



***Mission
Statement:***

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

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



Pastor Larry Novak - lnovak@flcbellefontaine.org

Office Mngr.— Stephanie Oaks - soaks@flcbellefontaine.org

Director of Music, Judy Vassar – jvassar@flcbellefontaine.org

Bell Choir Director, Stephanie Oaks - sloaks1737@gmail.com

Custodian — David Linebaugh

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

John 2:13-16

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, with the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

On Sunday, January 18, 2026, a group of anti-ICE protestors interrupted a worship service at the Cities Church, a Southern Baptist congregation, in Minneapolis. They were specifically protesting against Pastor David Easterwood, who is the acting deputy director of the ICE field office in St. Paul. The protestors were arrested and charged with federal crimes concerning violation of the FACE Act (Federal Access to Clinic Entrances). FACE was designed to protect women entering abortion clinics who were being blocked by pro-life protestors, but the law also specifically prohibits using force, threats, or obstruction to interfere with a person's right to worship. (The concern when FACE was adopted was concerning pro-life groups interrupting worship services to harass doctors, nurses, or other medical personnel who worked in abortion clinics). The leaders of the protest cited Jesus' cleansing of the temple as an example of why their protest was morally right. Is that a fair argument? As a pastor, I wanted to share three thoughts on this matter.

First, I would absolutely not want protestors coming into the sanctuary and protesting during a worship service. I would ask them to leave. If they refused, I would ask the members of our FLIRT team to escort them from the building, and I would file a police report. If the protestors would not leave with the members of our FLIRT team, I would arrange to have someone on FLIRT call the police to come over, arrest them, and remove them. I would do this even if I agreed wholeheartedly with what they were protesting against.

Just as I would not want ICE agents to burst into a worship service and haul out a person, even if they were in the country illegally, I would not want protestors to interrupt the service.

Matthew 18 lays out how to deal with a brother or sister in the church that you have a problem with. And the first step is to deal with the person one-on-one directly. The leaders of the protest movement should have contacted Pastor Easterday to sit down with him in his office, with no media present, and discuss their concerns with him; concerns that his work as an ICE agent are incompatible with his role as a pastor. In response, Pastor Easterday could have responded in three ways:

He could have said “You are right-they ARE incompatible”, and resigned from ICE;

He could have said “You are right, they ARE incompatible”, and resigned his call, deciding to work only for ICE;

He might have argued as to why they were wrong and why holding both positions was not incompatible at all. The ball would then be in the protesters’ court to see what they would do next.

Second, it was proper for the protestors to be arrested. I think state charges of disturbing the peace and trespassing would be more appropriate than the federal charges. To me, Federal charges seem heavy-handed. But I have read the federal statute and agree that federal charges might succeed here. A jury could certainly find them guilty of violating the FACE Act.

Engaging in civil disobedience is a good and right thing to do if you feel that there is an injustice that must come to light. The tactic was used by Ghandi, by Martin Luther King Jr., and yes, by Jesus. I have never felt it was biblically correct, as some politicians have stated, to argue that Romans 13 means that we must always obey the government and never protest. The Old Testament prophets have a long history of challenging the kings whenever they saw injustice. But civil disobedience requires that you be willing to go to jail when necessary. Freedom of speech is not a proper defense to interrupting a worship service.

Third, was it proper for the protestors to cite Jesus' cleansing of the temple to justify their actions? Well....no. In John's Gospel, the point Jesus is making is that it is no longer necessary to have animals in the temple to sell them for a Passover sacrifice. The practice, while well-intentioned, had the effect of turning the temple into a marketplace; of turning something holy into something secular. But Jesus is saying "I am here now. I will be the Passover Lamb. I am the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Therefore, animal sacrifice is no longer required. Turning the temple into a marketplace is no longer necessary". Also, I should probably point out that the cleansing took place in the outer courtyard of the temple, not in the sanctuary. If the protestors had protested in the parking lot or the narthex, then logistically speaking, (but not theologically speaking) it would have been more equivalent to what Jesus did.

Finally, while I may disagree with the protestor's methods, I absolutely agree with their goals. And I admire their passion in fighting for a cause that is noble and just. Living into our baptism includes working for justice and peace in the world. Surely we can craft immigration policy that is fair and not involving the brutal tactics we have been seeing in the last few years. In our Lenten journey, as we remember our baptism and our baptismal promises, we would do well with regard to immigration to remember these words from Leviticus 19:33-34-

³³ *"When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. ³⁴ The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.*

In the abiding hope of the empty tomb,

Pastor Larry



FINANCIAL SECRETARY

March – Consider percentage-basis giving

Many churchgoers give the same lump-sum offering week after week, year after year. But changing to percentage-basis giving will help folks keep track of their offering in proportion to their income. And that may put them on the path to tithing!



Director of Music

February Sundays have been hectic also. We enjoyed the special music presented by Alexis Hogan. The choir has some upbeat songs that have helped to raise our spirits.

Lent began with Ash Wednesday and Lenten evening services during February.

FAMOUS QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Music touches us emotionally, where words alone can’t.” — Johnny Depp



Suggested Food Items for March

- mac n cheese
- pork n beans
- 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, March 16th**. 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 plan to continue for another year. We welcome donations of fabric and sheets. We meet on Tuesday mornings and would welcome anyone who would like to join us. God's work.... our hands.

SUNDAY ATTENDANCE FOR January

	On Site	Online
Jan. 4	53	167
Jan. 11	73	110
Jan. 18	60	124
Jan. 25	Service Cancelled	
TOTAL	186	401
Average	62	134



TUESDAY

LUNCH IN THE COURTYARD!

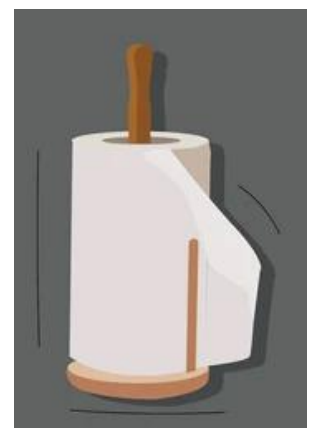
Lunch in the Courtyard will meet on Tuesday March 3rd & 17th at noon.

Bring your lunch.

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

Faith Circle will meet on *Tuesday March 17th* in conjunction with Lunch in the Courtyard.

Our Mission Project for March is to provide laundry detergent, toilet paper and paper towels for the residents of Luther Community.





To Our Church Family,

Janet and I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the love you have shown us over these past seven weeks. During a season filled with unexpected health challenges for both of us, your calls, thoughtful cards, and—most importantly—your faithful prayers have meant more than words can say.

We are especially thankful for Pastor Novak's visit with Janet and his call to me. Those moments of care and encouragement reminded us that we are never walking this road alone.

We truly believe God heard your prayers. While Janet still has some recovery ahead, we are grateful to say we are moving in the right direction. Each day feels a little steadier, a little stronger, and filled with renewed hope for a more normal and stable routine.

Thank you for standing beside us in faith, lifting us up when we were weary, and surrounding us with the kind of love that reflects Christ so clearly. We are deeply blessed to be part of such a caring church family.

With sincere appreciation.

Jim & Janet

Ministry Team Meetings

3/14 9:00 am Property
3/16 6:00 pm LCS Board Meeting
3/23 7:00 pm Worship

Church Council– 2026

President – Sue Neer

Vice-President– Brian Hogan

Secretary– Stephanie Oaks

Financial Secretary - Judy Vassar

Treasurer—John Belser

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



Articles for the April 2026
Newsletter will be due by
Thursday, **March 19th.**



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

Jim & Janet Donnelly

Lowell Huber

Barb Krueger

Beth Novak

Bob & Pat Mitchell

Charlotte Belser

Dave Dishop

Cindy Weikart

Entered the Church Triumphant

Dave Vassar



03/01 Tyler Reasor

03/04 Carol Keck

03/09 Lois Heintz

03/13 Barb Triplett

03/13 Tom Rose

03/15 Mike Adkins

03/16 Haley Horn

03/21 Carol Smola

03/24 Linda MacGillivray

03/26 Dennis Latimer

03/27 Ella Swisher

03/30 Rhonda Bingaman

03/31 Emma Swisher

03/23/2013 Cody & Dana Allen

03/11/1980 David & Ginger Buchenroth

03/28/2005 Zach & Amy Swisher

Worship Assistant

3/1	Alexis Hogan
3/8	Beth Harman
3/15	Winnie Bodin
3/22	
3/29	Brenda Shively

Communion Assistant

3/1	Dave O'Brien
3/8	Dave Comstock
3/15	Amy Adkins
3/22	Gail Keck
3/29	Dan Shively

Reader

3/1	Jean Wright
3/8	Brenda Shively
3/15	Dan Shively
3/22	Kris Swisher
3/29	Beth Harman

Altar Guild

Stephanie Oaks

Greeters

3/1	Bodin Family
3/8	Ted & Carolyn Hoy
3/15	Walt Stephan
3/22	Marge MacGillivray
3/29	Connie Regula

Acolyte

3/1	Brooks Bodin
3/8	Alexis Hogan
3/15	Devyn Hogan
3/22	Brooks Bodin
3/29	Delaney Reffner

Crucifer

3/29	Dane Reffner
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Ushers

3/1	Dave Comstock
3/8	Mike Zoldak
3/15	Mike Adkins
3/22	Marshall Blair Hildreth
3/29	Mike Adkins

Communion Bread

Rita Iiams

March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 1st - 5th grade Sunday School after Service 8:45am Adult Bible Class 8:45am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 9:00am Pre-School Sunday School Class 10:00am Communion Worship Service	2 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 6:30pm Dulcimers (RH)	3 9:00am Quilters 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard	4 9:30am Cluster @ FLC 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 6:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Dinner 6:30pm Mid-Week Lenten Bible Study 7:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Service	5 12:00pm Homeless Shelter Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice	6 Office Closed	7 Office Closed
8 8:45am Adult Bible Class 8:45am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	9 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA	10 9:00am Quilters	11 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 6:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Dinner 6:30pm Mid-Week Lenten Bible Study 7:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Service	12 9:00am Housing Coalition 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice	13 Office Closed	14 Office Closed 9:00am Property Meeting [Lounge]
15 8:45am Adult Bible Class 8:45am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	16 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 4:15pm Our Daily Bread 6:00pm LCS Board Meeting	17 9:00am Quilters 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard	18 8:00am Pastor's Breakfast 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 6:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Dinner 6:30pm Mid-Week Lenten Bible Study 7:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Service	19 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice	20 Confirmation Camp Office Closed 12:00pm Hunger Network Quarterly Board Meeting	21 Confirmation Camp Office Closed
22 8:45am Adult Bible Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	23 Chaplain MRH 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 7:00pm Worship Ministry Team Meeting	24 Chaplain MRH 9:00am Quilters	25 Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 6:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Dinner 6:30pm Mid-Week Lenten Bible Study 7:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Service	26 Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice	27 Chaplain MRH Office Closed	28 Office Closed
29 8:45am Adult Bible Class 8:45am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service	30 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA	31 9:00am Quilters	1 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice	2 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service	3 Office Closed 12:00pm Good Friday Service @ Presbyterian Church 7:00pm Good Friday Service @ Presbyterian Church	4 Easter Breakfast Prep Office Closed