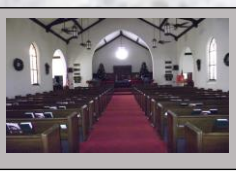
FIRST FRUITS

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

July 2026 **Volume 29 No. 7**



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 I look at what I believe the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, says about tithes, offerings, and gifts.

Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord…And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord. **Leviticus 27:30,32**

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver… **2 Corinthians 9:7**

Last month, this article examined Biblical revelations regarding tithes, gifts and offerings. The Bible presents these three as related, yet distinct, forms of worship. The Old Testament defines each in details nesting in the Covenant of the Law. The New Testament presents parameters of giving through the Covenant of Grace.

The New Testament never requires Christians to give a mandatory 10% tithe, but does require believers to give generously, willingly, and joyfully as an act of worship. While no verse in the New Testament commands Christians to give a fixed ten-percent tithe, tithing does appear in the Gospels but only in reference to Jews under the law. Jesus reprimands the Pharisees, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, but have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the other" (Matthew 23: 23). The epistles have no command regarding tithes. It is only cited as illustrations in Old Testament events (Hebrews 7:2-10). The New Testament is based on a Spirit-driven generosity and love. Jesus underscored the concept of sacrificial, generous and intentional giving by comparing the gifts of a Pharisee and a widow (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4).

In the New Testament emphasis on giving is based on the heart, not a percentage. “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion”. (2 Corinthians 9: 7). Giving in the church should be an act of free will, not of law (2 Corinthians 8:3); joyful (2 Corinthians 9:7); sacrificial (2 Corinthians 8:2-3, Acts 2:43, 4:32-35; 36-37); proportional and within means (2 Corinthians 8:12). Other characteristics of grace-giving reveal it is intentional, prioritized, repetitive, universal, deliberate, purposeful, and timely (1 Corinthians 16:2). This is not giving at a fixed and compulsory level by command-intervention; this is giving that is generous, willing, and joyous. This, I believe is God-pleasing.

Every donation to the work of God’s Kingdom should be worship. Through that worship, the Christian releases ownership of the donation as completely as the Old Testament Israeli surrendered his whole-burnt sacrifice. However, the New Testament believer receives a reciprocity factor. It is elaborated in Malachi 3:6-12; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; and Philippians 4:18-19. Danger exists in this: if one gives for the promised “return-on-investment", no benefit derives to the giver.

Too long, Christians have thought of the tithe as the ceiling to be attained. It is the floor on which we begin to build! However, ***you are not sinning if you do not tithe*.** Christians are not required to give 10% as the Law dictated. We are to seek the Lord, not asking, “How much must I give?” but rather asking, “How much can I give in love, joy and faith?”

Next month, I plan to finish this exposition on giving with two questions:
1) Why do some churches still teach tithing as a Christian necessity?
2) What do I give if I have no money?

Until then, Jesus loves you and so do I! PastorGrier

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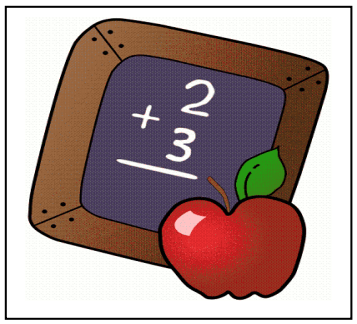
BIBLE READING SCHEDULE
JULY 2026

Date	Reading
1	Psalm 68
2	Job 1
3	Psalm 69
4	Job 2
5	Psalms 70,71
6	Job 3
7	Psalm 72
8	Job 4
9	Psalm 73
10	Job 5
11	Psalms 74,75
12	Job 6
13	Psalms 76,77
14	Job 7
15	Psalm 78:1-31

Date	Reading
16	Job 8
17	Psalm 78:32-72
18	Job 9
19	Psalms 79,80
20	Job 10
21	Psalms 81,82,83
22	Job 11
23	Psalms 84,85
24	Job 12
25	Psalms 86,87,88
26	Job 13
27	Psalm 89:1-29
28	Job 14
29	Psalm 89:30-52
30	Job 15
31	Psalms 90,91



First School And Day Care

The First School has been rocking along this summer! We turned in our application to the childcare state licensing for the new building and are awaiting approval.
Also, we have been very busy with fun activities for the kids and we are gearing up for VBS week! Lava Lava Island VBS will be the week of July 6th-10th from 9-12pm. We will be teaching the kids about controlling emotions and sharing Jesus' love.

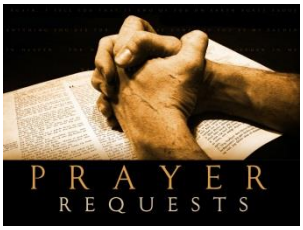
Many Blessings,
Bree Joines,
The First School Director

First School Board Meeting –
Tuesday, July 14th, 5:30 p.m.

July Readings

07/05 Daniel 7:13-18, Psalm 89:20-29, Romans 13:1-7, John 18:31-37
07/12 Isaiah 55:10-13, Psalm 65:9-13, Romans 8:12-17, Matthew 13:1-9,18-23
07/19 Isaiah 44:6-8, Psalm 119:57-64, Romans 8:18-, Matthew 13:24-30,36-43
07/26 Deuteronomy 7:6-9, Psalm 125, Romans 8:28-39. Matthew 13:44-52

07/11 Jimmy Nielsen
07/12 Jan Chatel
07/23 Gloria Campbell
07/24 Matthew Stewart
07/26 Linda Atchetee
07/31 Billie Jean Bram



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

Friends of FLC

07/12 Gaynard Wigginton
07/17 Benjamin Hernandez
07/19 Nora Borak
07/22 Kathleen Joines
07/29 Cecil Anderson

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.

PRAY FOR
ALL WHO
SERVE IN
THE US MILITARY

07/13 Leroy & Billie Jean Bram
07/24 Pastor Clyde & Alys Grier

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, July 20th
6:00 p.m.

Pastor Clyde Grier:
Phone: 979-541-6173

Flower Chart

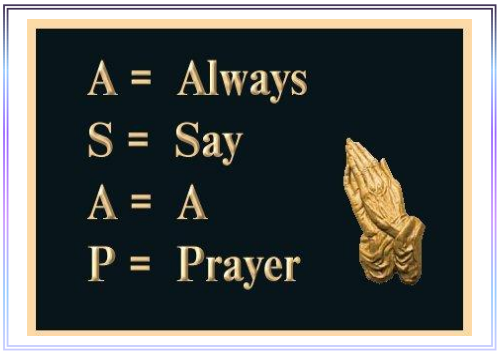
The Flower Chart still has available dates for the second half of the year! Please sign up for the Sundays when you would like to provide flowers for our service.

First School Board

Tuesday, July 14th
5:30 p.m.

Church Council

Monday, July 20th
6:00 p.m.



Pre-Gathering Seminar:
(To explore theme more deeply)
Seminar begins Friday, July 24th, at 1:00 p.m. To attend add $25 more

Friday Night Pork Tenderloin Dinner
to benefit St. Paul's Children's Ministry
$20 early/$25 late

LCMC Texas District Gathering
July 24 - 25, 2026
(4:30 p.m. Friday evening – 4:30 p.m. Saturday)
St. Paul Lutheran Church, New Braunfels, TX
Theme: CALLED (2 Timothy 1:-9)
Keynote Speakers: Ben Griffin,
Nathan Hoff, Julie Smith
Tickets: $80 thru 6/30, $110 after 6/30
(includes T Shirt)
To Register: Forms are available in the church office
Or register online:
www.lcmctexas.org/annual-gathering

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 WOW Bible Study	3	4
5 Worship Service 10:45 AM w/Communion	6 - - - - - -	7 - - - - - -	8 - - VBS - -	9 - - - - - - WOW Bible Study	10 - - - -	11
12 Worship Service 10:45 AM	13	14 First School Board Meeting 5:30PM Newsletter Items Due	15	16 WOW Bible Study	17	18
19 Worship Service 10:45 AM W/Communion	20 Church Council Meeting 6PM	21	22	23 WOW Bible Study	24 LCMC Texas District Gathering New Braunfels	25 LCMC Texas District Gathering New Braunfels
26 Worship Service 10:45 AM	27	28	29	30 WOW Bible Study	31	

July Responsibilities

ASSISTING MINISTER: Calvin Borak
SEXTON: Kirk House
USHERS: Kirk Marek, Alvin Yackel
ALTAR GUILD: Nora Borak, Diane Stewart

READER

5th Helen Johnson
12th Calvin Borak
19th Cathy Schoenfield
26th Ty Schoenfield

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

JULY FLOWER CALENDAR

5th
Open
12th
Open
19th
Open
26th
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, Jan Chatel, Lionel Chatel, Will Joines, Karen Kight, 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.