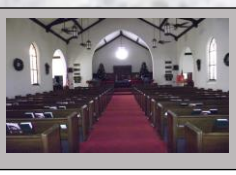
FIRST FRUITS

WE GIVE OUR FIRST FRUITS **BECAUSE HE GAVE US HIS ONLY SON**

December 2025 **Volume 28 No. 12**



First Things First...

This I Believe

"...in your hearts honor Christ, the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and respect." **1 Peter 3:15**

Belief exerts a powerful influence on every aspect of life. As Peter says above, there is a hope in everyone who believes in Christ the Lord. Each one of us should be ready, at any time, to make a defense (tell the reason) for that hope. In the upcoming issues of *First Fruits,* I share summaries of what I believe so that you may know me more fully and so you may see the reason for the hope that is in me. This edition I continue my belief regarding the Ten Commandments.

THE TWO TABLES OF THE LAW

Consider the fact that the original Commandments were written *with the finger of God* on *two tablets of stone* (Genesis 31:18). From this, we classify the commandments as being delivered in two "tables." This reveals a dual focus of the Law. It is not merely a rendering of rules for right behavior. It is the foundation of two relationships. The First Table (Exodus 20:2-11; Deuteronomy 5:6-15) regulates the relationship between God and man. The Second Table (Exodus 20:12-17; Deuteronomy 5:16-21) governs the relationship of one person to another. Jesus gave us the summary of these commandments by their respective tables through His answer to the question, *"Which commandment is the most important of all?"* (Mark 12:28) His collective response pools the First Table as the primary commandment conveying, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength* (Mark 12:30)." The Second Table He expresses as, *"Love your neighbor as yourself* (Mark 12: 31)." For our benefit Jesus lived in perfect obedience to God's Commandments and He perfectly fulfilled God's will. No one before Him and no one since Him have lived that perfection.

THE FIRST USE OF THE LAW

Matthew 5:48 sets the standard for a blameless life: *Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*. ONLY Jesus has accomplished that complete righteousness. We must remember it is not "doing our best" or being "better than" or "not as bad as' someone else. Only perfection will do. We often see the Ten Commandments as being a list of "You shall nots." Martin Luther, in the Small Catechism, expressed both the negative and the positive applications of the commandments. For example, Exodus 20:16 says, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Luther's Explanation expounds, "We are to fear and love God, so that

we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light." Does that mean no matter how dumb, inexplicable, irrational, hurtful or irresponsible a neighbor may be, I am still required to "interpret everything they do (or say) in the best possible light? As the card player says, "Read 'em and weep." Make those tears of confession and repentance, please! The first use of the Law is as a mirror, when we look at it, we See Our Sin and that sight leads us to Seek Our Savior!

THE SECOND USE OF THE LAW

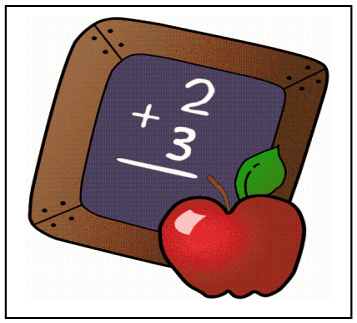
When the First Use of the Law has accomplished its purpose and we Seek Our Savior in the Gospel, then we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Law can serve as a ruler or guide. It helps us obey God's Commandments. We are set free from sin, death, and the power of the devil. We are no longer slaves of sin but are transformed by the renewing of our minds through the power of the Holy Spirit. That which once condemned us becomes the guidepost to a life of walking in righteousness. (cf. Romans 6:1-14; 8:1-10,28-39; 12:1-2).

THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW

This use of the Law explains why unbelievers do good things, why there are some who seem to be "good people" or why evil does not have unchecked chaos erupting over the whole Earth. Romans 2:14-16 declares, *''For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do what the law requires, they are a law unto themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law has been written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."* The Third Use of the Law curbs or restrains the extent and power of sin. Every person ever born has some amount of the law "written on their heart." It is called: having a conscience. It is true that some people have extraordinarily little conscience, but it is there by the work of this third use of the law.

Knowing and understanding the Ten Commandments are keys to living in the righteousness of Christ. He said*, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.* (Matthew 5:17)*"* He also said, "*Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.* (John 14:21a)" Should you have questions about any of the Ten Commandments, I suggest you first get a copy of Luther's Small Catechism (I have some available.) and review his explanations of each commandment. Then, if any questions remain, contact me and we can investigate what God's Word offers on those questions.

Remember: Jesus loves you and so do I! Pastor Grier



First School And Day Care

The First School is looking forward to all the Christmas activities we have coming up. Our Annual Preschool Christmas Program will be on Tuesday, December 16th, starting at 6:30pm in the church sanctuary. The program is entitled "A Country Kinda Christmas." The children will tell the story of Jesus' birth in a fun country style way with music and illustration. We would love for the congregation to join us that evening for this special occasion. We appreciate all your support and prayers this year!

Many Blessings,
Bree Joines
The First School Director

First School Board Meeting
Thursday, December 11th, 5:00 p.m.

Preschool Christmas Program
Tuesday, December 16th, 6:30 p.m.

December Readings

12/07 Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12
12/14 Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146, James 5:7-11, Matthew 11:2-15
12/21 Isaiah 7:10-17, Psalm 24, Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25
12/28 Isaiah 63:7-14, Psalm 111, Galatians 4:4-7, Matthew 2:13-23

12/08 Leroy Bram
12/08 James Stewart
12/09 Ed Campbell
12/13 Doug Mathews
12/13 Daniel Wilfert
12/15 Jake Herrington
12/15 Jacqueline Lundy
12/18 Pat Marek
12/19 Karen Kight
12/21 Kim Ledwig
12/25 Loretta Johnson
12/26 Cori Koudela
12/28 Emma Jo Barosh
12/31 Callie Dujka
12/31 Cash Dujka

Our FLC Family
Cecil Anderson
Rhonda Atchetee
Cora Lee Bishop
Pastor & Alys Grier
Marilyn Kight
Kim & Larry Ledwig
Misty Ledwig
Lloyd Nelson
Ashley Schoeneberg
Bentley

Friends of FLC
Gerald Ripple

12/05 Axel Koudela
12/07 Michael Barosh
12/14 Lori Cykala
12/23 Becky Sample
12/23 Ted Schoenfield
12/26 Daniel Wilfert

PRAY FOR
ALL WHO
SERVE IN
THE US MILITARY

12/01 Kyle & Haley Orsak
12/11 Philip & Sheila Miller
12/22 David & Karen Kight

WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

OR

Office hours: Tues & Thurs: 8:00am - 4:30pm
Wed: 8:00am – 12:00pm

Phone: 979-543-5847
Email: office@firstlutheranec.com

COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, December 15th
6:00 p.m.

Pastor Clyde Grier:
Phone: 979-541-6173

Poinsettias

If you would like to place poinsettias in church the cost is $13.00.

Look for the order form in the Narthex.

Flower Chart

The Flower Chart for the new year, 2026, is available in the Narthex. Please choose your special dates and sign up to provide flowers for our worship services.

End of Year Giving

All donations must be in the church office by Dec. 31st in order to receive credit for 2025. All contributions received Jan. 1st or later will be credited to 2026, regardless of the date on the check.

Advent Services:

Dec. 3 – God's Grace Appeared
Dec. 10 – Because God Is Love
Dec. 17 – Game, Set, Match
Dec. 24 – When He Appeared

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

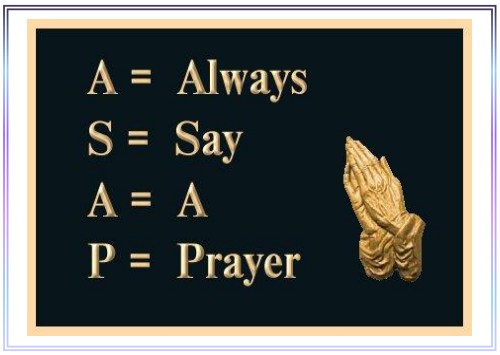
Wednesday, December 24th
6:30 p.m.

First School Board

Thursday, December 11th
5:00 p.m.

Church Council

Monday, December 15th
6:00 p.m.



Looking Ahead:

The Three Days of Prayer

January 6, 7, and 8, 2026

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Soup Supper 6:15 PM Advent Service 7:00PM	4	5	6
7 Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	8	9 Newsletter Items Due	10 Soup Supper 6:15 PM Advent Service 7:00PM	11 FS Board Meeting 5PM	12	13
14 Worship Service 10:45 AM	15 Church Council Meeting 6PM	16 First School Christmas Program 6:30PM	17 Soup Supper 6:15PM Advent Service 7:00PM	18	19	20
21 Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion 6:30PM	25 Merry Christmas	26	27
28 Worship Service 10:45 AM	29	30	31			

December Responsibilities

ASSISTING MINISTER: Calvin Borak
SEXTON: David Kight
USHERS: Cathy Schoenfield, Ty Schoenfield
ALTAR GUILD: David & Karen Kight

READER

7th Cathy Schoenfield
14th Ty Schoenfield
21st Diane Stewart
28th Kirk Marek

If you are unable to serve on your date, please find someone to take your place.

DECEMBER FLOWER CALENDAR

7th Open
14th Kirk & Pat Marek
21st Open
28th Poinsettias

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

304 Oscar
El Campo, TX 77437
979-543-5847

Email: office@firstlutheranec.com

ESTABLISHED FEB 1893

Worshipping Christ and Sharing the Word for over a century.

Clyde Grier, Pastor
Helen Marie Kight, Organist
Christine Richter, Office Manager
Bree Joines, Director of First School

***Join us on FACEBOOK** or check us out at*
www.FIRSTLUTHERANEC.COM

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS: Calvin Borak, Will Joines, Karen Kight, Kim Ledwig, Kirk Marek, Cindy Mathews & Doug Mathews

OUR NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERANEC.COM

Join us for our Christmas Eve Service on Wednesday evening, December 24th!

Worship Service with Candlelight and Holy Communion – 6:30 p.m.