them in remarkable ways, even as their faults are sometimes evident.

God's presence serves as a constant source of strength and peace and equips them to serve, though challenges may abound.

### **Promises of Hope (Pentecost: Nov. 9 to Nov. 23, 2025)**

As the Israelites turn away from God and forget their calling to serve as a blessing to all nations, the prophets call them back to relationship with their creator. The prophets offer promises of hope to a people lost and dejected, reminding them that God will never abandon them and promises a future filled with hope. The people may have turned from God, but God will not turn away from them. God's plan for their future, and ours, is bright and filled with hope.

### **God's Presence Brings Life (Advent: Nov. 30 to Dec. 21, 2025)**

God's everlasting promise to be in relationship with the Israelites and all creation allows hope to take root in even the most hopeless circumstances. God continues to provide and be faithful, bringing life where there was once death, like dry bones being gathered back to life. As texts move into the New Testament in this Advent season, hope is ultimately embodied in human form as God will go to any length to show love, even becoming flesh and dwelling with us. God's presence is found among us in the humble form of a child in Jesus, the one who brings true life to all.

**Sunday, October 26**



**Eva Sharpe's  
Confirmation**



**All Saints' Sunday & Dia de los Muertos  
Sunday, November 2  
Bilingual Worship Service**



**Followed by a potluck meal.  
The sign-up sheet for the potluck is on  
the church office door.**

# OCTOBER 2025

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
FRC = Family Resource Center GR = Great Room S = Sanctuary OCR = Olsen Conference Room CCS = Concordia Charter School C = Cafeteria/Fellowship Hall * Off-campus						
<b>5</b> 17th Sunday in Pentecost 9:30 Worship—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR	<b>6</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>7</b> 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6:30-8:30 PM ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families) - GR	<b>1</b> 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>2</b> OFFICE CLOSED 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard	<b>3</b> OFFICE CLOSED 10AM LSS Parent Café - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections	<b>4</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR
<b>Pastor Luis on vacation October 5-11</b>						
<b>12</b> 18th Sunday in Pentecost 9:30 Worship—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR	<b>13</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>14</b> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE NO LSS-SW Food Pantry 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6 PM Manna Night - CCS 6:30-8:30 PM ACA - GR	<b>15</b> 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 5 PM LSS Family connections - GR 5-7 PM LSS-SW Food Pantry - Courtyard 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>16</b> OFFICE CLOSED 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard	<b>17</b> OFFICE CLOSED 10AM LSS Flourishing Families - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections	<b>18</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR 12 PM Milo & Moxie - GR
<b>19</b> 19th Sunday in Pentecost 9:30 Worship—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR	<b>20</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>21</b> 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6 PM Manna Night: visit to Pumpkin Patch 6:30-8:30 PM ACA - GR	<b>22</b> 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>23</b> OFFICE CLOSED 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard	<b>24</b> OFFICE CLOSED 10AM LSS Parent Café - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections	<b>25</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR 5-10 PM ACA Halloween Party - GR
<b>26</b> Reformation 9:30 Worship/Confirmation of Eva Sharpe—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR	<b>27</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>28</b> 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6 PM Manna Night - CCS Farm to School Night 6:30-8:30 PM ACA - GR	<b>29</b> 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 10AM LSS Parent Café - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 6-8 PM Trunk or Treat - parking lot	





# November 2025

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
FRC = Family Resource Center GR = Great Room S = Sanctuary OCR = Olsen Conference Room		CCS = Concordia Charter School C = Cafeteria/Fellowship Hall * Off-campus				
<b>2</b> All Saints Sunday/Dia de Los Muertos 9:30 Bi-lingual Worship—S Potluck	<b>3</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>4</b> 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6:30-8:30 PM ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families) - GR 6 PM Manna Night - CCS	<b>5</b> 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>6</b> OFFICE CLOSED  9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard	<b>7</b> OFFICE CLOSED 10AM LSS Parent Café - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections	<b>1</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR
<b>9</b> 22nd Sunday in Pentecost 9:30 Worship—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR	<b>10</b> Veteran's Day OFFICE CLOSED	<b>11</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN NO LSS-SW Food Pantry 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6:30-8:30 PM ACA - GR	<b>12</b> DEADLINE: NEWSLETTER 11:30 AM 1st Pt Coordinating Comm - OCR 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 5-7 PM LSS-SW Food Pantry - Courtyard 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>13</b> OFFICE CLOSED 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 9 AM Mesa Migrant - Great Room	<b>14</b> OFFICE CLOSED 10AM LSS Parent Café - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections	<b>15</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR
<b>16</b> 26th Sunday in Pentecost 9:30 Non-communion Worship—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR  Pastor Luis on vacation	<b>17</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>18</b> 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6 PM Manna Night - CCS 6:30-8:30 PM ACA - GR	<b>19</b> 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 5 PM LSS Family connections - GR 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>20</b> OFFICE CLOSED  8 AM- 4 PM LSS Class - GR	<b>21</b> OFFICE CLOSED 10AM LSS Flourishing Families- GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections	<b>22</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR 12 PMLSS Family Connections /Bday Celebration - GR
<b>23</b> Christ the King Sunday 9:30 Worship—S New Member Blessing 10:30 Pie Social-GR	<b>24</b> DEADLINE: BULLETIN 6 PM Spanish Bible Study - GR	<b>25</b> 9 AM LSS-SW Food Pantry- Courtyard 10-11 AM LSS Messy Play - GR 11 AM-12 PM LSS Family Connections 11 AM-1PM LSS Triple P L2Eng/SP 6 PM Manna Night - CCS Thanksgiving Potluck 6:30-8:30 PM ACA - GR	<b>26</b> OFFICE CLOSED 3 PM LSS Raising a Reader - GR 4 PM LSS Kids in the Kitchen - GR 6:30 Choir Rehearsal - S	<b>27</b> Thanksgiving  OFFICE CLOSED	<b>28</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>29</b> 10 AM Zumbini - GR 11 AM LSS PlaySPOT - GR
<b>30</b> First Sunday in Advent 9:30 Worship—S 10:30 Fellowship –GR						