

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

July, 2020



As we celebrate July 4th, it probably won't be all about cookouts with family and watching fireworks this year. We might not be able to get together the way we have in the past. And the conversations about freedom and our country's history may not be the same either, since they will be impacted by the political divisiveness during the last months of this pandemic and also the widespread racial reckoning our nation has been called into during the past weeks. Maybe you wish God would make all that go away and for us to go back to normal! I can understand feeling that way, but I believe God is using what is happening around us to help us talk about what we need to talk about—not just what we want to talk about!

I personally welcome these conversations in the public sphere, partially because practicing this type of deep reflection through asking challenging questions and listening to people's stories, is the short-term work we need to do as a congregation as well. It is those efforts that will lead us into the healthiest decisions and best future possible. In order for any community, or even a nation, to move forward in a united way, there need to be conversations that include everyone. In order to identify a plan for our best future, First Lutheran needs to do the work of reflecting on our past and finding out how others have known and perceived us.

Like most congregations, I know there are people at First that enter into this work, kicking and screaming. We want to believe we have done this work already, or that it isn't really valuable, and that we can just go reach out to people and invite them into our happy church family and they'll respond excitedly. Most of you know from experience it is not that simple. Like most worthwhile and mature efforts, it is hard in the short-term, but healthy and helpful in the long-term. I know from experience that the Holy Spirit works through the deep questions that lead to stories that reveal our values. Just as Jesus asked questions and shared stories, frustrating those that wanted simple answers, these are the tools of transformative change in people and communities.

What have we done together and where have we put resources?

Who has been invited and who hasn't?

Have we tolerated visitors or truly welcomed the stranger and those on the margins?

Reflection, sharing stories and asking questions, even difficult questions, is the key to moving forward with purpose. Only after this work will we be prepared for the question, "Where is God leading us?"

Questions and stories can give us strength and encouragement, reveal our values and sometimes a need for repentance, and maybe most importantly help us value others' questions and stories. It is my hope that our stories remind us God is with us, and when we live into Jesus' values, we will have a stronger sense of our call as a community so we can meet challenges together and enjoy the harvest together as well.

Pastor Josh

Christian Life

COPING....

During the long days of “safer at home” restrictions our fears made us feel very alone. But the Bible does hold comfort for those dark hours. The Old Testament Prophet Isaiah writes:

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).



This Summer, we're fortunate to be able to use the BUGS Summer Family Sunday School video series which was produced by St. John's Lutheran and the Waukesha County Creation Care Network. The WCCCN is designed to develop, support, mentor, and inspire Creation Care teams in Faith Communities through sharing resources, programs and ideas. Go to www.waukeshacountygreenteam.org/creation-care-network for more information. In Milwaukee, the Groundwork Milwaukee (GWM) Green Team is a service-learning program that engages 14 to 17 year olds living in GWM's target communities. The program's dual goals are to prepare youth for a lifetime of environmental leadership and to develop community capacity to improve the physical environment. For more information go to www.groundworkmke.org/mission. The Sunday School video is being sent out in our daily emails. If you would like information on signing up for emails, contact the church office.



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

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

“FAITHBOOK”

QUIPS FROM FACEBOOK

What if we began to treat our Bible the way we treat our cell phone?

What if we:

- ...carried it with us everywhere?
- ...turned back to get it if we forgot it ?
- ...checked it for messages throughout the day?
- ...used it in case of emergency?
- ...spent an hour or more using it each day?

God Be with You



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

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

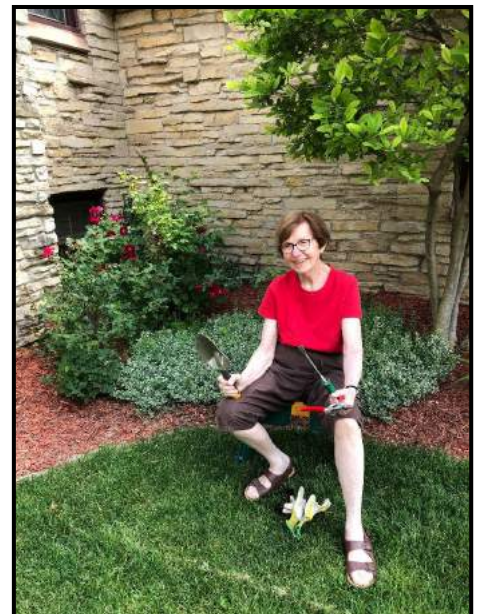
We're still using the book "Bible Women: All their Words and Why They Matter". We hope to be able to meet outside (weather permitting) soon, while finding a way to include members who can't attend in person. You can always join our studies online using Zoom. You don't need to have a computer - you can 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!

Enjoying nature.....



There are a lot of ways to enjoy nature - Pastor Josh greeting clients at the food pantry (mask off for picture), a beautiful peony brought in by Marie (that was sadly laying on the desk 2 days later), our beautiful Pentecost geraniums and Colleen making arrangements for a wedding arch. The beauty of God's creation is all around us - we just have to look for it!



NEW GARDEN CREW NEEDED!

Thanks to Marie LePage, our gardens continue to add to the beauty of our church. But....Marie would like to retire from her position. We used to have a crew of 3 which worked well, and that's what we're hoping for now. Are you willing to step up and be a part of a group to faithfully tend the grounds? Weeding and trimming are the main projects that need to be kept up with from Spring through Fall. John Hrovat helps with trimming, but he'd like a little help, also. We'll have a detailed schedule of what needs to be done when, and Marie will always be available to lend guidance. If this is something you're called to do, please contact the church office. Thanks to Marie for all of the time and talent she's shared with us!

and keeping busy



THE 2020 OUTREACH FOR HOPE RIDE/RUN/WALK IS GOING VIRTUAL!

What does that mean, exactly? OFH is inviting bikers, runners and walkers to remotely participate in 25 fitness and fundraising challenges in honor of Outreach for Hope's 25th anniversary. You decide the time and place of each activity, as long as it's between now and September 30th.

Once you've registered online, OFH will mail your t-shirt(s). They've also created a blog with helpful resources, and a Facebook Group for participants to share their progress and photos-- so that even though we're physically distanced, we're still connected as a community. For more information go to www.outreachforhope.org.

Outreach for Hope supports life-giving ministries that serve with the people of low income communities in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA. OFH just named their new Executive Director Chris Manke.



FEELING CRAFTY?

Eras Senior Network is in need of volunteers to decorate 10,000 birthday and holiday cards that will be mailed to clients in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties throughout the year. Cards are available in packs of 25 to decorate and return to Eras. They can be decorated using stickers, rubber stamps, crayons, markers, pencils or paint. This is a fun project for a family, scout troop, or anyone who wants to let their artistic juices flow while they are self-isolating at home. To volunteer, contact Becca Snow at (262) 522-2409 .

Warren Hirschinger celebrated his 90th birthday on June 17th and was able to share the fun and a fishing-themed cake with Joy Dowd and her family.



We're thinking fall....

Heidi and Colleen are planning for a Fall Fest (Covid-permitting) to replace the cancelled Spring Fair and in place of the Holiday Fair. The event will include children's activities, a vendor/craft fair and pie/ice cream social. They are also planning on having a Rummage Sale---SO PLEASE start saving your gently used good quality items in anticipation for the sale. Date to be determined---thinking later September or early October.

Meet Our Members...

Wayne Wagner came to First Lutheran Church in 1968. He graduated from Cudahy High School in 1952 and worked at what is now the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for 47 years until his retirement. He is a past president of the First Lutheran Church Council, the Milwaukee Pop's Youth Bands, and Local #23 GCC/IBT. He also served 10 years on the City of West Allis Board of Appeals, and 10 years as a Loan Officer of the Milwaukee Journal Credit Union.

Lucy graduated from Ripon High School in central Wisconsin in 1953, and then moved to Milwaukee to attend beauty school. While in school she also worked nights downtown at the Warner Theatre. She finished work in time to catch the last bus home to the east side of Milwaukee. After graduation she worked as a beautician. She and the girls she worked with would go bowling after work at Silbermans Lanes in Cudahy. So this girl from Pickett, WI came to bowl two blocks from Wayne's house and their team sponsor, Pulaski Hall was right across the street from him. They met in 1958 and were married on January 14, 1961. It was 55° on the day of their wedding, a record which still stands today. They have 4 children, two sons-in-law and 3 grandchildren. Were the '50s great or what!



I think we've talked a lot about COVID, but please know that the Council and Pastor are in continued conversation regarding how best and safe it is to re-start worship and meetings within FLC. Stay patient and continue to pray, but we MUST be prudent in our decisions that provide for the safety and well-being of each of us. I thought I'd approach another subject (crisis) that is affecting so many.

For many Christians, support for the Black Lives Matter movement is a no brainer. After all, Jesus opposed violence, opposed the taking of life and opposed racial divisions. As the Apostle Paul taught in his letter to the Galatians, there is neither slave nor free, for "you are all one in Christ Jesus".

As I sit on my front porch here in Rosholt, WI, USA, I find that my heart and mind are pondering many thoughts including: "Black lives matter", "All lives matter" and "All are welcome", I think about our goal of reaching "those not here yet". As a baptized Christian having received a fair amount of teaching on Christian faith and morals, to say "All are welcome" in my mind means our doors, hearts and arms are open to "ALL" God's children regardless of race, color, creed, sexual preference, social and/or financial status. Jesus loves us just the way we are and Jesus welcomes all into His fold.

Faith is an arduous adventure---a great and *glorious calling to step out of the boat, walk on the waves and be a true disciple of Jesus Christ*. I pray that others are experiencing the same thoughts and maybe having dialog with family and friends. At some time after the COVID and the other crises facing the world and country settle down, "WE" the FLC family/community can enter into Christian conversation as well.

Stay healthy, safe and well.

Your sister in Christ,
Heidi Leiser-O'Neil, Council President

July Birthdays

7/11 Greta Plicka
7/13 Olive Muffler
7/16 Joyce Gardner
7/17 Gary Biorn
7/18 Matthew Grulke
7/26 Michael Plicka



July Anniversaries

7/19 Dennis & Jamie Schoberg 14 yrs.

CHURCH COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Discussions held regarding:

- Donation of Benevolence money
- Food pantry services
- Renovation of pastor's office
- Request to use church for wedding
- Planning for a fall festival
- Resuming church services outdoors
- Survey results
- Kid-friendly section in newsletter

Approved purchase of new computer and software



What seemingly small act did Jesus specifically say would be rewarded?

- A. Giving a child a toy
- B. Giving a lost traveler directions
- C. Giving someone a cup of cold water
- D. Giving a sad person a hug

Answer: See Matthew 10:42.)



**As you go on your way,
God goes with you:**

...goes before you to show you the way

...goes behind you to encourage you

...goes above you to keep watch over you

...goes beside you to befriend you

...and goes within you to give you peace.

NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO PLANT THE SEED!

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!



- Wash Hands
 - Don't Touch Face
 - Stay Home
- Hygenesis 24:7

*Friendly
Reminders*

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

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Permit No. 3633

Mailed on 6-25-2020

Electronic Service Requested

Dated Material
Please deliver by 6-29-2020



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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

