



THE "FIRST" EDITION

May 2026

One of my favorite songs from my Sunday School days is the catchy one that says, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart".

As I look ahead to the month of May, I've been thinking about joy. There are several occasions this month that we will celebrate with joy: Affirmation of Baptism at Grace, Mother's Day, and Graduate Recognition. These are meaningful moments, and they give us plenty of reasons to rejoice.

In addition, we will be reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians where one word shows up again and again: joy. Which sounds great, until you remember that Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. I'm pretty sure if it was me sitting in prison, "joy" would probably not be the topic I'd choose to write about.

Yet, Paul keeps coming back to joy. Not because his life was easy. Not because everything was going well. But because his joy isn't based on his circumstances. It is based on knowing Jesus.

That is important for all of us to remember. Most of us are pretty good at connecting joy to our lives when things are going well. But when things start to fall apart.... Joy is not usually the first thing that comes to mind.

In this letter, Paul reminds us that the foundation of our joy isn't the goodness of our day or even the goodness of our life, but the goodness of God. And that changes everything. It doesn't mean life suddenly becomes easy. It doesn't mean we stop struggling or wishing things were different. But it does mean this: even here, even now, Christ is present. Christ is at work. And that is a joy nothing can take away.

So this month, let's rejoice in the many celebrations we share together, but even more in the steady, unshakable joy that comes from the love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings and Joy,
Pastor Rebekah Tarras

I've Got the Joy Joy Joy

George William Cooke (1848-1923)




I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart down in my heart down in my heart I've got the
Refrain
joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart down in my heart to stay. And I'm so hap- py, so ver- y
hap - py, I've got the love of Je - sus in my heart, _____ And I'm so
hap - py, so ver - y hap - py, I've got the love of Je - sus in my heart.

bethsnotes.com

2. I have the love of Jesus, love of Jesus, down in my heart... *Refrain*

3. I have the peace that passes understanding down in my heart... *Refrain*

May

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 9:00am Sunday School 9:15 Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship	27 1:30pm Bible Study	28 	29 10:00am Choir 11am Archive	30	1 9-10:30am Food Pantry 1-3pm Stampin! 3-4:30pm Food Pantry	2
3 9:00am Sunday School 10:30am Worship 11:30am Cupcakes! 5:30pm El Charro dinner	4 12:30pm Worship Ministry 1:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Stampin!	5 6:30pm Endowment	6 10:00am Choir 11:00am Archive 5pm Finance	7	8	9 9am-4pm Craft Day at Grace
10 9:00am Sunday School 9:00am Mother's Day Breakfast! 10:30am Worship 11:30am Sundaes!	11 1:30pm Bible Study 2:45pm M-Team	12 6:30 Council	13	14	15 	16 Bike Rodeo 9:30-11am @ Grace
17 9:15am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship & Graduate Recognition 11:30am Cake 6:30pm Mutual Ministry at Grace	18 1:30pm Bible Study 6:00pm Joint Council Meeting	19	20  SING PRAISES TO HIM, TELL OF ALL HIS WONDERFUL WORKS. PSALM 108:2	21	22	23
24 9:15am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship	25 Memorial Day Office Closed No Bible Study	26	27 Pastor Off until June 3	28	29	30
31 9:15am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship	1 No Bible Study Pastor Off	2	3 Pastor Off	4	5 9-10:30am Food Pantry 3-4:30pm Food Pantry	6

Senior Camp Registration is Open Bible Camp for 55+

Embark on an adventure-filled day at Pine Lake Bible Camp near Waupaca! Join Pastor Rebekah and others for a day with laughter, camaraderie, and memory-making. From outdoor activities to cozy bible study chats, there's something for everyone. Come experience the joy of Camp Senior!

Date: July 9

Time: 9:30am – 3:00pm

Cost: \$25.00

Register: www.crosswayscamps.org

CRAFT DAY @ GRACE

May 9th, 9am-4pm All Crafters Welcome!

Bring your art/craft, enjoy fellowship and a light lunch! The crafting fun begins at 9am at Grace Lutheran and ends at 4pm. Please sign up so we know how many crafting stations to have prepared! Stay the whole time or drop in for a bit!





- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 5 Reggie Vergin | 15 Mark Kretzmann |
| 6 Eric Beine | 17 Lenny Langkau |
| 9 Steve Macijeski | 17 Clara Voightlander |
| 9 Jan Strehlow | 17 Greg Plamann |
| 12 Mick Warning | 18 Ryan Bahr |
| 13 Ryan Deppe | 19 Alex Bahr |
| 14 Benjamin Chase | 21 Eva Krause |
| 14 Shannon McPeak | 23 Scott Michels |
| 15 Katie Collins | 29 Amber Fenner |

HAPPY Anniversary

- 4 Hermie & Germaine Schwebs
- 6 Steve & Darlene Cravillion
- 9 Reggie & Judy Vergin
- 9 Brandon & Brittany Disterhaft
- 10 Glenn & Linda Gruett
- 20 George & Kim Huerth
- 31 Zach & Jacklyn Wilson

May the Lord bless this beautiful day, woven with both the gift of life and the grace of faithful love. On your birthday, we give thanks for the life God has so lovingly created in you – a life that reflects His light, His kindness, and His purpose! On your anniversary, we celebrate the sacred bond you share – a love rooted in faith, strengthened through every season, and blessed by God’s enduring presence.

*Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary!
May His blessings overflow in your life and your love.*

Cupcakes & Celebrations!

You’re invited to linger a little longer after worship on the first Sunday of each month... because something sweet is happening!

We’ll be celebrating birthdays and anniversaries with cupcakes and the simple joy of being together as God’s family. It’s a small moment, but one that reflects the abundant love God pours into our lives through one another.

And if you can’t be with us in person, please know this: you are not forgotten. You are lifted up in prayer, wrapped in grace, and held close in the heart of this community.

****If we missed a special day or have a date wrong, please contact the office!**



For the month of May, our Noisy Bucket offering will support:

School Lunch Debt Relief for the Berlin School District!

Help relieve school lunch debt in our community. Every coin and contribution makes a difference, offering care and dignity to local families. Thank you for helping us share Christ’s love in a practical way.

Our March Noisy Bucket Mission, School Lunch Debt relief for Wild Rose, raised \$268.23!

Thank you for your generosity & caring hearts.

If you are unable to attend in person, join us online on our Facebook page or listen to worship via radio station 93.1 FM or 1600 AM at 9:45 am.

May 3 Fifth Sunday of Easter 10:30am	Acts 17:16-31 Communion at the rail Celebration Sunday	Greeter: Greg & Sharon Plamann Reader: Dar Cravillion Usher: Mark Henn & Joel Beine Bread: Mali Beine Communion: Mali Beine
May 10 Sixth Sunday of Easter 10:30am	Philippians 1:1-18a Mother's Day Communion in the pew	Greeter: Dar Cravillion Reader: Kim Huerth Usher: Harold Nigbor
May 17 Seventh Sunday of Easter 10:30am	Philippians 2:1-13 Honoring Graduates Communion in the pew	Greeter: Diane Warning Reader: George Huerth Usher: Diane Warning
May 24 Day of Pentecost 10:30am	Acts 2:1-12; and Philippians 4:4-7 Communion in the pew	Greeter: Joan Everson Reader: Karen Macijeski Usher: Mark Henn & Joel Beine
May 31 1 st after Pentecost 10:30am	1 John 1:1-7 No Communion	Greeter: Mark Henn Reader: Harold Nigbor Usher: Gary Boening

Jerry Wrage – Health Concerns
 Grant – Parkinson's – Friend of the Plamanns
 Rich Evans – Stroke – Friend of the Lairds
 Jeri Latshaw – Arm Surgery – Coworker of Linda N.
 Michelle Nelson – Health – Germaine's Daughter-in-Law
 Jaci Boening – Surgery – Healing
 Chris Monroe - Healing
 Alyssa - Granddaughter of Dan & Judy Button
 Pastor Bill Meier
 Carol Bergeon – Stroke - Germaine Schwebs' Cousin
 Wiggie Benton – Cancer – Germaine Schwebs' Nephew
 Gen Everson – Health & Healing
 Russ Hofer – Overcoming Grief – Friend of the Lairds
 Kathy Piper – Friend of Judy V.
 Sue – Health & Continued Healing – Friend of the Lairds
 Craig Monroe – Health – Son of Gary & Chris
 Chris Monroe – Healing
 Mike C. – Continued Healing – Friend of Vergins
 Patty C. – Cancer - Friend of Judy Vergin
 Doris – Cancer & Heart
 Linda Ewald – Healing – Sister in Law of Judy Vergin
 Phyllis Jenks – Continued Prayers - Lee Chase's sister
 Pastor Rick Rieten – Health – Friend of Laird's
 James Cartwright – Healing, Heart Surgery – Lenny's Cousin



Patti Christie – Friend of the Langkaus
 Missy Miller - Healing
 Jaci Boening – Surgery, Healing
 Lee Nelson – Healing
 Kay Jeske – Continued Healing
 Corrine – Healing – Cousin of Judy B.
 Mark Bongart – Continued Healing
 Mark Kretzmann – Continued Healing
 Tammy Kretzmann – Healing
 For those battling cancer: Tom, Dave L.



Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)

What is a QCD? It is a tax-free donation directly from your IRA to a qualified organization such as First Lutheran Church. Do I qualify? You must be 70 ½ or older and own an IRA such as a Traditional or Inherited IRA. There are a select few other accounts that qualify as well. Talk to your financial adviser to see if you have a qualifying account.

How much can I donate? Have no fear...the maximum you may use for an QCD for 2025 is \$108,000!

Why is this a benefit to me? QCDs can reduce your adjusted gross income and lower your tax bracket on the amount of taxes you pay. Example: You choose to donate \$5,000 to First Lutheran (whether monthly, quarterly or as a one-time donation). This money is taken from your qualifying account and directly sent to First Lutheran. You do not have to report this withdrawal as income on your tax return. Also, if you make these distributions from your IRA prior to turning 73 or 75 depending on when you were born, it reduces your IRA, which in turn can reduce your required minimum distributions.

To get started on this Win-Win method of donating to First Lutheran Church contact the financial institution where your IRA is housed!



With grateful hearts, we give thanks for the many hands and loving spirits who made our Easter celebration so beautiful. Thank you to all who shared in our Easter breakfast! Your presence made the morning shine with warmth and community.

We are also deeply thankful to those who brought flowers to adorn our worship space. Each bloom was a reflection of the new life we celebrate in the Resurrection - a reminder of God's beauty, hope, and promise made new in Christ.

May the joy of Easter continue to blossom in our hearts today and in the days ahead. As we go forward, may we carry that same spirit of generosity, gratitude, and love into all we do.

Alleluia! He is risen indeed!



Little Dresses for Africa

On Saturday, May 9th, during the monthly Craft Day at Grace, we will be sewing dresses for the Little Dresses for Africa Mission. We will begin at 9:00am and go to mid-afternoon (come for any part of this time or stay the entire time)! We need sewing machine sewers, hand sewers for buttons, ironing, pinning, etc. Join us for a day (or an hour!) of creating.



Mother's Day Breakfast | May 10th at 9:00am

Ladies: Look forward to having the men do the cooking, serving & clean-up!
Sign-up with # attending, relax & enjoy the day.

Men: Sign-up! See how you can help out & pamper the women at First!

Sunday Sundaes! | May 10th 11:30am

Ice Cream Sundaes (with toppings!) will be served *after* Sunday worship by the Sunday School Children! It will be their last day of class for this school year.



With great joy and hearts full of faith, we warmly welcome Flora into our church family! Baptized on beautiful Palm Sunday, she has been received into the promise of God's grace and love.

May the same Jesus who entered Jerusalem in peace now dwell richly in her life, guiding her steps and surrounding her with His everlasting love. May her journey of faith be rooted in Christ, growing strong and radiant through the years. Welcome, sweet Flora—you are a beloved child of God, and we are so blessed to walk this faith journey with you!



Brianne Langkau

Brianne is graduating from Weyauwega-Fremont High School on May 22, 2026. She plans to go straight into the workforce! Brianne's favorite memory as part of First Luther Church was the bike-a-thon for St. Jude's.

Gracious God,

We give thanks for this graduate and the gifts You have placed within her. As she steps into the workforce, guide her path with wisdom and purpose. Grant her courage in new challenges, kindness in every encounter, and joy in the work of her hands. May she know her worth, trust in Your presence & carry Your light wherever she goes. Steady her journey and fill her future with hope.

Amen





May Collection: This month we're keeping it simple... and fun! We're collecting **ketchup & mustard** for the food pantry. It might not seem like a big deal but these are the kinds of items that don't always get donated - and they make a big difference. A meal is a meal but a hot dog without ketchup? That's a sad story.

If you're able, pick up an extra bottle (or two) and bring it along to church this month. It's a small way to care for our neighbors in a very real, practical way.

As Micah reminds us: *"What does the Lord require of you? To do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."* Sometimes "doing what is right" looks as simple as a bottle of ketchup. Thanks for being part of it.

First Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

March 10th, 2026 at 6:30pm

Present: Bill Deppe, Mali Beine, Jim Laird, Mark Henn, Aron Nelson, Pastor Tarras

Absent: Judy Shierland

Call to Order: 6:32pm

Devotion: Acts 6:1-7. Consider how we share the work of prayer, care for people, and sharing the good news of Jesus.

Visitor(s): None

Approval of Minutes: MOTION to accept. Second. No discussion. Motion carried.

Approval of Monthly Financial Reports: MOTION to approve financials as presented. Second. No discussion. Motion carried.

New Business:

1. New Trex Policy – Grace received bench. First has a deadline to reach 1,000 lbs. Have already collected 250 lbs.
2. Propose Prince of Peace Lutheran Church receive donation from Endowment.
3. Discussion and awareness of local shelters that turn people away nightly due to lack of beds.
4. We are in Christ is a Waushara County organization that meets monthly on Monday mornings. Currently working on a hygiene drive and resource fair. Recommend adding a representative for this group to the nomination committee's list.
5. Jim made group aware of Lasagna Love Program that was run in Fond du Lac. Food was made & delivered to individuals & groups.

Unfinished Business:

1. Lights: OK to be removed from Council agenda.
2. Facilities & Grounds: To be emailed this week.
3. Bulletin Boards: Work in progress.
4. Attic clean out: OK to be removed from our Council Agenda.

Closing Prayer

Motion to Adjourn: MOTION. Second. 7:58pm

Next Meeting Date: April 14 at 6:30p



Crossways Response Following the Board-Called Special Meeting

On Sunday, April 12th, the delegates of Crossways congregations gathered for a Board-Called Special Meeting to discern the future of the Waypost property. This moment, however, did not begin on that Sunday. It builds on the conditions of many years, the work shared at our Annual Meeting and the continued exploration led by the Financial Sustainability Committee over the past year, through appraisals, delegate feedback, and conversations with potential partners, including early relationship-building connected to the history of this land.

Four potential pathways were presented for consideration including Full (Open Market) Sale, Full Land Back Donation, Partial Sale / Partial Donations, and an option to explore amending the Conservation Easement to sell a larger portion. The Partial Sale would include the sale of the residence and surrounding acreage that is identified as an exception zone of the conservation easement.

We engaged in prayer, careful listening, and thoughtful discussion guided by the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the will of the delegates revealed an intent to pursue a partial sale and partial donation of the property, carried by a narrow majority. This decision reflects both the complexity of the moment and the care our community holds, for this land, for our ministry, and for one another.

What Happens Next

In the coming weeks, we will begin preparing the residence and surrounding parcel for sale. This includes both physical preparation and any necessary steps to separate the parcel. When a formal offer is ready, it will be brought back to the delegates for approval, with a required 21-day notice. We encourage all delegates and stakeholders to stay engaged in that process. At the same time, something important is beginning. The decision to donate a portion of this land marks the start of another journey. While initial conversations helped identify interest and historical connection, we want to be clear: this vote does not complete that work, it begins it. The work of restoration and Land Back is not transactional. It is relational. It will unfold over time through listening, trust, and shared commitment. That relationship-building has only just begun.

Moving Forward Together

We know that not everyone feels the same level of excitement or clarity about this decision. That, too, is part of being a community. What remains true is this: we move forward together. This decision does not mark an ending. It marks a beginning, a commitment to live more fully into who we say we are. To align our actions with our values. To care for this land not only as something we steward, but as something we are in relationship with. And to say, with integrity and humility: This is who we are, because this is how we live. We are grateful for the voices, the questions, the discernment, and the deep care that brought us to this moment. We trust that God is present in this process leading and guiding us through the shared conversations and wrestling with the most faithful path forward. We pray that future generations of the Crossways family will point to this moment in our history as a powerful witness to our trust in God's faithfulness to us and calling to be people of reconciliation. We know this moment is but one step, and there is more work ahead. And by God's grace and faithfulness, we will do it together.

Berlin Bike RODEO

MAY 16 | 9:30-11 AM

RAIN DATE: MAY 17 1-2:30 PM

PRIZES, GAMES, & GIVEAWAYS

AGES
4-10

FREE

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GREEN LAKE COUNTY RIGHT TO LIFE

First Lutheran Church

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Office hours at First:

Monday 9am to noon

Wednesday 9am to noon

Carolynn Rynish, Office Admin.

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Mon & Wed 7:30am to 12:30pm

Myndi Margan, Bookkeeper

firstluthbook@gmail.com

Mon and Thurs. 9:30am - 2:30pm

Bulletin Deadline:

Wednesday 9 am

Newsletter Deadline:

20th each month

Worship 10:30am Sundays

If you are unable to attend in person, join us online on our Facebook page or listen to worship via radio station 93.1 FM or 1600 AM at 9:45 am.



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