

First News

September 2024

The Monthly Publication of First Lutheran Church, Portland, ME



Welcome Back Cookout

A Fellowship and Cross-Generation Event
Sunday, September 8th following Worship

Join us on September 8th for a Welcome Back Cookout as we end the summer. We will be outside (weather permitting), and there will be a cornhole tournament, lollipop activity and a picture booth.

Hamburgers and Hot Dogs, along with drinks, will be provided.

Folks are invited to bring a pot-luck side dish or dessert to share.

150th Anniversary Celebration

Our Church's
150th Anniversary



This year marks the 150th anniversary of First Lutheran Church serving the Greater Portland community!

Mark your calendars to join us on October 26th and 27th for a celebratory weekend. We will be hosting a Harvest Supper on the 26th, and are planning a special Worship service on the 27th (which is also Reformation Sunday).

We hope you will join us as we look back at the history of First Lutheran, and celebrate the ministry of our church as the Spirit leads us forward.

[If you have any pictures of the church or past events you would like to share, please send them to news@flcme.org, or see any Council member.]

Council News

In July, our newly elected Church Council met. Executive board positions were voted upon, and I am grateful to be the new Church Council President for the 2024-2025 year. I hope to continue the standard of excellent leadership that my predecessors provided.

Progress continues to prepare the Washington Street property for sale; the Portland City Council met on August 21 to look at our plans, but we haven't heard any updates. We will let you know as soon as there are new developments. We are beginning to discuss a celebration of FLC being 150 years old this year! Look for more announcements to come, but mark your calendars for October 26 and 27! It should be a wonderful weekend celebration.

Pastor Amanda Gerken-Nelson will be our Contact Pastor for the next several months. She will be our primary contact for any pastoral concerns (hospital or home-bound visits, counseling, Council meetings) and will occasionally preach. Pastor Amanda is currently the Rector at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Yarmouth. We look forward to working with her during this transition time.

As we said goodbye on August 18th to Pastor Mark and Linda Perry, we are grateful for the leadership and service they provided during their time with us. We look forward to new possibilities and our future. We as a Council will continue the mission here at FLC. If you have any suggestions or questions, please let me know.

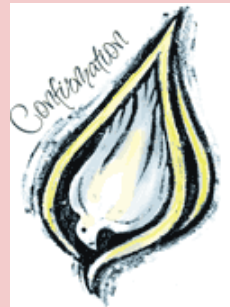
In His Service,

Ann Brown



On August 18th, we celebrated as Vinu Joshua Vimal Prabakar made public affirmation of his baptism and was confirmed by Pastor Mark Perry.

We ask that God continue to watch over Joshua, and that the Holy Spirit continue to lead Joshua as he grows in his faith.



Financial Update

FLC had a net operating deficit in July 2024 of \$2,780. We had expected a deficit of \$7,387 so the result was favorable to our budget. The monthly giving was over budget and our expenses were under budget resulting in the favorable variance. Our cash reserves remain sufficient to fund our ministry at least through the end of 2024. Council and the Finance and Stewardship committee continue to explore ways to increase receipts and reduce expenditures as we seek an improved financial position supporting calling a full-time pastor.

If you have questions, please contact me by e-mail or on my cell phone, (207) 939-0820.

--Ed Daggett, Treasurer

ed.daggett@flcme.org

	Actual July 2024	Actual 2024
Operating Income	\$24,264	\$202,117
Operating Expenses	\$27,044	\$199,698
Net Operating Income (Loss)	(\$2,780)	\$2,419

From the (Outgoing) Pastor

Dear First Lutheran Friends,

As we prepare to move to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, after which I will serve as Intentional Interim Pastor for Trinity Lutheran Church in Worcester starting September 3rd, we offer our deep and sincere appreciation for all that you've meant to us these past 14+ months. It has been a great privilege and joy to serve Christ with you and assist in your transition process. Linda and I thank you very much for a lovely "Goodbye and God bless" Sunday on August 18th, for your warm well wishes, and for all the cards and other expressions of support. We are both sad to leave you as well as excited for our next chapter in our lives, especially as we will be living so close to our daughters and grandchildren.

I trust and pray that you will continue to strengthen and grow into the thriving faith community I've known you to be, and which God takes joy in building up.

Here is our new mailing address:

Pastor Mark & Linda Perry

PO Box 75

Stockbridge MA 01262

I leave you with this sincere prayer and thought for you and all of us, from Ephesians 3:16-21,

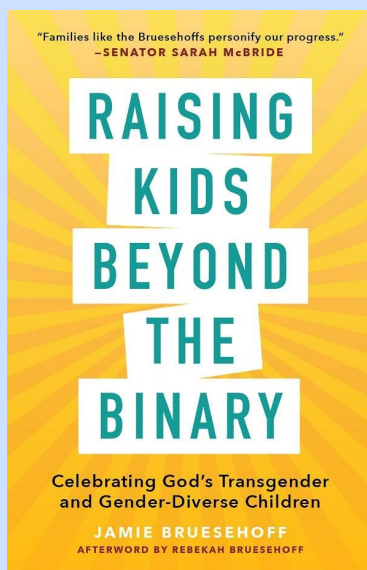
I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

"Goodbye for now,"

Pastor Mark

The RIC task force has a new name — *Committee for Inclusion*



As a next step in the RIC process, the Committee is sponsoring a book discussion group in October. The study will meet at 10AM once a week as well as in the evening if there is enough interest. The study will last about four sessions.

Several of us have already read this book and found it thought provoking, educational, heartwarming and challenging. Written by a Lutheran pastor's wife, the book describes the journey of her family as they nurture their transgender child.

This is an advance notice, so if you want to participate, you can order the book in time. It is available in paperback and Kindle at several on-line booksellers' sites.

We are still deciding on the day of the week we will meet. Evening meeting time, if a second session is indicated, will be 6:30 or 7:00pm. We are not planning to use Zoom at this time. However, if you really want Zoom, if you have a strong week day preference or have other questions, feel free to speak with any of the members of the Committee.

Our Community Involvement



GFPF update

The shelter at Williston Immanuel is now closed. Families that were housed there either moved to First Parish in Gorham, or found apartments to move into. It was a great space for Family Promise families for the past 16+ months. Currently four families are being housed at First Parish in Gorham and three families in the Clark House.

In July, the Board of Trustees of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church voted to donate the Clark House (22 Pleasant Ave) to Greater Portland Family Promise. Michelle, Family Promise director, is beyond excited and can't wait to start planning for the future of the property to expand housing options for families.

Three summer field trips were planned for the families with the last one in August to the splash pad in Portland. The African Celebration held in July was a huge success. Also, a summer picnic took place in Lewiston for the families living there.

Currently, case management is being provided by GFPF staff for approximately 35 families. The families also receive culturally appropriate foods once a month which is provided by Family Promise through a grant.

Update on Elza and her family

Jannice, a little girl, was born in July. Mom and baby are doing fine. Anuria is looking forward to freshman year at Portland High. Vitoria will be in 3rd grade and enjoyed summer school and Boys and Girls Club Quest Camp. Evelyn, who is 3 1/2, is adjusting to life with a new baby sister.

Thank you very much for the recent Walmart and Hannaford gift cards. We use the Walmart gift cards to purchase items such as diapers, wipes, detergent, dish soap and toilet paper for their family. The Hannaford gift cards are really helpful for Elza to purchase food for her family. Thank you for your continued support and prayers. Elza is so appreciative of the extra help.

FLC GFPF Coordinators

Candice, Alison, and Wendy

Quilting Ministry

The quilters have completed 22 quilts for The Quilts for Vets Project. Many were constructed from the large fabric donation we received last summer. God always provides! Susan Bollman is still collecting finished lap quilts, so there is still time to get one done before the end of the October.

The quilts will be distributed to residents living at the Scarborough Veterans Home for Veteran's Day.

Upcoming quilting dates (we meet on the first and third Saturdays from 9:30am to Noon):

September 21st; October 5th and 19th; November 2nd and 16th. All are welcome!

Once Upon a Holiday Fair

November 23, 2024

We are entering autumn, and the holidays will be here in no time. As preparations for the Holiday Fair move forward, there will be a Fair planning meeting on **Sunday, September 22** following the worship service.

Keep cleaning out your closets and shelves, keep working on those handcrafted items, and join us for the planning meeting on 9/22. If you have any questions, please email fair-chairs@flcme.org.

Maine Needs Gift Boxes

The Outreach Committee thanks everyone that picked an item or two from the clothesline and brought them in for our Holiday Maine Needs project over the summer.

There will be more clothesline opportunities this fall; if you would like to work on your own box, great! Grab an empty box from the Ministry Center entrance, and pick items from the [wish lists](#) on our website.

The Outreach Team meets on the 3rd Sunday of every month (September 15th this month) following the worship service. All are welcome to join us!



Empower Dreams with RaiseRight Gift Cards

A BIG THANK YOU to the organization, *100+ Women Who Care*, whose philanthropic efforts will be providing our Give a Child a Chance program with a monetary donation. We don't know the exact amount of the donation, but whatever it is, it will be helpful and used 100% to help a preschooler attend our FLC Children's Programs. A special shout-out to Lynn Macken who brought this opportunity to our attention.

We will again be making a tuition donation for a child or children in need to attend our Children's Programs early education offerings. Our tuition support is Planting Seeds of Success! Just like a tiny seed grows into a mighty oak, our donation grows into confident, educated, and empowered individuals who will shape the future of our community. What could be better than that?

We continue with our twice-monthly sale of RaiseRight gift cards. It's not too late to get some cards for purchasing those back to school supplies. We will be selling cards in September the second and third Sundays of the month so all can celebrate the long Labor Day weekend before fall begins in earnest! (Note, this is a change from our usual sale of RaiseRight gift cards the first and second Sundays of the month.)

Join the Movement — purchase gift cards and be a part of our "Give a Child a Chance" ministry effort! Let's make education accessible, dreams achievable, and futures brighter for all of our neighborhood children.

Team members: Ann Brown, Susan Bollman, Lynn Macken, Colleen Taylor and Karen Johnson.

Ec-fund@flcme.org

Circles of Friends Update

Greetings to all! You may be wondering how Circles of Friends have been doing within the FLC family. Some groups decided to continue with their once a month dinners through the summer and are coming to the end of their Circle (where a group of 8-9 take turns hosting the dinner). Other groups put it on hold for the summer because of busy schedules and will be having their second dinner on Saturday, September 21st, moving forward. It has been great to have an informal social event to get to know each other better and share great food as Lutherans love to do. At one dinner, two couples discovered that not only had they married on the same day but the same year too! You can learn all kinds of interesting things at these gatherings!

We will be starting up again with new Circles of Friends groups in January 2025. I would encourage everyone who enjoys eating and socializing to sign up on the bulletin board. This is for singles too — everyone is welcome! If you have any questions, please see Mickie Kucinkas.

Cross-Generational Fun & Learning

This year we are adding to our Cross-Generational events by providing a learning and fun time for the congregation. This will not be traditional Sunday School, but a cross generational time of learning and sharing. All ages are welcome—please plan on joining us!

Sunday, September 22nd, 9:00—10:00am

Sunday, October 20th, 9:00—10:00am

Sunday, November 17th, 9:00—10:00am

Education Team News



The Cross Generational Events are the primary manner for this team to continue to reach out to youth and encourage participation in Faith Formation. The June 5th event (pictures above) was enjoyed by about 65 folks, including many families from the Children's Program. The team reflected that as we continue to hold events, finding times and activities of interest to the Children's Program is an important consideration.

The Educational Team held our kickoff meeting on Monday evening, August 19th. At the August meeting the team agreed to (a) hold monthly meetings on the third Monday of each month from 7:00 to 8:15pm (Zoom only at this time); (b) planned to hold monthly Cross Generational Events on Sunday mornings at 9 AM on the third Sunday of the month (9/22, 10/20, 11/17), as well as an Advent Wreath making event after worship on December 1st; (c) the team will coordinate with Fellowship to provide games and activities on September 8th and to support the October 26th Congregational celebration; (d) to continue to encourage youth participation in worship by reading and acolyting; (e) to work to organize Bible Studies throughout the year; (f) to coordinate with other committees to support youth and church wide educational growth and involvement.

Members of the Team continue to be committed to education and involvement of all members in this aspect of our church. Our next meeting will be held on Monday, September 16th at 7:00pm via Zoom. All are welcome. Contact Gene Kucinkas if you need the Zoom meeting information.

Security Update

As part of the grant we received to improve the security and safety of our facility, several projects have already been undertaken. A new digital key system was installed on the four primary doors of the buildings, which will allow us to control who has access to the building. All of the other door locks have been changed so that no "old" church keys will work anymore. Ring security cameras have also been installed at the doors so our office staff can see and speak to someone without going to the door.

The old windows in the Fellowship Hall have also been replaced. Not only will this improve the safety of the children and staff during the week, but it will also prevent leaks and water damage, and will allow us to open them for ventilation.





Ken Carr	Victims of racism and
Abbott Knowles	hate, especially those
Lynne Fishburn	in the LGBTQIA+
Joy & Rachel Hansen	Community
Carol Mitri	FLC Call Committee
Doris Kilfoil	All victims of
Pat Graham	violence
The family of Robert	Students, teachers and
Mitchell	staff as a new school
Leslie & Russ Morton	year begins



September 1 Debbie Sensecqua
Lynn Carey

September 6 Michael McIver

September 8 Dorothy Sensecqua

September 13 Cooper Hayn

September 14 Carole Case
Cheryl Cyr

September 20 Alison Smith

September 21 Emily Cole

September 25 Joleen Knowles

September 27 Francie Conley

September 28 Teddy Hanley

September 29 Amanda Krantz



Prayer is such an important part of our daily Christian lives, and sometimes extra prayers are needed. If you have any special prayer requests and you would like to have our "Prayer Warriors" praying as well, please send an email.

prayer-request@flcme.org



September 22



Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Robert Mitchell, who passed away on August 26th after a brief illness. Bob celebrated his 100th birthday on July 7th.

A longtime and faithful member of First Lutheran, Bob was a man of deep faith, with a love for his country, his family and friends.

A funeral service will be held at First Lutheran on Saturday, September 7th at 11am, with a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

Click [here](#) to view Bob's full obituary.

We ask that God grants comfort and peace to his family, especially his daughters Lois and Julie, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
132 AUBURN STREET
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103-2145**

September 2024



First News is a monthly publication of First Lutheran Church. Articles can be submitted to the church office, or by email to news@flcme.org.

Worship Service is at 10:00 am

Church Office Hours are Monday thru Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (797-2525)

www.FLCME.org

STAFF

Transition Contact Pastor.....Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson
Church Secretary.....Joleen Knowles (joleen.knowles@flcme.org)
Church OrganistBrenda Morneau (brenda.morneau@flcme.org)
Director—FLC Children’s Community Ministry.....Sherryl Eastman (flcpinfo@flcme.org)

OFFICERS

President.....Ann Brown
Vice-President.....Bill Mills
Secretary.....Ken Conant
Treasurer.....Ed Daggett
Financial Secretary.....Cheryl Cyr



First Lutheran is a Reconciling In Christ congregation. Here we believe there is a place for **Everyone**.