



# THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE

(206) 935-6530

[www.flcws.org](http://www.flcws.org)

June 2025

## TO THE PEOPLE OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE

I am writing this letter to you to announce that I will retire from the position of Choirmaster of First Lutheran Church of West Seattle, effective Sunday, the 8th day of June 2025, the Festival of Pentecost.

Serving as Choirmaster for the past 50 years along side Andrew James King, our gifted Cantor/Organist of immense talent and commitment, has been one of the great joys of my life. Andy was a dearly loved friend who enriched both my personal and spiritual life in so many ways. He was a person of great integrity who held strong beliefs built on the historic traditions of the church, its liturgies, and its great music. This enriched our worship experience and our lives.

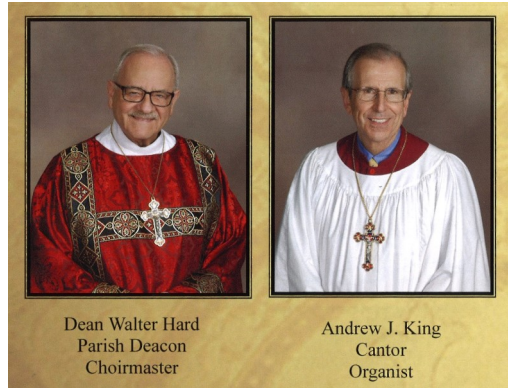
I had planned to retire earlier, but felt I should wait. My reasons were many: the Covid-19 epidemic, followed by the death of Pastor Marshall, which necessitated finding visiting clergy to assist us as we searched for a new pastor. Then the death of Andrew King, which required guest organists to play for worship while we looked for a new organist/choirmaster. I was willing to stay in place until the Executive Committee had secured a candidate who was an eminently qualified church musician and had served as both Organist and Choirmaster in previous churches.

I am very excited and pleased to welcome Dr. Dana Robinson to First Lutheran Church of West Seattle as our new Organist/Choirmaster. Dr. Robinson is highly regarded nationally as a professor of music and organ, as well as by members of the American Guild of Organists, both nationally as well as locally.

To the Choir, and to you, the members of First Lutheran Church of West Seattle, I wanted to thank each and every one of you for your friendship and support over the past 50 years.

In His service,

Dean Walter Hard  
Choirmaster



Dean Walter Hard  
Parish Deacon  
Choirmaster

Andrew J. King  
Cantor  
Organist

### Footnote:

First Lutheran Church of West Seattle Established September 25, 1918, 106 years

Andrew King and Dean Hard—Longest serving members of staff, 50 years concurrently, for a total of 100 years

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The NW Washington ELCA Synod Assembly was held over the course of two days, May 16th and 17th. The assembly was much larger than the previous year and was held at the Edward D. Hansen Conference Center in Everett, WA. Kathrine Young and I attended the assembly as representatives of FLCWS. The final credentials registrar had a grand total of 350 voting members in attendance. One of the main agenda items was the election of the Bishop; whoever is elected shall serve a six-year term. Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee was re-elected after two rounds of voting. Along with the Bishop election, there were general elections for the "committee on discipline," "consultation committee," and "synod council," as well as two resolutions, three memorials, and the next year's budget to approve. It was an interesting process to take part in. I am thankful to have been there and to have represented FLCWS.

On June 8th, our congregation will welcome our new organist and choirmaster, Dana Robinson. The process for hiring this position was not easy. The executive committee, which according to the constitution acts as the official personnel board of this congregation, started the hiring search in the Fall of 2024. There were not many applicants. The executive committee held interviews in both December and January. Thankfully, we have been able to keep a steady schedule of substitute organists to help us continue to conduct our services. We had heard great feedback from the congregation about services that Dana substituted for us. We are excited to have Dana join us here at FLCWS. As you all will soon come to learn more about him, you will find that his experience and credentials are outstanding and impressive.

Lastly, on behalf of the congregation, I want to wish Pastor Bryon Hansen a speedy recovery from his surgery. He will be out on medical leave until the end of June. Thank you to Pastor Phil Nesvig, Pastor Ivar Hillseland, Pastor Barry Fritz, and Pastor Doug Stensby for lending us your time and preaching the gospel to us. We are appreciative of your support and teaching.

A reminder to the congregation that the mid-year meeting will be held in July. Traditionally, it has always been on the final Sunday in July, which prospectively would be July 27th. Announcements will be made in the bulletin regarding the exact date as we draw closer to that time. Have a happy summer and enjoy the beautiful weather and long days that the Northwest provides! God's blessings on your adventures!

-Steve Liang, President

## **Council Meeting Calendar Dates and links:**

Tuesday, May 13, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, June 10, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, July 8, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

No meeting in August

Tuesday, September 9, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, October 14, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, November 11, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, December 9, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, January 13, 2026: In-Person/Hybrid

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ffb-rdss-xqm>

Or dial: (US) [+1 502-622-8042](tel:+15026228042) PIN: 222 331 072#

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:** Join us in the lounge every Sunday after the service.

**FOOD BANK COLLECTION:** The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggested donations for Summer are easy snack and lunch items for school age children home for the summer months. Any non-perishable foods, personal products, or grocery store gift cards are welcome. Your much needed donations are taken to the West Seattle Food Bank, Compass Housing Alliance, Mary's Place, and Westside Neighbors (American Legion Hall Shelter).

**RIVERTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** still needs help in housing the hundreds of immigrants that keep arriving. To help, go to: <https://rivertonparkumc.com/donate>.

**EXTENDED MINISTRY:** Support the Food Bank with Your Thriftway Receipts! West Seattle Thriftway gives back 1% of sales from receipts turned in to benefit the WS Food Bank! Simply drop your receipts in the envelope at the Extended Ministry bulletin board outside Room C—we'll take care of the rest. Every receipt counts and makes a difference to those in need in our community.

**SICK LEAVE:** Pastor Hansen had surgery on May 12. This was the second surgery on his right foot to replace the hardware that came apart. While not as extensive as the first, the recovery time when non-weight bearing is required is the same, six weeks. Pastor Phil Nesvig will be presiding and preaching June 1., Pastor Ivar Hillesland on Pentecost, June 8th, and Pastor Barry Fritts will be the presider and preacher on Holy Trinity Sunday, June 15,

**FEDERAL FUNDING HAS BEEN CUT OFF FOR FOOD BANKS & SCHOOLS!** In March the USDA announced immediate termination of the Local Food for Schools (LFS) program and the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program, cutting \$1 Billion from school meals and food banks.

The money the West Seattle Food Bank and West Seattle schools had to buy fresh local produce is gone. So, farmers in our region have lost a significant market and source of income.

The West Seattle Food Bank has some suggestions on how we can help:

- Support WSFB's Backpack Program & Fresh Food Fund. The Food Bank has an increased demand for weekend food backpacks and fresh produce. They will also experience increased demand for summer lunches when schools and lunchrooms go on summer vacation. [We can donate money to help with this.]
- Buy LOCAL and advocate for Farm-to Table Programs
- Support farmers who lost funding by shopping at farmer's markets, joining a CSA, or encouraging local businesses to source from regional farms. Buying locally grown produce will help area farmers recover.
- Contact state legislators to advocate for increased funding to keep kids fed regardless of shifting USDA policies.
- Volunteer at the Food Bank. Donate funds to the West Seattle Food Bank or through your church offering.
- Check the Extended Ministries bulletin board in the hall to find out what the Food Bank needs and donate via the church collection box in room C.

# STEWARDSHIP

*This Stewardship article includes excerpts from a very interesting and thoughtfully written piece about stewardship in the church [see Oct 3 CSN Christian Stewardship Network for the full article]*

-Gina Allen, Church Council

The Bible speaks more about money and possessions than almost any other topic. Jesus talked often and openly about our relationship with money. My perception of tithing changed dramatically once I experienced how giving makes you want to give more. We all have months and years of financial struggle at different times of our lives. But I have experienced that the tighter that I've tried to hold money close are the times when I seem to have less to give. However, when one gives "the first fruits", amazingly, there is still enough for daily life. The more you give, the more you will have. It is a miracle. Stewardship also includes sharing your time and talents. We often don't know what our own capabilities are unless we try new things and commit ourselves to helping where the help is needed. We all are capable of growing and learning, no matter our age. Many hands make light work.

1) *Stewardship, Generosity, and Giving are not synonymous.*

These terms interchangeably confuse people. Stewardship is simply the act of being a steward. In biblical times a steward was a respected person of high integrity entrusted with his master's possessions. He was expected to manage the possessions following the master's wishes. Since God created and still owns all we have, stewardship is recognizing God is the owner, and we are His managers. As managers, we are responsible for using God's possessions to please Him. Giving is an act, and generosity is an attitude. Generosity involves a willingness to sacrifice for the benefit of others personally. Giving is merely the act of abandoning something of value. Giving can be done without being generous (the Pharisees are an example), but you cannot be generous and not give.

2) *Stewardship is more about spiritual growth than dollars and cents.*

It is estimated that 25-50% of church attenders give nothing or next to nothing. The lack of giving is not a financial problem but a spiritual one. God is a giver. Our willingness to give reveals our relationship to God. When we communicate to our people about money, they must understand we want something for them not something from them. If teaching on money is only about giving to the church, people tune out, and we will miss an excellent opportunity to help our people grow. When our people gain a biblical perspective of their role as stewards, a culture of generosity can flourish.

3) *Poor stewardship is dangerous to our people*

Luke 12:15-21 Jesus describes a rich farmer blessed with an abundant crop. He gives no credit to God, nor does he give any thought to being a steward, but thinks only of himself. Jesus calls him a fool, not because he had great possessions, but because his possessions had him. Similarly, in Revelation 3:14-17, we get a chance to eavesdrop on God's letter to the church in Laodicea. Because the people in the church took such pride in their wealth, they concluded their material blessings indicated they were right with God. But God exposed their blindness, nakedness, and depravity. In both cases, their unhealthy relationship to wealth was the root of their spiritual blindness.

4) *Our stewardship culture impacts our ministry's effectiveness.*

A powerful example of how our relationship to money impacts our spiritual lives is found in the parable of the four seeds and the four soils in Mark 4. Beginning in verse 18, Jesus explains the meaning of the third seed. "Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful." Don't miss the critical message stressed here. Of all the things Jesus could have mentioned, He calls out the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for more things which lead to the real danger of "making the Word unfruitful." A wrong relationship to money is not primarily a financial issue but a spiritual one that robs God's Word of its fruitfulness. As leaders concerned about the spiritual vitality of our people, we cannot afford to miss this. However, Jesus gives us good news in explaining the fourth seed, "Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown." Isn't this the kind of multiplication we want to see in every area of our churches? Teaching our people to resist the power of wealth to deceive will keep the door of their hearts open to "accept" the Word and to experience abundant fruitfulness. Stewardship matters!

5) *True stewardship is about hearts and not causes.*

We live in a world of abundant causes to support. And yet, the point of stewardship isn't about causes – good as they may be. During a visit to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, in Mark 14:3-9, Mary emerges with a year's wages worth of precious perfume and pours it on Jesus. The Bible says some of the disciples grumbled, imagining all it could have done for the poor. But Jesus wanted to focus their attention on the heart attitude of the

giver. Mary showed her deep love for Jesus by how she utilized her resources. The disciples missed the point. How easy it is for us, church leaders, to miss the point that our relationship to money impacts our relationship to God. When we make God our highest priority, and we honor Him, it releases a spirit of love, which triggers acts of generosity. In 2 Corinthians 8:8, Paul addresses this same concept when challenging the early Macedonian church, "I am not commanding you, but want to test the sincerity of your love." Generosity, even amidst poverty, tests our love for God (v. 8:2).

6) *We need to preach more about tithing, not less.* People are struggling financially more than we realize. Money is an emotional topic that causes many people to hide their financial struggles. Not only is this impacting their spiritual condition, but people often feel they are not in a position to be generous. Avoiding the topic of money intensifies the problem. Preaching frequently about money creates a greater willingness in people to address their financial health. In Luke 10, the Good Samaritan not only generously gave of himself, but he was also a good steward. He intentionally saved money in advance for an unknown and unforeseen need. Because he was a saver, he had the surplus to express his generosity to the wounded traveler tangibly.

7) *The relationship people have to money impacts their relationship to God.* Ministry is not primarily a financial ministry; it is a discipleship ministry. If we are not teaching and preaching about money we are leaving our people spiritually exposed to one of Satan's most effective tools. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus says it is impossible to serve two masters. Either we will follow and serve the powerful force of money (Mammon), or we will serve the one true God. It is not possible to do both. Each one of us must choose whom to serve. In one of the saddest passages in Scripture, we eavesdrop in on a conversation between Jesus and a rich young ruler. In Luke 18, the intelligent and influential man asks Jesus what he must do to gain eternal life. Jesus engages him in conversation and learns that the man believes he has kept the commandments from an early age. Knowing the one thing that was holding him back, Jesus asks him to part with his wealth and follow. When confronted with making Jesus or his wealth a priority, the rich young man chooses his wealth. The power of money to deceive was stronger than his desire to follow the God of the universe. And he walked away sad. If we build a healthy stewardship culture of sharing time and skills, in addition to giving money, being generous, our church will be stronger as we all will be responsible for keeping it strong and thriving! We will grow closer to God; our congregations will experience increased spiritual vitality, and greater resources will be unleashed for significant impact.

## ***Festivals and Commemorations***

June in the Lutheran calendar is chock full of days remembering and celebrating the saints. Here are just SOME of them ...

### ***June 1, Justin, Martyr of Rome (165 AD)***

Justin was an apologist, a defender of the Christian faith. He wanted to show Christianity could serve as a bridge between Jewish and Gentile worlds. He also gives us the oldest written description that has been found to describe the Christian liturgy. In this document written around 150 AD, he goes into great detail describing what the early Christians did when they gathered on "the day of the Sun." Said another way, this is the earliest written description of Word and Sacrament in the Christian community. The day of the Sun, writes Justin, "is the first day, on which day God, having transformed darkness and matter, made the world. On the same day God raised Jesus Christ our Savior from the dead."

### ***June 3, the Martyrs of Uganda***

These martyrs were Christian converts who refused the religious demands of King Mwanda of Buganda who attempted to eliminate Christianity within the country's borders. They were killed between 1855 and 1887. The historical kingdom of Buganda is now part of Uganda where about 85% of the population identifies as Christian.

### ***June 3, John XXIII, Bishop of Rome (1963)***

Though he was a courageous leader, little was expected of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli when he became pope in 1958. He was to be a stopgap pope. John XXIII distinguished himself by convening the Second Vatican Council from 1962-1965. Vatican II was a massive reform movement within the Roman Catholic Church that, among other things, changed the liturgy from the Latin Mass to the vernacular and enacted strong ecumenical conversations with other Christians.

### ***June 7, Seattle, Chief of the Duwamish (1866)***

Seattle (Si'ahl) was among the first to greet the first pioneers, who gave the city his name. His descendants, the Duwamish Tribe, are still fighting for federal recognition.

### ***June 24, The Nativity of John the Baptist***

This celebrates the birth of the forerunner to Jesus. Much is heard of John on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of Advent. The prophet and baptizer of Jesus said it well: "he must increase, but I must decrease."

### ***June 25, Presentation of the Augsburg Confession (1530) and Commemoration of Philip Melancthon, Renewer of the Church (1560)***

Melancthon penned both the Augsburg Confession and Apology (explanation) to the Augsburg Confession. The Augsburg Confession or statement of faith, was presented to the emperor. Presented as a unifying document to show how Lutherans were like and unlike Western Catholics and Protestant groups, it was rejected and sadly created schism. Something Luther never wanted.

# WELCOME DANA ROBINSON!!!

On Sunday, June 8, 2025, the Festival of Pentecost, Dr. Dana Robinson will play the Noack organ in our church gallery for the first time as our new Organist/Choirmaster. The Executive Committee is extremely pleased that Dana has agreed to share his talents and love of church music with our congregation. We are very fortunate to have found so qualified a church musician to continue the tradition of excellence in worship liturgies and music.

Dana Robinson received both his Bachelor's and Master of degrees of music from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. He was an Associate Professor of Music (Organ) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for 25 years. He has an extensive background as a church Organist and Choirmaster dating back to 1978. His most recent church position was at Grace Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Champaign, Illinois. His past positions include churches in New England, the Midwest, Germany, and the Netherlands. He has performed nationally and internationally, and is considered by many to be, "one of the finest performers of Johann Sebastian Bach's music in the United States." (Music at 9th & Stewart, Seattle 2019)



How fortunate for us that when he retired from his last professorship in Illinois in December of 2024, he intended to move back to Tacoma and find a local church that had a unique and excellent organ where he could make beautiful music and enhance worship for the congregation. Enter into the picture, First Lutheran Church of West Seattle! And as Pr. Phil Nesvig shared a few Sundays' ago, he will join the ranks of Tacoma church musicians who are neighbors. Phil Nesvig, Thomas Clark (one of our recent substitute organists), and now Dana Robinson, all live in the same neighborhood, and will continue to substitute when needed at FLCWS. Kind of a satellite group of First Lutherans!

We so look forward to what joys will be heard from our organs resonating in our church nave and surrounding us with lush tones that give us glorious sounds, inspiration, and delight as we worship every Sunday at First Lutheran. *Soli deo gloria!!!*

-The Executive Committee

## SAVE THE DATE

### Sunday, September 21

Following the service, you are invited to a luncheon in the Parish Hall, honoring Dean Hard's many years of service as Deacon and Choirmaster at FLCWS and to welcome Dana Robinson as our organist/choirmaster

# PARISH PRAYERS

*Remember in prayer before God those whom He has made your  
brothers and sisters through baptism.*

Pray for members and friends of our congregation that God will bless and strengthen them in these days: Peter and Dana Morrison, Shirley Graham, Nora Vanhala, Don Minter and children, Holly Petersen, and Michael Thompson.

Pray for the homebound that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Mona Ayer, Jeannine Lingle, Robert Schorn, Lou & Lori Landino, CJ Christian, and Melanie Johnson

Pray for our bishops Elizabeth Eaton & Shelley Bryan Wee, our pastor Bryon Hansen, our choirmaster Dean Hard, our incoming organist and choirmaster Dana Robinson, and all who faithfully assist with worship. May they be strengthened in faith, love and the holy office to which they have been called. Pray for our church council: Steve Liang, Matthew Kahn, Peter Douglass, Kathrine Young, Gina Allen, Dale Korsmo, Marianne Petersen, Tyler Schorn, David Juhl, and Steve Jeske, that God will guide and strengthen them in their work.

Pray that God would give us hearts to find joy in service and faithful stewardship. Pray that God would work within us to become a good steward of our time, talents, and finances. Pray to strengthen our commitment to stewardship in our congregation.

Pray for the hungry, ignored, abused, unemployed, addicted, homeless, and unbelievers. Pray God will show mercy to these people, and for all in Christ's church to see and help those who are in distress. Pray for our country and those who lead us, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

Pray for people around the world who suffer from the effects of war, terrorism, natural disasters, disease, poverty, and abuse, especially the people of Ukraine, Israel, the Palestinian people, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, all immigrants and asylum seekers, and all who live in fear.

Pray for our leaders, that they may govern with wisdom, justice, and mercy.

Pray that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Justin, Martyr of Rome (165); John XXII, Bishop of Rome (1963); Seattle, Chief of the Duwamish Confederacy (1866), Barnabas, Apostle; John the Baptist; Philip Melanchthon, renewer of the church (1560); Peter & Paul, Apostles.

God, our refuge and strength, our present help in time of trouble, care for those who tend the needs of others. Strengthen them in body and spirit. Refresh them when weary; console them when anxious; comfort them in grief; and hearten them in discouragement. Be with us all, and give us peace at all times and in every way; through Christ our peace. Amen.

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4105 California Avenue S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98116-4101

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