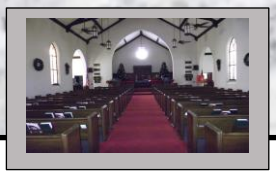
FIRST FRUITS

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

February 2026 **Volume 29 No. 2**



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 month initiates the expansion of my belief regarding prayer.

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of his disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." **Luke 11:1**

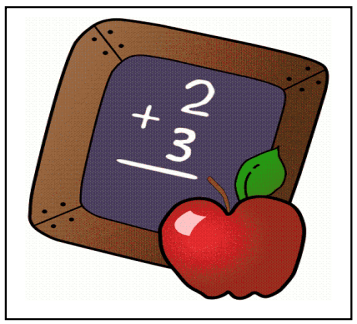
Since 1933, Southwest Radio Church of Oklahoma City has used the closing epithet: "God is on the throne and prayer changes things." Indeed, prayer is a powerful and useful tool for a Christian's time upon the Earth, but the changing power of prayer is the Omnipotent One seated on His throne. Prayer is the conduit carrying our requests to the throne of our Father. Consulting The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language, I found six definitions for the word "pray." The first definition was "to utter or address a prayer or prayers to God, a god, or another object of worship." The Dictionary interprets "prayer" (the third of ten definitions) to be "an act of communion with God, a god, or another object of worship." For general and secular purposes these definitions may suffice. I cannot think of any religion that does not have prayers to a higher or highest authority. Even the atheist with his or her self as the highest authority and object of worship, prays to the self-centric deity. When determining the mores of ethical and moral behavior, does not the self-worshipper pray asking, "What is right and what is wrong?" Is it not a petition for guidance of the self-god when adjusting a daily agenda pleading, "What shall I do next?" So, defining prayer to "a god or another object of worship" is accurate as the desire to connect with a divine and powerful persona. However, reality reveals only *I AM* (**God)** hears and answers prayer (Psalm 115:4-7; Jeremiah 10:5; Revelation 9:20). I encourage that together we examine our prayer times to see if we can improve our communication with the Only True and Living God.

Too often, the prayer offered becomes a monologue, listing commands, demands, wishes, and dreams. Even the most fervent and strident entreaty risks devolving into a litany of the

petitioner's choosing from his or her wish list. Another danger lies in repeating prayers that have been memorized, mouthing the words without conscious thought of what is being said and to Whom the petitions are presented. The final problem I will address in the coming columns will be the nature of the requests brought to God. What blessings are being sought? Can we glean any elemental concepts of prayer which are part of the prayers recorded in Scriptures but missing from our prayers? Let us pray, "Holy Spirit, what do You want me to learn today? Amen"

I believe prayer should be a conversation with God. A conversation needs at least two participants. I believe we should learn to listen when we pray. Do I mean that we should await a vocal response to each petition we present to the Lord? No, but we should spend a few moments silencing our hearts and minds to listen to an answer from the Holy Spirit, revealing the solution to a problem we face or a path we need to follow or encouragement we need to offer or receive. His voice may come in a thundering proclamation (Matthew 3:17; John 12:28-30) or a whisper (1 Kings 19:12). The cliché relevantly says, "God gave us two ears and one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we speak." Or, as Jesus declared, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew11:15, et al). We must remember that we come to the Lord seeking His favor, help, and guidance. He does not need our instructions to give us what is best for us. He will lead us into paths of righteousness, providing us with everything we need for this life and for eternal life (Psalm 23; 119:105; Philippians 4:19). He is our Father, we are His children, and He gives us every good and perfect gift (James 1:17, even if we do not see it nor believe it as a perfect gift (Matthew 7:9-11; James 1:17; Genesis 50:15-20). God grants us a broad and powerful authority in prayer (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24,26). We are not to neglect this grant (James 4:2b). Neither is it for our pleasure or personal gain (James 4:3). We have instructions for its use in healing and repentance (James 5:13-16). Many verses convey how and when to pray (Galatians 5:18-20; Ephesians 3:14-19; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:3-4; et al). With so many needs of health, security, peace, compassion, comfort, hurt, bereavement, fear, loneliness…ad infinitum, how does one find time to listen prayerfully? The answer: we do not have time nor do we find time. We MAKE time. We TAKE time. Laying aside our prayer lists and logs, we quiet our minds and our hearts with a petition, "Holy Spirit, what do You have for me today?" At the start, we may abide in His tranquil presence for no more than ten or fifteen seconds. It may be that we never go beyond fifteen seconds. Hopefully, as we experience His comforting presence, He leads us into that peace of God exceeding our comprehension, keeping our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. Then, someday in the future, we will be able to say, "I heard the voice of Jesus say…"

Jesus loves you and so do I! Grace and peace…Pastor Grier



First School And Day Care

The First School is asking for your prayers as we continue into the new year. Please pray for provision, protection, and guidance for the school. We are excited about what all God has in store for 2026 for the school and children's ministry.

Many Blessings,

Bree Joines

The First School Director

First School Board Meeting -
Thursday, February 12th, at 5:30 p.m.

February Readings

02/01 Micah 6:1-8, Psalm 15:1-5, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Matthew 5:1-12
02/08 Isaiah 58:3-9a. Psalm 112:1-9, 1 Corinthians 2:1-12, Matthew 5:13-20
02/15 Exodus 24:8-18, Psalm 2:6-12, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9
02/22 Genesis 3:1-21, Psalm 32:1-7, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

02/18 Kyle House
02/20 Ellis Lundy
02/21 Ty Schoenfield
02/23 Tammy Campbell
02/27 Nora Borak

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

Friends of FLC
Gerald Ripple
Mckenna & Connor Jones

List will be cleared on the 1st in January, April, July and October. Please help us stay current; call the office with changes or additions.

02/02 Kirk Marek
02/03 Bram Koudela
02/15 Cori Koudela
02/22 Daniela Rodriguez
02/22 Ivan Rodriguez
02/23 Ty Schoenfield
02/24 Cash Dujka
02/24 Callie Dujka
02/25 Tammy Campbell
02/29 Pat Marek

PRAY FOR
ALL WHO
SERVE IN
THE US MILITARY

02/02 James & Sheila Herrington
02/18 Warren & Helen Johnson

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, February 16th
6:00 p.m.

Pastor Clyde Grier:
Phone: 979-541-6173

Flower Chart

The Flower Chart for 2026 is available for you to choose your special dates. All Sundays for the month of February are open. Please sign up for the dates when you would like to provide flowers for our service!

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FLCEC Manna Meals Team

Our Team will serve on Monday, February 23.

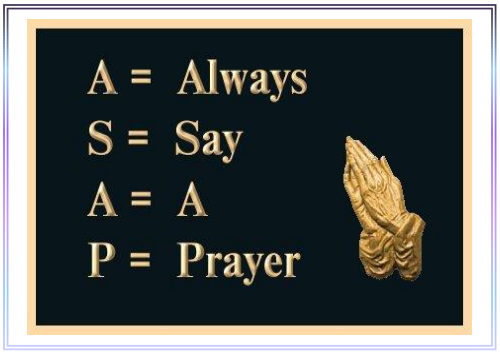
We continue to send cards to members at the time of their birthday or to share condolences when needed.

If you have birthday cards you would like to donate to this outreach you may leave them in the Church Office.

Thank you!

First School Board
Thursday, February 12th
5:00 p.m.

Church Council
Monday, February 16th
6:00 p.m.



Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who agreed to serve by filling in our monthly assignments positions for 2026 (Assisting Minister, Sexton, Ushers, Altar Guild)!

Let us know if there is an area in which you would like to serve!

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Worship Service 10:45 AM	9	10 Newsletter Items Due	11	12 First School Board Meeting 5:30PM	13	14
15 Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	16 Church Council Meeting 6PM	17	18 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00PM	19	20	21
22 Worship Service 10:45 AM	23 FLCEC Team serves @ Manna Meals	24	25 Soup Supper 6:00-6:45 PM Lenten Service 7:00PM	26	27	28

February Responsibilities

ASSISTING MINISTER: Ted Schoenfield
SEXTON: Jimmie Nielsen
USHERS: Ed Campbell, Kirk Marek
ALTAR GUILD: Gloria & Ed Campbell

READER

1st Cathy Schoenfield
8th Ty Schoenfield
15th Diane Stewart
22nd Kirk Marek

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

FEBRUARY FLOWER CALENDAR

1st Open
8th Open
15th Open
22nd Open

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 on Sunday mornings!

Worship Service – 10:45 a.m.