

First Lutheran Church

November 2026

Does Love Mean Avoiding Politics?

Pastor Steve Bond

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:16-18)

You've heard the questions and complaints before, I'm sure—maybe even out of your own mouth. "Why does everything have to become political?" or "Christianity has to do with love and faith, but it should stay out of politics." Or "I just go to church to feel better about life, and politics will just make me uncomfortable!" Been there before? Probably so have most of us. And since many of us were raised with the social rule that "You don't bring up politics or religion in polite company," we tend to get especially squirmy when church folks in particular (or—gasp!—pastors) talk about things that delve into the political. So what are we to do? Can't we just focus on "love," and promising ourselves never to talk about "politics" for the sake of niceness?

Maybe we need to start being clear about what we mean. For a great many folks, the word "politics" immediately triggers "partisanship," with demagogues at podiums who divide us into parties with competing slogans and draw lines between "red states" and "blue states." And all too often that fractures communities (and congregations!) into "us" and "them" groups, which almost inevitably pushes us into "Me-and-My-Group-First!" thinking. But what if politics isn't necessarily about being partisan, but rather doing the important work of promoting the common good for our shared life? That sounds a great deal like love, honestly, since the Scriptures keep reminding us that Christ-like love is never reducible to a mere feeling or empty lip service, but "in deed and truth." As Cornel West famously put it, "Justice is what love looks like in public." We can't avoid addressing how our call to love neighbors (and strangers and enemies) impacts our shared life and resources—that's what politics really is. But what we can do is to engage political questions differently from the angry voices around us who are slow to listen to one another.

Love not only leads us to ask the difficult questions about how we order and organize our common life, but also to risk listening to those who see things differently and still share with us a commitment to the common good. Love calls us to be brave enough to do both: to wrestle with the thorny questions we might rather ignore, and to listen to the other voices at the table whom God has brought across our path.

1. The verses above from 1 John contrast love that shows up only "in word or speech" with the kind that is seen "in deed and truth." What do you think that difference looks like—and why would it matter?

2. How could a commitment to listening graciously change the way that we as Christians approach political questions?

O God whose Love will not let us go, give us the courage to face the difficult questions that come with sharing a common life, the bravery to listen to one another even when we differ, and the daring to love as we have first been loved. Amen.



Fruitful in Every Good Work

"…walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God." – Colossians 1:10

The Stewardship of the Historic Saints

Martin Luther 1483-1546



The Bible is a collection of writings and stories from a wide variety of people in different places and different times that tell about the nature and character of God and about God's relationship to humanity. God's outrageous generosity toward humanity is one of the primary themes that runs cover to cover from the beginning of the Hebrew Scriptures all the way through the New Testament.

God is the Great Provider and provides all we need with abundance!

God gives life and all that life entails and requires.

God gives freedom when we are enslaved.

God gives hope when we suffer.

God gives protection when we are in danger.

God gives grace and mercy even when we don't deserve it.

God gives opportunities and second chances.

God gives relationships and communities to support and help us.

God gives love to people in all places and in all circumstances.

This list of examples from the biblical story of God providing everything needed could go on and on. And yet, it is difficult sometimes to feel and experience the abundance that comes from God. It is in our human nature to worry about, fear, and really feel the illusion of scarcity. Even the Israelites fleeing Egypt felt scarcity and worried about not having the manna they needed for tomorrow! However, God wanted to be known to the future generations as the dependable provider of all good things (Exodus 16).



Apple-so-lutely amazing!

Freedom *from* and freedom *for*

Trusting that God has provided, is providing, and will always provide everything we need frees us from the anxiety of needing to provide for ourselves. Martin Luther described this in his essay, "The Freedom of a Christian." We are freed *from* the responsibility of fending for ourselves and freed *for* the opportunities to use what we have to serve God and one another. Even this freedom is an incredible gift from God!

Understanding this glorious freedom changes how we view the gifts God has bestowed upon us. All that we are and all that we have comes from God. **It is not, however, for the sole purpose of our own comfort and pleasure.** God has been generous to us so that we can be generous to others. In this way, what we receive from God is not gifted to us; it is entrusted to us. What we have is not ours because we worked hard to earn it and deserve it. It is ours only because God gave it to us and trusts us to use it to meet our own needs and the needs of others. We are then only stewards of our lives, our time, our talents, and our possessions.

Fruitful in Every Good Work



Love is a verb

These are the things God has given to us as signs of God's gracious love. When Jesus tells us to love one another as he has loved us (John 15), there is an implication that this means to provide for others as God has provided for us. **When Jesus speaks of "love," it is almost always as an action verb and never as warm fuzzy feelings.**

The most important question of stewardship is this: *How will we care for and use what God has entrusted to us in order to love, serve, and care for our neighbors?*

The Stewardship of Our Contemporary Saints

Jane Ebersole

You are very active at First Lutheran! Why do you spend so much of your time and gifts (and money) for this ministry?

Having been an educator for 30 years, I was used to being on the go from 5:20 a.m. to usually 11:00 p.m. When I retired 20 years ago, I wanted to stay busy. There is SO much that you can do as a volunteer in Findlay. Since I grew up here, I wanted to give back. I benefited from a wonderful public education at FCS, I have a wonderful and supportive husband, and I love my church family. So I began volunteering my time first to the Mazza Museum and Project Linus, then the LSS food pantry (now the Blessing Basket), and coordinating our monthly Community Dinner (with MANY helpers!). More recently I have been serving on the Shade Tree Commission for the City of Findlay. I love serving on the Evangelism and Stewardship and Social Ministry teams here at First as ways to do God's Kingdom work. I feel blessed to be healthy (with a few more aches and pains) and strive to be open to how I can serve God each day, especially since all that I have is really His.

Jane Ebersole







God works within our community with our hands. The Missionary Outreach fund within Endowment has annual distribution monies to financially support any Christian project, education, expansion and service to those beyond the physical confines of our church. If you know of any worthwhile project, we could support this year, please present your request to a standing committee within our church to be evaluated and possibly approved to request funds from Endowment. The 2026 distribution funds must be approved for expenditure before the end of this year with flexible disbursement. Endowment meets the second Wednesday of each month. The Missionary Outreach Fund has $12,293.96 remaining to be distributed in 2026. First Lutheran has already sent funds to City Mission in the amount of $3000 and Habitat for Humanity Apostle Build in the amount of $4000. We hope our benevolence dollars can equip ordinary people with the funds to do extraordinary things in the name of Jesus so that all might see, hear, and experience God's love in tangible ways or partner with local community organizations to help care for the most vulnerable here locally and transform lives for Jesus. The Endowment Committee Funding Request is available in our box in the Communication room, online, or from Sarah in the church office.



November 15, 2026 after the ThankOffering Service

A Congregational Meeting will be held November 15th after the ThankOffering Service. There will be only one service that day. The purpose of the meeting is to elect Council members for the next term. There will be 4 open slots available to run for this year, and more information on candidates will be available soon on the bulletin board! A preliminary budget will also be available at the meeting.



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

L.I.F.T. will meet on **Tuesday, November 17th** at **11:45**. Bring a brown bag lunch and enjoy a time of conversation!
Please contact Sue DeMoss at 419-306-9994 or Marilynn Dunn at 419-722-8543 for more information or if you need a ride.



RUMMAGE SALE 2027

Having a rummage sale in 2027 has been discussed. The type of sale has been changed to just household items, no apparel of any kind. If anyone is interested in being the lead coordinator for a rummage sale Fall 2027 please contact Marilynn Dunn or Cyndy Rotman.

WELCA Calendar of Events for November 2026

Martha Circle is in-service for the month of **November**

Tuesday, November 10 @ 9:00 a.m. – Service Project

Tuesday, November 10 @ 1:00 p.m. – Rachel Circle in the church library
Hostess: Sally Hartzell; Leader: Cindy Fitzpatrick

Thursday, November 12 @ 1:00 p.m. – WELCA Board planning for Snowflake Social

Sunday, November 15 @ 9:30 a.m. – WELCA ThankOffering Service

Monday, November 16 @ 7:00 p.m. – Hannah Circle
Hostess: Pat Needles; Leader: Arlene Shriner

Sunday, November 29 – Cookie Sunday – Martha Circle

Sunday, November 29 – Start Reverse Advent Food Collection

Tuesday, December 8 – Brunch – Bring a taxable item – Martha Circle Hosting



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



And suddenly summer collapsed into fall……
at least that is how I feel.

Let's talk about the church book club which meets the first Tuesday of every month usually in the church lounge at 7:00. September's discussion centered around a book about Nathan Hale, **The Spy and the Seamstress** by Scott Smith. It is 1776; George Washington and his army are on Manhattan Island surrounded by British forces. The story of Hale is woven together with the fictional story of Anne Wheaton, whose family are loyal British supporters. The book follows the very real chaos of two different sides of the revolution living in the same area-the violence thrown at opposing sides. Three points of view cover all sides of the war. A bit long but history buffs will love the little known info of the times.

In October, we discussed **Remarkably Bright Creatures** by Shelby van Pelt, a book recently made into a movie starring Sally Field. I don't want to try to explain all the connections in the story that unfold slowly as one reads. Let's just say the octopus Marcellus is one of the narrators of the story. The novel addresses grief, loneliness, old age, captured sea creatures, human inability to communicate honestly with one another - and more. It is a great read.

In November, we will discuss **The Berry Pickers** by Amanda Peters. In July 1962 a Mi'kmaq family (an indigenous people from Nova Scotia) travels to Maine to harvest blueberries. Four-year-old Ruthie vanishes. Local authorities provide little help. Then we meet Norma, an affluent only child also in Maine. Dark skin, missing baby photos and vivid recurring dreams of elsewhere in Maine. You catch the rest of the story, don't you. it's the lifelong piecing together of two families.

i invite all of you to the book club Christmas party, tentatively set for December 1, where those in attendance choose the reading list for 2027. Come join the fun. If you have any suggestions forward them to me by hand or by email - kathleenbrooks15@gmail.com

A bizarre read, also known as a satirical suspense, first introduces the word "tradwife" to me - a picture-perfect traditional mid-20th century homemaker while the husband serves as the sole breadwinner.. Her fantasy life has 8 million followers online. One morning, she wakes up in 1855. It is dark satire as well as a psychological mystery that includes a look at modern culture, consumerism, all surrounding an unlikable protagonist.

This Book Made Me Think Of You by Libby Page is a sweet book about a recent young widow, whose husband, before he dies selects 12 books , one for each month of her grief. He arranges with the London bookseller to personally deliver each to her. The first month's read is a children's story, a beloved book from her childhood. She had since given up reading. She returns to reading by looking at other childhood favorites. We, the reader of her reading, watch her learn to love life again. I loved this book.

Ann Patchett's recent book **Whistler** is a perplexing read. Nine-year-old Daphne is in an automobile accident with her then first step-father, Eddie. After the accident, Mom throws out Eddie, apparently because of the danger he had put her daughter in. Forty-five years later, Daphne runs into him at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Reconnecting as adults, both Daphne and Eddie re-examine their lives from those many years earlier. Okay, you ask "so what does a whistler have to do with the story?" Same question I had. And I must point out that the cover has a picture of a beautiful horse. Now, about halfway through the book, after the narration goes back and forth in time, we are in the car accident with Eddie and Daphne. At one point stranded off the road and of course down a ravine, Daphne fears that they will never be rescued. Eddie comforts and reassures her with the story of Whistler and how this horse rescues his rider. I have no idea whether to recommend this one or not. Friend of mine was highly disappointed. Go forth with caution.

Have a great Thanksgiving. God bless and keep reading (or listening). Kathy Brooks (kathleenbrooks15@gmail.com)

"One must always be careful of books,"…"and what is inside them, for words have the power to change us." — Cassandra Clare

Ministry Opportunities

TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY



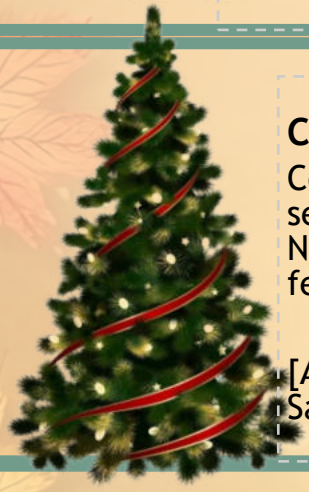
Would you like to be more involved in your church? Still looking for what that ministry might be? I have something that any male or female might like to do. How about being a driver for members who do not drive anymore but would like to attend church service. It would be for late service and not every 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.



2027 Altar Flower Chart

The NEW 2027 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.



Church Decorations

Come join us in preparing for the Advent/Christmas season. We will be decorating the church on Saturday, November 28th, at 9:30am. Come join in the fellowship!

[Also note: we will take down all the decorations on Saturday, January 9th, at 9:30am]





Social Ministry is trying to keep the Military Ministry active and going. This would involve contacting families of our military and getting updated photos and addresses. Please pray about trying to help with this project and contact the office or Social Ministry Committee if you are willing to assist with this very valuable ministry. Thank you.

November Volunteers

ALTAR FLOWERS
Nov 1—Kurt & Jane Ebersole
Nov 8—
Nov 15—
Nov 22—
Nov 29—

ALTAR GUILD
Julie Buck, Amber Leipheimer

BLESSING BASKET
Carolyn Wilde

COMMUNION BREAD
Nov 1—Pat Needles
Nov 8—Beth Meier
Nov 15—Carolyn Bryant
Nov 22—Devra Hall
Nov 29—Julie Dittmar

COOKIE SUNDAY
Nov 1—Comm Dinner
Nov 8—Property
Nov 15—Christian Ed/Youth
Nov 22—Evangelism/Stewardship
Nov 29—Martha Circle

COUNTERS
Nov 1/8/22/29—Randy & Julie Buck
Nov 15— Daryl & Cyndy Rotman

FLOWER DELIVERY
Jane Ebersole

LECTORS
Nov 1
8:15—
10:45—Elaine Miller

Nov 8
8:15—
10:45—Cyndy Rotman

Nov 15
9:30—Marilynn Dunn

Nov 22
8:15—
10:45—Jane Ebersole

Nov 29
8:15—
10:45—Tom Fitzpatrick

DEACONS
Nov 1
8:15—Marilynn Dunn
10:45—Eric Huttenlocher, Mike Heldman

Nov 8
8:15—Toni Poling
10:45—Greg Johnson, Chip Altman

Nov 15
9:30—Janet Wobser, Judy Kipker

Nov 22
8:15—Reed Needles
10:45—Eric Huttenlocher, Tricia Cox

Nov 29
8:15—Toni Poling
10:45—Art Wilde, Eric Huttenlocher

SOUND ROOM
Nov 1
8:15—Daryl Rotman
10:45—Todd Thompson

Nov 8
8:15—Tim Roth
10:45—Falkyn Roth

Nov 15
9:30—Toni Poling

Nov 22
8:15—Daryl Rotman
10:45—Gary Altman

Nov 29
8:15—Tim Roth
10:45—Steve Roth

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS
Nov 1
8:15—
10:45—Daryl Rotman

Nov 8
8:15—Tim Cochran
10:45—Tim Cochran

Nov 15
9:30—Traci Roth

Nov 22
8:15—
10:45—Daryl Rotman

Nov 29
8:15—
10:45—

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



Happy Anniversary!

Kevin and Karen Breen	7-Nov	39
Jerry and Judith Luth	12-Nov	60
Eddie Gallegos and Erin Rodabaugh-Gallegos	22-Nov	12
Leslie Tornye and Hilda Auanna	24-Nov	14





Happy Birthday!

Ryan Nunn	1-Nov
Jim Schoerger	1-Nov
Laura Corle	3-Nov
Cindy Thompson	4-Nov
Jeremiah Cox	4-Nov
Carole Wittenberg	7-Nov
Gary May	7-Nov
Brent Fruchey	8-Nov
Phoebe Treece	8-Nov
Phyllis Higgins	8-Nov
Dillon Timbrook	9-Nov
Steve Seibert	9-Nov
Deborah Baker	11-Nov
Gary Woodruff	12-Nov
Beth Schriner	13-Nov
Gabby Cox	13-Nov
Kim Peplinski	15-Nov
Paul Brooks	15-Nov
Andrew Mains	18-Nov
Carolyn Wilde	18-Nov
James Routson	19-Nov
Timothy Roth	21-Nov
Larry Borger	21-Nov
Christian Dittmar	22-Nov
Jeffrey Short	24-Nov
Wesley Rodman	25-Nov
Allison May	26-Nov
Dorothy Freeland	26-Nov
Shirley Gerber	26-Nov
Janann Lishawa	26-Nov
Emily Meier	26-Nov
Craig Meier	27-Nov
Virginia May	27-Nov
Sara Cleary	29-Nov
Leslie Tornye	29-Nov
Arlene Schriner	30-Nov

November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8:15 & 10:45am Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11:30am Community Dinner	10:15am Prayer Group 10:30am Ladies Bible Study 6:30pm Worship & Music	7pm Book Club	1-3pm Hymn Selection	9:30am Bulletin Assembly 6:15pm Joyful Ringers Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Noisy Offering 8:15 & 10:45am Worship 9:30am Sunday School	10:15am Prayer Group 10:30am Ladies Bible Study 7pm Property 7pm Social Ministry	9am Martha Circle 1pm Rachel Circle 7:30pm Finance	OFFICE CLOSED 7pm Endowment 	9:30am Bulletin Assembly 6pm BSA 6:15pm Joyful Ringers Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Thankoffering Service 9:30am Worship Congregational Meeting	10:15am Prayer Group 10:30am Ladies Bible Study 12pm Newsletter Deadline 1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Hannah Circle	11:45am LIFT 7pm Theology Pub		9:30am Bulletin Assembly 6:15pm Joyful Ringers Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
8:15 & 10:45am Worship 9:30am Sunday School	10:15am Prayer Group 10:30am Ladies Bible Study 6pm Combined Handbell Rehearsal (Trinity) 7pm Combined Choir Practice (Trinity) 7pm Council Meeting		7pm Thanksgiving Eve Service (Trinity)			9:30am Church Decorating
29	30					
8:15 & 10:45am Worship 9:30am Sunday School	10:15am Prayer Group 10:30am Ladies Bible Study		7:15pm Choir Practice	9:30am Bulletin Assembly		