

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

June, 2020



Hello brothers and sisters in Christ. We continue to find ourselves within the COVID restrictions. I'm aware of the "grumblings" asking, "Why and when will FLC re-open for services and why aren't the video services not recorded within the church?" I want to address these questions to the best of my understanding and I even admit as a medical professional that I get a bit confused and frustrated with all the news reports.

Regarding the location of the video/on-line church service: Recording the services from our individual homes made the greatest sense to minimize contamination to and within the church, minimize expenses, maintain social distancing and protect the health, safety and well-fare of the service participants. This is not "ideal" but what really is "ideal" at this time? The need to follow the CDC, WI Council of Churches, ELCA guidelines and recommendations was foremost. As leaders of FLC we needed to make prudent and safe decisions based upon the congregation in totality. Merriam-Webster defines "Church" as a building for public and especially Christian worship. I believe worship can be where ever Christian families and/or individuals come together to worship, praise and thank God for all His gifts regardless of the building structure.

The greater concern is the re-opening of FLC. Recently, President Trump stated, "Churches need to re-open immediately because the church is an essential service". I don't want to make this a political response but "WE" know that hearing the Good News of the Gospel as a brother or sister in Christ is important with regards to strengthening our faith journey and growth and uniting as a Christian family. Maybe, the social component is the driving force for the decision to arise and gather on Sunday mornings to worship, praise and come together in prayer. The decision to re-open must meet all health, government and ELCA guidelines, protocols and recommendations. There are so many considerations it's mind boggling! Pastor Josh, myself and other members of the Executive and Church Council are in conversation and reviewing written communications between Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Paul Erickson, local ELCA clusters along with previously mentioned recommendations. Please continue to pray for "ALL" because these decisions are not easy (including required PPE, social distancing, any restrictions/instructions and individual choice) and may not always be agreed upon BUT, the decisions must be respectful, prudent and safe for each of us before we can again come together as a church family.

Remain patient, offer your feedback and input and as we've all heard "we're in this together". As a Christian family this has never been more-true. I send my love and best wishes to each of you with confidence that **we are getting close!!!**

Heidi Leiser-O'Neil, Council President

Christian Life



As a community we pray for those with immediate needs of healing and strength:

Diane Gallegos, Shannon Irvine, Aiden Kreblin, Carrie Pflugradt, Nicole Sevcik, Jan Stasiak and Rachel Tripi

AN INVITATION TO REST

Summer calls to mind a slower pace, time off from school and work. But many still face daily demands this time of year:

farmers work long hours; teachers may take seasonal work to make ends meet; parents with kids now home all day may catch up on work late at night. Still, may the longer days and warmer weather beckon you into a bit of free time this season. Listen:



“When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.” — Eleanor Brown (public speaker and educator)

“Sometimes it's important to work for that pot of gold. But other times it's essential ... to make sure that your most important decision in the day [is] which color to slide down on the rainbow.” —Douglas Pagels (author)

“Rest time is not waste time; it is economy to gather fresh strength. ... In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less.” —Charles Spurgeon

“Come to me, all you that are weary ... and I will give you rest. ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” —Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30)

“FAITHBOOK”

QUIPS FROM FACEBOOK

The greatest man in history named Jesus, had no servants, yet they called him Master. Had no degree, yet they called Him teacher. Had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer. He had no army, yet kings feared Him. He won no battles yet conquered the world. He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him. He was buried in in tomb, yet He lives today.

—God Be With You/ Bible Lock Screens

Not once does the Bible say “Worry about it”, “Stress over it” or “Figure it out”. But over and over it clearly says “Trust God”.

Positivity in Life



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

While we're all maintaining safe distances from one another, you're welcome to join our Tuesday morning Bible Study.

We're back to using the book “Bible Women: All their Words and Why They Matter”. Our studies are online at the moment using Zoom. You don't need to have a computer - you can join us over the phone. If you're interested, contact the church office and we'll get you on the Zoom invitation list and send you copies of the lessons. We'd love to have you!

CELEBRATING CHURCH IN A PANDEMIC



Throughout the Biblical narrative and our own faith stories, challenges to our “norms” allow God’s wisdom and strength to be revealed. I am grateful for how First has found ways to stay connected, while socially distanced, as we support each other and continue to celebrate together as a Christian community. Due to the urgent nature of the pandemic response we already have a large list of achievements to lift up together, including four huge projects: Creating our “Staying in Touch” survey, our new daily email program, shared programming ideas with other churches, and a full shift to online services with church member participation. Each of these could have taken a year or more to roll out, but because of the pandemic you’ve done them all in a few months... and with a new pastor! [Congratulations!](#)

As we look ahead to the summer months, little is certain about how Covid-19 may challenge us as a church, but the Council leadership is approaching each choice with wisdom and insight (See Heidi’s Letter). I am working closely with area congregations, the synod, West Allis Health Department, and our FLC Executive Committee to understand what safe gatherings could look like, and when it might be best to return to in-person worship. While I am hopeful we can find safe ways to congregate in person, I am also realistic and remain concerned about the health and safety of our community.

It’s important to remember that our preventative actions can only reduce, but not eliminate risk, and that raises real concerns for me as a shepherd of this flock in the midst of a pandemic. Celebrating worship in a way that could cause parishioners to put their health or their family’s health at risk is not something any of us want. So how should we be thinking about this decision to gather and worship?

Many of our fellow ELCA congregations in West Allis have chosen to be more conservative and are choosing to not gather physically. Another ELCA church in Wauwatosa recently chose to not worship at church until September, when they realized without being able to enforce wearing masks, many others wouldn’t participate. Many congregations have adapted to outdoor worship in cars, or in a park or open area which reduces the risk of transmission. Our weather in the summer may cooperate with that possibility, but First would need to identify locations for that type of gathering. Other denominations around us are re-opening buildings in the area, most with restrictions and distancing.

If we gathered together or had in-person worship, then everyone, including me, would wear a mask and sit apart. Communion would be individual or at home, rather than together at the altar, and there would be no singing, touching, hugging, or fellowship. Those in an at-risk category, would likely follow recommendations to not gather or participate. So the question is not whether to get back to our “normal” worship, but rather weighing how online worship services and alternatives compare to what we would experience in person, assessing the risks and benefits.

I understand that many of us want to be together and see each other, even if masked and at a distance. I would like to see something like that too, especially since I still haven’t worshipped with you in person since being called! But the safety of the flock is my main consideration for me as a pastor. I also know we will need to be ready to respond as public health realities change, which makes it hard to have any kind of grand reopening in this circumstance.

So what’s the bright side to all of this? Finding community clarity on how we respond to this crisis will give all of us more confidence, make us less reactionary, and enable us to deal with whatever comes our way. That is a community experience that can bring us closer together... even if we are apart. Through this conversation and discernment, we can recognize the shared identity and values that unite us, in the face of external factors that may try to divide us. Experiencing that unity as a response to these current challenges, would be a great blessing, as I continue my journey with you!

--Pastor Josh

I do sometimes write about things other than this pandemic! If you’d like to read my articles on other topics, please sign up for our daily emails, where I write a Pastor’s Corner every Monday. In the coming months, I am hopeful that we will be able to live into more ministry conversations and continue to do amazing things together.

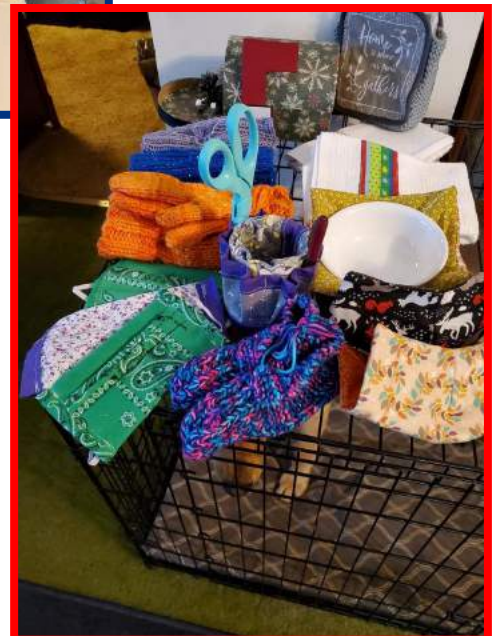
Members find ways to use



Werner and Jackie (above and right) spent time making masks for essential workers.



Heidi (below left) spends her time crafting: Xmas card containers, knitted slippers, hats mittens and fingerless gloves, Bowl holders, facial masks, napkin holders and desk supply cup holders.



their social distancing time.

Linda G. spends her time babysitting Eli - she's got no problem with that!



Joy D. has enjoyed watching her amaryllis bloom.



Colleen & Spencer S. are having fun (not!) remodeling a spare bedroom (right).



Dale P. is starting to spruce up the place - getting a few hardy planters ready. He and Sharon are getting ready for their grandson's virtual graduation June 4. He's heading to Valparaiso in the fall. Sharon is providing home cooked drive up meals for family and friends. Their ulterior motive is social distance visiting for a while. They also get to spend time social distance playing with their new grand dog, Coco.

Class of 2020
Congratulations, Max!
Valedictorian
Ronald Reagan HS

Meet Our Members...

Dan and Gail Sopa first met in 6th grade where both attended 27th Street School in Milwaukee. They started dating at 17 years old. Dan attended West Division High School, while Gail attended Ju-neau High School. After graduation Gail worked for Lutheran Hospital while Dan worked at Speaker Motion then Allis Chalmers for 10 years. Gail joined the staff of the West Allis Public Library where she worked approximately 36 years until retirement. Dan went to work for Custom Production and retired after approximately 32 years (the company was sold several times). They have 2 daughters, Amanda who is 43 years old and Sarah who is 39 years and 1 granddaughter, Makaila, who just turned 14. Dan and Gail have been married for 45 years and enjoy travelling. They took a trip of a lifetime to Amsterdam, Munich and Italy last fall. They were to go on a cruise, was but was cancelled due to the coronavirus. They both enjoy golfing. Dan likes to go fishing anytime he can.



Lutherdale is proud to provide delicious, savory meals to our local community and supporters for the months of June and July. Please see our menu, dates, and information at www.lutherdale.org/curbside

DINNERS AT THE LAKE CURBSIDE IS ONLY FOR MEAL PICK UP.

- You must pre-order your meals ONE WEEK PRIOR to the food pick up.
 - \$16 per meal includes WI Sales Tax.
 - Food may be ordered ONLINE ONLY between Wednesday, NOON – Saturday, NOON. Meals must be pre-ordered ONE WEEK PRIOR to pick up.
 - Pick up times are Fridays and Saturdays between 4:30 – 7 pm at Lutherdale. You must indicate your preferred time and day at the time of your pre-order.
 - Meals will be available while supplies last. Meals are limited to 80 per night.
- Lutherdale does not provide disposable plates or utensils with Dinners at the Lake Curbside meals.

June 5 & 6 – BBQ Beef Brisket (Pre-order ONLINE May 27-30)

June 12 & 13 – BBQ Beef Brisket (Pre-order ONLINE June 3-6)

June 19 & 20 – BBQ Beef Brisket (Pre-order ONLINE June 10-13)

BBQ Beef Brisket inc. garlic mashed potato, sautéed corn w/bacon & chives, buttermilk biscuit w/Lutherdale honey butter, cookie

June 26 & 27 – Spanish Festival (Pre-order ONLINE June 17-20)

Paella w/chicken & chorizo, Spanish potato au gratin w/manchego, sautéed vegetables, Spanish mixed green salad, warm roll, Spanish cinnamon cake.

June Birthdays

6/3 John Hrovat
 6/3 Wayne Wagner
 6/8 Carrie Muffler
 6/11 David Wegener
 6/13 Laurel Grulke
 6/14 Austin Cyrus
 6/17 Warren Hirschinger
 6/18 Carolyn Moncher
 6/19 Dennis Schoberg
 6/21 Damon Wegener
 6/29 Randall Schwartz
 6/29 Audrey Wiefelspuetz
 6/30 Mason Schoberg



June Anniversaries

6/7 Robert & Joyce Gardner 62 yrs.
 6/9 Roger & Elizabeth Gray 36 yrs.
 6/9 David & Linda Grulke 47 yrs.
 6/18 Nancy & Theodore Krizan 71 yrs.
 6/21 Chris & Amy Guthrie 12 yrs.
 6/23 Don & Carolyn Moncher 64 yrs.

CHURCH COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Pastor Josh discussed his first week here, and reported he's been participating in Zoom meetings and webinars.

Sexual Misconduct policy was adopted.

Discussions held re:

- Daily emails to members.
- Streaming worship services.
- Food pantry will not provide hot meals
- Food bag distribution
- Building use during "safer at home"
- Lenten services will not take place in person.
- Request to use building

HMMMM....

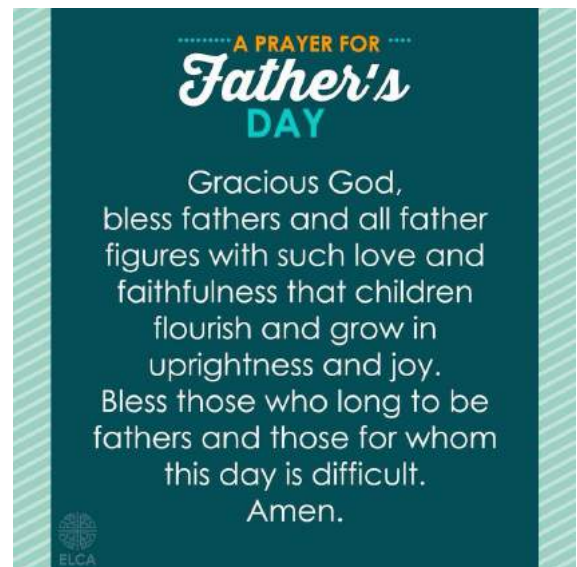
Do you know someone that may not be part of a church, but could be looking for a new connection to faith and community? Remember that you can share a link to our sermons and services on our website. It could lead to helping someone find a church home with First Lutheran!



Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Which of the following are mentioned in the list that follows?

- A. a time to teach, and a time to learn
- B. a time to mourn, and a time to dance
- C. a time to fast, and a time to eat
- D. a time to work, and a time to rest

Answer: See Ecclesiastes 3:1-8



Don't Forget to notify the church office of any address, phone or email changes!

Need pastoral care?

Please remember to notify the church office if you are ill or hospitalized so that we can offer prayer and support directly to you. If you have a pastoral emergency during non-office hours (death in the family, hospitalization, etc.) contact Pastor Josh at (414)476-4664, ext. 2.

First Lutheran Church
7400 W. Lapham St.
West Allis, WI 53214

Non-Profit Organization
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Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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Mailed on 5-27-2020

Electronic Service Requested

Dated Material
Please deliver by 5-30-2020



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

7400 W. Lapham St.
West Allis, WI
www.firstlutheranelca.org
E-mail: firstlutheranelca@att.net
Phone: 414-476-4664

**During “Safer at Home” restrictions,
the church office will be closed and worship
services will be available online.
Please call or email if you need assistance.**

*Worship With Us:
Saturdays at 5:30 p.m.
Sundays at 9:00 a.m.*

Sunday School is at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm
Office located at 7400 W. Lapham, West Allis
(414)476-4664

**Just to be clear,
the Church has not been closed,
so it doesn't need to be re-opened.
We have simply stopped worshipping
in our buildings for a time
to protect the health & well-being
of our people & our communities.
The Church does not require a building
in order to be the Church.
What is required is love, compassion,
& the presence of God.**