



FIRST HAND

First Lutheran Church
208 West Sandusky Avenue
Bellefontaine, Ohio 43311
937-592-7699 Website:
www.flcbellefontaine.org

Mission Statement:

Sharing God's grace through prayer, witness, and service

Vision Statement:

Connecting people to Jesus and one another



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OUR WELCOME STATEMENT

At First Lutheran, all means all, and the gifts of God are free. We welcome, love, affirm, and include everyone in our faith community regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Here in this place, you will find a warm, loving Christian family which strives to faithfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all of God's children. We renounce racism, discrimination, and persecution in any form, in faithfulness to the gospel, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide ministries and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place.

GOD WELCOMES ALL, AND SO DO WE

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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

⁶ So the administrators and satraps conspired and came to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever!" ⁷ All the administrators of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever prays to any god or human, for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict.
(Daniel 6:6-9)

This is a story we know well-the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. The king of Babylon's advisors conned King Darius into signing an edict effectively declaring that homage to the king was the only type of religious exercise to be permitted, and anyone caught praying to any other god would be punished. If you are familiar with the story, you know that Daniel, being fully aware of the edict, continues to pray to God. When caught, the king reluctantly agrees that Daniel must be thrown into a den of lions. But God saves Daniel, sealing the mouths of the lions. When King Darius awakens the next morning, he is delighted to see that Daniel has survived. He orders that Daniel be removed from the lion's den, and the king's *advisors* are then tossed to the lions, who suddenly regain their appetite!

As we prepare to celebrate 250 years of independence, there are some people who are clamoring that either that America must become a Christian Nation or that we already are one. Completely ignoring the constitution and our founding fathers who rejected any religious test to be able to hold office, they proclaim that only Christians should be in the halls of government, and that Government policies must be based in Christian principles. In theory, it sounds quite lovely. Of course, our laws should reflect Christian values. Who would be against that?

The problem comes in when we have differences over which type of Christian is the right one, and which Christian values are the right ones. The early history of this nation, before 1776, is filled with stories of state churches and the persecution of people who did nothing more than preach the Gospel, but who did not happen to be a member of the state church.

In both the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by Satan, and one of the temptations is for Jesus to rule with political power. (Matthew 4:8-10, Luke 4:5-8). But Jesus rejects that temptation. In fact, in John's Gospel, after Jesus feeds the five thousand by multiplying the loaves and fishes, the crowds try to capture Jesus and forcibly make him king, and Jesus runs away from them. (John 6:15).

We are blessed to live in a nation that guarantees us religious freedom. In America, one can be a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or even an atheist with no fear of government persecution. And there is nothing wrong with being patriotic and loving your country. That patriotism includes fighting against government policies that do not promote equality, freedom, and justice for all. But we must resist the efforts of people who want to have only Christians control the government. One of my seminary professors said that he believed that the worst thing that ever happened to Christianity was when Constantine declared it to be the official religion of the Roman Empire (The Edict of Milan-313 CE). The Bible, both, Old and New testaments, are filled with stories of prophets confronting the kings to point out when injustice was happening. Now, it is certainly true that the Edict of Milan ended official government persecution of Christians, but the downside is that once Christianity became the official state religion, it lost its ability to be a moral force against government corruption. It became too tied up with government, and too ineffective to be a moral voice in the wilderness.

As we celebrate 250 years, I wish you all a blessed and restful holiday. Enjoy the time off work. Enjoy the fireworks. Sing *God Bless America*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, *Proud to be an American*, and all those other great patriotic tunes. We truly are blessed to live in this country.

But beware of the siren call to make Christianity the official religion, whether explicitly or implicitly. Christian Nationalism is a dangerous road, and even Jesus himself rejected it.

In the abiding hope of the empty tomb,

Pastor Larry



FINANCIAL SECRETARY

July – Be a good steward of your body this summer

The good news for everyone, regardless of body type, is that eating well and exercising more can help improve our physical health and shed extra pounds. Paying attention to diet and exercise will put life in your years and add years to your life.



Director of Music

July Newsletter

The choir season ended in May and now we look forward to special music. In June we enjoyed music by Chris Tillman, Kris Shannon and Linda MacGillivray.

The current July plan features Kris Swisher with David Buchenroth, Chris Tillman, and Larry Walker on July 5. July 12 is special music with Caroline Novak. July 26 will be a park service in Oakland Square Park with special music by Stephanie Oaks.

FAMOUS QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“How is it that music can, without words, evoke our laughter, our fears, our highest aspirations?” — Jane Swan



Suggested Food Items for July

- peanut butter
- cereal
- canned fruit

There are several donation bins in the lower narthex always collecting something. However, there is one bin in particular that I've noticed has somewhat faded into the background. And that is the bin for LCS Food Pantry. In these difficult times, our donations are needed more than ever.

Christian Action Ministry Team is stepping up to bring more awareness to Food Pantry donations. There will be a monthly suggestion for donated food items.

As you are doing your weekly or monthly grocery shopping, consider throwing some additional food items into your cart. It doesn't take much and will provide much-needed food to our neighbors. **THANK YOU!**



The next evening, we will be serving Our Daily Bread is **Monday, July 20th**. If you can't help us serve, but would still like to help you could provide the dessert. Desserts needed are cupcakes, cookies or brownies. Volunteers are asked to arrive at Our Daily Bread about 4:15 pm prior to the serving time of 4:30 pm. If you are planning to help, please let the office know.



Quilt News

We are very thankful for the support of this congregation as well as the community. We welcome donations of fabric and sheets, especially sheets. We meet on Tuesday mornings and would welcome anyone who would like to join us. God's work.... our hands.

SUNDAY ATTENDANCE FOR May

	On Site	Online
May 3	64	108
May 10	69	86
May 17	66	109
May 24	64	132
May 31	<u>83</u>	<u>134</u>
TOTAL	346	569
Average	69	114



TUESDAY LUNCH IN THE COURTYARD!

Lunch in the Courtyard will meet on Tuesday July 7th 21st at noon.

Bring your lunch and lawn chair. In case of inclement weather, we'll meet in the Courtyard.

NOTE CHANGE OF DAY!

On **THURSDAY JULY 23rd**, we will travel to **UNCLE BETH'S BBQ** located outside of N Lewisburg.

This is a time for good fellowship. Come, Join Us! Women and Men, All are invited!

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME!!



Saturday Aug 1st

7:05 pm

Columbus Clippers Vs Toledo Mud Hens

Dinner beforehand at a Columbus restaurant (TBA) for those who would like to join.

Sandwich and Sundae Bar

sponsored by Faith Circle

Sunday July 19th following Worship



Sandwiches



**Varieties of Ice cream
with many toppings**



Freewill Donations which will go toward a ministry of the church



Thank you for your large generous food donations over all these years. They really help and are appreciated by those in need.

Thank You,

Brandon

Ministry Team Meetings

7/11 9:00 am Property
7/27 7:00 pm Worship

Church Council– 2026

President – Sue Neer

Vice-President– Brian Hogan

Secretary– Stephanie Oaks

Financial Secretary - Judy Vassar

Treasurer—Rita Iiams

Members—Amy Adkins, John Bodin, Marshall Blair
Hildreth, Gary Kauffman, Judy Lunz, Jessica Morris,
Kathy Fultz



Articles for the August 2026
Newsletter will be due by
Monday, **July 20th.**



Highlights

- ***Christian Action***

Projects

- ***FLIRT***

Continued safety plan

- ***NLCF***

Continued grant requests

- ***Outreach***

Developing new ways to reach neighborhood families.

- ***Property***

Repairs

- ***Worship***

Special services

Contemporary Services

- ***WELCA***

Tuesdays in the Courtyard

Projects

- ***Quilters***

275+ quilts in 2024

- ***CHEF***

6 grants given in 2024

- ***FAITH FORMATION***

Sunday School

Youth Events

During the past month we have remembered many in prayer. We remember in prayer all who are in need of God's presence and care ... especially:



Health Issues or Surgery

Dan Shively

Bill Keck

Brenda Shively

Alice Godwin

Entered the Church Triumphant



07/02 Dave Comstock
 07/03 Stephanie Oaks
 07/13 Betty Vondenhuevel
 07/14 Tommy Belser
 07/15 Dave O'Brien
 07/17 Ray Swisher
 07/20 Brenda Shively
 07/20 Sherri Hodies
 07/21 Cash Morris
 07/25 John Belser

07/25/1971 Carl & Rachel Gillespie
 07/06/1991 Tom & April Jameson
 07/08/1995 Chris & Jennifer McKenrick
 07/17/1993 Tom & Liz Rose





LOGAN COUNTY'S COUNTYWIDE SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE IS BACK!



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE COLLECTING THIS YEAR

BOLD items are most requested by the schools.

- **BACKPACKS**
- Binders
- Colored Pencils
- Composition Notebooks
- Crayons
- **DISINFECTING WIPES**
- Dry Erase Markers
- **ELASTIC WAIST PANTS AND SHORTS**
- Erasers
- Folders
- Glue and Glue Sticks
- Hand Sanitizer
- **HEADPHONES (OVER-EAR)**
- Highlighters
- Index Cards
- Markers
- Notebooks (College AND Wide-Ruled)
- Paper
- Paper Towels
- **PENCILS**
- Pencil Bags
- Pens (Blue & Black)
- **POST-IT NOTES**
- Rulers
- Sandwich Bags
- School Boxes
- Scissors
- Socks
- Tissues
- Underwear
- Water Bottles
- Watercolor Paint



HELP OUT OUR LOCAL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS!

ITEMS COLLECTED WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO:



Bellefontaine City Schools

Mac-A-Cheek Learning Center



Benjamin Logan Local Schools



Calvary Christian School



Indian Lake Local Schools



Ohio Hi-Point Career Center



Riverside Local Schools



West Liberty-Salem Schools

STUFF THE BUS



CHRISTMAS *in*
JULY
CRAFT SHOW

FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
117 N. Main St.
Bellefontaine Ohio

Saturday July 18, 2026
Set-up begins at 8:00am.

Doors are open from
9:00am – 4:00pm

\$25.00 per selling space, you may bring your own table(s)!

We will have tables in both our Fellowship Hall
and our Chapel with easy access to each area.

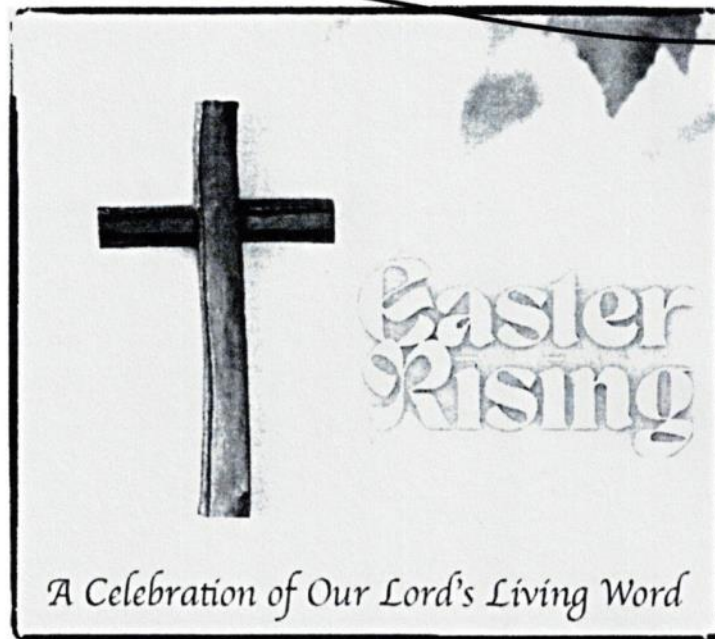
We have plenty of chairs, so you will not have to bring your own,
unless yours are more comfortable.

Electricity is limited, but can be done.

Thank you for joining us and making our first show a hit!!

Your items will make the world a brighter place!

The Keynotes Present



Friday July 10, 2026

7:00pm.

First United Presbyterian Church

117 N. Main St.

Through the words of Christ and the gift of sacred music, this concert reflects the journey of the Christian life. From the wonder of new life and the blessings of love and fellowship, through seasons of struggle and redemption, to the promise of resurrection and eternal life, we are reminded that our Lord walks beside us in every season. May these songs proclaim the hope, grace and victory found in Jesus Christ.

Worship Assistant

7/5	Kris Swisher
7/12	Chris McKenrick
7/19	Brenda Shively
7/26 (Park)	Alexis Hogan

Communion Assistant

7/5	Marshall Blair Hildreth
7/12	Dave Comstock
7/19	Dave O'Brien
7/26	Park Service

Reader

7/5	Jean Wright
7/12	Carolyn Novak
7/19	Brenda Shively
7/26 (Park)	Chris Tillman

Altar Guild

Stephanie Oaks

7/19 & 7/26 Cheri & Dave Comstock

Greeters

7/5	Gloria & Misty Kipker
7/12	Kevin Miller
7/19	Ed & Deb Pulfer
7/26	Park Service

Acolyte

7/5	Brooks Bodin
7/12	
7/19	
7/26	Park Service

Ushers

7/5	Kathy Fultz
7/12	Walt Stephan
7/19	Max Bixler
7/26 (Park)	Susan Wyckoff

Communion Bread

Chris Hildreth Blair

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10:00am Park Service @ Brown Park	29 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA	30 9:00am Quilters 2:00pm Holland Holland Rehearsal (RH)	1 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	2 Office Closed 3:00pm NA (RH)	3 Office Closed	4 HAPPY 250TH BIRTHDAY AMERICA!! Office Closed
5 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	6 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 6:30pm Dulcemers (RH)	7 9:00am Quilters 10:30am Carpet Cleaning - Sanctuary/Upper Narthex 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard	8 10:30am Carpet Cleaning - Classroom Hallway 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	9 12:00pm Homeless Shelter Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH)	10 Office Closed	11 Office Closed 9:00am Property Meeting [Lounge]
12 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	13 Chaplain MRH 12:00pm AA	14 Chaplain MRH 9:00am Quilters	15 Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	16 Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH)	17 Chaplain MRH Office Closed	18 Office Closed
19 Ice Cream Social 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	20 12:00pm AA 4:15pm Our Daily Bread	21 9:00am Quilters	22 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	23 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard @ Uncle Beth's BBQ 3:00pm NA (RH)	24 Office Closed	25 Office Closed
26 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Park Service 2:30pm Green Hills Service	27 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 7:00pm Worship Ministry Team Meeting	28 9:00am Quilters	29 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	30 3:00pm NA (RH)	31 Office Closed	1 Office Closed

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR SURVEY

If you would like to be on the list of people who are seeking help from our own in-house neighbor to neighbor program, please fill out this form and return it to the church office. The second step will be compiling a list of people willing to volunteer to do the work.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Place a check mark in the circle next to what you would like help with

Lawn care/mowing grass

Raking leaves in the fall

Cleaning gutters

Shoveling snow in winter

Gardening/Planting flowers

Housework

Painting

Transportation needs

Other: _____

Thank you!