



FIRST HAND



2024

First Lutheran Church
208 West Sandusky Avenue
Bellefontaine, Ohio 43311
Website: www.flcbellefontaine.org
Email: info@flcbellefontaine.org

Pastor Larry Novak- lnovak@flcbellefontaine.org
Office Manager, Rachel Gillespie-rgillespie@flcbellefontaine.org
Director of Music, Judy Vassar- jvassar@flcbellefontaine.org
Bell Choir Director, Stephanie Oaks-sloaks1737@gmail.com

Mission Statement:

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

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.

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Happy
Father's
Day!



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. -Proverbs 16:18

For the LGBT community, June is designated as "Pride Month". Some people mock this. One pastor on Facebook last year called it "Sin Month". And some people may ask: "Isn't pride one of the seven deadly sins?" Well....not quite. The actual sin is "hubris"-*exaggerated* pride or exaggerated self-confidence. It is also defined as self-overestimation, arrogance, or grandiosity. Parents who say to their children "I am very proud of you" are not committing a sin. A singer who sings Lee Greenwood's song "God Bless the USA, including the line "I'm proud to be an American" is not committing a sin either.

And neither is it a sin for a gay or lesbian or transgender or non-binary person to say: "I am out and proud". For indeed, it is simply an acknowledgement that for far too long, LGBT people were told to be *ashamed* of who they were; that they were deviant, abnormal, and that God did not love them. Or that perhaps God loved them, but wanted them to be straight, because being gay was seen as a sin. To our shame, even the Christian Church has said this.

Everyone is a sinner. We all sin. And we all fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) We are called to repent of our sin. However, and I am certain I have said this before, being gay or lesbian or transgender or non-binary is not a sin. And for any Christian who points to certain passages of scripture and argues: "See? The Bible says that being gay is a sin", I can assure you that I am familiar with all of the Bible passages on the topic, and I would be happy to share my thoughts on the interpretation of those passages in a one-on-one meeting.

But indeed, as the above quote from Proverbs points out, (a proverb often truncated to say: "pride goes before a fall") pride *can* become sinful. It CAN morph into hubris and self-aggrandizement very easily. Religions can become sinful when they proclaim that their way of interpreting scripture is the only correct way, and that all other religions are evil. Christians proclaim Christ crucified and risen. We also preach that we are saved by grace through faith. When we meet with people of other faiths, we do not water our beliefs down for the sake of getting along with everyone. And yes, we invite others into the Christian faith.

But if our invitation is declined, we also must have the humility to declare that we are told not to judge anyone else's salvation, and that God may offer salvation to a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Hindu, or even an atheist, and we leave those matters to God.

Hubris can also very easily rear its ugly head in the realm of politics. A person who says "My party is on the side of God, decency, and morality, while the other party is on the side of anarchy, immorality, and evil" is committing hubris, as is any politician who claims that he or she is the smartest person in the room, that only they have all the answers, and that only they can solve the problem.

Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, male, female or non-binary, black, white, Hispanic, or Asian, LGBT or straight; know that we all are beloved children of God, created in the image of God, with a mission to make disciples and to show the love of Christ to the world.

Each of the seven deadly sins has an opposite virtue. Instead of lust; chastity. Instead of wrath; patience. Instead of gluttony; temperance. Instead of envy; kindness. Instead of greed; generosity. Instead of sloth; diligence. And instead of hubris; humility.

Christ the Son of God had every good reason to be full of hubris, but he was not. Instead, Christ preached the need for service, healing, forgiveness, and love. The beautiful hymn found in Philippians 2: 5-11 says that Christ emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born fully human, and humbled himself, obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

To all my friends who are members of the LGBT community: Happy Pride Month. Jesus loves you. So do I. Jesus affirms you. So do I.

And to all who are NOT members of the LGBT community-Happy June. Jesus loves you. So do I. Jesus affirms you. So do I.

In the abiding hope of the empty tomb,

Pastor Larry



Report of Director of Music

June 2024

The summer special music program kicks off on June 16. Scheduled in June are Kris Shannon, Jeff Newland, and Chris Tillman.

Also you will enjoy Favorite Hymn part 2. These are favorite picks from 2023 ranked from 40 to 21.



He never looks for praises.
He's never one to boast.
He just goes on quietly working
for those he loves the most.
- Karen K. Boyer



From the Financial Secretary

Summertime

“*Summertime and the living is easy.*” That’s what the favorite old song says. The **living** may be easy, but often the **giving** is not. Summer collections often drop significantly in our church because of vacation travel, sports schedules and other activities that cause members to not be able to attend. If you would like to make your giving easy and consistent this summer, please consider automatic payments from your bank account.





TUESDAY LUNCH

“LUNCH IN THE PARK”!

Lunch in Oakland Square Park will meet at noon on Tuesday, June 4th.

Bring your lunch & a lawn chair and join us for fellowship and fun.

(In case of inclement weather, we will meet in the courtyard)

On Tuesday, June 18th, we will enjoy lunch at *Cranberry Resort* on beautiful Indian Lake. Meet in the church parking lot at 11:30 am to carpool.



Christian Action Team

will meet on Monday, June 10th at 6:00 pm in the lounge.

We will be discussing and organizing future events.

Come Join Us!



We will be serving at Daily Bread on June 17th. Please arrive by 4:15 pm to help serve.

Donations of cupcakes, cookies, or brownies are needed for the meal. You can take to Daily Bread or leave in the church and we will make sure your baked goods get to Daily Bread.



Oakland Square Park Cleanup

Saturday, June 8th

@ 11:00 am. Volunteers needed!

**Come and help clean up the park for
our first park service on**

June 9th.

Bring gloves & garden/work tools.

Other park clean-up dates:

July 13; August 10; Sept. 7



Our first service in the park will be on June 9th.

Fellowship Time will begin at 9:00 am

Worship Service will begin at 10:00 am

Bring a lawn chair.

The deadline for the
July newsletter articles
is June 19th



FLC PICNIC IN THE PARK

JUNE YOUTH EVENT

JUNE 9, 2024 11:30AM

FOLLOWING SUNDAY SERVICE

**Please come join us for
lunch and stay for the
fun! This is a free event
for all.**

**We will have hot dogs and hamburgers for
lunch and then move onto playing cornhole,
Jenga, Connect 4, Water balloon toss, bounce
house and an egg toss. Each participant will
receive 5 tickets for a chance to throw a cool
whip pie at Pastor Larry. 5 winners
determined by draw.**



Dad

He never looks for praises
He's never one to boast
He just goes on quietly working
For those he loves the most
His dreams are seldom spoken
His wants are very few
And most of the time his worries
Will go unspoken too
He's there.... A firm foundation
Through all our storms of life
A sturdy hand to hold to
In times of stress and strife
A true friend we can turn to
When times are good or bad
One of our greatest blessings,
The man that we call Dad





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If you love contemporary Christian music, and play an instrument or sing, we would like to invite you to

join our contemporary worship ministry team!

We are looking especially for keyboard or piano, drummers, guitar players, and of course singers.

Currently, the contemporary worship team leads worship once a quarter. If you are interested in a different kind of worship, you can reach out to any of the following people:

Pastor Larry: inovak@flcbellefontaine.org

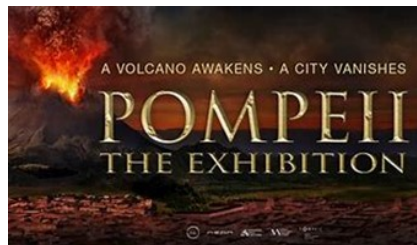
Carolyn Novak: cnovak@flcbellefontaine.org

Jeff Newland: ffej.newland@gmail.com

Chris Hildreth-Blair: childret@yahoo.com

Or call the church office at 937-592-7699

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FAITH & FRIENDS OUTING

THURSDAY, JULY 11TH

POMPEII EXHIBIT—CINCINNATI MUSEUM CENTER

THE GROUP WOULD LEAVE THE CHURCH (CARPOOLING) APPROXIMATELY 9:00 AM; STOP TO EAT AN EARLY LUNCH AND THEN GO TO THE EXHIBIT. IT WILL TAKE APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS TO TOUR THE EXHIBIT. THEN RETURN HOME.

THE SENIOR COST IS \$21.50 - SIGN UP BEFORE JUNE 20TH

IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION OR TO SIGN UP FOR THIS OUTING CONTACT JEAN WRIGHT @ 937-844-8428



June Ministry Team Meeting Date:

06/03— 7:00pm Church Council Meeting & NLCF

06/10— 6:00pm Christian Action Meeting

06/24—7:00pm Worship Meeting



Highlights

Faith Circle

- Future projects

Faith Formation Ministry Team

- Youth projects
- Park Picnic

Christian Action Ministry Team

- Fellowship in the Park

Finance Ministry Team

- Monitor church finances

FLIRT

- Ongoing security

Outreach Ministry Team

- Continue program to reach out to those unable to attend services
- Monthly movies

Property Ministry Team

- Building Maintenance
- Outside repairs

Worship Ministry Team

- Summer Services
- Contemporary Services

Copies of reports from the monthly meetings of each ministry team is available for you to view in the Partners In Ministry Book located in the upper narthex.

2024 Church Council

President- Chris Hildreth Blair

Vice-President- John Bodin

Secretary- Carolyn Novak

Treasurer – John Belser

Financial Secretary – Judy Vassar

Members- Kathy Fultz, Brian Hogan, Gary Kauffman, Judy Lunz, Sue Neer, Brittany Porter, Liz Rose



Sunday Attendance for April

	On site	Online
April 7	68	72
April 14	74	60
April 21	69	43
April 28	73	72
Average	71	62

Remember In Prayer



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

Health Issues:

Jordan Banks

Brittanny Porter

Jim Donnelly

Chris Kwiatkowski

Dave Schwarm

Paul Karn



Dear Friends,

A big Thank You to Pastor Larry for his visits. Also for all the prayers and cards. All of this along with God watching over me I am pretty much back to my old self. God Bless!

Martina Himmeger



- 06/04 Rosalee Horn
- 06/06 Jennifer Miller
- 06/09 Chris Tillman
- 06/09 April Jameson
- 06/10 Larry Walker
- 06/14 Ron Hadley
- 06/16 Tom Secrist
- 06/18 Dane Reffner
- 06/19 Emma Heath
- 06/21 Jim Donnelly
- 06/21 Carolyn Novak
- 06/24 Bill Keck
- 06/24 Ellen Keck
- 06/24 Tyler Jones
- 06/24 Zach Swisher
- 06/26 Charlotte Belser
- 06/26 Gloria Kipker
- 06/26 Diane Smith



- 06/29/2013 Heath & Jaclyn Allen
- 06/06/1964 Max & Marjorie Bixler
- 06/01/1983 Scott & Cheryl Chamberlain
- 06/10/1972 John & Carolyn Ellis
- 06/28/1996 John & April Fultz
- 06/21/1959 Ted & Carolyn Hoy
- 06/28/1986 Bill & Gail Keck
- 06/30/1979 Terry & Judy Lunz
- 06/10/1967 Phil & Pam Pulfer
- 06/02/1990 Ray & Kris Swisher
- 06/15/1996 Gary & Susan Wyckoff



First Lutheran Church,

Thank you so very much for the wonderful and extremely useful household supplies donations that you collected and delivered to our building for our residents.

We appreciate your kindness as always!!

Thank You,

Luther Community Staff & Residents

Worship Assistant:

June 2 Winnie Bodin
June 9 Beth Harman (Park Service)
June 16 Kris Swisher
June 23 Brenda Shively
June 30 Luke McKenrick

Communion Assistant:

June 2 Dan Shively
June 9 n/a (Park Service)
June 16 Dave O’Brien
June 23 Cindy Weikart
June 30 Jim Donnelly

Usher :

June 2 Kevin Miller
June 9 Carl Gillespie (Park Service)
June 16 Kevin Miller
June 23 Carl Gillespie
June 30 Kevin Miller

Communion Bread for June

Rachel Gillespie

Reader:

June 2 John Gensemer
June 9 Dan Shively (Park Service)
June 16 Chris Hildreth Blair
June 23 Brian Hogan
June 30 Kris Swisher

Greeter(s):

June 2 Ed & Deb Pulfer
June 9 Dan & Brenda Shively (Park Service)
June 16 Jan VanHoose
June 23 Dennis & Elaine Latimer
June 30 Tom & Liz Rose

Acolyte:

June 2 Brooks Bodin
June 9 n/a (Park Service)
June 16 Alexis Hogan
June 23 Dane Reffner
June 30 Lottie Bodin

Crucifer:

Delaney Reffner

Altar Guild for June:

June 2 Cindy Weikart
June 9 Rachel Gillespie (Park Service)
June 16
June 23
June 30 Colleen Bodin

June 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Graduate Recognition 9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 1:00pm ETB	27 Memorial Day - Office Closed 12:00pm AA (RH)	28 9:00am Quilters 10:00am Staff Meeting 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Worship Committee	29 3:00pm NA (RH)	30 3:00pm NA (RH) 6:00pm Harwood Meeting	31 Office Closed Synod Assembly	1 Office Closed Synod Assembly
2 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 3:00pm Windmill Practice	3 11:00am Chaplain MRH 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Dulcimers 7:00pm Council Meeting / Book Study 7:00pm NLCF w/ Council	4 9:00am Quilters 11:00am Chaplain MRH 12:00pm "Lunch in the Park" 1:00pm Faith & Politics (zoom) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	5 11:00am Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH)	6 11:00am Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH)	7 Office Closed 11:00am Chaplain MRH 12:30pm Hunger Network of Ohio Board Meeting	8 Office Closed 10:00am ETB 11:00am Park Clean Up 11:30am ETB
9 Worship Service in the Park 9:00am Fellowship Time (at park) 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Church Picnic 4:00pm ETB	10 Pastor on vacation 12:00pm AA (RH) 6:00pm Christian Action Meeting	11 Pastor on vacation 9:00am Quilters 2:00pm Windmill Practice	12 Pastor on vacation 3:00pm NA (RH)	13 Pastor on vacation 3:00pm NA (RH)	14 Office Closed Pastor on vacation	15 Office Closed Pastor on vacation 6:30pm Dulcimers
16 Guest Pastor Michael Wiechers Pastor on vacation 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	17 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 4:15pm Our Daily Bread	18 9:00am Quilters 12:00pm "Lunch in the Park" 2:00pm Windmill Practice 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	19 3:00pm NA (RH)	20 3:00pm NA (RH)	21 Office Closed	22 Office Closed
23 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 1:00pm Faith Formation Meeting	24 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 7:00pm Worship Ministry Team Meeting	25 9:00am Quilters 2:00pm Windmill Practice 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting	26 3:00pm NA (RH)	27 3:00pm NA (RH)	28 Office Closed	29 Office Closed 1:00pm ETB 1:00pm Hoy Family Anniversary Party
30 CHEF & Noisy Money Sunday 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	1	2	3	4	5	6