First Things

JULY 2026

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

"Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." — John 16:7

I have been trying to figure out how to prioritize this summer. I'm sitting at about an 80% solution, which I keep telling myself is fine even though some part of me feels like I should have had this figured out weeks ago.

But honestly, it doesn't take much to get to 80%. How many days can you really take off in the summer? Not many. Limited. I've got projects waiting around the house and the garden, but I already know I'll run out of growing season before I run out of plans. The frost will come early, like it always seems to. Limited. And then there's money, the constant governor on everything. But here's the thing I keep bumping into: even if I had unlimited money, I still wouldn't have unlimited time.

Every Sunday we are drawn to an unlimited God in a very limited world.

You'd think that would be cruel to worship a God who has no concept of being limited, who set the sun and the moon, the day and the night, who built the whole created order on rhythms and boundaries... and then placed all of those limits on us while He goes on without constraint. We have to schedule our worship. We have to protect the Sabbath on purpose, or the week will swallow it whole. We even have to prioritize the very thing that is supposed to be our rest.

Continued on page two

Continued from cover page

So how do we experience a God without limits?

We don't, actually. Not first. What we have is something stranger and far kinder. We have a God who emptied himself, who became one of us and walked among us. We worship a God who *was* limited and constrained and who felt it deeply. That is why, in John's Gospel, Jesus talks about the necessity of facing his own end. He had to go, he said, so that he could send another, an Advocate, the Spirit, the one who moves us past our limits and carries Jesus' message everywhere. The limited God opens the way for us to belong to the unlimited one.

That is the gift hiding inside our limits. To be created by a limitless God, and created *with* limits, is not a cruelty. It's an invitation. God sets these constraints, day and night, season and frost, the eighty percent we can actually manage, and through them invites us, finite as we are, into His limitless presence. Not by pretending we are infinite, but by honestly admitting that we are not.

Maybe that's exactly where the peace is. Not in finally landing unlimited time or unlimited money or the perfect summer plan, but in the season itself, day and night, minute by minute, breath by breath. Breathe in. Count the breaths. Give thanks. And trust that each ordinary moment carries its own power to redeem, to restore, to recharge, because it belongs to Christ, and through Christ, so do you.

So maybe that is the real invitation into this summer. Not to conquer it. Not to optimize it. Just to live it, limit by limit, in the presence of the God who made the limits and then stepped inside them for us.

Eighty percent is enough. It always was.

Grace and peace,

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

10am Fellowship Hour
11am Worship Service

Services are recorded and can be found on our website: www.tflutheran.org

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet in July. Date to be determined.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

07/06 Jesse Loen
07/07 Jason Linngren
07/08 Vada Fenger
07/10 Deb Rhoads
07/12 Ryan Rogers
07/15 Mae Fenger
07/16 Cynthia Holmberg
07/26 Janet Shepardson
07/28 Dustin Valez
07/29 Buddy Mattson
07/30 Angie Linngren

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

05/24 Giving:	$ 770.00
05/31 Giving:	$1,775.00
06/07 Giving:	$2,858.00
06/14 Giving:	$1,402.96
06/21 Giving:	$3,063.00

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

Taking a break for the summer. Watch for updates in August and September!

WISDOM SEEKERS

Will take a break June - August. Watch for the September newsletter for start up date!

CRAFTING

CRAFTING ON SATURDAYS

WE WILL NOT MEET IN JUNE AND JULY

Thursday, July 16th
4:30pm - 6:30pm

Are you interested in hosting the meal & running the game night? Sign up at the usher stand!!

Come enjoy supper, good music & have fun playing board games!!

at First Evang. Lutheran

Quilting

No quilting for the summer.

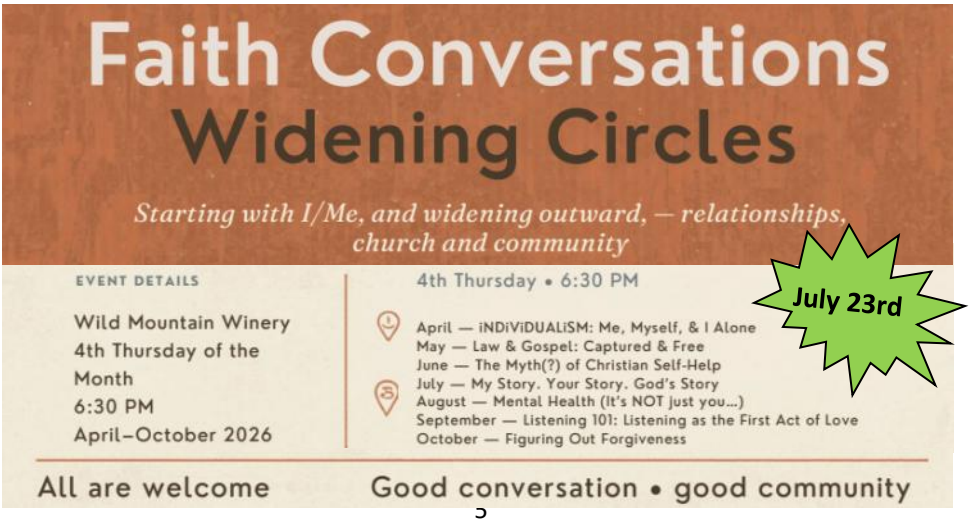
Better Together

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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

Tune in our Daily Texts with Pastor Justin

Monday - Saturday: Immanuel Lutheran Church of Almelund Facebook Page.
A daily devotional time.



JULY

Sun	Mon	Tue
FELC - First Evangelical Lutheran Church ILC - Immanuel Lutheran Church		
5 9am Worship at ILC 10am Fellowship at ILC 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC	6 8:30am Counters Meet at FELC	7
12 9am Worship at ILC 10am Fellowship at ILC 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC	13 8:30am Counters Meet at FELC Newsletter Submissions Due	14
19 9am Worship at ILC 10am Fellowship at ILC 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC	20 8:30am Counters Meet at FELC	21
26 9am Worship at ILC 10am Fellowship at ILC 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC	27 8:30am Counters Meet at FELC	28

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge	3	4
8 10am Book Study at The Lodge	9 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge	10 4:30pm Community Meal at ILC	11
15 1:30pm Worship at The Lodge	16 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge 4:30pm Supper & Game Night at FELC	17 Wannigan Days July 17th - 19th	18
22 10am Book Study at The Lodge	23 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge 6:30pm Holy Smokes at Wild Mtn Winery	24	25
29	30 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge	31	

WHAT'S HAPPENING

IN OUR COMMUNITY

FARMER'S MARKET

St. Croix Falls Public Library Plaza
Saturdays, May-October
10am to 1pm
Local vendors offering fresh produce, sustainably raised meats and cheese, preserves, honey, flowers, & more!

Parking Lot of St. Bridget's in Lindstrom, MN
Wednesday 3 pm to 6 pm
Saturday 8 am to 12 pm
Local vendors offering vegetables, flowers, home canned goods, soap, eggs, baked goods & more.

Almelund Farmer's Market at Rod's Country Corner
Friday Afternoons | 3pm to 6pm
Flowers & plants, fresh produce, eggs, maple syrup, honey, baked goods, canned foods & more!

Taylors Falls Farmers Market
Located in vacant parking lot across from The Drive-In
Sunday, July 12th & 26th
11am to 3pm
Local vendors offering fresh produce, flowers, baked goods, handmade crafts & more!

OUTDOOR MUSIC

Wednesday Nights at 6:30pm
Lions Park Band Shell,
Lindstrom
Events start at 6:30pm
ALL Concerts FREE to the Public!

St Croix Falls, WI
Severson Memorial Overlook Park
June - August
Friday evenings at 6:30pm

FREE Friday Summer Concerts at the overlook. Bring a lawn chair.
FREE ADMISSION!

Sunday, July 5th | 10am-2pm
Local farmers and artists come together at Franconia Sculpture Park to provide a variety of fresh produce and handmade crafts. Farmers market is rain or shine!

Chisago County Fair
Rush City, MN

THE LODGE OF TAYLORS FALLS

Join the residents at The Lodge in Taylors Falls!

Every Thurs at 2:30pm for their free Community Coffee Hour!

Book Study
July 8th & 22nd at 10am

Worship at The Lodge
July 15th at 1:30pm

CHISAGO LAKES
COMMUNITY MEAL
Monday Evenings
4pm - 6pm
Zion Lutheran Church in Chisago City.
All are welcome!

2026
KARL OSKAR DAYS
Lindström, MN

July 8th - 12th

Celebrate Lindstrom's Swedish heritage and our modern-day community!
www.cityoflindstrom.us/kod

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Thursday, July 23rd

THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH

6 PM - 9 PM

COMMUNITY CENTER

Bring your friends and favorite board games!

Wannigan Days celebrates the rich history of St. Croix Falls, WI & Taylors Falls, MN. Join us for a fun-filled weekend of family fun!

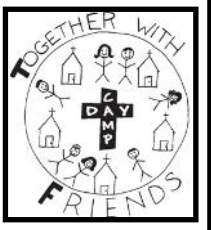
Music | Fireworks | Food | Kids Zone | Parade | Bingo
Art & Craft Fair | Sidewalk Sales and so much more!!!

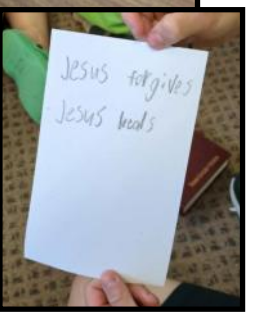
POLK COUNTY FAIR
ST.CROIX FALLS, WIS
Polk County Fair Society, Inc.

Thurs. July 23rd - Sun. July 26th

The day campers learn Bible lessons, memorize Bible verses, sing songs, create crafts, play games and share snack together.

TWF Campers learned and performed a skit about friends bringing a paralyzed man to Jesus.





The quilters got together to make lap quilts. Two full sized quilts were donated to the Luther Point summer fundraiser.

Quilting will resume in the fall.

As we welcome the new members to council, we wank to say a big thank you to Becky Hulden, Kathy Carlsted, and Rose Anderson for their time and commitment to our church as dedicated council members!

Thank you to all the members who served on committees and have volunteered to be on upcoming committees! We appreciate you!!!

Thank you for being understanding on the delay on the complete Annual Report. It's hard to pull everything together when life happens - mission trips, surgeries, family vacations, anniversary getaways, etc - we are working hard to get the annual report finalized and it will be available for members to view in July. Thank you for your patience!

MEETING MINUTES / ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS

Special Congregation Meeting - Page 13

Annual Meeting Minutes - Page 14-15

Audit Committee Report - Page 15-16

Property Committee Report - Page 16-17

Memorial Funds Yearly Recap - Page 18

June Council Minutes will be included in the August newsletter.

Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

To vote on continuation of the joint ministry with Immanuel Lutheran Church May 17 2026

Call meeting to Order: Becky Hulden – declared a Quorum of 19 or more was present-35

Purpose of meeting is to vote on continuation (one year) with shared pastorate with Immanuel Lutheran Church , Almelund, MN

Pastor Justin Led the congregation in prayer

Volunteers to count the Votes: Jerry Rhoads and Bri Tompson

Becky Hulden stated that the purpose of the special meeting was to vote yes or no for the continued joint ministry between FELC and ILC.

The motion and second was made by Council to vote on continued pastoral duties joint ministry at a special congregational meeting

There was no Discussion

Written ballots were distributed to members present

Results of the Vote

Yes: 32

No: 3

Motion and second by the council was approved

Jerry Rhoads moved to adjourn.

Seconded: Bri Tompson

Motion carried

Meeting adjourned

Minutes First Evangelical Lutheran Church Annual Meeting
June 21, 2026 (Unapproved until 2027 Annual Meeting)

1. Becky Hulden called the meeting to order
2. Quorum- Becky counted 25 members present at the beginning of the meeting
3. Prayer- Pastor Justin Fenger opened the meeting with prayer
4. Appointment of Tellers if needed. Not needed
5. Acceptance of 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes: Wendy Szczepanski made a motion to accept; Angie Dahlstrom seconded, motion carried
6. Acceptance of Special Congregational Meeting Minutes from 04/27/2026
7. Elections
    1. Council Member
        a. Joe Sczepanski agreed to serve on the council
        b. Rita Johnson was interested
        c. Krissy Linnerooth is interested
        d. Nominations from the floor- Jerry nominated Krissy Linnerooth to serve on council. Angie seconded, Motion carried. Terms to 2026 to 2029.
    2. Nominating Committee- Miriam Flysjo is on the committee, nominations made from the floor include Don Hansen and Becky Hulden for nominating committee for 3 years.
    3. Auditing Committee-Natalie Landgreen is currently on the committee. Jerry Rhoads and Dennis Bucholz volunteered to be on the auditing committee in 2026. Mary Ann and Carol Nelson resigned from the committee. Angie Linngren moved to have Jerry and Dennis serve on the auditing committee, Don Seconded Motion carried
    4. Memorial Committee- Council will print a summary of the donations and disbursements from memorials.
8. Reports: Becky Hulden, Pastor Justin all gave oral reports as well as the written reports, to be included in the final Annual report. Dennis made a motion to accept the reports, both written and oral, Jerry Rhoads seconded, motion carried.
9. New Property Committee established: Joy Bulkholz, Julie Valez, Wendy Sczepanski, and Julie Magnuson volunteered to serve on. Miriam Flysjo made motion to form a new property committee

and Carol Nelson seconded. Motion carried. Julie Valez will set up the first meeting.

10. Budget Proposal for 2026-2027 Fiscal year. Becky Hulden summarized the 2026/27 proposed budget. Angie Dahlstrom moved and Carol Nelson seconded to adopt the budget as written and attached in the annual report; motion carried.
11. Jery Rhoads made a motion to adjourn, Dennis seconded. Meeting was adjourned, ending with the Lord's prayer.

Audit Committee Report

History: At the 2025 Annual Meeting, two members of the audit Committee resigned stating that they could not fulfill their responsibilities due to the current financial procedures. The Church Council reached out an organization called Clergy Financial Resources, who specialize in tax, payroll, bookkeeping and HR exclusively for churches. We presented our situation to them, and they agreed that they would be able to assess and report on our Internal Financial Controls. They sent us a questionnaire of over 130 questions covering the topics: Cash and Collection Process, Fixed assets, Accounts Payable, Emergency and Safety Protocol, Insurance Policies and Coverage Reviews. This questionnaire was completed by Craig Loen – Council Treasurer, Becky Hulden – Council President, and Jerry Rhoads – Financial Secretary.

In January 2026, we received these General Recommendations:

Here is a list of general recommendations to enhance FELC's internal controls, safeguards, and security:

1. Have a person and/or a committee overseeing the internal financial controls.

2. Have a person and/or a committee overseeing the physical security of the church property and church congregants.

3. Utilize technology – cameras inside/out, key code entry system on doors, information technology companies to sure digital records...etc.

4. Utilize third parties with specific expertise – denomination, accountants/CPAs, banks, local fire and police, insurance companies, church security companies...etc.

5. Maintain transparency for all financial and operational areas.
6. Communicate and train volunteers to reduce knowledge gaps.

Fifteen (15) additional Specific Recommendations were included in the report. Some of these recommendations have been addressed by the current council, but some will need to be addressed by the emergency/safety committee and some will be addressed by the audit committee.

Faithfully submitted,

Rebecca Hulden – Council President 2023-2026

Property Committee Report 2026

First off, let me apologize for not having the property summary of activities report prepared for the annual meeting/report. This was my responsibility and no one on the council or church staff is to blame.

I would like to provide a little history and a brief list of the accomplishments, that I am aware of over the last 10 years, as a summary and would also like to share the make-up of the "property committee" members. Before I actively became involved in the property committee, which was around 2015, Gene Andersen, Bruce Carlsted and Pete Lindgren were the "go to guys" when it came to church property projects and maintenance. There were others on the committee, but those three men were the first to receive calls when anything went wrong regarding our church building. They coordinated major projects, met with vendors, obtained bids and most often times did the work themselves. These projects, included restorative painting of the 1904 sanctuary, a complete organ update and remodel, pew restoration, securing building and liability insurance, restoration of outside church finials, 3 new boiler replacements for the 1903 sanctuary, front entrance door replacement and repair of stained glass.

They coordinated that work including the some of the fund raising. They were indeed a 3-person maintenance crew for the church and could fix anything. Pete and Gene "retired" from the committee about 2017 and Joe Szczepanski , Joe Landgreen and myself volunteered to fill that role for continued property care of the church. Official Property committee meetings occurred when they were necessary and large projects and funding were always driven and approved by the Church council. Large projects completed within the last 5 years include

reroofing of the Sanctuary, education wing and the copper Steeple, the education wing church bathroom was remodeled and updated and asbestos tile removed, water seepage in the basement was mitigated by addition of new concrete side walk on the north side, brick and window sills were tuckpointed, the fellowship hall received new wall coverings paint and folding chairs, new piping and boilers were installed in the education wing, Funds for these projects were from budgeted property maintenance, designated property improvement gifts, maple syrup bucks, and undesignated memorial funds.

2025/26 projects include new security cameras at the back door and education wing hallway, new exterior door locks and installation of scheduled on-off outdoor lights at the church entrance. The installation of a new 'access point" which allows these cameras and remote-controlled lights and vacuum to operate wirelessly in the sanctuary. New sanctuary monitor and computer was installed in the sanctuary for worship. The 2 basement men's and one women's restroom was also remodeled by Bruce this past year. The men's bathroom under the narthex was upgraded. Funds for these projects came from the property maintenance, maple bucks and undesignated memorials. All of the labor was donated for these projects. The old fuel oil barrel was removed along with the fence on the backside of the church. A new door to the kitchen stairwell was installed. The outdoor shed was cleaned out and organized. Bruce Carlsted continues to keep the parking lot clear of snow and Ice and donates this service. Joe and Wendy Szczepanski continue to mow and trim lawn throughout the summer and they donate all costs for this service. I checked on the value of snow removal and lawn care and the value of these services are around $500 to $600 per month.

Plans for 2026 and 2027

We will continue to strive to make the Church Building and Grounds more inviting, safe and a pleasant place to be. Outdoor church signage and parking lot resurface, are two projects on the list to consider and I am sure the kitchen is also on the list for consideration. The newly formed property team will have much to consider. The people involved in maintaining and beautifying the Church take great pride in their handy work which makes First Lutheran Church of Taylors Falls a wonderful place to worship and call my church home.

Sincerely,

For the Property Team,

Don Hansen

Memorial Accounts (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026)

Type	Date	Memo	Amount	Balance
Designated Funds				56,883.59
Memorial Funds				56,883.59
3200-Archives				7,641.10
Total 3200-Archives				7,641.10
3210-Lamb Baptism Fund				350.00
General Journal	07/09/2025	Check written on 07/09/25	-100.00	250.00
General Journal	05/13/2026	For Allen French	-100.00	150.00
Total 3210-Lamb Baptism Fund			-200.00	150.00
3215 Olson Youth				16,579.22
Total 3215 Olson Youth				16,579.22
3220-Organ Maintenance				2,386.05
General Journal	03/04/2026	Pipes of the North	-1,003.60	1,382.45
Total 3220-Organ Maintenance			-1,003.60	1,382.45
3225-Olson/Lindgren Fund				2,142.90
Total 3225-Olson/Lindgren Fund				2,142.90
3235-Undesiganted Memorial				4,412.52
Deposit	07/20/2025	Lee Bokeman	50.00	4,462.52
Deposit	08/31/2025	Lee Boleman	20.00	4,482.52
General Journal	10/29/2025	New Bathroom -Becky Holden	-553.46	3,929.06
Deposit	05/17/2026	Mardielle Rogers	1,000.00	4,929.06
Total 3235-Undesiganted Memorial			516.54	4,929.06
3240-Pass-thru to CD Investment				20.00
Total 3240-Pass-thru to CD Investment				20.00
3245-Nelson Memorial				20,603.33
General Journal	11/12/2025	Womens Retreat Luther Point	-962.00	19,641.33
Total 3245-Nelson Memorial			-962.00	19,641.33
3250-Sellman Memorial				0.00
Deposit	11/20/2025	Deposit	61,693.29	61,693.29
Total 3250-Sellman Memorial			61,693.29	61,693.29
3085-Palmquist Scholarship				2,748.47
Total 3085-Palmquist Scholarship				2,748.47
Total Memorial Funds			60,044.23	116,927.82
Total Designated Funds			60,044.23	116,927.82
TOTAL			**60,044.23**	**116,927.82**

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH of TAYLORS FALLS

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

Angie Linngren
Ministry Coordinator
felctf@gmail.com

2026-2027 Council/Officers:

Angela Dahlstrom
Don Hansen
Rita Johnson
Khrissy Linnerooth
Riley Linngren
Craig Loen
Joe Szczepanski
Julie Valez

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 in July. Date to be decided.

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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