

**First Lutheran Church**  
**92 W. Walnut Street**  
**Washington, PA 15301**



**Ixoye**  
**ICH-THUS**  
**Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior**

## **Pastoral Perspectives #2 for September 2023**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit amen.

After nearly five years of the Pennsylvania judicial system working on the case against Robert Bowers there is finally some closure for the victims, families, police officers, friends, and community of all those involved. The jury returned with a guilty verdict and to give the death penalty.

In scripture: the word "kill" in the 10 Commandments is much closer, in the original Hebrew, to the word "murder" as found in Book of Exodus 20:2-17 & the Book of Deuteronomy 5:6-21. In the Bible the 5th Commandment is, "Thou Shall Not Murder". Luther in his Small Catechism wrote, "What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbours, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs."

In the Gospel of St. Matthew 5:21 we heard our Lord and Saviour Himself say, "You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, "You shall not murder;" and "Whoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgement."

What happened at the Tree of Life Synagogue was a planned anti Semitic/ hate crime: not only were parishioners murdered but there was also the attempted murder of the responding police and swat officers on that horrific day.

The jury had a heavy burden to carry in their decision regarding the punishment of such a violent crime that took place in a house of worship. Each juror must live with the fact that the blood of the murderer is on their conscience until the day Bowers is dead one way or the other.

Pennsylvania governors have the power of whether or not to use the death penalty. This too is a decision that the politician must live with for the rest of their life. Our last two governors have chosen not to implement the death penalty. It's easy for us to sit back and judge but what if we are wrong?

In this case of the Tree of Life murders we know that there is no doubt as to whom is guilty. The defense never challenged this but rather looked historically at the life of Bowers to show that there were reasons as to why he committed these murders. It's not always that easy to see with the evidence.

When crimes against humanity take place that shock and sicken us and leave us asking ourselves, "how could such evil exist in humanity?" The answer is in our human history which shows us that sin and evil are everywhere and always have been there since Genesis 4:1-16 with the story of Cain and Abel; this is mankind at its worst! God gave judgement upon Cain for the murder of his brother, "the earth would no longer yield to him any fruit, and he would become a fugitive and a wanderer" (Genesis 4:12).

No matter what punishments we may feel are appropriate: incarceration, solitary confinement, a life sentence, or the death penalty; these punishments are limited to as long as we have breath. In the end it is God who is the final judge and no one on this earth bypasses God on their way their way to heaven or to hell; even if they do not believe in God they will stand before Him and are in for a real wakeup call for God's judgement is eternal!

When we followers of Jesus die, we too will stand before God and God will rightly judge each of us, "on what we have done and left undone" (as we confess each Sunday in church and ask for God's forgiveness in our repentance).

For Bowers, what is even more damning to his soul is that he is not repentant for his actions and behaviours that day and, even while he was wounded, he continued spewing his hatred for a group of people that he had never met nor had ever done anything personally to him. His multiple decisions in planning each detail of this attack and then entering the synagogue, a house of worship, to murder innocent people is not mental illness but pure evil.

Houses of worship globally have suffered more and more attacks in recent years that reach into the thousands! In the first quarter of 2023 there have been 289 attacks, or incidents, on US churches and no doubt this will continue.

This may remind us of Luther's famous hymn A Mighty Fortress Hymn # 505 ELW "Though hordes of devils fill the land, all threatening to devour us."

However, it is more important that we remember the final verse of the hymn, "They cannot win the day. The kingdom's our FOREVER!"

May we continue to wake each morning thanking God and praising Him and put on the full armour of God as we are called to by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians 6:10-18.

In Christ Jesus,

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

## What's Happening at First Lutheran

September 2023

With the dog days of summer behind us we prepare to return to all of our church programs after the long weekend of September 4th .

**Adult Catechism** class starts up Sept 5th on Tuesdays at 11 am and 7 pm,we will look at the book we read over the summer, "Disordered, Lies about Human Nature and the Truth that Sets Us Free." by Rev. C. Esget

**Adult Sunday School** will once again begin before services on September 10th at 9:45 am in the church library. All are welcome. To see more info please read the article by FLC VP Dennis S.

**Dart-ball** will return on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 pm and they are always looking for players. For more info please see the article by FLC VP Dennis S.

**Confirmation Class** study of the Bible will begin Sept 11th from 6-8 pm on Monday evenings

**Movie and a Meal** will return monthly on the last Sunday of each month starting Sept. 24th after the service. Enjoy faith based movies and something to eat and drink as another way we can learn about our faith.

**Children's Sunday School** will return part time with the children's sermon during the sermon on the second and fourth Sundays of the month (Sept. 10th & 24th).

**Chess Club** meets year round on Thursday evenings at 7:30 - 9:30 pm and welcomes those wanting to learn the great game to seasoned veterans. See Dave L for more info

**Bell Choir** rehearsal return as well at 7 PM Monday's.

**Adult Choir** is in the works.

As our church is currently in its 225 year of being a faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the City of Washington. We continue to gather and worship at God's holy house. I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and check out these options of growing in faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

# September

Dear First Lutheran Church Family,

Where did the summer go? I can't believe that I am already writing for the September Newsletter.

Council has been taking it easy over the summer and working on church maintenance. As we move into September, we are still trying to fill our Organist/Music Director position. Please get the word out. Meanwhile, we are blessed to have Linnea and Rick fill in for us when they can while we continue our search.

Our fall classes will be starting up, so please take a look at the church calendar for the dates and times. Anyone interested in joining our Adult Choir or Bell choir, now is the time as they begin practicing. And yes, you can do this. I've heard you all sing. The Bell Choir is not as hard as it looks and they will be glad to teach you how it's done and then you, too, can become a First Lutheran Church ding-a-ling!!!

If you have an idea for any fundraisers, please let Pastor or someone on Council know. We encourage new ideas and welcome your help. Everyone is welcome to our Church Council Meetings if you would like to propose a new idea.

Just a reminder, Pastor will have mid-week Advent Services in December, and we will have our Congregational Meeting in November to vote on the 2024 budget. Please check future newsletters for these dates and times.

Blessings,

Jennifer Black, FLC Council President



## WNALC September Newsletter

Welcome back everyone to our scheduled life.

Thank you to all who donated food and desserts for the yard sale and picnic.

Our tee shirt sale was successful. I hope everyone is happy with their choice.

Fall is creeping up on us so it is time to get back on a normal schedule.

The WNALC board meeting will be held Wednesday, Sept. 6 at 10:00 AM in the lounge.

Circle will be held Thursday, Sept. 28 at 10:00 AM in the lounge. Leader will be Ruby Rodgers and hostess Linda Coleman.

Altar team for September is Janet Fischer and Sonie Rea.

We welcome any new women to our Bible Study and lunch. We share discussion, food, and laughter. Please join us at 10:00 AM the last Thursday of the month.

God bless,

Sonie

## **MUM FUNDRAISER**

Thank you to all for your support of the Mum Fundraiser which will benefit the Roof and Window Fund.

Flower pickup will be Saturday, September 9th from 9:00—11:00 am. Please pull beside the Church Handicap entrance to pick up your order. Any questions, please call Vickie at 724-344-0565. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

Caitlyn and Vickie Group

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## **First Lutheran Church Dart Ball is back!**

We are looking for players to join our team. The season starts Tuesday September 12<sup>th</sup>. Practice is weekly starting at 7:00pm with the game following at 7:30pm. No experience needed. Come out and join us for a weekly night of fun.

## **Adult Sunday School**

The adult Sunday School class starts back up Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup>. Class is 9:45am to 10:45am. We would love to have you come and join our class. Our readings and studies correlate with what Pastor preaches during the church service.

## **YARD SALE UPDATE**

First, a big "Thank You" to all who came out to help before, during and after the sale. The yard sale is one of our biggest fund raisers, but also requires the most man power. I think having the tables up and ready to accept donations was a good idea. Saved a lot of leg work! I do think attendance was down this year. Could it be the sale items were all downstairs? Possibly, but the trade off of not having to haul things up the stairs and then back down was well worth it. Out total was \$1755. This includes the kitchen profit. Thank you Leann for another well run and organized kitchen. Your time, effort and costs are much appreciated. Thanks to all who donated baked goods. Not sure she will do the kitchen next year. She was disappointed in the total sale amount, which I understand. Kitchen sale and yard sale was down from last year. We made approx. 1/2 of last year and the year before that. Does dollar amount equal labor involved?? This is a question which I believe needs to be discussed, maybe at the Nov. Congregational meeting?? Let's think on it.

Kim Luketich

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## **PICNIC UPDATE**

I am writing this just hours after arriving home from the event. What a great day! Weather was prefect and attendance was great. Approx. 52 people attended. Plenty of good food to go around. I think everyone had a good time. Thank you to all who donated baskets and helped in anyway. Despite the microphone system not working, I think Pastor's and Kimberly's voice was heard thru out the park! Carl Group did another good job at the grill.( I won't mention the 8 burnt hot dogs) Really, it takes a lot of effort to get this picnic up and running and I do appreciate the help for set up and clean up and having Carl do the grilling, it allows my husband and myself to run the kitchen. And I counted on Larry Sten to pick up any loose ends I was over- looking. I think the dollar amount made on the baskets sale was \$615! Another successful day for the Lutherans. Let's do this again next year!

Kim Luketich



## First Lutheran Church



Would love for **YOU** to join us!!

Hello our First Lutheran Church Family!!

We hope you all had a wonderful summer! Fall will be here in a little over a month and before we know it, winter. Time seems to fly by faster every year.

Bell Choir practice will begin on Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. We will also continue our Sunday practices, bell basics/introduction to handbells, starting on September 17<sup>th</sup> after the Worship Service.

The Bell Choir rings most High Feast Days thru ought the year. We will begin preparing for Reformation, All Saints' Sunday, Christ the King, the Advent Season and Christmas Eve Service.

We are always looking for more choir members, 12 years old and up. Whether you have some music experience or NONE, or just curious about the bells, please join us on a Monday evening or a Sunday after service to pick up the bells, ring them, and ask questions. We would **LOVE** for **YOU** to join us!!

In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like more information you can speak with any choir member, or you can contact Kris at 724-747-0849 or [kkbrgs1@gmail.com](mailto:kkbrgs1@gmail.com).

Blessings to all!!  
See you on Sunday,

First Lutheran Church Bell Choir

~FAITH is seeing **light** with your heart when all your eyes see is darkness~



# *Come join us*

For an afternoon  
of fun and social  
gathering

## *Church fundraiser*

*When: Saturday September 23, 2023, 2 pm*  
*Where: First Lutheran Church Social Room*

*92 West Walnut Street, Washington, Pa*

*What: Painting Event lead by Shelby*  
*(no painting experience necessary)*

*Cost: \$20 will include the cost of supplies and*  
*the remainder proceeds will go to the church*

*Please RSVP by September 17 to Judy Sarver, so that we*  
*can purchase the needed supplies 856-889-0776*

*Snacks and refreshments too!*

### September Lay Readers

3

10 Kimberly Grewe

17 Dennis Schmidt

24

### September Altar Flowers

3

10 Nancy Larson

17 Maust

24

### September Acolytes

3

10

17

24

### September Ushers

3 C. Krcil; R. Williams

10 S. Ringer; D. Schmidt; Z. Mason; M. Verderber

17 T. Bernhart; E. Goga; R. Johnson; J. Ulanich

24 R. Phillips; J. Sakerka; D. Wheeler

### September Counters—Alternate: Dennis Schmidt

3 C. Group; V. Group

10 J. Black; S. Berry

17 H. Quedenfeld; K. Luketich

24 R. Williams; L. Sten

### September Altar Team

Janet Fischer and Sonie Rea

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Amy Pascuzzi
- 4 Judy Sarver  
Brad Bernhart
- 5 Lillah Clark
- 6 Shane Ringer  
Karen Krcil  
Anne Johnston
- 8 C. Arne Sten
- 12 Joanne Marker  
Tim Bernhart
- 14 Paul Sten
- 17 Jeff Ulanich  
Larry Zimmerman
- 22 Kandi DeWalt  
Herb Snyder
- 26 Kurt Snyder
- 29 Andy Carl