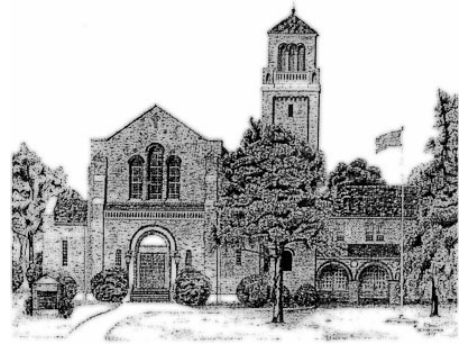


# First Edition



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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Houston, Texas

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## SYNOD FALL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

On Friday and Saturday, October 17-18, a leadership conference for pastors and laity in the Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod will be held at Faith Lutheran Church, 4600 Bellaire Boulevard, in Bellaire. The title of the event is *Imagine! Growing the Vision!*

In June the Synod Assembly officially launched a Synod-wide visioning process that continues this fall. Every congregation is encouraged to participate fully, as we refine and grow into our shared vision. “Evangelism is our highest priority,” say our Synod leaders, “with every congregation obsessed about making disciples.”

On Friday, October 17, rostered leaders (i.e., pastors and associates in ministry) will meet from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

On Saturday, October 18, all rostered leaders and all lay leaders will meet from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The lay leaders include all who were voting members at the synod assembly in June, congregation council members and officers, congregational staff, and key leaders in each congregation.

Registration ends on October 7, so everyone attending from our church should inform Millie Thibodeaux by that date. The cost for the event will be a free-will offering to cover our meals together.

We hope to have a full complement of leaders from First Evangelical Lutheran Church present at this important and timely event.

## THE PLAN.....Peterman’s Postulate

About fifteen years ago a friend of mine, Pastor Charles Treptow, put this story in his church newsletter. I have never forgotten it.

*When Jesus returned to heaven after his earthly ministry, an angel asked him how he planned to continue the work on earth. Jesus told the angel that before he left he asked the disciples to tell others and for those to tell still others.*

*With a puzzled look the angel asked, “And what if that doesn’t work? What other plan do you have?”*

*Jesus replied, “There is no other plan.”*

That’s a little frightening isn’t it? No other plan? What if people forget the good news or get it wrong? What if they’re too shy or embarrassed? What if they tell it but don’t practice it, and their deeds betray their words?

The disciples did a good job of telling others, and for centuries others also did a pretty good job or we wouldn’t be Christians now. But what kind of job is the church doing today? What kind of job

are you doing? Wil Volker, a trusted colleague of mine, often said, “Christianity is always just one generation away from extinction.”

Here are some ways you can tell the story.

First, you can attend worship every week. That tells other people how important you consider the Christian faith to be in your life.

Second, you can invite others to worship with you. If you’re not comfortable talking about your faith, bring them along to the adult Sunday Church School, too, where you will learn new insights and different ways to put your faith into words.

Third, don’t be afraid to appear ignorant. You don’t have to be a gourmet chef to know which food is good, and you don’t have to be a seminary professor to know grace in your life. Tell others what you have experienced and what is meaningful to you. Tell them what gives you roots and wings. Invite others to share it with you, even though you don’t fully understand it.

You see, the plan is for you to tell others what has been told to you. It’s up to you. There is no other plan.

### **ADULT CLASS CONTINUES TO STUDY CORINTHIANS**

In September the Adult Sunday Church School Class began a three-month study of Paul’s letters to the Corinthians. The course is being taught by Pastor Peterman.

The city of Corinth had been destroyed in 146 B.C. The Corinth Paul knew was rebuilt on the same site a century later, probably under orders from Julius Caesar, and quickly grew to be an important Roman colony. With a population of 600,000, it was a prosperous commercial center. Nearby were held the Isthmian Games, second only to the Olympian Games in importance. On the summit of Acrocorinth, a peak 1800 feet above the city, stood a famous temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Visitors to the site enjoyed the view and no doubt the numerous sacred prostitutes attached to the temple. In the Greco-Roman world Corinth had become a byword for vice.. To “live like a Corinthian” was slang for debauchery.

It was into this troublesome city that Paul carried the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Acts 18 describes the period of eighteen months that Paul spent in Corinth in 50-51 A.D.

Although the New Testament indicates only two letters from Paul (First and Second Corinthians), many scholars believe portions of his letters were rearranged and spliced into each other. By careful study, it is not difficult to distinguish four of Paul’s letters in these two books. It is believed these letters were written from 55 to 60 A.D.

The adult class meets every Sunday in the Parish Hall from 10:00 until 10:40 a.m. All adults are invited to attend.

### ***SYNOD HAS E-NEWSLETTER***

Did you know there is a monthly e-newsletter from the Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod? This is a great way to know what is happening in our sister congregations and facilitate the faith journey of the 126 congregations in our synod.

Check it out at <http://www.gulfcoastsynod.org/listserv.htm>

And be sure to read in it *A view from the pew*, which is an open letter dialogue about the different ways lay people and clergy see what is happening in our church. It is written by Pastor Herb Palmer and Kurt Goedecke.

**SELAH: WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH**

*Selah* (pronounced SEE-lah or SEH-lah) is Hebrew for crescendo; to increase, to lift up; also, the Young Adults at First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Happy Birthday *Selah* lunch at Katz's Deli on September 7 was a smashing success! We were one short of an apostles' dozen, and all were members or members to be. Congratulations to everyone for a successful first year!

Thank you to all the *Selites* who showed up for the All Church Work Day on August 31, as well as the spontaneous Church Work Day on September 16 after Hurricane Ike. Thank you to *Selites* Greg and Andrea Ranft, Peter Hokanson, Jeffrey Hokanson, Dean Huffman, Emily Williams, Lydia Williams, Meredith Nelson, Meghan Turnis, Mary Wiese, and Joshua Gumtow.

For October *Selah* will hold a Bring-a-friend Costume Party on Friday, October 31. Please bring a friend and a treat to share! The fun and games will begin at 7:45 p.m. at Dean Huffman's house, 303 McGowan at Bagby in Midtown. Prizes will be awarded for various costumes, so get creative! RSVP to Meredith Nelson at 713-688-4081 or Dean Huffman at 832-660-6003.

**CONFIRMATION CLASS STILL BEING CONSIDERED**

The possibility of offering a Confirmation Class at First Evangelical Lutheran Church continues to be under consideration. (The arrival of Hurricane Ike delayed planning for the class.) The one-year course, taught by Pastor Peterman, would meet for one hour each week for a total of about thirty sessions, culminating in the Rite of Confirmation late next spring.

Although confirmation instruction is usually offered to junior high youth in grades seven and eight, it might be possible to include both older and younger students in the class.

When the class would meet is also under consideration. One possibility is Sunday morning from 9:00 until 10:00. Another option would be Saturday morning.

Families with children in this age range will be contacted soon to discuss this matter with the pastor.

**HOUSTON SAENGERBUND'S 125<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

The Houston Saengerbund will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a special event on Saturday, October 25, at the elegant Czech Center Museum Houston, 4920 San Jacinto at Wichita. There will be dinner and dancing at Prague Hall from 7:00 p.m. until 11:00. The cost per person is \$20.00. Festive attire is appropriate.

The Houston Saengerbund is a German glee club that meets regularly at First Evangelical Lutheran Church on Tuesday evenings. Rodney Koenig is president.

Reservations are due by October 15. Contact [mrs.wright@att.net](mailto:mrs.wright@att.net).

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**TEXAS BAR SUES CHURCH**

*In a small Texas town, the local bar began construction on a new building to increase its business. The local Baptist church started a campaign of petitions and prayers to block the bar from opening. Work progressed right up till the week before opening when lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground.*

*The church folk were rather smug in their outlook after that, until the bar owner sued the church on the grounds that the church was ultimately responsible for the demise of the building, either through direct or indirect actions or means. The church vehemently denied all responsibility or any connection to the building's demise in its reply to the court.*

*As the case made its way into court, the judge looked over the paperwork. At the hearing he commented, "I don't know how I'm going to decide this, but as it appears from the paperwork, we have a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer and an entire congregation that does not!"*  
- From Senior News, September 2008

## **PRAYER LIST (August 16–September 15)**

### Members and Associate Members

Richard and Betty Campbell	John Palmer
James Cone	Emilie Ratcliffe
Minnie Lou Gaeckler	Carl Sontag
Minnie Johnson	Deborah Speeg
Robert Jungbecker	Millie Thibodeaux
Lorine Nichols	Betty Wade

### Friends and Relatives

Matthew Babin	Tamera Nicholl-Smith
Joshua Berggren	Lee Orton
Louise Fountain	Ed Story
Fred Haman	Anna Taylor
Jeff Haussler	Bill Walding
Barbara Knoeller	Chuck and Marlene Walding
Lindsay Lum	Klaus Wehrmeister
Karen McCambridge	Kimberly Westbrook
Brian Nelson	Mary Ruth White

### Other Special Concerns

The Dedication of the New Nave, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Houston, August 24  
The death of Eleanor Leopold Baumgarten, August 25  
The victims of Hurricane Ike, especially the Hillyer Family, Lynda Parsons and Bobbye Mathews, and Deborah Speeg

## **LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER**

November 1 - 12:00 *Wedding of Christian Coto and Lauren Gomez*  
November 2 - 12:30 Property Committee meeting  
12:30 Serve and Care Committee meeting  
November 3 - 7:30 Executive Committee meeting  
November 4 - 7:30 *Houston Saengerbund*  
November 7 - 6:00 *Wedding Rehearsal*  
November 8 - 5:00 *Wedding of Evan Young and Shena Baker*  
November 9 - 12:30 Congregation Council meeting  
November 10 - 7:30 Executive Committee meeting  
November 11 - 7:30 *Houston Saengerbund*  
November 14 - *Wedding Rehearsal*  
November 15 - 11:00 Altar Guild meeting  
3:00 *Wedding of Brent Nettles and Chloe Cash*  
Deadline for December issue of *First Edition*

## **WITH HEARTFELT THANKS . . .**

Throughout my life with First Evangelical Lutheran Church I have always known and felt the kindness and love of this congregation. During my recent fall, broken hand, surgery, and recovery, this fact has been reaffirmed. The day started out as usual but ended up with Pastor and Jane sitting with me in the emergency room watching as I fell asleep in the middle of morphined sentences.

Wonderful friends cheered me with sweet cards and thoughtful phone calls. And e-mails were sent requesting food for this disabled soul. I thought I would drop a few pounds during recovery, but our good cooks negated that.

I thank each and every person who held me in their thoughts and prayers as I have recovered. It's not over yet, but I am definitely on the mend and back at work just in time for Hurricane Ike's arrival and Pastor Peterman's "facelift."

Thanks and love to each and every one of you.

Millie Thibodeaux,  
Parish Administrator

## ***DRAFT STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY***

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is preparing a social statement on human sexuality to be considered by the Churchwide Assembly in 2009. The draft of that social statement has been prepared by the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

While it represents the best thinking of the task force to date, not all the members of the task force agree with all aspects of the document.

The draft statement is intended to encourage deliberations on what this church should say about human sexuality. Therefore, broad response to it is vital to the process of writing the social statement and central to the life of this church. Responses to the document will inform the task force's work on the final statement that will be proposed at the Churchwide Assembly in 2009.

In preparation for this draft, the task force has published three congregational studies and a youth resource in the Journey Together Faithfully series. All of them may be downloaded from the Web site at [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney) or ordered from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.

ELCA social statements are theological and teaching documents that assist members in forming judgments on social issues. They offer a framework for moral discernment. They also set policy for this church, guide its advocacy, and aid its life as a public church. Social statements result from an extensive process of deliberation throughout this church and are adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

A single copy of the draft can be obtained free by downloading it from the above Web site or by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2996.

Everyone is invited to respond to the draft statement and send comments to the Task Force. You may use the response form at the back of the document or write comments in letter or essay form. You may send your responses directly to Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, Church in Society, 8775 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4190, email them to [faithfuljourney@elca.org](mailto:faithfuljourney@elca.org), or respond directly online at [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney).

The deadline for responses to this draft statement on sexuality is November 1, 2008. Every member is strongly urged to respond.

## ***HURRICANE IKE WREAKS HAVOC***

Hurricane Ike came roaring through the greater Houston area the second weekend in September, causing our church building to lose electricity for about four days, severely damaging our roof, and flooding many areas of the interior of the building.

All activities, including Sunday Church School, worship, and the Congregation Council meeting, were canceled for Sunday, September 14. However, it appears that Sunday Church School and worship will resume the following Sunday. It was also necessary to postpone the Church's Birthday Luncheon originally scheduled for September 21.

Our Parish Administrator, Millie Thibodeaux, immediately began working closely with our insurance company to provide water extraction and temporary roof remediation. At the time of this writing, it appears that over a million dollars worth of repair work will be required.

Outside the building we found a great deal of tree damage, but thanks to *Selah* and others from the congregation, the limbs and debris were cleared and moved to the curb for removal. We thank all the volunteers on this project, as well as the August 31 work day, for all their work. At the risk of inadvertently omitting someone, we nevertheless will attempt to name those who joined in the effort: Dean Huffman, Paul Orton, Marjorie Ranft, Curtis and Fran Allen, David Hokanson, Millie Thibodeaux, Sabrina Smitherman, and, of course, the magnificent *Selites*, who are mentioned on page four of this issue of *First Edition*.

## **FROM THE PARISH RECORD (August 16—September 15)**

### **Add to the Associate Membership Roll**

JOINER, THE REV. ROBERT and KATHRYN

## **MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS**

	<u>September 16</u>	<u>August 15</u>	<u>One year ago</u>
Child members	10	10	8
Confirmed members	<u>140</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>109</u>
Total baptized members	150	150	117
Associate members	37	35	14

## **ANNUAL THANKSGIVING AND STEWARDSHIP DINNER**

Mark your calendar now for Sunday, November 16, 12:30 p.m. That is when our Annual Thanksgiving and Stewardship Dinner will be held in the Parish Hall. This is an event no one should miss.

## **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATE**

### **Membership Changes and Corrections** (underscored)

ECKELMAN, ANDREA

Address unknown

SHADDOCK, CARROLL & (DORRY)

713-661-6106

### **Add to the Associate Membership Roll**

JOINER, ROBERT & KATHRYN

281-997-2988

2538 Princeton Drive

Pearland, TX 77585