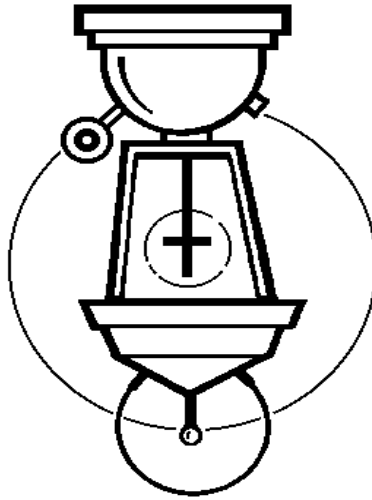


September 2026



First Lutheran Church
109 West Third Avenue
Warren, PA 16365

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Permit No. 17

CARRY YOUR BOOKS?

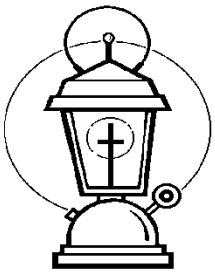
A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

- 1 PETER 5:7 NIV

"Welcome to First Lutheran Church! All are accepted and affirmed just as we are, with all our differences and gifts – unique children of God. No matter your race, ethnicity, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, social or economic status, we have a place for you. As part of the whole complex, colorful spectrum of God's creation in all its diversity we are all one in Christ!"



Hello,
church

September 2026 Lantern “FRIENDS LOVING CHRIST. FRIENDS LOVING COMMUNITY”

First Lutheran Church
109 West Third Avenue
814-723-6450

Check us out on Facebook and at flcwarren.com



family:

FROM THE PASTOR

Wow, what a renewal (so far 😊)! As you all know, on June 6th Kari and I began our clergy renewal trip. We started off on the west coast to visit with Kari's sisters and their husbands. We met them in San Francisco and just one highlight was the morning we rode bikes across the Golden Gate Bridge (thanks, Dave Campbell, for the suggestion). What

was neat about this was that we rode over the bridge in the fog (which was really cool). While on the far side of the bridge, we could see the fog roll in from the Pacific over hills surrounding the San Francisco Bay. We could actually see the fog moving in – roll after roll. It reminded me of the relentless, unstoppable love God has for each of us – time after time after time. The only difference between the fog and God's love is that fog dissipates as it gets warmer. God's love never does no matter the temperature!

This month is filled with new beginnings as we look forward to the elevator project being finalized and all of our programs kicking off – choir, handbells, TAP, workshop, Senior Fellowship and more. This is your opportunity to get involved in God's work through your hands. This partnership between God and us gives us the opportunity to share in bringing God's realm to this very human, very messy realm. I hope you will find a niche or two that syncs your time and talents with our ministries and outreach.

God's blessings to you and yours and I'll see you in church (in October 😊)!

Shalom,
Pastor Jeff

Songs of Renewal

*In morning's light, the songs arise anew,
With whispers soft, the air begins to sing,
Each note a gentle promise of the day,
As petals bloom, their colors vibrant, bright,
Hope dances lightly on the breeze of change,
Inviting hearts to dream of what could be.
The sky adorns itself in hues of gold,
While shadows fade in warmth of sunlit rays,
The earth reclaims its life from winter's grasp,
In every corner, life begins to sway,
Songs of new beginnings fill the air,
A symphony where dreams and hopes unite.
As rivers flow with whispers of the past,
We find ourselves transformed, reborn, renewed,
Embracing challenges like open arms,
The heartache fades, replaced with promise bright,
To dance and sing in unity of joy,
As songs of new beginnings fill the air.*

-Author Unknown





WHERE DOES MY OFFERING GO?

Glad you asked! First Lutheran is committed to being fiscally responsible with the gifts entrusted to it. We support the local area by having a full-time pastor involved in the community (not as common as you might think), sponsoring ministries like TAP and Luther's Locker, offering God's love through Produce Express, Trunk 'n' Treat, The Warren Area Refugee Resettlement Network, the Sharing Place, Holiday meals, the quilting workshop and fund-raiser dinners (just to name a few). We also have many local organizations using our building for meetings, workshops and classes. We support our Synod through mission support which, when combined with other congregations in NWPA, helps fund our synod office and its mission, along with various service organizations such as Bethesda Lutheran Services, Union Seminary, Thiel College, Camp Lutherlyn, the Lutheran Home in Kane and Glade Run Lutheran Services. And ½ of the mission support we send to the synod is passed on to the national church (ELCA) which helps plant churches, train missionaries and church leaders, work for justice on a national scale and provides an international presence for the vulnerable and displaced around the world. There's so much more, but know that your offering has far-reaching effects!

HOW CAN I GIVE?

There are several ways you can give to the mission of First Lutheran:

- Write a check each week/month. This is the most popular preference among our church family.
- Our GivePlus program is designed for quick and easy options either by a phone app or going to our church's website.
- The Simply Giving preference can be set up very easily, too.
- You can also set up an auto deduction from your checking/savings account and designate the amount and the date of withdrawal. The bank automatically sends a check to the church.
- There is also an IRA distribution option. Individuals aged 70 ½ or over can direct a qualified charitable distribution from an IRA or Roth IRA directly to the church. The distribution can satisfy your required minimum distribution amount, and is limited to \$100,000 per taxpayer, per year. This is a valuable tax-saving advantage, since this is a tax-free treatment for a qualified charitable distribution that is equivalent to an immediate 100% deduction without regard to the usual limitations for charitable contribution deductions. Another advantage is often retirement plan assets are a significant portion of a decedent's estate. These assets do not receive a step-up in basis at death and are subject to income tax when received by the recipient of the funds. Providing a qualified charitable distribution reduces your estate and saves estate, gift and income taxes. You should discuss with your tax adviser.



Our treasurer, Don Reed, our Financial Secretary, Lori Nowacki, will be happy to walk you through any of these processes.



As always, if you have any questions regarding the mission of First Lutheran church, please feel free to contact Pastor Jeff or any member of council. And thank you for all you do to share God's love with others!

A Prayer for Joy and Laughter

*Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
Give me the wit to see a joke
To get some humor out of life,
And pass it on to other folk.*

—Anonymous

BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER





RESERVE THE DATE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH!

Join us at First Lutheran church as we celebrate World Communion Sunday with our brothers and sisters from First Presbyterian at both the 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. services. Pastor Tara will be delivering the Good Word for the day and will be pastor Jeff's first Sunday back – what a great way to celebrate!

KITCHEN/NIWEOEHNER HALL CLEANING

The elevator project is almost done and the dust has settled – literally! In preparation to resume our “normal” schedule, we need to do a deep clean in both the kitchen and Niewoehner Hall. This is going to be a pretty involved undertaking – dishes will need washed, cupboards will need wiped out, appliances will need cleaned, etc. Needless to say, the more hands we have, the easier the job will be. The Kitchen Committee will be leading the effort and there will be things that everyone can help with. We will be having work bees on Friday, October 2nd from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm and on Saturday, October 3rd from 9:00 until we have completed everything on the cleaning checklist. There will be a sign-up sheet for the different work bees in the narthex. Please join us if you are able. Thank you for your help!



God's work. Our hands.



Adopt-a-Highway/Playground Clean-Up Sept 12th (rain date Sept 19th)

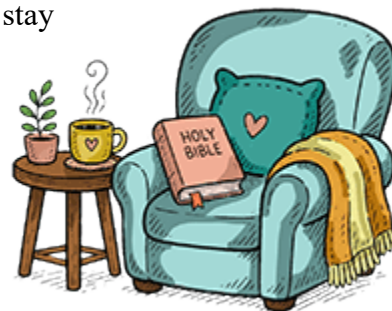
Meet in the parking lot at 10:00. Donuts and juice provided before we head out. Let's join our Brothers and Sisters of the ELCA during this time to celebrate "God's work our hands" Sign up in the Narthex or call Ralph Farone 814-313-1393

REST FOR THE SOUL

Studies show many Americans don't get enough sleep, and the effects can take a toll on both body and mind. Whether it's a packed schedule or restless nights, a lack of rest makes it harder to think clearly, stay focused and care for our overall well-being. Over time, that constant fatigue begins to wear us down.

Our spiritual lives follow a similar rhythm. When we rush from one task to the next without pausing to spend time with God, we can feel just as drained. We need consistent, quiet moments with Him to stay grounded, encouraged and strong in our faith.

Even Jesus made space for this kind of rest. Luke 5:16 tells us that He often withdrew to quiet places to pray. If He needed that time with the Father, how much more do we? When we step away from the noise and listen for God's voice, we find the renewal our souls have



FRIDAY NIGHT OUR- SEPTEMBER 11

Friday Night Out will be September 11th at the Peppermill. Note the time change this month. We will meet at 6:45PM, and order off the menu. Sign up in the narthex. We hope you can join us.

CHOIR- SEPTEMBER 2

Do you enjoy singing? If so, you are cordially invited to attend a rehearsal and see what singing in the choir is all about. Being able to read music is not a requirement. Wednesday choir rehearsals will resume on September 2, from 7 to 8:30 PM.

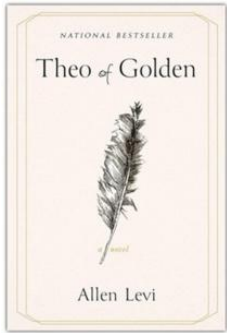


WALKING TOUR

Another session of our “Culture Classes,” a historical walking tour of downtown Warren, will be held Tuesday, September 1 at 6:30 p.m. We’ll gather in front of the Warren Public Library. Leader of the tour will be historian Dave Winans. We’ll stroll downtown streets and surrounding neighborhoods and learn about the development of the city, the people who built the buildings and homes, and architectural styles. It’s a leisurely walk on flat sidewalks and will take about a little over an hour.



CLERGY RENEWAL SERIES EVENT- SEPTEMBER 15TH AT 6:30 PM.



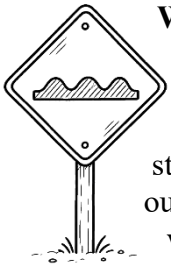
Join a discussion of the international best-selling book, *Theo of Golden*, by Allen Levi. Copies of the book were purchased through a Thrivent Action grant and are available for participants to borrow. They are located on a table in the narthex. Check one out and don’t forget to return it so that others may read it, too.

Theo of Golden is the endearing story of a curious old man who quietly moves into a southern city and, for reasons unknown to anyone but himself, undertakes a campaign of anonymous generosity. Theo’s love for people, combined with his fondness for books, art, birds, and story, unite in a colorful expression of outreach and affection. The old man, no stranger to sadness and loss, quickly becomes a welcome presence in the community but his new friends and neighbors wonder, who is Theo? And why is he here?

WARREN’S ITALIAN HERITAGE

Our next Culture Class will be on **Tuesday, September 29, 2026 at 6:30pm** in Niewoehner Hall. **Josie Gerardi** will be our featured speaker. She and her family grew up in the West End of Warren, home of many Italian immigrants. She is well-known as a former home economics teacher, Penn State Master Gardener, former vendor at the Farmers’ Market (biscotti were her specialty), member of the Warren City Street Landscaping Committee, plus many more local committee and projects. Please join us as she shares her stories of Warren’s Italian heritage. There will be some tasty morsels to sample, too!

Sent from my iPad



WHEN THE ROAD GETS ROUGH- It had been a long trip home, and the weary traveler still had miles to go. So when a sign appeared reading, “Rough Road Ahead — 4 miles,” he braced himself.

Rough was an understatement. The lanes narrowed, the shoulder disappeared, and traffic slowed to a crawl. Drivers carefully weaved around potholes and construction equipment, inching forward one stretch at a time. But just as the sign promised, after four difficult miles, the road opened up and smoothed out again. Jesus offers a similar kind of clarity about life. In John 16:33 (NIV), He says, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Notice He doesn’t say we might face trouble. It is part of the journey. There will be stretches that feel slow, uncertain and hard.

Notice that Jesus didn’t say we “might” have trouble. Sooner or later, problems will come. The road will get rough. But Jesus has already defeated everything the world can throw our way. We just have to keep moving, fueled by hope. The promise is just as certain as the warning sign. The rough road does not last forever, and it does not have the final say. Christ has already gone before us, and smoother ground is ahead.



ROAD RALLY- OCTOBER 11

A “Culture Class,” one that mirrors Pastor’s desire to explore beautiful, interesting places will be held Sunday, October 11. Yup, it’s another First Lutheran Road Rally! It will start at 2:32pm in the Church parking lot and take you on a scenic, mysterious ride through our towns and countryside. Get your team together and your gas tank full. Donations (\$20 per car, maybe?) will benefit Court Appointed Special

Advocates (CASA) and the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC), organizations that help kids and families navigate child abuse and other issues in the judicial system. See Pastor or Gary Lester with questions. Watch the bulletin and sign-up area for more information.

VOLUNTEERS OPPORTUNITIES

We are currently looking for volunteers in the office. Would you like to serve your church staff by helping in the office. We are currently looking for people who would be willing to help Lori count on Monday mornings and people to cover phones and the desk when Jessica is out of the office. Contact the office to learn more. (814) 723-6450.



LATE SERVICE MOVES BACK TO 11AM

Late service will return to 11AM on September 13.

OUR MIND'S STOREHOUSE

Benjamin Weir, a missionary in the Middle East, was taken captive by terrorists and held in solitary confinement. Blindfolded and cut off from the outside world, he endured deep isolation with no one to speak to and no sense of where he was.

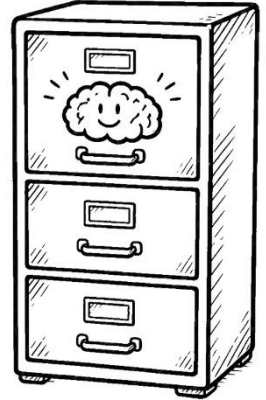
What could he do? In many ways, all he had was a beating heart and a mind still free to think.

To endure the long days, he began drawing from what was stored within him. After his release, he reflected, "I called up my memory bank, things that were stored in my mind."

He recalled Scripture passages he had learned years before. He remembered lines from William Shakespeare, the words of hymns and songs, and the faces of those he loved. He reflected on his work, his family and the steady grace of God throughout his life.

Looking back, he said, "Whatever is in your mind is what you have to draw on."

That truth lingers. What we place in our minds today shapes what we will lean on tomorrow. It invites a simple but important question: What are we storing away? May we fill our thoughts with what is true, pure and life-giving, with the story of Christ and the hope of His saving grace.



SUNDAY'S COOL WILL START BACK UP SUNDAY, SEPT. 13TH!! AT 9:25A.M!!



As part of our church family's baptismal promise to you and your children to help them grow in their faith and learn more deeply how much God loves them, we are encouraging you to take advantage of Sunday's Cool.

We have amazing people that have dedicated time to plan lessons, teach, and share faith with our kids. Without them we couldn't have a great Sunday's Cool! We don't want you and the kids to miss out. All the children from 4 years old - up to 12th grade are welcome and will meet in the Narthex at 9:25a.m. We are using the curriculum "Whirl" this year. We look forward to seeing your children at Sunday's Cool!!!

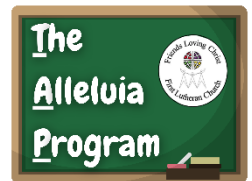
ADULT SUNDAY WILL ALSO START ON SEPT. 13TH IN NIEWOEHNER HALL

T.A.P. Starts back-up on Wednesday, October 7th, here at FLC!

Kindergarteners to seniors! Packets will be sent out in a couple weeks.

But for T.A.P. to be successful, we need volunteers to help with: Sign-in kids, snack Helpers, cooks, teachers, table parents, and cleaner uppers.

Please call Cheri @ 814-723-6450 or 814-688-0640!



LOSERS' YOUTH SUNDAY GROUP WILL BE STARTED BACK UP ON SEPTEMBER 20TH.



Any 6th through 12th Graders, are welcome to come hang out with friends, play games, and read a devotion and learn about God's Love for us and have discussions. But wait, once a month we order pizza and have a tournament of some kind of game and the chance to win a \$5 gift card. Bring friends! We meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 6:00-7:30pm. See you on the 20th.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPERS NEEDED

Do you like working with kids? Whether it is as a helper, substitute teacher, or regular teacher, there are opportunities where you can serve! Please contact Cheri Kellogg at 814-688-0640 or by emailing her at christianed@flcwarren.com.



AUGUST SUNDAY SCRIPTURE SCHEDULE

Worship at 8:00 am and 10:00/11:00 am.

I would encourage you to open your bible and read the upcoming week's scripture passages on Wednesday in one sitting. Let them soak into your spirit and reflect on them throughout the week. Look to see what the threads are that connect the readings together. What themes do you see? . – PJ

September 6, 2026

[Ezekiel 33:7-11](#) - *The prophet's responsibility to warn the people*

[Psalms 119:33-40](#) - *I desire the path of your commandments. (Ps. 119:35)*

[Romans 13:8-14](#) - *Live honorably as in the day*

[Matthew 18:15-20](#) - *Reconciliation in the community of faith*

September 13, 2026

[Genesis 50:15-21](#) - *Joseph reconciles with his brothers*

[Psalms 103:1-7](#) [8-13](#) - *Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)*

[Romans 14:1-12](#) - *Accepting diversity in the community of faith*

[Matthew 18:21-35](#) - *A parable of forgiveness in the community of faith*

September 20, 2026

[Jonah 3:10—4:11](#) - *God's concern for the city of Nineveh*

[Psalms 145:1-8](#) - *The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Ps. 145:8)*

[Philippians 1:21-30](#) - *Standing firm in the gospel*

[Matthew 20:1-16](#) - *The parable of the vineyard workers*

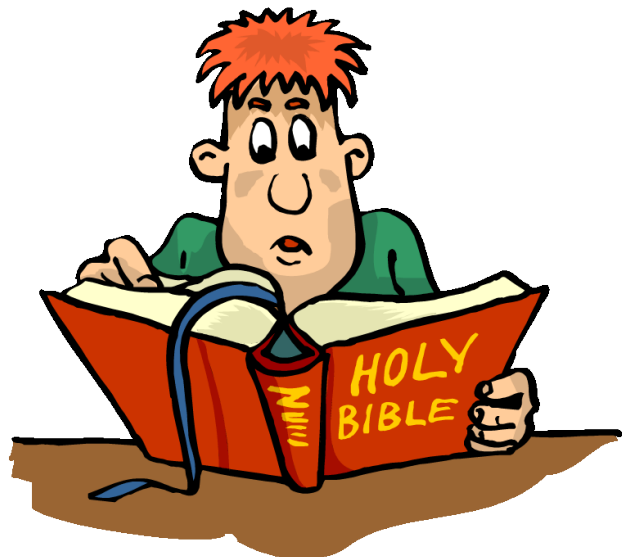
September 27, 2026

[Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32](#) - *The fairness of God's way*

[Psalms 25:1-9](#) - *Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)*

[Philippians 2:1-13](#) - *Christ humbled to the point of death on a cross*

[Matthew 21:23-32](#) - *A parable of doing God's will*



SERVING SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Please be sure to note when you are scheduled to serve this month.

CANTORS

8:00AM

10:00/11:00AM

September 6
September 13
September 20
September 27

John Hyde
Carolyn Worley
Troy Dinga
Troy Dinga

ASSISTING MINISTERS

8:00AM

10:00/11:00AM

September 6
September 13
September 20
September 27

Kris Whitacker
John Kersey
Don Reed
Lori Nowacki

Cathy Soutwell
Susan Stout
Donna Trubic
Denise Whipp

ACOLYTES

8:00AM

10:00/11:00AM

September 6
September 13
September 20
September 27

Jen Kersey
Jen Kersey
Jen Kersey
Jen Kersey

Justin Klenowski
Reagan Moore
Ryan Klenowski
Charles Bielawski

USHERS

8:00AM

10:00/11:00AM

TBA

*Jim Moore
Al Dennis
Jeff Granger
Ed Carr
Bob Gregersen
Joe Colosimo

ALTAR GUILD

8:00AM

10:00/11:00AM

Gloria Genberg
Carol Johnson

Lori Howard
Brenda Hunter
Janabeth Dinga

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

September 6
September 13
September 20
September 27

Cheri Kellogg
Cynthia Klenowski
Jessica Long
Adri Hunt

DIGITAL DEACONS

September 6
September 13
September 20
September 27

Denise Whipp
Heidi Colosimo
Keith Hedges
Penny Lester

COUNTERS

September 6
September 13
September 20
September 27

Lyn McDaniel and Addy Landrio
Addy Landrio and Mary Worley
Mary Worley and Jane Beardsley
Jane Beardsley and Barb Boger



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

9/1	Ciara Whipp	9/15	Bill & Karen Caldwell (53)
9/2	Lynn Williams	9/16	Avery Carr
9/3	Gary Landrio		Sorren Check
9/4	Butch & Cathy Southwell (39)		Mary McNett
	Cole Enos	9/17	Cheri Kellogg
9/5	Melody & Thomas Traub (34)	9/18	Betty Knupp
9/6	Barry Keller		Kristina Mirtti
9/7	Colleen Witmer	9/19	Jim & Pamela Ciprich (11)
9/9	Kate Reed		Mike & Sandy Wachter (56)
9/10	Andy Gausman	9/20	Ken Rowland
	Pamela Ciprich	9/23	Becky Holt
9/11	Jack Jones	9/24	Darren Trubic
	Haley Justice		Kelly Wolfe
	Scott & Tammy Koerselman (27)	9/25	Tataboline Enos
9/13	Shawn Ristau	9/26	Heidi Colosimo
	Maddison Bussoletti	9/27	Pete Carlson
	Anna Bielawski		Kim Moore
9/14	Tammy Koerselman		Lou Rich
	Beverly Moore		Jake Trubic
	Lillian Mirtti		Robert & Joan Reist (46)
	Andy & Jane Beardsley (41)	9/28	Lori Eaton
			Bill Mickle
			Erin Williams

- Be Late For Something Day, *September 5, 2026*
- Labor Day, *September 7, 2026*
- Star Trek Day, *September 8, 2026*
- National Teddy Bear Day, *September 9, 2026*
- Patriot Day, *September 11, 2026*
- National Grandparents Day, *September 13, 2026*
- Hispanic Heritage Month, *September 15-October 15, 2026*
- First Day of Autumn, *September 22, 2026*
- Hobbit Day, *September 22, 2026*
- Ask Stupid Question Day, *September 28, 2026*



Special Dates to Remember



LANTERN INFO DUE DATE- SEPTEMBER 12

If you have any information for the October Lantern, please have it to the office by September 12. You can email it to Jess at office@flcwarren.com or drop it by the office any time Monday through Friday between 9AM and Noon or 1PM and 4PM.

LANTERN ASSEMBLY- SEPTEMBER 28- 10AM

Join us for a time of fun, fellowship, and service as we assemble the October Lantern. All are welcome!

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP NEWS



Fall is coming quickly & Senior Fellowship is right around the corner! For several reasons, we will begin a little differently this year. Our first Sr. Fellowship - which is Tuesday, September 8th - will be worship only. We will return to worship service/luncheons on Tuesday, October 13, 2026. We will have a team calling a week beforehand, to remind congregation members and friends about the date. The cooks appreciate your responses, as it helps to plan for the correct number of meals. If you weren't on a list last year & would like to be on one this year, please notify Jess in the church office & we will make sure that you get a call! We look forward to seeing you on October 13th!

FLC wants to hear your story!

As a part of our Clergy Renewal Program we want to chronicle the faith journey of our congregation. The youth of our church will be interviewing the adults about their faith journey for a video about our church family. There is a sign up in the narthex for time slots for interviewer and interviewees on **September 19 from 10AM to 1PM** at First Lutheran Church. It should only take about 20 minutes of your time. **If these times and locations do not work for you, please contact Cheri to schedule another time and location.** You can call her at 814-688-0640 or by emailing her at christianed@flcwarren.com.



PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE FOR PATRIOTS DAY



O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter through every storm, and our eternal home:

We come before You remembering the lives lost on September 11, 2001. Though many years have passed, the sorrow of that day still lingers in the hearts of families, friends and a grieving nation.

Lord, comfort those who continue to carry loss. Grant peace to the brokenhearted, strength to the weary and light to those walking through seasons of grief. Let Your presence bring hope where memories still ache.

Teach us to care for one another with compassion and courage. Help us to be a people who offer kindness to the hurting, encouragement to the discouraged and

justice to those who suffer. Stir our hearts to live with mercy, humility and love for our neighbors.

Forgive us when our words are greater than our actions. May we strive each day to reflect the values of faith, unity and grace that honor You and strengthen our communities.

Thank You, Lord, for Your constant care and unfailing mercy. Even in tragedy, You remain our refuge and our hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRODUCE EXPRESS – September 17, 2026

Our next Produce Express distribution will be on September 17, 2026. We are always looking for volunteers to fill carts, run carts, load cars, and more. Contact Colleen Witmer for more information.

Our August distribution turned out to be a really nice day – the rain ended before we got started and the sun came out by the time we were done! We served 90 Families, ten of which were new to the program. That turns out to be roughly 194 individuals (42 children, 110 adults, 42 seniors). Thank you for your continued support of this ministry.

Produce Express



September 2026

52 Ways to Care for Creation

Week 37: September 6- 12

Season of Creation

September begins the "Season of Creation." Celebrate in your church community! Find theological reflections and liturgical resources at creationjustice.org/seasonofcreation.

Week 39: Sept. 20- 26

Ride The Bus

Advocate for public transportation in your town. Carpooling, sharing rides, and riding the bus all help to cut down on carbon emissions. With the weather starting to cool down, it's the perfect time to take advantage of temperature-- spend more time outside walking and biking, slowing down when you can in a season that tends to be quite busy.

Week 38: September 13-19

Reflect on the Changing Foliage

As the leaves start to change colors, take time to get to know the trees and plants around you. Many people tend to take a drive/trip somewhere to see all the colors changing, however we invite you to instead get to know the trees that give off their vibrant colors in your own backyard.

Week 40: September 27- Oct. 3

Rest and Reflect

"The sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, the wind in the trees is my prayer, for God is all in all." - Thomas Merton



Find more theological & educational resources at creationjustice.org/blog

CreationJustice.org



@CreationJustice