The First Edition

Summer 2026

This Issue:

Notes from Our Pastors
Pages 2-3

Vacation Bible School
Page 4

Prime-Timers
Page 5

Love in Outreach Ministry
Page 5

Summer Reading
Page 6

Council Highlights
Page 7

Summer Calendar
Page 8

Congratulations Confirmands!

Congratulations to our eight 9th grade students who affirmed their baptism during worship on Sunday, May 17. Owen Albers, Jackson Althoff, Ben Flanders, Charlie Gappa, Eleanor Montgomery, Kinzley Rezac, Ashton Shattuck, and Mason Sjoblom have completed confirmation class and written faith statements naming what they believe. Posters highlighting the students and their faith journeys were displayed in the Fellowship Hall after the service. Thank you to the families, mentors and volunteers for helping them reach this milestone.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, confirmation is a pastoral and educational ministry, often called Affirmation of Baptism, where young baptized Lutherans publicly affirm the promises made on their behalf at baptism. It involves study of the Lutheran confessions, scripture, conversations around faith, and active service.

First English Lutheran Church
Cannon Falls

511 W Belle St Cannon Falls MN 55009
507-263-3042 www.firstenglishchurch.com

Church Office

507-263-3042
Office Hours: M-F, 9 am - 3:30 pm
E-Mail: info@firstenglishchurch.com
Website: www.firstenglishchurch.com

Pastor: Luke Hollander
507-218-1311
lukeh@firstenglishchurch.com

Associate Pastor: Alison Bondy
507-263-3042
alisonb@firstenglishchurch.com

Treasurer: Phyllis Althoff
phyllisalthoff@gmail.com

Fin. Sec./Admin. Asst.: Kathy Ehlers
507-263-3042
kathye@firstenglishchurch.com

Director of Music: Cam Moll

Choir Director: Jill Serres
507-649-0851
jserres@mac.com

Bell Choir Director: Jane Peterson
507-263-4148
janerichard@mchsi.com

Church Council

President: Austin Noble
austin.noblecf@gmail.com

Vice-President: Bill Peterson
bipet001@gmail.com

Secretary: Diane Johnson
dcjohnson1000@att.net

Phyllis Althoff
Kelly Brintnall Miller
Julie Gergen
Scott Johnson
John Peterson
Jami Reinhardt
Amanda Thompson
Carna Visagie
Jared Woodward

Visit our Website for Updates!

www.firstenglishchurch.com

Watch for our next newsletter issue in September 2026

Pastor Luke

lukeh@firstenglishchurch.com
507.218.1311

Note from the Pastor

Grace to you and peace,

Summer can feel like a down time in the church calendar. People go on vacation or are spending time at cabins, and programming takes a pause while staff begin to prepare for the next program year. But this doesn't mean ministry stops. In fact, summer can serve as a sabbath for our community. Sabbath, written into the creation story, is the counter cultural idea of rest. Yes, rest is important in our culture that seems to reward constant hustle.

By stepping away from emails, chores, and the constant pressure to produce, you give your brain a chance to drop out of fight-or-flight mode. Scientifically, it lowers cortisol levels, reduces anxiety, and helps prevent burnout. When we slow down and eliminate the distraction of work and screens, we create space for relationship, for more meaningful connection. Sabbath is traditionally centered around shared meals, unhurried conversations, playing games, and going for walks with family, friends, and community members.

Sabbath can also create a healthier relationship with time, offer physical rest and longevity, cultivate gratitude and joy, and offer even more gifts that can benefit not just us as individuals, but our community. So, may you find sabbath this summer and may it be an opportunity for spiritual renewal in some of the ways listed.

I hope by slowing down our community can find ways to connect and recover whether inside or outside the church this summer. Pastor Alison and I will facilitate a few opportunities for this – different summer meet ups – but we hope you will naturally do this as well. If you need our help facilitating something like a meet up at a park or at the coffee shop, let us know and we will spread the word.

To get us started here are some scheduled events:

Family Meet Ups:

Wednesday, June 10 – Join Pastor Luke and his kiddos at Hannah's Bend Park at 12:30pm. Bring a lunch or your frisbees for frisbee golf or just plan on hanging out by the playground.

Saturday, July 11 – Meet Pastor Luke at Cannon Belles at 10am. We can grab a coffee or an ice cream, then head on a walk or make a plan to go to a park depending on who shows up.

Youth Meet Ups:

Wednesday, June 10 – Middle and High School Youth are welcome to join Pastor Luke at the church at 7pm for lawn games and a bonfire (s'mores will be provided).

Sunday, July 19 – Middle and High School Youth are encouraged to come to worship at 9am, then join Pastor Luke after worship. We will walk downtown to grab a coffee or breakfast and depending on who shows up may find a fun activity to do.

Continued on next page...

Note for First English Youth: Please watch your emails as Pastor Luke will be sending out dates to try and schedule a couple of larger activities this summer.

Cannon Belles Meet Ups: See the note from Pastor Alison in this newsletter to learn more about these.

THANK YOU, TEACHERS!

One of the greatest things we can do is simply show up for people. No one does this better than our Sunday School teachers and Confirmation guides.

Week after week, you have stepped into our classrooms and small groups, bringing your energy, your faith, and your hearts. In a world full of digital distractions and frantic schedules, you offered our young people something incredibly rare: your undivided attention and a safe place to grow.

Because you showed up, lives were impacted. Because you listened, our students learned that their questions matter. Through the crafts, the open conversations about God, the chaotic games, and the quiet moments of prayer, you didn't just teach the gospel—you lived it out right in front of them. You became a tangible reminder of God's constant presence and unconditional love.

Thank you, thank you!

Pastor Luke

Pastor Alison

alisonb@firstenglishchurch.com

Note from the Pastor

Good day to all of you!

I hope things are beginning to wind down for you as we will soon enter a season of vacations and family fun. I thought it might be enjoyable to meet folks outside of the church building this summer, so beginning on Tuesday, June 2, I (Pr. Alison) will be at Cannon Belles on Tuesday afternoons in **June** and **August** from **2:00 – 3:30 pm** for anyone who would like to stop by and chat or those who may need prayers. I invite you to come and get to know me a little better as well as for me to have some good conversations with you! Here is my schedule, including one September date…

Dates I will be there…(except for emergencies of course):

June 2	August 4
June 9	August 18
June 23	August 25
June 30	and September 1

Hope to see you there at least once if not more than once! I look forward to our conversations and the opportunity to get to know you a bit better.

Thank you.

Pastor Alison

Women of FELC Gathering and Bible Study

The Women's Group Bible Study will meet on **Tuesday, June 9 at 10 am** in the Family Room. This group will *not* meet in July. In August, there will be a potluck picnic (location TBN).

We've been studying Jesus as The Bread, The Light, The Vine, The Good Shepherd, and The Resurrection & the Life. We have had wonderful conversations about these descriptions of Jesus and how they impact our lives. In June, we'll be talking about being made in God's image, "Imago Dei." Please join us – ALL ARE WELCOME!

Upcoming Dates

June 9
August 11 Potluck Picnic
September 8
October 13
November 10
December 8 Christmas Party

FELC Summer Office Hours

Our summer church office hours are **Monday-Thursday, 9 am-Noon, 1-3:30 pm**

Closed on Fridays through Labor Day.

Grayson Carter Reber was baptized on Sunday, May 31, 2026. Grayson was born on March 8, 2026 in Northfield. His parents are **Elizabeth and Carter Reber** His sponsors are **Chase Reber, Isabelle Freeberg** and **Jack Freeberg.**

New Baby?

We want to know!

Are you expecting a child through birth or adoption? Do you have a new infant at home? In these sacred times of welcoming a baby, First English Lutheran Church is here for you. We have resources to support the whole family and look forward to connecting with you! Contact our office for more information.
For baptism requests, please fill out the Baptism Request form found on our website at www.firstenglishchurch.com.

This Month's Youth Program Updates

Register Today!

Want to have some summer fun? Please sign up for "WEAR LOVE", FELC and surrounding area church's Vacation Bible School, led by Good Earth Village this summer, on **Monday, July 6 – Thursday, July 9.**
We'll sing, do crafts, learn about God, play games, and EAT!! The days will go from **8:30 am–3:30 pm** and the **cost is only $25 per camper** (scholarships are available.)

Camp is for kids who have completed grades Kindergarten through 5th. The registration **deadline is June 15**.

If you can help out in any way, please contact Pastor Alison at: alisonb@firstenglishchurch.com or talk to her in person. Volunteers need to be at least 14. We're looking forward to being with all of you!

Live Streaming Worship Services

The livestream of our 9 am worship service is available on YouTube via our website, www.firstenglishchurch.com and aired on the local HBC Channel 12 *(check local listing for schedule)* & MediaCom cable channel 12 *(11 am on Tuesday, 3 pm Wednesday, and 4:30 pm on Saturday)*

Cannon Falls Food Shelf

For over 30 years, the volunteers of the Cannon Falls Food Shelf has devoted their energy to passionately advocating for the needs of our community family.

Hours:
Thursdays
3-6 pm

Consider helping to unload or distribute food. Weekly help is needed. Contact Paul at 507-819-0236.

The Cannon Falls Food Shelf is run by a local volunteer board and is not under the administration of First English Lutheran Church.
Tax ID# is 30-0221349.
Contact Info: 507-819-0236, cannonfallsfoodshelf70@gmail.com

PRIME timers
AT FIRST ENGLISH

Join Us June 4 at 10 AM

Open to all retired and partially retired folks. We plan to meet the first Thursday of each month at 10:00. Light refreshments provided.

Join us **Thursday, June 4 at 10am**. Please ponder the following: recent book/movie or TV series you've found interesting. And be prepared to share your best advice for travel. Might be a great trip (or the worst) you've experienced, a dream trip or maybe just why you want to stay close to home.

For more information or to suggest future discussion topics, contact Bill Peterson at bipet001@gmail.com or Sandra Meglic at raymeglic@frontiernet.net.

Stewardship Moments in May

Thank you to all who shared stewardship moments with us in May. These moments have been great reminders of what we can accomplish when we come together. First English truly is a community that does gospel work. As we heard from your stories, your time, talent, and resources positively impact our community in so many way that we may not have even realized.

Stewardship is ultimately an act of gratitude and trust. It is a way to live out the gospel recognizing that everything we have is a gift and we are called to be faithful caretakers of those gifts. When we give – whether it is a financial contribution, a helping hand, or a shared relationship – we are doing more than just funding a budget or filling a volunteer slot. We are investing in a shared vision for the future.

As we enter summer months, please keep in mind that expenses at First English continue. Since the vast majority of our expenses are related to staff, it is important to keep up our level of giving so that we enter the fall on a strong footing. Keep First English in mind as you leave on vacations. Use the QR code or the following information to keep your giving up to date. Thank you for your continued generosity in support of the vital ministries at First English!

1. Scan to Give
through Vanco, our eGiving provider. You can make a one-time gift or set up recurring donations to our church.

2. Increase Automatic Withdrawal Option
through Merchants Bank. Contact the church office for a direct debit form to set up or increase your contribution.

3. New or Increase Pledge
Let us know you plan to increase your monthly pledge. Call 507-263-3042 or email info@firstenglishchurch.com.

Love in Outreach Ministry

June and July Focus: Valley View Recovery Center

The Valley View Recovery Center is located in Cannon Falls, providing residential treatment for men who experience mental health disorders and addiction. Currently, they are in need of men's clothing: pants, shirts, shoes and jackets. Donated clothing should be clean and in good shape. Additionally, Walmart gift cards are needed for those who are discharged. At this time, our Love in Outreach ministry would prefer monetary donations be made out to FELC with Valley View written in the memo line. We will then purchase the gift cards. Clothing items can be brought to church where there will be a tote in the narthex. If you have questions, please reach out to Kathy Grosland.

Many thanks for sharing love…

Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

Worship at Cannon Rivers Senior Living in June

Did you know that Pastor Luke and Pastor Alison lead worship at Cannon Rivers Senior Living?

About once a month or two, at least one of our pastors leads worship for the residents of Cannon Rivers. They play music, preach, pray, and provide communion. After, they head upstairs to the memory care unit and pray and play music. It is always a great time for connection and worship. In June, they will be leading on **Thursday, June 11,** and **Tuesday, June 30.**

Coming in July Cannon Valley Fair

The 2026 Cannon Valley Fair runs from July 1 through July 4 at the fairgrounds. The four-day community celebration features carnival rides, livestock exhibits, 4-H demonstrations, live music, and a grandstand event each night.

Grandstand Lineup

July 1: Rodeo at 7 PM (Gates open at 5:30 PM). Tickets are ($26.75) (Kids 12 and under are free).

July 2: Adam Calvert Concert at 7:30 PM (Gates open at 6 PM). Tickets are ($26.75) for general admission and ($53) for VIP.

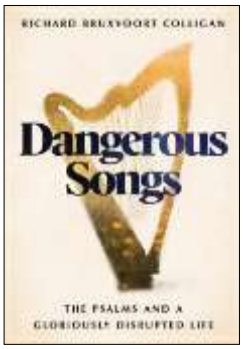
July 3: Demolition Derby at 6 PM (Gates open at 4:00 PM). Tickets are ($21.50) for adults, ($11.50) for kids (12 and under), ($32) for pit passes.

July 4: Harness Horse Racing at 2 PM (Gates open at 1 PM). Admission is free.

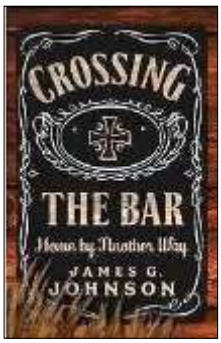
View the full schedule by checking the official *Cannon Valley Fair Schedule.*

Summer Book Recommendations from Pastor Luke

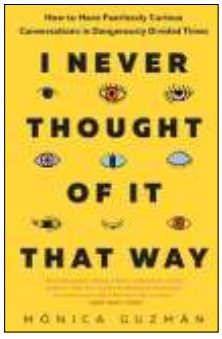
Pastor Luke is planning on reading a few books this summer. If any of them sound interesting to you, join along and let's talk about them after worship sometime this summer.



"Dangerous Songs" by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan – Richard is a dear friend and an absolute expert on the Psalms and I am looking forward to reading this! Richard writes, "The Psalms are dangerous. The ancient songs inspire us and bring us a sense of joy, but they also scare us. They might even transform our faith."



"Crossing the Bar – Home by Another Way" by James G. Johnson – I read part of this book during seminary but am looking forward to reading it through. If you want to sit in on a conversation with a bartender who is a pastor or if you want to take a journey filled with stories and insights born of joining together of these two worlds, this book is for you.



"I Never Thought of It That Way" by Mónica Guzmán, (How to have fearlessly curious conversations in dangerously divided times) – I am always eager to bridge divides and promote curiosity in how we engage with scripture and our faith. I was recommended this book and am curious what insights it will have to offer.

"Dungeon Crawler Carl" a series by Matt Dinniman – this is a dorky science-fantasy series that has dark humor, reads quick, and has video game-like mechanics. I started reading it alongside my siblings for conversation and quickly got sucked into the plot which follows Carl and his ex-girlfriend's cat, Princess Donut, as they are forced to survive a deadly, intergalactic game show after Earth is destroyed and turned into an 18-level dungeon.

Council Highlights

The First English Lutheran Church Council met at their rescheduled meeting on May 6, 2026 at Bill Peterson's location. Here are some highlights.

Heard Pastor Hollander's Report.

Pastor Bondy presented a written report.

Approved Treasurer's Report, subject to audit.

Noted that budget deficit is not getting better. For four Sundays, we will have Stewardship "bites" after Prayer of Day. 3-4 people will work on an action plan (Kelly Miller, Bill Peterson, Jared Woodward).

Foundation scholarships: received six applications.

Approved renewing Community Resource Bank CD for 6 months at 3.84% APR.

Approved renewing insurance policy at $18,716/year ($1,671 increase) with standard deductible of $2,500 and wind/hail deductible of $55,167 for church, $23 for shed, and $6,750 for personal property.

Approved not renewing current annuity at K. Meyers Financial ($53,679.65 plus interest) and moving those funds temporarily to a 3- or 6-month CD; and in the Edward Jones account, moving any cash funds to the money market fund.

Appointed Jared Woodward, Austin Noble, and Pr. Luke Hollander to serve on task force directed to formulate an investment strategy and parameters for the Foundation funds; reporting back to the Finance Committee by the first week in August.

Huruma: Postpone decision until we have plan on quarterly focus (international, local, etc.) based on where there is energy in the congregation. L. Hollander will write up draft.

Received written report from Finance, Love in Outreach, and Property.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Johnson

Next Council Meeting:

Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 6 pm

All are welcome to attend council meetings. If you would like copies of the documents, please let us know.

Memorials & Gifts

May 2026

In Memory of Heidi Shorter
- Diane Kruse

In Memory of Ruthie Anderson Fox
- Jim and Jan Edlund

In Memory of Cindy Husaby
- Martha McCusker
- Mary Althoff
- Kathy and Mark Illa
- Jim and Jan Edlund
- Kay Sabin
- Sharen and Stub Noble
- Michael and Janae Blakeslee
- Bradley and Kathryn Anderson
- Todd and Kathy Swanson
- Glen and Chris Pofahl
- Brenda and David Deutsch
- Karen Coakley
- Stan and Debra Kjarland
- Betty Nelson
- Rodney and Julane Anderson
- Brian and LaNor McDonald
- Scott and Brenda Safe
- John and Michele Zimmerman
- Jon and Theresa Soule
- Jay and Donna Chytracek
- Diane Johnson
- Dar Qualle
- Aland and Gail Carstensen
- Jim and Babe Nelson
- Roseanne and Scott Husaby
- Phil and Teresa Ruud
- Nancy Althoff
- Forrest Anderson
- Steve and Debra Gesme
- Kevin and Beth Nerud
- Cathy Rehm

In Memory of Robin Nelson
- Jim and Jan Edlund
- Betty Nelson
- Kathy and Mark Illa
- Cary and Laura Freeberg
- Kay Sabin
- Cathy Rehm
- Doug and Lynn Larson
- Dick and Jane Peterson

In Memory of Edward Miller
- Elvena Schmugge
- Betty Nelson

Summer 2026

JUNE 4, THU
10 am Prime-Timers Gathering
JUNE 5, FRI
Church Office Closed
JUNE 7, SUN
9 am Communion Worship
JUNE 9, TUES
10 am Women's Group Gathering and Bible Study
11 am Finance Committee
JUNE 10, WEDS
12:30 pm Family Meet Up at Hannah's Bend Park
7 pm Youth Meet Up
JUNE 11, THU
6 pm Church Council Meeting
JUNE 12, FRI
Church Office Closed
JUNE 14, SUN
9 am Worship
JUNE 19, FRI
Church Office Closed
JUNE 21, SUN
9 am Communion Worship
JUNE 26, FRI
Church Office Closed
JUNE 28, SUN
9 am Worship
JULY 2, THU
10 am Prime-Timers Gathering
JULY 3, FRI
Church Office Closed
JULY 5, SUN
9 am Communion Worship
JULY 10, FRI
Church Office Closed
JULY 11, SAT
10 am Family Meet Up at Cannon Belles
JULY 12, SUN Outdoor Worship
10 am Worship and Picnic at Lake Byllesby, Goodhue Side
JULY 16, THU
3-6 pm CF Food Shelf
JULY 17, FRI
Church Office Closed
JULY 19, SUN
9 am Communion Worship
Youth Meet Up following
JULY 24, FRI
Church Office Closed
JULY 26, SUN
9 am Worship

Check our website at www.firstenglishchurch.com for more dates and events!

First English Lutheran Church
511 W Belle St
Cannon Falls MN 55009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cannon Falls, MN
Permit 55