



# THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE  
(206) 935-6530 [www.flcws.org](http://www.flcws.org) September 2025

## PASTOR'S PAGE

*Giving thanks to God for Dean and Dana*

This month we will give thanks to God for Deacon Emeritus Dean Hard for his many years of faithful service at First Lutheran Church and we will give thanks to God for the arrival of Dana Robinson, our new choirmaster and organist. The celebration for both Dean and Dana will take place on Sunday, September 21st with a special luncheon after worship.

In the year and a half or so that I've been serving as pastor, I have learned much from Deacon Dean Hard. He is a well of deep knowledge about this congregation, its history, and practice. It has been a delight to work with him. He has been most gracious in welcoming me. I continue to be inspired by his faithfulness and commitment to excellence around the liturgy of the church. For Dean, Sunday morning worship is a kind of experience of heaven on earth. More than once he has commented on how important it is for the people of God to enter into an experience that transcends our everyday routines and activities. Thanks to Dean and his diligent work throughout these many years, a sense of mystery or the numinous permeates the liturgy at FLCWS. The very mystery of heaven peeks into Sunday worship.

Our new choirmaster and organist, Dana Robinson enriches this sense of worship. In the short time I've worked with Dana, I join many others who feel they are moved by his music. He has an amazing ability to capture the tone of the liturgical season or day and the scriptures read on a particular Sunday. Dana's music is pleasing to the ears and runs deep down into the soul. Dana is a real gift to our community and it is a joy working with him.

Please attend on September 21st. More information is in this edition of the *Messenger*. It will be a time of gratitude, reminiscence, great joy, and hope as we give thanks for what has been and look forward to what will be.

In the peace of Christ,  
Pastor Hansen

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope everyone's summer has gone well; the time seemed to have flown by. Thank you to all who attended the Mid-Year Meeting on Sunday, July 27th. We have some exciting plans for the fall and want to remind everyone to save the date for the luncheon on Sunday, September 21st. We will be honoring Dean Hard for his many years of service as our Deacon and Choirmaster and officially welcoming Dana Robinson as our new Organist and Choirmaster.

Dean's official retirement from Choirmaster was effective Sunday, June 8th, after serving in this position for 50 years. I first met Dean in 2003 when I joined the choir and congregation. For a cumulative 17 years (minus years away from Seattle and the birth of my second child), I sang and worshiped in the gallery alongside Dean. He always delighted me with his stories and humor. The movements and sways of his conducting during all the choir pieces we performed helped to enhance, emphasize, and evoke the power of the message and praise to God. I recall times when the music was particularly moving, and Dean would react with great affection, either from the gallery or down in the narthex. Dean once described to me that it felt like the music was "cascading down from the gallery like a waterfall." Seeing his reaction always made me feel that I had a deeper purpose in our worship services. I'll never forget the hug I received from Dean when I first returned home after living away from Seattle for a few years—it was a firm embrace followed by tears of joy. Dean is truly a treasure, and I wish him the very best in retirement.

As fall begins, we are excited to announce our new stewardship campaign: ***Growing in Giving***. Our previous process for collecting pledges for the next year was a pledge card distribution. This year, with the Growing in Giving campaign, we are looking to grow stewardship throughout the congregation. We've asked the Church Council to start the process in late August. Their pledges and testimonies will be shared on a visual display starting on Sunday, September 14th. The display will be updated weekly as new pledges are received. The campaign will conclude after three weeks on Sunday, October 5th, and we will have a little extra treat during coffee hour to celebrate!

The Cup of Blessing Dinner will be held on Saturday, October 18th. The dinner benefits the West Seattle Food Bank, which provides a crucial service to our community. In past years, we've had a presentation about the food bank's inner workings, process, and impact. First Lutheran has been a long-standing partner in their mission. I look forward to attending, spending quality time with everyone outside of Sunday worship, and donating to a great cause. I also look forward to receiving the commemorative swag.

May we continue to love our neighbors and serve our community, trusting in God's grace to guide us all.

-Steve Liang, President

## Council Meeting Calendar Dates and links:

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 link: <https://meet.google.com/ffb-rdss-xqm>  
Or dial: (US) +1 502-622-8042 PIN: 222 331 072#

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

**CHOIR REHEARSALS RESUME** on Thursday, September 11 at 7:00 pm. All are welcome. If you are interested in joining Deo Gloria Cantores, please contact Dana Robinson at [dmrobsn@gmail.com](mailto:dmrobsn@gmail.com)

**WEST SEATTLE THRIFTWAY** gives back 1% of sales from receipts turned in to the WS Food Bank! Drop your receipts in the envelope on the Extended Ministry bulletin board outside Room C. Every receipt makes a difference to those in need.

**OUR WEBSITE,** <https://flcws.org> has events, recent homilies, and issues of the Messenger. (The old site's home-page, with archived materials, can be found at: <http://old.flcws.org>)

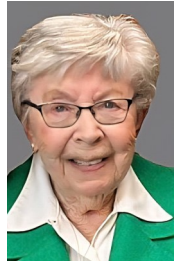
**RIVERTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** is still in need of help with housing the hundreds of immigrants that keep arriving. If you can help, go to: <https://rivertonparkumc.com/donate>.

**FOOD BANK COLLECTION:** The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggested donations for September are soups or other canned or boxed instant or one meal options. 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).

**ADULT FORMATION:** Our adult formation will resume on Sunday, September 28. The class, "*Making Sense Out of Nonsense, and Back Again,*" begins following coffee fellowship in Rooms C & D. We begin this fall with a study of Ecclesiastes led by FLCWS member Jeremy Keizur. Join us as we explore this most unique and interesting book of the Bible.

**A MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE HELD FOR MONA AYER** at First Lutheran Church of West Seattle at 2:00pm on Saturday, September 13, 2025. Throughout her life, Mona was an active and guiding light at First Lutheran Church of West Seattle. Singing in the choir was her first love. She was also very active in the Altar Guild, and many other aspects of church life. She was preceded in death last year by her beloved husband, Bob. Mona loved, and was loved by her Lord, her family, and many friends. A reception in the Parish Hall will follow the service.



# STEWARDSHIP

## *Growing in Giving*

The "Growing In Giving" Stewardship Campaign officially started with the church council on August 28th. The council has been asked to submit their pledges and testimonies about why they give. Beginning on September 14th, a display will be placed in the church lobby to highlight our pledged progress and the testimonies for everyone to see. Our hope is to inspire others to make their stewardship pledge. For those who haven't pledged before, we encourage you to join us in supporting our ministry at the conclusion of the campaign on October 4th.

***Philippians 4:19*** "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus."

As for my own stewardship testimony, I grew up in a Baptist church in south Seattle. The congregation was created to serve the Chinese community in Seattle. My grandparents were devoted followers of Christ. My grandmother was especially well known for cooking Sunday lunches. She could be found cooking on the wok in the church's commercial kitchen, preparing large trays of food for everyone to eat after the service. My father and I would wake up early Sunday morning to retrieve the church vans. We used them to pick up all the elderly throughout south Seattle and Chinatown. My job, at elementary school age, was to jump out of the passenger seat, open the doors, and assist the elderly into the van. My early understanding of stewardship was learned by watching my family's involvement.

***Proverbs 11:25*** "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

As an adult and since attending FLCWS, I've learned more about tithing. In my first year on the church council, I was assigned to write the stewardship article and realized I hadn't truly reflected on what stewardship meant. I've learned that beyond the ideal of a 10% pledge, our financial giving is a fuel for our worship, enabling our community to be enriched with music, scripture, and the gospel. It's a vital part of how we're renewed, refreshed, and rejuvenated by God's Word. This renewal extends to the sense of community we share, from pot-lucks to coffee hours. I enjoy these gatherings and wish we had more of them. Our cheerful giving, as mentioned in **2 Corinthians 9:7**, isn't just a financial act but also a source of joy that we share with one another through fellowship. May we all continue to be cheerful givers in every sense.

**2 Corinthians 9:7** "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

-Steve Liang

The Thrivent logo, featuring the word "thrivent" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "t" is stylized with a red dot above it. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the word.

First Lutheran Church of West Seattle is grateful to be a recipient of Thrivent Choice Dollars Grant Funds. If you are a Thrivent member, you can designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to First Lutheran Church of West Seattle.

# COME ONE COME ALL...

...to a Luncheon after church on September 21, 2025 to celebrate two very special people! We will honor Dean Walter Hard for his many years of service to First Lutheran, and we will welcome Dana Robinson, our new organist/choirmaster, a gift from the angels!!!

The luncheon will consist of a variety of sandwiches, salads, and desserts. We will have a short program highlighting the contributions of both Dean and Dana. Mostly it's about getting together as a church family, rejoicing and celebrating these two very special people, and having time to share a meal and visit with each other.

Myself and Sonja Clemente will be the organizers and hosts of this event. We would love for those who feel they can, to make salads and desserts to share at this event. I know there are many wonderful cooks in our

congregation. Our hope is that you will be willing to share your talents and contribute your favorite salad or dessert. Try to be mindful that some members are gluten free or have food allergies to things like onions and nuts. So keep that in mind when you are deciding what to make.

In order to avoid overlap and duplication please let me know what you will be bringing. Email me at [larrainelk@gmail.com](mailto:larrainelk@gmail.com) or call/text me at 206-550-8009. Also if you are interested in helping setting up, serving at the luncheon, or helping clean up, let me know. Your assistance will definitely be appreciated. Just give me an email or call/text.

Looking forward to enjoying this celebration of Dean and Dana for their talents and commitment to the work of the church.

-Lorraine King

## 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.



## GROWING IN GIVING

The annual Stewardship Pledge Drive begins on Holy Cross Day, September 14th. During this time members of the congregation will be asked to submit written answers to the question, "Why do you give?" These will be posted throughout three weeks on a large canvas in the narthex that will also update us on how many pledges are received. The "*Growing in Giving*" campaign will conclude on Sunday, October 5th with a celebratory coffee fellowship after worship. The emphasis this year is on our need to grow in our giving as a spiritual or faith practice.

-Pastor Bryon Hansen

# ✠ 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, Jeanine Lingle, Robert Schorn, CJ Christian, and Melanie Johnson

Pray for newly elected Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry and give thanks for the leadership and ministry of Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, pray also for our pastor Bryon Hansen, our retiring 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 in gratitude for the lives of Mona Ayer and Pastor Neil Snider. Pray for those who grieve, particularly the Ayer and Snider families.

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, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

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

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 that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, renewer of the church (1872); Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen (1179); Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society (1961); Nelson W. Trout, renewer of the church (1996) St. Matthew, Apostle; Michael & All Angels.

*Govern everything by your wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may be always serving you in the way you will and not as I choose. Let me die to myself so that I may serve you; let me live to you who are life itself.*

-Theresa of Avila, 1515-1582





Yehiel Curry was elected July 30 at the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to serve a six-year term as presiding bishop of the ELCA. Additionally, he is the first Black presiding bishop of the ELCA.

Speaking to the assembly after his election, Curry reflected on his membership at Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale, Ill., where he eventually became a lay mission developer. During that time he participated in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program, which prepares individuals for ordained ministry in the ELCA, with a focus on emerging ministry contexts like ethnic-specific, multicultural, and both rural and urban settings. He spoke to the assembly about his initial hesitation in accepting that first ministry role:

“I’m what a return on your investment looks like,” he said. “Perhaps I’m out there in one of you. I never saw myself as good enough, so for two years, I said no. I finally said yes. When I said yes, your support, this church’s support, of that ministry meant everything. So if you want to know what your benevolence dollars look like, it looks like me. And I want to say thank you. Thank you for your investment.”

Curry has served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod since 2019. He previously served as mission developer (2009-2012) and pastor (2012-2019) of Shekinah.

He received a Bachelor of Arts from Lewis University in Romeoville, Ill., in 1995 and a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) in 2013. LSTC is one of seven ELCA seminaries.



*A community fundraiser for West Seattle Food Bank  
Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> 2025*

## Cup of Blessings Dinner

**Saturday, October 18, 2024  
5pm – 7:30 PM**

This year’s Fundraising Dinner is on October 18th, *benefitting the West Seattle Food Bank.*

***Our theme will be West Seattle Trivia.***

We will incorporate West Seattle Trivia into the dinner program, so brush up on your West Seattle Trivia!

Again this year, we are selling tickets. They are \$10 each, which helps us get a head count for the event. And, all ticket proceeds will be donated to the West Seattle Food Bank.

We plan to provide:

- Opportunity to do good works. (As James 2:14-26 says, “Faith without works is dead.”)
- Time for fellowship
- Fun playing the game “West Seattle Trivia”
- Catered Dinner from Ivar’s!
- Guest speaker from the West Seattle Foodbank
- Dessert Dash
- Raffle
- A good time for everyone!

# HOLY CROSS, SEPTEMBER 14

These Sundays after Pentecost are also known as the “long green and growing season.” This year, the Gospel is from St. Luke and our Sunday readings contain many of Jesus’ teachings, miracles, and parables. While a light shines upon the mystery of Christ in the Christmas and Easter cycles, these Sundays in ordinary time focus on Jesus’ call to follow him in daily discipleship. However, when a festival falls on or around a particular Sunday, that festival may take precedence on that Sunday. This is what happens every year, for example, in mid-August with the feast of Mary, Mother of our Lord. This month, Holy Cross Day, September 14, falls on a Sunday.

## COMMUNION IN THE CHAPEL

This month we begin another Sunday service at 8:00 a.m. each Sunday. “Communion in the Chapel” begins on September 21<sup>st</sup>. This service is simple and without music. This new service is new to many but a recovery of an old practice to many others. For many years before the COVID epidemic a service like this was held. Following the older practice, the service will take place every Sunday except on festivals. On Festival Sundays such as Reformation, All Saints or Easter, the chapel community is invited to join the rest of the church congregation for worship at 10:30 a.m. in the main sanctuary.



According to legend the Empress Helena was involved in an excavation when she discovered the true cross of Christ. This is the primary narrative around the origin of this festival. Another legend says that the cross was constructed from the wood of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. In the fourth century, after Emperor Constantine outlawed crucifixions, Christians began to use the cross as a source of their identity. This festival of the Holy Cross praises God for God’s surprising wisdom revealed in the cross. An instrument of torture has become a flowering tree.

## DEATH OF NEAL SNIDER

Reverend Neal Snider died in early August. The memorial service for Pastor Snider was held on August 15 at Mt. Cross Lutheran Church in Tacoma. He served as Interim Pastor here at FLCWS from May through November, 2023. We give thanks for his many years of sharing the Gospel. Cards of care to his wife, Judy and family may be sent to: Judy Snider, 1515 Dock Street #706, Tacoma, WA 98402. “Rest eternal grant him, O Lord, and light perpetual shine upon him.”



## ADULT FORMATION RESUMES!

Our adult formation will resume on Sunday, September 28. The class, “*Making Sense Out of Nonsense, and Back Again,*” begins following coffee fellowship in Rooms C & D. We begin this fall with a study of Ecclesiastes led by FLCWS member Jeremy Keizur. Join us as we explore this most unique and interesting book of the Bible.



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



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September 2025



## Growing in Giving

Annual Stewardship Pledge Drive  
Begins September 14