First Things

NOVEMBER 2025

The Newsletter of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
561 Chestnut Street | Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110
651-465-5265 www.tflutheran.org

Gratitude is everywhere these days—podcasts, books, mugs at Target, and yes, plenty of my sermons. Sometimes it can feel like we're being told to be thankful because we've forgotten how. In Luke 17, Jesus heals ten people with leprosy and only one turns back to say thank you. The other nine do the sensible thing: they follow the rules, see the priest, go home, and get their lives back. It's an awesome picture of restoration—but maybe not a picture of well-being.

Here's the difference the Gospel nudges us to notice: it's one thing to be thankful, it's another thing to be mindful. All ten received a blessing. Only one paused long enough to trace that blessing back to its Source. Jesus tells that one: "Your faith has made you well." In other words, gratitude didn't just celebrate the cure—it opened the door to wholeness.

Gratitude re-threads us to God as the giver of every good gift. It pulls us out of isolation and back into relationship—with God, with others, and even with our own lives. And because it's relational, gratitude has to become concrete, practiced, embodied…or it slips away.

A small, pocket-sized practice

Recently, my daughter found three small smooth glass rocks in a little plastic bag outside our sanctuary doors. "What are these for?" she asked.

Continued on page two

Continued from cover page

I told her a woman from First Lutheran in Taylors Falls made them after a sermon on gratitude. Inside the bag were simple directions:

- Put three glass stones in your right pocket at the start of the day.
- As you encounter a moment of joy, peace, or gift, say, "Thank you, God," and move one stone to your left pocket.
- By day's end, all three should be in the left pocket. Then write down those three thank-you moments in a small prayer journal.

My daughter looked at the rocks, smiled, and said, "I think I'm going to try this." Proud dad moment. And confession: I still need to follow up with her. Because again—it's one thing to be generally thankful; it's another to practice being mindful.

Gratitude is not the reward for a good day; mindfulness is the discipline that remakes a day—and, over time, remakes us.

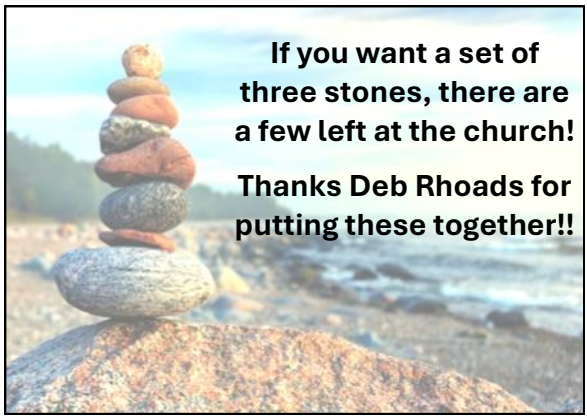
Why this matters for our community

When we practice gratitude together, we become a church that notices. We notice the people who are often unseen. We notice what God is already doing in small, quiet ways. We notice where healing has begun and where we're still longing for it. Gratitude doesn't deny pain or gloss over grief; it trains our eyes to find God's presence even there. That's the difference between being cured and being made well.

Imagine as our church becomes known as "the church that pays attention"—to God, to one another, to the needs of our neighbors. That kind of attention changes how we worship, how we serve, and how we talk to each other in meetings and hallways. It turns complaints into curiosities, impatience into intercession, and routine tasks into offerings.

With gratitude for each of you and those stones are still outside the sanctuary doors if you would like to grab a few for family and friends this November.

Pastor Justin



New Members **Welcome!**

If you are interested in becoming a member, please talk with Pr. Justin or contact the office at 651-465-5265.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship every Sunday at 11am. Recorded services from Sunday morning worship are available Sunday afternoons on our website www.tflutheran.org and can also be found on our YouTube Channel: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of TF - 2nd.

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet on Sunday, November 9th at 12:15pm.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11/06 Janna Loen
11/13 Dan Streed
11/16 Diane Goetz
11/22 Joel Langer
11/27 Jeff Rogers
11/28 Analise Parks
11/30 Cassidy Luschen

Please contact the church office if there are any errors or omissions. Thank you.

MONTHLY GIVING REPORT

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. —2 Cor. 9:7 (NIV)

Budgeted Weekly Expenses: $2771.60

09/28 Giving:	$3,126.77
10/05 Giving:	$1,319.75
10/12 Giving:	$2,141.00
10/19 Giving:	$1,160.00

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Craig Loen with any questions or concerns at: 715-553-0519 or cloen@federatedcoops.com

Shared Ministry

First Lutheran Evangelical Church

Taylors Falls, MN
Fellowship at 10am
followed by Worship at 11am

SundaySCHOOL

Monthly Sunday school class for children elementary age right after children's message.

Nov Date: 11-16-25

CHOIR

Choir will meet for practice every Tuesday at 5pm, rotating locations.
No experience is needed to join us! See bulletin board for more information!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

If you'd like to be part of this ministry or have any questions, please talk with Becky Hulden.

Quilting

9:30am - 11:00am
First and Third Wednesdays of the month. No experience needed! New quilters welcome!

WISDOM SEEKERS

THURSDAYS AT 9:00AM

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Youth Room, 1st floor

Crafting

Crafting on Saturdays
November 8th | 9am - 2pm
Bring your craft to work on, a dish to share & come for the great company!

Better Together

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Almelund, MN
Worship at 9am
followed by Fellowship at 10am

FAITH CONVERSATIONS

FOURTH THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

6:30 PM

Are we living in the last days—or just beginning again? Join us to explore biblical prophecy, popular myths, and hopeful visions of renewal.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Tune in our Daily Texts with Pastor Justin

Monday - Saturday on our Facebook Page: Immanuel Luthera Church of Almelund. A daily devotional time based on an Old & New Testament Bible verse based on a Moravian Church tradition and Ground Up Grace Publications Daily Texts 2025 books.

Thanksgiving Worship

Tuesday, Nov. 25th
TBD at Immanuel Church in Almelund
Join us for pie and coffee following the service.

Upcoming Events To Put On Your Calendar

Church Christmas Decorating
Sun, Nov. 23rd after worship

Thanksgiving Service
at Immanuel Lutheran in Almelund
Tues, Nov. 25th | Time: TBD

Lighting Festival
Saturday, November 29th
Piano Music in Sanctuary 9am-11am
Pancake Breakfast 9am-11am
Make an Advent Wreath 9am-11am

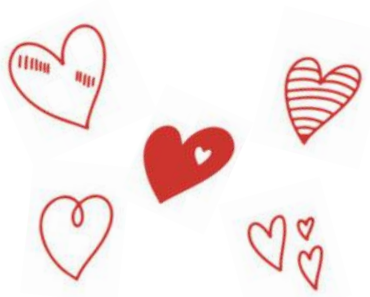
Children's Program Planning Meeting - Dec. 7th

Make and Take Lefsa
Sat, Dec. 6th at FELC - Time: TBD
Wed, Dec. 10th at the Lodge - Time: TBD

Christmas Program - Dec. 21st

Christmas Eve Service
Tues, December 24th
4pm at FELC
10pm at Almelund

Christmas Carols
Sunday, December 30th at 11am



love OUR COMMUNITY

Christmas Food Drive

Family Pathways is prepping to assemble Christmas Meal boxes in early December! Each church in our Chisago Lakes area have been asked to contribute an item for the meal kits. Our church has been asked to collect 160 cans or jars of pickles or olives and also collect money to purchase items needed for the kits. Please bring in cans of corn now through November 26th and place them in the Christmas Food Drive bin near the usher stand!!!

Are you looking for a great cause to donate to this holiday season? Here are a few that we hold close to our hearts!

Each year, our generous congregation purchases gift cards for families who struggle at Christmas. These families are blessed with gift cards towards gas, food and presents. If you'd like to donate toward this wonderful cause, you can put your donation in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mail your donation to the church, marking "Giving Tree" on the envelope.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Attn: Giving Tree
561 Chestnut Street
Taylors Falls, MN 55084

Thank you for opening your heart this upcoming Christmas season and blessing others!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

William O'Brien State Park

Sat, Nov 1st | 10am-11:30am
The Art of Tracking

Sat, Nov 1st & 8th
12:30pm-2:30pm
Animal Detectives

Sat, Nov 22nd | 12:30pm-2pm
Wander with a Naturalist

Sat, Nov 29th
10am-11:30am
Migrate, Hibernate or Adapt
1pm-2pm
Outdoor Survival - Fire Starting

Coffee TIme

Join the residents at The Lodge in Taylors Falls every Thurs at 2:30pm for their free Community Coffee Hour!

MIRACLE AT BIG ROCK

ST CROIX FALLS, WI
OPENING NOVEMBER 29TH
FIREWORKS, SHOPPING VENDORS, FOOD TRUCKS, COOKIES WITH SANTA, LIVE ENTERTAINMENT & MORE!
MORE INFO CAN BE FOUND AT
WWW.MIRACLEATBIGROCK.COM

CHISAGO LAKES
COMMUNITY MEAL

Chisago Lakes Community Meal
Monday Evenings 4pm - 6pm
Zion Lutheran Church in Chisago City
All are welcome!

The Lighting Festival theme this year is *Memories Await*.

FRIDAY NOV. 28TH

All Day Enjoy the river and trails at the FREE Entrance Day at Minnesota Interstate Park
TF Shop Crawl—Local Businesses Participating
3-6pm Hot Cocoa, Cookies, Cider, Cotton Candy & Food Trucks at Downtown Businesses
4-8pm Christmas at the 1855 Folsom House
3-8pm 3rd Grade Exhibit at the Town House School
3-5pm Visit the 1868 Bullard-Owens House, 537 Bench Street
$5 Adults, $1 Ages 6-17
5-6pm Mrs. Claus at the Library, 473 Bench Street
5pm Chili, Hot Dogs and Hot Beverages at St Joseph's Church
5-8 pm Booya at Romaynes (or until gone!)
6pm Grand Lighting of the Village and Santa Parade on Bench Street—Wear ruby red!
After the Parade—visit Santa at "With August" parking lot, 406 Bench Street.

SATURDAY NOV. 29TH

9-11am FREE Flapjack Breakfast at First Evangelical Lutheran Church basement
9-11am FREE Advent wreath making at First Evangelical Lutheran Church
9-3pm Wassail Party Craft Fair—Taylors Falls Community Center, 312 Government Street
9:30-12:30pm Visit the Historic Taylors Falls Library, 473 Bench Street
10am Medallion Hunt—$100 prize—Watch for clues on Facebook.
10-4pm Visit the 1868 Bullard-Owens House, 537 Bench Street ($5 Adults, $1 Ages 6-17)
10-6pm Christmas at the 1855 Folsom House, Donations welcome
4:30pm Ecumenical Vespers at 1861 Methodist Church, 290 W. Government Street.
6:30pm Family Bingo for cash prizes, Taylors Falls Memorial Community Center
7:30pm St. Croix Festival Theatre, 125 N. Washington: A Christmas Carol

SUNDAY, NOV.30TH

Worship at Area Churches
1-4 pm Visit the 1868 Bullard-Owens House, 537 Bench Street ($5 Adults, $1 Ages 6-17)
1-4 pm Christmas at the 1855 Folsom House
1:30-3:30pm Greenfire Irish Dancers, Taylors Falls Memorial Community Center
2 pm St. Croix Festival Theatre, 125 N. Washington: A Christmas Carol
3 pm Winter Concert by St. Croix Valley Orchestra, 1861 Methodist Church

Check website for schedule updates, as it will be updated as events are confirmed.

TAYLORS FALLS LIGHTING FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Pancake Breakfast

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2025
9:00AM TO 11:00AM

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR A PANCAKE BREAKFAST WITH OUR DELICIOUS MAPLE SYRUP!

STAY AND MAKE AN

ADVENT WREATH

ALL SUPPLIES ARE PROVIDED!

ENJOY LIVE MUSIC IN OUR CHRISTMAS DECORATED SANCTUARY BY

TONI BREKKE

First Evang. Lutheran Church,
561 Chestnut Street
Taylors Falls, MN 55084

WATCH FOR A SIGN UP SHEET FOR THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING AT THIS EVENT!

Church Council Meeting Minutes
of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, October 12, 2025, 12:15pm
Next meeting: November 9, 2025, 12:15pm

Council Members: Rose Anderson, Kathy Carlsted, Angie Dahlstrom, Don Hansen, Craig Loen, Julie Valez, Pastor Justin Fenger

A. Opening Devotions – Angie
November - Craig

B. Sharing Stories of God's Love in our Lives - Riley's wedding

C. Pastor Justin's Report

1. Technology upgrades and changes-Worship went more smoothly with the changes. Live streaming will be coming soon. There will be camera upgrades soon
2. Lectionary plans-Revised lectionary will be used throughout this upcoming year.
3. Wedding for Riley

D. Treasurer's Report – Craig-

1. Audit planning-Becky, Craig and the Audit Company, met and will look at best practices for a selected month. Estimated costs will be $250.00 per hour and will take 10 hours. This was put on hold and Pastor Justin will check with Immanuel Lutheran Church (ILC) auditors to determine the questions to conduct an audit of FELC books. Craig will talk to auditing company to see if there is an audit form FELC could use

Summary:

1. Monthly giving $9341, short $800 for September.
2. We are at 23 percent of budget for giving for the current fiscal year
3. Expenses are at 38 percent because of Pastors salary overlap and tech equipment upgrades
4. Written reports of the financials are open for inspection in the church office

E. Building and Grounds Committee Projects - Don

1. Technology installation will be completed by Matt Mitchell in October.
2. Need to recruit people for committee to oversee interior projects / announcement
3. Kitchen cleaning and fix-up-no update
4. Bathroom remodeling-Joy and Dennis were to get estimate.
5. Relocated cry room to southeast coat room in the sanctuary
6. Kitchen team remodel and repairs comprised of Joy, Rose, Tim, Don, Bruce
7. Emptying out the shed – completed

F. Library Report - Julie

1. Apply for Little Free Library status.
2. Jerry and Deb Rhoads suggest making a sign for the little library.

G. Women's Retreat - Julie

1. The retreat will be in February 2026 at Luther Point - Cost will be about $1500.00-2000.00
2. Motion by Don and seconded by Julie to allocate $2000.00 for the February from the Lowell Nelson outreach fund. Motion carried

H. Vision Group -> Mission and Outreach Committee

1. Leadership will be Rita and Wendy. The hope is to evolve into the Mission and Outreach committee.

I. Shared Ministry – Better Together with Immanuel-Pastor Justin will send notice when scheduled

1. A combined council made up of a few members from each congregation will meet quarterly to monitor the ongoing relationship – Craig, Don, Kathy, and Becky have volunteered to serve on this group.
2. Music and Worship Coordination – Becky has been meeting with the Immanuel Worship Team to choose hymns and go through bulletins. Communication with Angie and Toni is a work in progress.

J. Personnel

1. Angie's PTO – Angie is now working her full-time hours of 34 hours per pay period.
2. Momoh Freeman has completed W4 paperwork; has received keys; and has led rehearsals throughout September.
3. Extra hours for Carli to create screen presentation weekly (up to 3 hrs/wk) This cost will be shared with Immanuel. ILC will pay Carli direct

K. Sunday Morning - Council Person on Duty (CPOD)

1. Start at 9:30 instead of 9.
2. Check all doors before leaving.

L. Caring Ministry

1. Monthly communion visits to shut-ins-no report
2. Monthly meeting of visitors -

M. Reports on Events

1. Thursday, Holy Smokes-one more at the winery this month
2. God's Work, Our Hands-cleaning of church inside and out.

N. Upcoming Events

1. Trunk and Treat – 10/31-at FELC 4:30—6pm, candy in a trunk.

O. Motion to Adjourn

Rose moved and Julie seconded for motion to adjourn

Twenty layettes assembled for local hospitals

Sunday School kids created cards for shut-in's

Library Project

Clean & Organize
Create Bookmarks

Twelve purses loaded up with toiletries and other goodies for local women's shelter!

Yard Work

Raking and clearing brush & weeds

God's Work Our Hands

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH of TAYLORS FALLS

Church Office
651-465-5265
www.tflutheran.org

Pastor Justin Fenger
c: 651-308-7717
pastor@immanuelalmelund.com

Angie Linngren
Ministry Coordinator
felctf@gmail.com

2025-2026 Council/Officers:

Becky Hulden—President
Kathy Carlsted—Vice President
Craig Loen—Treasurer
Don Hansen—Secretary
Julie Valez
Rose Anderson
Angela Dahlstrom
Riley Linngren

Financial Secretary
Jerry Rhoads

Please hold the ministers and council members in your prayers that God would give them the wisdom, strength, courage, patience and perseverance to serve this community of faith as they lead us in our mission for the sake of the world and the glory of God.

Next council meeting will be held on Sunday, November 9th at 12:15pm

Mission Statement

Proclaim the Gospel and Serve our Neighbors.

(Mission Statement approved 2023)

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations." Psalm 90:1

Please send submissions to: felctf@gmail.com
Articles due the 12th of each month.

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH

561 Chestnut Street, Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110

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