



The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City  
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Thursday, September 28th, 2023

### This Sunday

**18th Sunday after Pentecost** - It is so easy and so tempting to build ourselves up at the expense of others. *"I can't imagine ever doing that."* *"How can people live like that?"* *"Who would do such a thing?"* At some point we all think or say these sorts of things. Like it or not, we use these words to comfort ourselves at the expense of others. These words are a reminder that all people stand in need of God's grace. Each of this day's readings shows us this reality: Ezekiel proclaims God's invitation, *"Turn, then, and live"* (Ezek. 18:32). This is an invitation that extends to all people, from a God deeply desiring a loving and life-giving relationship with humanity. In Philippians, we are reminded of Jesus' act of grace on the cross, emptying himself, becoming sin so that all creation might be redeemed through him. And in the gospel, in the parable of the two sons, Jesus invites us to choose between two sons when neither fully does the will of their father. Here Jesus makes the point that we are all equally in need of God's grace. All of us are in need of God's grace; God extends grace to all, and one day we will confess that salvation as one people.

**A Spiritual Practice for this Week** - Look for an empty jar, box, or container to use as a prayer focus this week. Listen for God's voice to you in Philippians 2:1-13, considering how the Spirit might be inviting you to empty yourself in this season of your life, not as punishment, but to *"let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."*

**Gospel Service Today** - This Sunday we sing many traditional *"gospel songs"* at worship. The roots of American gospel singing lie in the spiritual songs of the eighteenth-century religious awakenings and African American spirituals. We will sing and hear gospel songs from both traditions this morning.

**Sunday School** - The kids had fun learning about Noah's Ark and creating rainbows on their activity sheets. They learned Noah had a hard job to do from God and followed His word to save so many animals. Join us after Children's Word during service!

**In Sympathy** - To the family and friends of † Wallace Guptill who died on Sunday, September 17th. Services were held at First Lutheran Church in Hinckley on Monday, September 25th.

### The Coming Week

**Everyday Connections Bible Study** - Every Sunday, we hear God's challenges and promises for us in the Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel. Interested in having weekly conversation and learning about these readings? Daily Connections provides devotional material, suggested spiritual practices, questions for journaling, and prayers for each week. Everyday Connections Bible Study resumes this Wednesday at 1:00 PM in the church library. There is the possibility of a Sunday evening Zoom gathering as well—indicate your interest on your *"Count Me In"* form or contact the church office.

**Volunteers are Needed for WASP and Sunday School** - Everything is laid out for you to follow and instructions provided. Email [youth@rushcityfirstlutheran.org](mailto:youth@rushcityfirstlutheran.org) for more information and questions.

**Backpack Food Program** - Did you know that our congregation stores and packs bags for the Rush City Backpack Program? The program provides extra food and snacks for children on the weekend. We are proud to partner with CE Jacobson Elementary and Family Pathways Food Shelf and are so thankful for a lot of community support. Consider helping us pack bags every Wednesday at 5:30 PM or delivering every Thursday at 10:00 AM beginning this week. Monetary donations can be sent directly to: Family Pathways Food Shelf, 6413 Oak Street, North Branch, MN 55056. **IMPORTANT:** Include a note or write on the memo that it is for the *"Rush City Backpack Program."* All donations, dollar-for-dollar, directly benefit the Rush City account.

**Tools for the Church: Building Houses & Planting Gardens** | Saturday, Oct. 7 - 9 a.m.-3 p.m. | Gustavus Adolphus, St. Paul - While *"being church"* today has changed over the last year years, God continues to call you and your congregation to work for justice and peace and to share the life transforming good news of Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 29 reminds us about the importance of setting deep roots where we are planted. What does that look like? It looks like having a sense of who you are...who your neighbor is...and why you do what you do. Join us, where we will engage in an interactive day of learning tools and practices. The end goal of this day is for you to have a sense of how to get at the heart of your mission, vision, values in your ministry setting. The day is made for lay leaders and rostered ministers. This event costs \$15 per person and includes and lunch. Indicate your interest on your *"Count Me In"* or contact Pastor Nathan. Registration deadline is Monday, October 2nd.

**New Member Gathering October 8th** - It's not what you believe, but knowing that you belong: that is the most important part of church membership. At the heart of our life together is the gift of one another and walking with each other in our journey of faith. Interested in becoming a member? Or not sure but curious about what membership is all about? If so, you're invited our first New Member Gathering next Sunday at 10:45 AM (*following Coffee Fellowship*).

### On the Horizon

**Fall Clean-Up** | Saturday, October 21st - Everyone is welcome for this annual fellowship and work event and there are tasks for every

age and ability. If you can, please bring your own trimmers, blowers and rakes. We begin at 8:00 AM. Indicate your interest on your "Count Me In" or speak to Mike Griffin, Property Chair, if you can help (651-245-2403). Rain date is October 28th.

**Spiritual Gifts Retreat | Saturday, October 28th** - Have you ever wondered what you should be when you grow up? All joking aside, God has called us to live our life to the fullest and to realize that every day is a gift for us to love and to serve. God grants us all specific gifts that empower us to do the work of the kingdom every single day. You are gifted! Spiritual gifts are part of your DNA and we want to help you uncover your gift package in a way that makes sense. This retreat will provide you with an opportunity to look deeply at who you are and how God has uniquely blessed you with certain gifts. Using spiritual gift inventories, conversation and other tools, you'll go home with a better sense of who you are and how you might best serve your faith community and the world! Registration is \$30 per person to cover the cost of materials and lunch. Indicate your interest on your "Count Me In" or contact Pastor Nathan. Registration deadline is Monday, October 23rd.

**2024 Mission Trip - Niagara Falls, NY! July 26th - August 4th.** 10 spots available but we can always add more. Fundraisers available to help cover cost. Please email Amanda at youth@rushcityfirstlutheran.org if interested.

### Ongoing

**Website Update** - We are looking for someone to help us update and re-vamp the design of our webpage. Most of the content is ready to-go, but we are looking for a fresh look to our content as well as including more recent pictures. Office staff can assist with every step and, if you wish, you can use your own computer. Indicate your interest on your "Count Me In" (or suggest someone you know) or speak to Pastor Nathan directly.

**Calling for Pictures!** - As we update our website we are looking for recent pictures (*especially in the past two years*) of our life together. You can easily use your phone to send several pictures at once. Send all pictures to office@rushcityfirstlutheran.org

**Church Van** - Would you like a safe and easy ride to worship? Please inform the church office **by 12 Noon on Thursdays** if you'd like a ride to church (*leave a message on the office phone*). The van is walker and wheelchair accessible - no steps necessary! Pickups begin at 8:30 AM and departure from church will begin at 10:30 AM.

**Baptism & Membership** - God's grace is a gift that is freely given to us. We don't earn a thing when it comes to God's love, and we only try to live in response to that gift. Please indicate on our "Count Me In" form or speak to Pastor Nathan if you are interested in baptism or becoming a member of the congregation.

**Sunday Morning Greeters** - Be a part of our hospitality and a welcoming face to others! All are welcome to sign-up to greet those coming to worship at the door. A sign-up sheet is outside the church office.

**Prayer List** - Our prayer list for homebound members and those with ongoing needs has now moved to our monthly newsletter. Immediate prayer requests will continue to be listed in our weekly bulletin under the "This Sunday" heading.

**Special Offering Envelopes** - If you give by envelope, once every two months there is an envelope designated as "Special Offering." These offerings support endeavors beyond the regular ministries of First Lutheran. October offerings support the Decorating Committee.

**Livestream and FM UPDATE** - The livestream is currently suspended while we improve our equipment and establish a better internet connection. We will also need additional volunteers to run future livestreams and adjust sound levels. For now, we will continue to broadcast on 96.5 FM all of our church services.

**Pastoral Calls** - You are welcome to contact the church office anytime if you have a pastoral need, especially for a medical emergency or at the time of death. After hours emergency numbers are provided on the church's answering message. You can also use the "Count Me In" to request a pastoral visit.

Income Report -	<u>Last Week</u>	<u>September Month-to-date *</u>	<u>August Income</u>
General Fund	\$ 2,573.00	\$10,952.00	\$13,282.31
Building Fund	\$ 990.00	\$ 4,340.00	\$ 3,126.31
*Does not include electronic giving totals			
Expense Report -	<u>Average Monthly Budget</u>	<u>September Beginning Balance</u>	<u>August Expenses</u>
General Fund	\$16,954.00	\$ 2,366.96	\$14,947.91
Building Fund	\$ 5,849.00	\$ 1,194.07	\$ 5,849.00

<p><b><u>Sunday, October 1st</u></b>            9:00AM: Gospel Service Worship            9:15 AM: Sunday School            10:00 AM: Coffee Fellowship</p> <p><b><u>Monday, October 2nd</u></b>            1:00 - 5:00 PM: Office Hours            7:00 PM: Church Council Meeting</p> <p><b><u>Wednesday, October 4th</u></b>            8:00 - 1:00 PM: Office Hours            9:00 AM: Quilters            1:00 PM: Everyday Connections Bible Study</p>	<p>3:00 PM: W.A.S.P.            5:00 PM: Family Meal            5:30 PM: Backpack Program Food Packing            5:30 PM: Confirmation            6:30 PM: Senior Choir            7:30 PM: Bell Choir</p> <p><b><u>Thursday, October 5th</u></b>            8:00 - 1:00 PM: Office Hours            9:30 AM: Ruth Circle Meeting            10:00 AM: Backpack Program Delivery</p>	<p><b><u>Sunday, October 8th</u></b>            9:00AM: Worship            9:15 AM: Sunday School            10:00 AM: Coffee Fellowship            10:45 AM: New Member Gathering</p>
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