

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

October, 2020



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I had no idea what to write about this month because there really have been no major changes with the exception of the Installation of the Church Council and Pastor Josh (finally), until yesterday afternoon when the Holy Spirit put an article into my lap and I decided to share it with each of you. The article appeared in the Monthly Inspirations section of the local Rosholt paper and written by Geri Butler.

“Soar Like an Eagle-----

Did you know that an eagle can foresee when a storm is approaching long before it breaks? Instead of hiding, the eagle will fly to some high point and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so the wind can pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle soars above it. The eagle does not escape or hide from the storm instead it uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the stormy winds which others dread. When the storm of life or challenges hit us, we can rise above them and soar like the eagle which ride the winds of the storm. Don't be afraid of the storms or the challenges in your life. Use them to lift you higher in your life.”

I remembered Pastor Kristin's sermon remarking on the challenges we (FLC members) have been facing and thinking about the discussions and decisions soon to be at the center as the COVID pandemic continues and the Flu Season approaches. “WE” will need to soar above the storms like the eagle and I have every confidence the Holy Spirit along with our faith and the support of prayers and the FLC congregation will lift “US” higher than we ever expected.

God's Blessings,
Heidi Leiser-O'Neil



Christian Life



WORSHIP "AL FRESCO"

Join us on Sundays at 10 a.m. for worship "in open air" and appreciate the day that the Lord has made. Come as you are and be sure to be safe and wear a mask. Please bring your own lawn chair. If the weather is an issue for you, catch us online to view a recording of the service at firstlutheranelca@att.org.



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

Mary Dana, Diane Gallegos, Jeremy Gugel, Shannon Irvine, Carrie Pflugradt, Nicole Sevcik, Rachel Tripi, Dave Wegener, Nora Williquette and Kimberly Zappa

*"Start by doing what's necessary;
then do what's possible;
and suddenly you're doing the impossible."
.....Unknown*

CHURCH COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Discussions/actions held regarding:

- Break-in and theft from food pantry on 8/17
- Gift for Dave Grulke for tech work done during Covid
- Update on cleaning service instructions
- Finalizing Pastoral Call to Pastor Josh
- Winter worship and activity

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



You're invited to join our Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am. We will gather outdoors under the canopies weather permitting. Bring your lawn chair and mask and join the group. When the weather gets too cold, we'll look at other options.

If you're interested in joining us, contact the office and we'll email the lessons to you ahead of time. If you're not able to meet with us 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. We're always happy to welcome new members!

Meet Our Members...

Janell Cyrus was born on April 9th 1953 in Milwaukee, WI. Her parents were Russell and Kathleen (nee Bernard) Hackbarth. Janell was baptized, raised and confirmed at Emmaus Lutheran church Milwaukee. She has one sister, Jenny, and two brothers, Bryan and James. Janell and her late husband Earl Cyrus have one son Joshua and one daughter Jessica. She has four grandsons: Louis, Austin, Dylan and Devin, and has legal guardianship of Louis and Austin. Janell lives in West Allis. Austin was recently baptized at First Lutheran where they have been members for about three years. Janell has enjoyed being active in the church, as she has served as a lector and is currently on the church council. Pictured (L to R) are her sister Jenny, Austin's father Joshua, Austin and Janell.





A LEGACY OF FAITH

The purpose of National Grandparents Day, celebrated on the first Sunday after Labor Day, is threefold: to honor grandparents, to give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children and to help children become aware of strength, information and guidance older people can offer. *Thank you, God, for these special people who have lived long enough to become like you, in many ways.*

Enjoy the pictures below and on the next page of some of our members' grandchildren. All of our Sunday School children (right) are grandchildren, too!

SUNDAY SCHOOL HAS BEGUN!

The first "virtual" Sunday School class was held on Sept. 12th. Conversation about fear, care and comfort took place and was incorporated into the lesson. As part of caring the children made special masks for their stuffed animals to help keep both them and others safe. Several special guests attended including favorite stuffed animals, Pastor Josh as their surprise reader, and Pickles the kitten. Thank you Pastor Josh for surprising the kids with a great story and for introducing Pickles! Class was held via Zoom and turned out to be a lot of fun!



Below: Nine of Dolores' ten great-grandchildren

Lavone and granddaughter Karlie (Above) painted rocks. Joy's grandkids, Logan and Bailey (Above R). Pastor Peterson and Lois with kids and grand-

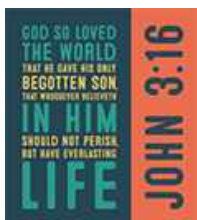


More of our wonderful grandkids!

Grulke grandkids Seth (R), Gwen (Below R) and Eli (below watching Lion King).



Phillippo grandkids: Ben and Zach (above) flanking their mom, Tracy; grandson Max with grandpup Coco (above); granddaughter Maddy (far L) and step-grandsons Alex, Matt, Nick (son-in-law) and Forrest (L)



THE BEST MEDICINE

Near the end of his life, Protestant reformer Martin Luther suffered debilitating headaches. When told about a costly medicine that might offer some relief, Luther smiled and said, "My best prescription for head and heart is that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" That Bible verse became a refrain for Luther on his deathbed. "What Spartan saying can be

compared with this wonderful brevity," he said of John 3:16. "It is the Bible itself!" After repeating the words of that Gospel-in-a-nutshell verse three times in Latin, Luther exclaimed, "They are the best prescription for headaches and heartaches!"



ALWAYS REFORMING... ESPECIALLY IN SCARY TIMES

At the end of every October we celebrate Reformation Sunday and the courageous people that helped create a new church. And at the same time we celebrate Halloween... and this year... a presidential election. Which is scarier?

Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door in Wittenburg on the day that we celebrate as Halloween, when people dress up in masks and costumes and pretend to be someone other than themselves. But the freedom that emerged on that October 31st taught people that God wanted people to truly be themselves without any “spooky” fears. Martin Luther taught us, being truly ourselves in the gospel makes humans feel liberated from fears and makes us want to liberate others from what holds them, spiritually and politically. For Luther following the gospel got him into a political debates and that can be the case for us as well. Those that followed Luther called themselves evangelicals, because they loved the gospel and sought to share it, but the names “Lutheran” and “Protestant” are evidence that our church emerged in the midst of political tension.

Of course, in America there are many narratives about what it means to be free and who is equal. I always liked the quote from Animal Farm that “some animals are more equal than others” as a critique of how communities proclaim equality in the midst of inequality. I hope that no matter what your political affiliations are, that your understanding of freedom is informed by the freedom Luther knew and loved so much. For Luther the freedom of a Christian eclipsed the fear that controls so much of our lives and society, including political fears. So many political ads and messages play on our fears and hope those fears can influence our votes—whether you fear socialism and lawlessness of people on the street or fascism and the lawlessness of the powerful! Both sides know that fear is a political weapon and exaggerating the risks and preying on those fears can lead to short-term gains, but also long-term distrust between neighbors and fellow citizens, that can poison our national health.

And in the midst of that, Luther still claims “A Christian is a perfectly free Lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject of all, subject to all”. What are we to make of that?

As we in America continue the political reformation of “forming a more perfect union”—through our participation in democracy, our votes, and sharing our views—we also remember the Lutheran Reformation is tied to God’s love for our neighbors and our service to our neighbors.

However, you vote this November, remember the courage of the first Lutherans to act and speak up to power and norms. Luther was dramatically called into the political realm and stood for the truth his conscience called him to, in the face of a bullying church and political leadership who told him to conform to their version of the truth. I hope we as Lutheran Republicans, Democrats and anything else in between, can continue to be true to our identity in light of the gospel and bring to others the light that casts out fear. When the Apostle Paul tells us to “live our life in a manner worthy of the gospel” (Philippians 1: 27) he is inviting us into the political realm. As we apply the light of the gospel to our current political challenges and cultural contexts we will always be reforming in our lives, in our church, in our communities and countries. And I hope we will always seek and share the love and truth that casts out fear, on Halloween and Election Day!

Pastor Josh



Five things I am learning from God during this time:

The most precious people on the planet are the ones that live with me (or used to live with me). Family, children, parents, relatives, close friends, roommates, etc. are people that we care for the most. Though I often take them for granted, when things get serious, I want to gather these dear people home and make sure they are ok.

Church gatherings are one of the most undervalued and underappreciated events in the whole world. This is the first time in most of our lives that we have not been able to “be” with the church every week. We have failed to recognize how important it is to be with other believers regularly. Oh, how much I have taken Sundays for granted!

Busyness has a false sense of accomplishment while stillness feels deceptively like idleness. ..Our overly busy lives have taught us to dislike times where we are sitting still and in the same place. This season is teaching me to accomplish things by staying put and sitting still. It is teaching me to reclaim something I had forgotten was important – “being” somewhere and with someone.

Prayer is vastly undervalued and significantly underutilized. .. What might happen to our families, our churches, and our world if we seized this opportunity of relative stillness and used it for concentrated, long periods of prayer? If I can’t learn to pray during a worldwide crisis, when will I learn?

Petty disagreements and the little things that tend to consume us are even pettier and smaller when compared to eternity. When I think about the things that have caused strife in our family or in the church, they are really generally very small matters that got blown out of proportion or misunderstood. When you compare them to what matters for eternity, most of them aren’t worth the breath to speak them or the energy spent to post them on social media. Were they even worth our time at all? Are they worth my time now? What value are they in this world if they have no bearing on the world to come?

Excerpts from an online article “Ten things I am learning from God during this Time”, Scott Connell, Jackson Baptist Church

First Lutheran was recognized as a 2019 Partner by the organization “Serving Older Adults”. They were one of our benevolence partners in 2019. S.O.A. operated five Milwaukee County senior centers including the lunch programs.



Thanks to Mike & Greta Plicka, John Hrovat and Sue Winters for continuing to operate our food pantry each Friday. As you probably heard, we had a break-in in August and only food was taken. They emptied the freezer and took other non-perishables. We pray for others and realize how lucky we are to have resources to carry us through during these turbulent times.

Meet Elise Hynek

Elise Hynek, who is Elsie Boese’s grand-niece and namesake, is in her second year of pastoral studies at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. This past summer she was one of the very few students whose Clinical Pastoral Education experience was not cancelled due to the pandemic. She worked at University of Colorado Aurora Hospital in the transplant/hepatology and burn units. Elise was fortunate to stay with her mother’s older brother.

This fall she is back on campus doing virtual classes. Next summer she will begin a one-year internship. Her fourth year will be back on campus. If you’d like to send Elise cards of support, contact the church office for her address.



This is in 2019 when she went hiking in the mountains near Denver with her uncle.



In Japan for her J-term cross-cultural experience.

OCTOBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

October Birthdays

10/1 Gail Sopa
 10/3 Marie LePage
 10/8 Mari Dixon
 10/11 Linda Grulke
 10/11 Donna Schwartz
 10/15 Samuel Guthrie
 10/17 Earl Casto
 10/20 Elizabeth Gray
 10/22 Gloria Grassell
 10/22 Gary Hanson

October Anniversaries

10/26 Daniel & Gail Sopa 46 yrs.

Thank You!

Thank you to Dr. Anne Richey who provided solo music for our hymn on Sept. 13th for Pastor Josh's installation service.

Announcements and Upcoming Events



We will be holding a pet blessing in Oct., but the date has not yet been set. Check our website or call the church office for the date. If you can't bring your pet, contact the office with your pet's information and they will be included in a blessing.



We will celebrate All Saints Sunday on November 1st when we will remember Myra Shields and Earl Junck, who died this past year. If you have anyone you would like remembered in prayer during the service, please contact the church office.



CLERGY APPRECIATION

October is Clergy Appreciation month, and Oct. 11th is Clergy Appreciation Day. Don't forget to let Pastor Josh know how grateful we are to have him with us!



In Jesus' parable about people who hear and live by God's words, on what did the wise man build his house?

- A. rock
- B. sand
- C. grassland
- D. soil that was free of rocks



Answer: See Matthew 7:24



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.



Turn your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Oct. 31st! Enjoy that extra hour of sleep!

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

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Please deliver by 9-29-20



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

7400 W. Lapham St.

West Allis, WI

www.firstlutheranelca.org

E-mail: firstlutheranelca@att.net

Phone: 414-476-4664

***Worship With Us:
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.***

We ask that you wear a mask to worship,
and bring a lawn chair or blanket to outdoor services.
We look forward to you joining us.

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

**God is
Awesome!**