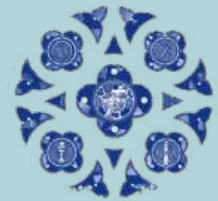




first Lutheran Church



February 2026

How Do I Find God's Love?

Our second month in the *Way of Love* brings forward a question on searching and finding God's love. This question first has to be brought down to its most simplistic understanding for us to build a theological mindset around it. That simple idea, belief, and struggle for so many in our communities and lives is, 'I don't have God's love'. This is a truly horrifying notion because it gets at a root problem that people believe that God does not love them. That their life, for some reason, is separated from God and therefore isolated from the creator of all things. However, I think that Pastor Nate Tuff gives a wonderful reflection on this very question.

Pastor Tuff is grappling with Alzheimer's and the difficulty of always having to find things that he has misplaced. Not that he could misplace God's love, but our minds are tricky, tricky things. Our brains are fantastic at catastrophizing events in our lives which can cause us to freeze, flee, or fight. This is why many people become agitated, irritated, or more emotional when they lose their memory. It is difficult! I get irritated when I misplace my car keys, or my daughter hides them, but I cannot imagine the frustration that can come from having to place Air Tags on my items and relying on so many to navigate a day that could once be done sleepily.

This loss of individual control over one's own life can feel frightening and lead to very scary rabbit holes our thoughts can escape into. Pastor Tuff combats some of this spiraling with a curiosity and a question for us to ponder this month.

1. Describe a time that God's love accidentally found you.
2. How might you grow your openness to God's love that has found you?

I find the first question quite stirring. As I have had difficulties with my faith I have at times felt as if I was alone. When I talk about my call story into ministry I am constantly reminded of when I felt the abyss. A moment when it felt as if God took a step away from me. When a bottomless pit formed in my gut it felt as if I was going to be swallowed entirely. As an individual who has grappled with depression and suicidal ideations, I can tell you that this pit felt worse. It was at that moment that I was able to turn back and apologize to God. Center myself in the knowledge that there is a creator that loves us beyond our fragile little egos and personal squabbles and perceptions. A God that loves us when we don't love ourselves and when we have "misplaced" God's love.

It is, without a doubt in my mind, our calling from Christ to share that love of God with all people. We are instructed to make disciples of all nations, we are instructed to preach and teach, we are instructed to live a life that uses Jesus as a road map of holy living, and it all centers around loving God and our neighbors. Not just the ones that are a part of Findlay, Ohio, the Midwest, or the United States of America. We are sent forth to all nations, so that all may know Christ's never-failing love. So when were you surprised by accidental love? How can you grow in that openness of love? But, how can you share that love with all around you so that no one will feel unloved?

Pax et Bonum,
Pastor Tucker

2026 Stewardship Emphasis

Living a STEWARDSHIP

The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God. – Martin Luther *The Ninety-Five Theses* [62]

Life

Last week three people shared the \$1.59 billion Powerball Lottery winnings. That means, after taxes, each will receive \$245 million! That's a lot of dough! Some four million people paid up to \$4 for each ticket to wealth, and even though the odds are 1—292,201,328, they hope they will win.

In Matthew 13, Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” Do you ever think of the gospel of Jesus Christ as priceless treasure, better than winning the Powerball Lottery, better than having the assets of Elon Musk, or, as they used to say, “all the gold in Fort Knox” [\$175 billion]? The writers of the biblical books think it is. And greater than any of these, for the future, but also for today.

For the man who discovered the treasure, there was a cost to obtain it. Viewed one way, the cost seemed high — it cost him everything he owned. But viewed another way, the cost was very small. Standing in the field, the man did a quick cost-benefit analysis. It didn't take him long to realize that selling all his possessions was going to make him wealthy beyond his wildest dreams. He would have been a fool not to do whatever was necessary to buy that field.

When people win the Lottery, they often declare they will share it with their family or give a portion to a charity. We are blessed beyond our wildest expectations with the treasure of the gospel. Will we not also share it with others?

When I look back on my personal spiritual journey, I realize that I couldn't tell you when I “accepted Christ” or became a Christian. All I remember are certain people who told me about Jesus, who shared their personal experience, and who wanted to give me a share of the treasure they had found. My mother who was often a troubled soul, openly declared (quoting Paul's letter to the Philippians), “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Or my Sunday School teacher who told me (at age 6), “Jesus loves you.” And so many more. They shared their treasure with me and made me a rich man, indeed.

I ask you to think of the gospel of Jesus Christ as your greatest treasure and think of your personal stewardship as sharing that massive treasure with others: the good news of Jesus Christ.

I read an article by Chris No-land. He argued that if you have this treasure, then “it must be preached. It must be preached in the market places. It must be preached in the schools. It must be preached in the halls of government. It must be preached in the dark alleys. It must be preached on the ball field and in the gym. It must be preached in the hospitals. It must be preached in the jungles. It must be preached in the deserts. It must be preached in the mountains.” I would argue that he doesn't mean for you to put on an alb and a collar or stand on the street corner, but be willing to share it openly and lovingly to anyone who will listen. Don't keep the greatest treasure locked up in church, but share it with others and make them rich!

- Pastor Chris

10 Stewardship Principles

4

Give willingly

**as moved by the Holy Spirit.
We have been prepared to give
of ourselves. We give our time,
talents, and resources freely.**

**“For, as I can testify, they
voluntarily gave...”
-2 Corinthians 8:3**

WE'RE HIRING

Building Manager

The ministry of the Building Manager is to clean, maintain, and preserve the properties of First Lutheran Church. The Building Manager shall be responsible for the day-to-day care of the church property. This also includes, but is not limited to, scheduling needed contractors, coordinating volunteers for large, time-intensive projects, and maintaining the Church Property Budget.

Requirements :

- Cleaning (each room, every 30 days; the entire building, every year)
- Electrical/Painting/Construction/Light Plumbing
- Mow lawn, trim shrubs
- Maintain security system/sound system (in nave)
- Equipment Installation
- Maintain a maintenance history
- Provide in-house computer and network support
- Remove snow around immediate building, contract (with Property Committee) a snow removal contract
- Administer "Building Use Policy" and other tasks as deemed necessary by the Pastor(s), Church Council, and Property Committee
- Ensure local and state inspections and certifications are up to date

SEND YOUR RESUME TO: flcfindlay@gmail.com

L.I.F.T. - Living in Faith and Trust

L.I.F.T. will meet on **Tuesday, February 17th at 11:45**, please take note of the time change. Starting 15 minutes later will allow for those who want to attend the 11:30 Sacred Daily in the church chapel. Bring a brown bag lunch and enjoy a time of conversation. Please contact Marilynn Dunn at 419-722-8543 or Sue DeMoss at 419-306-9994 for more information or if you need a ride.



Thank You, Dave and Shirley!

It has been more than twenty years since Dave and Shirley Gerber started bringing Holy Communion to our shut-ins. They responded to a plea by Pastor Don Bridinger, then continued with Pastor Paul DeMoss, and now, for thirteen years, have been working with Pastor Chris to make sure those who cannot be in worship due to health or other concerns will not miss the Sacrament and a few words with good friends in Christ.



Dave noted that he always enjoyed making visits to church members, some who were people he grew up with. Beulah Bishop's (our oldest member at 102) daughter, Judy, was a student of Dave's in 1957. She was in his 7th grade homeroom. "I think I have been to every rest home in Findlay," Dave said. He and Shirley loved the privilege of sharing the body and blood of Christ, but they also loved the conversation. "It was always a chance to reminisce," he said.

Dave was a teacher in the Findlay public schools. He served for 31 years, teaching chemistry at Donnell and Central. For 13 years he taught at Owens, instructing future nurses at chemistry lab. "They couldn't be nurses unless they passed my course!"

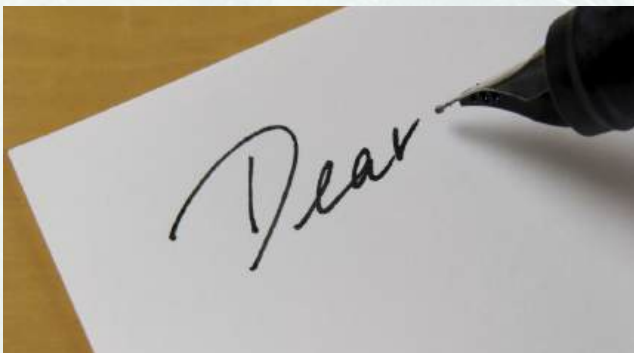
Shirley was an elementary school teacher for 25 years. She also tutored workers at the cookie factory in McComb for three years. They had to be there at 7 a.m. before they started work.

Both of them were in charge of playgrounds in Findlay (1964-74). They provided arts and crafts, jump rope and hula hoop tournaments, and other structured activities. Dave started a girls softball team in Findlay, the first in town.

Dave told me how much being a home visitor meant to him and Shirley. "We always looked forward to it," he declared. And those he visited also looked forward to their coming. Phil Bash always eagerly awaited a visit by the Gerbers so he could talk about the Indians and the Browns. What a blessing you are to us all, but especially to those who looked forward to a visit by friends who always offered a smile and a story. Thank you, Dave and Shirley, for being ministers to us.



Our Communion Visitors Team consists of: Pastor Chris, Marilyn Dunn and Sue DeMoss, Daryl Rotman, and Carolyn Wilde and Sharon Thompson. We also have some 16-17 shut-ins that we call on monthly. Can you help with this vital ministry? Contact Pastor Chris.



Reaching Out to Our Members

Feel free to make use of our card-writing station in the hall outside of the Narthex! Cards are available and can be placed in the basket on the table to be mailed. On the table are also lists of addresses for At-Home members and birthday lists if you need any ideas for recipients.

WELCA Calendar of Events for February 2026



Hannah Circle is in-service for the month of **February**

Wednesday, February 4 – Snowflake Social – Fellowship Hall – 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Tuesday, February 10 @ 9:00 a.m. – Martha Circle in the church library
Hostess: Roberta Howard; Leader: Sue DeMoss

Tuesday, February 10 @ 1:00 p.m. – Rachel Circle in the church library
Hostess: Sharon Thompson; Leader Jan Eakin

Monday, February 16 @ 7:00 p.m. – Hannah Circle in the church lounge
Hostess: Kathy Brooks; Leader: Marilyn Dunn

Wednesday, February 18 – Ash Wednesday – 40 Days of Giving

Sunday, February 22 – Cookie Sunday – Hannah Circle

WELCA would like to again challenge the congregation to provide food items so that those that have a need will be able to feel our heartfelt generosity. As we enter into the 40 Days of Lent let us celebrate 40 days of giving, one item daily, 40 items total. The Blessings Basket the Lutheran Food Pantry at St. John's Findlay this year is relying on our generosity to fill their pantry. The pantry provides a 3-day emergency food supply to their clients. As we enter into Lent, a time of reflection on God's abundant generosity in our lives, WELCA is asking members to please consider gifts to the food pantry. Here is a list of the needed items:

Canned meat
Coffee (11 oz. size)
Tea
Powdered milk
Paper towels
Cereal
Oatmeal
Wide Noodles
Salt & Pepper
Boxed sides (potatoes, pasta, rice)
Saltine crackers
Canned vegetables
Canned fruit
Canned Soup



Items can be brought in weekly and placed in the cart by the elevator. Thank you for prayerfully considering this opportunity to share your blessings with others.



Scholarship applications are now available in the church office or online at the church website for two scholarships from the Endowment Fund. From the website, forms can be downloaded, or the application can be submitted online. From the home page of our church website, click on Forms, then scroll down to Youth Forms and you will find the online and download option for each scholarship. If you submit online be sure and contact your letter of recommendation individual(s) with the correct timing of submissions that need to be mailed to the church office.

1. The Endowment General Scholarship is available for voting members and their dependents attending a Christian Theological Seminary, a Lutheran affiliated college or university regardless of major, or any Christian college or university if majoring in areas of Christian ministry.
2. The Jeffrey Allan DeMoss Scholarship was established for members of First Lutheran Church by Paul and Sue DeMoss in memory of their son, Jeff. This scholarship will be awarded to a student who is an active member of First Lutheran between the ages of 18 and 25, attending a nationally accredited college or university with a declared major in health, religion, and/or social work professions. Examples of professions include but are not limited to social work, counseling, psychology, nursing, medicine, youth work, ministry, and mental health. Applicants must also be of good Christian character and be making use of their talents in a manner that is pleasing to God. No one person may receive the scholarship award more than twice.

Deadline for submitting applications and letters of recommendation is March 31st. The recipient(s) will be selected and notified on or before June 1st. A total of \$12,745.86 for the General Scholarship and \$1,730.47 for the Jeffrey Allan DeMoss Scholarship is available to be awarded. If you have any questions, please contact any Endowment committee member or the church office. Please be aware, each scholarship requires letter(s) of recommendation. Do not wait until the last minute to request these forms to be submitted by your selected individuals. **All forms are due in the church office by March 31st.**

Feb. 18th (Wed) Ash Wednesday 4pm & 7pm	First Lutheran	
Feb. 25th (Wed) 1st Lenten Service 6pm Meal 7pm service	Trinity Findlay	
Mar. 4th (Wed) 2nd Lenten Service 6pm Meal 7pm Service	First Lutheran	
Mar. 11th (Wed.) 3rd Lenten Service 6pm Meal 7pm Service	Trinity Arcadia	
Mar. 18th (Wed.) 4th Lenten Service 6pm Meal 7pm Service	St. John's	
Mar. 25th (Wed.) 5th Lenten Service 6pm Meal 7pm Service	St. John's (Synod Office Leading)	
April 2nd (Thurs.) Maundy Thursday 7pm	The Last Supper Reenactment (First Lutheran)	
April 3rd (Fri.) Good Friday 7pm	First Lutheran	
April 5th (Sun.) Easter Worship 8:15am & 10:45am, meal at 9:30am	First Lutheran	

COME VISIT THE CHURCH LIBRARY



Happy New Year and my apologies for missing the deadline for the January newsletter. A week after the deadline had passed, I asked Sarah, our administrative assistant, to find a picture of a librarian covered in Christmas wrap and ribbon and surrounded by boxes to fill my page! She must have thought I was kidding. I wasn't. I was so behind in the month of December but I refused to worry about it. It

all got done and just in time.

I have managed some reading in my spare time! I did read Nobody's Girl: A Memoir of Surviving Abuse and Fighting for Justice by Virginia Roberts Giuffre, in which the author details her experiences with, among others, Jeffrey Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell and Prince Andrew. When I finished the read, I realized I had many more questions left unanswered. I really have no desire to go into any details. If interested, you can read and ask your own questions. The whole scenario is deplorable.

A friend and I read and talked about The Names by Florence Knapp. Three stories are detailed about a mother who names her second child; each story relates what happens to the boy when he is given one of three different names. The premise is the name of the child determines what kind of life the boy will live. Each section follows the differently-named boy into his adulthood: Bear, Julian, and Gordon (who will be the third generation to carry that name). The question remains : does your name determine your future? Or is the mother's single decision the deciding factor? Again we are left with questions.

Cece, one of my granddaughters, and I read Every Last Word by Tamara Ireland Stone. Sam suffers from Purely-Obsessional OCD. She tries very hard to fit in with her group of high school friends, without discussing her "condition." Then she meets Caroline, who introduces her to the Poet's Corner, and she really connects with these high school "outsiders." Here she can be herself. The novel presents one of the most common teen problems, that of trying to belong. It was a good read.

Okay, now let's talk about some of the books on the shelf of our library that you women might think about reading. The stories of the women of the Bible have never been the emphasis of teaching. If you really want to learn more about these women, borrow the texts Slightly Bad Girls of the Bible, Bad Girls of the Bible, and Really Bad Girls of the Bible, all part of the series by Liz Curtis Higgs. The text follows these women to focus not on their sins, but rather on God's grace for imperfect people. Workbooks for each of these are available online. These books offer hope.

Or try instead the one text Twelve Extraordinary Women by John McArthur; let's include the remainder of the title and you will know immediately the focus of this book: "How God Shaped Women of the Bible and What He Wants to Do with You". Got it? A study guide is included.

Made to Crave: Satisfying Your Deepest Desire With God, not Food by Lisa Terkeurst is also an excellent read for those trying to understand the cravings in their lives. She explains that wanting to make changes in our behavior may actually happen if we refocus our behavior to include God in our wants and needs. The workbook that accompanies the book is excellent help.

I have placed the Higgs', McArthur's and Terkeurst's books on the cart for your easy access.

Also, I am always open to suggestions of great reads that you encounter. Email me at kathleenbrooks15@gmail.com. God bless and keep reading.

February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8:15 & 10:45 Worship	10:15am Prayer Group	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	9:30am Bulletin	
9:30am Sunday School	10:30am Ladies Bible Study	7pm Book Club	6:30pm Snowflake Social	7:30pm Sr Choir		
11:30am Community Dinner	11:30am Sacred Daily					
	6:30pm-Worship & M.usic					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Noisy Offering	10:15am Prayer Group	9am Martha Circle	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	9:30am Bulletin	FH Rental
9:30am Worship	10:30am Ladies Bible Study	11:30am Sacred Daily	7pm Endowment	7:30pm Sr Choir		
11:30am Congregational Meeting	11:30am Sacred Daily	1pm Rachel Circle				
	7pm Property	7pm Stewardship/Evan				
	7pm Social Ministry	7:30pm Finance				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8:15 & 10:45 Worship	10:15am Prayer Group	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	9:30am Bulletin	FH-NYLT
9:30am Sunday School	10:30am Ladies Bible Study	11:45am LIFT	4pm Ash Wednesday	7:30pm Sr Choir		
	11:30am Sacred Daily	7pm Theology Pub	6pm BSA			
	12pm Newsletter Deadline	7pm Council Meeting	7pm Ash Wednesday			
	7pm Hannah Circle					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
8:15 Worship	10:15am Prayer Group	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	11:30am Sacred Daily	9:30am Bulletin	
9:30am Sunday School	10:30am Ladies Bible Study	7pm Lenten Service	7pm Lenten Service	7:30pm Sr Choir		
5pm Youth Group	11:30am Sacred Daily					

February Volunteers

ALTAR FLOWERS

Feb 1—
Feb 8—
Feb 15—
Feb 22—

ALTAR GUILD

Julie Buck, Amber
Leipheimer

BLESSING BASKET

DELIVERY
Sue DeMoss

COMMUNION BREAD

Feb 1—Devra Hall
Feb 8—Julie Dittmar
Feb 15—Janet Wobser
Feb 22—Lent Wafers

COOKIE SUNDAY

Feb 1—Community Dinner
Feb 8—Property
Feb 15—Christian Ed/Youth
Feb 22—Hannah Circle

COUNTERS

Daryl & Cyndy Rotman

2026 Altar Flower Chart

The 2026 Flower Chart is up in the hallway, across from the church office. There is a full year of Sundays that need flowers to brighten not only the altar, but also either your home or the home of a shut-in. Please consider this ministry as a way to share God's love for His people.

DEACONS

Feb 1
8:15—Marilynn Dunn, Chloe
Nielsen
10:45—Daryl Rotman, Toni
Poling

Feb 8
8:15—Janet Wobser
10:45—Tricia Cox, Ali Cox

Feb 15
8:15—Reed Needles
10:45—Julie Buck, Greg
Johnson

Feb 18th (Ash Wed.)
4:00—Tad Schell
7:00—Mike Heldman

Feb 22
8:15—Judy Kipker
10:45—Daryl Rotman, Mike
Heldman

LECTORS

Feb 1
8:15—Marilynn Dunn
10:45—Elaine Miller

Feb 8
8:15—Elaine Miller
10:45—Nina Dukes

Feb 15
8:15—Janet Wobser
10:45—Falkyn Roth

Feb 22
8:15—Kathy Brooks
10:45—Cyndy Rotman

FLOWER DELIVERY

Julie Buck

SOUND ROOM

Feb 1
8:15—Daryl Rotman
10:45—Todd Thompson

Feb 8
8:15—Tim Roth
10:45—Steve Roth

Feb 15
8:15—Daryl Rotman
10:45—Toni Poling

Feb 22
8:15—Tim Roth
10:45—Falkyn Roth

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Feb 1
8:15—
10:45—

Feb 8
8:15—
10:45—

Feb 15
8:15—
10:45—

Feb 22
8:15—
10:45—

It is important you use the forms for your bulletin Announcement; they are available on the bulletin board.

Flowers need to be delivered to the church by noon on Friday.

2026 Altar Flower Chart

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Happy Birthday!

Joan Swisher	1-Feb	Jane Ebersole	13-Feb
Seth Franks	1-Feb	Nancy Bahler	17-Feb
Steven Rodman	2-Feb	James Maurer	19-Feb
Erin Meier	3-Feb	Yvette Mains	19-Feb
Janice Wagner	5-Feb	Kylee Timbrook	19-Feb
Nancy Haffelder	5-Feb	Michelle Dale	20-Feb
Richard Ruehle	6-Feb	Steve Leopold	22-Feb
Amy Masterlasco	6-Feb	Cloyce Baker	22-Feb
Janet Baker	7-Feb	Anthony Conner	23-Feb
Ruth Parker	7-Feb	Traci Roth	26-Feb
Erik Nielsen	8-Feb	Doyle Sherman	26-Feb
Julie Buck	9-Feb	Tori Widman	27-Feb
Cheryl Seibert	11-Feb	Nathan Leipheimer	28-Feb
Steven Groh	12-Feb	Casey Leipheimer	28-Feb

Your friendship is a light that brightens every corner of my life. Happy Valentine's Day!



Happy Anniversary!

Jeff and Sharon Gainsley 5-Feb 51 years

Ministry Opportunities

Would you like to be more involved in your church? Still looking for what that ministry might be? I have something that any male or female might like to do. How about being a driver for members who do not drive anymore but would like to attend church service. It would be for late service and not every week. Sound like something you might like? Please contact Carolyn Bryant at 419-422-0015 and leave a message or see me at church.



Prayerfully consider this, it is a special ministry! Thank you.