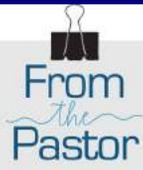


News & Views

First Lutheran Church

February, 2021



As we start a new year and prepare for our first socially distant Annual Meeting in February, I'm grateful and proud as I think of everyone in this congregation. Seriously. We have been on a journey together that none of us could have predicted. I can't believe that I started this call right before the pandemic closed the doors of our church, as well as churches throughout our community and country. What a strange time to address and get through as a community, but now almost a year later I am reflecting on this time we have spent together.

There is plenty that we can be frustrated with and disappointed with and this pandemic has created real issues in our lives and in our communities that shouldn't be overlooked. I am so grateful that while many church members have battled through being sick with covid or the fears and sadness of loved ones getting covid, none of our members have succumbed to this illness, though I know it has had a huge effect on each of our lives. But as I reflect on getting to this point and my first year of ministry with the people of First, I am proud and grateful.

We have addressed the things we can together with grace and wisdom. We've needed to be creative and nimble as we have made so many adjustments in this year. We've worshipped in many different ways and places. We've met online instead of in person. And while each step has had difficulties, and sadly not everyone can or is willing to participate, I know we are being good stewards of the church through this moment. We are caring for each other, and sacrificing in ways that may be difficult but that have gotten us safely to this point. And we are learning lessons that will help us in the future to be creative and nimble, as we bring God's mission into our neighborhoods and world in new ways.

As we await vaccines and hope for a return to normalcy in this next year, I can't wait to spend more time with each of you in person.

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ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Drive-in worship will be held on February 17th in Luther Memorial's parking lot, 84th & Beloit, at 12:00 p.m.



**ANNUAL MEETING
SUN., FEB. 7TH,
11:30 A.M.**

Our meeting this year will be held by phone or computer on Zoom. Information will be sent to active members via email or US mail prior to the meeting. Annual report is available from the church office.

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Please do everything you can to stay healthy in the coming months and continue to take seriously this virus and the new variants that are spreading.

I am grateful to God for helping us get to this point. I am grateful to the doctors, nurses and medical staffs that have learned to treat this illness and who are currently fighting back another surge of cases and hospitalizations. I lament the sickness and loss of life that our communities and nations have experienced.

There are things I know we regret or wish we could change about how this crisis was handled in the last year, but we have made it to this point. And I long for the time when being together is not just a limited number or a virtual experience, but a time when we all can be together again safely. Thank you for all the moments where you could have lost patience or treated someone else with frustration because of all you are going through, but chose to show patience and love.

We do need to speak into this world in the ways we can, and for those of you who need some help and prayers to help you do that, I want to share a prayer that I shared with our church council, known as the Serenity Prayer. It was written by Reinhold Niebuhr, a leader who called Christians to act with passion and wisdom, with peace in their hearts. It is a prayer that is often used by those in AA and Recovery.

**God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and Wisdom to know the difference.**

Each of us can only do so much but together we can help each other continue on this unexpected journey through a crisis and a pandemic. Your voice is important and you have value. And the choices you make in how you interact with others, respond to challenges, and reflect God's love and care for his children also have an impact. I'm grateful for the grace, care, and love that people in this community have shown me, whether through a card or a positive comment. Thank you all and please keep lifting others up so we can get through this and carry on in hope, together.

Pastor Josh



Bring your cans of soup for our food pantry to the drive-in worship on Superbowl Sunday, February 7th. You can also drop off food at the church office any time during the week.

Prayer of Saint Francis

*Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred,
let me bring love.*

*Where there is offence
let me bring pardon.*

*Where there is discord,
let me bring union.*

*Where there is error,
let me bring truth.*

*Where there is doubt,
let me bring faith.*

*Where there is despair,
let me bring hope.*

*Where there is darkness,
let me bring your light.*

*Where there is sadness,
let me bring joy.*

*O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying
that one is raised to eternal life.*

FEBRUARY SUNDAY SCHOOL



This month we will be making Valentines to share with people who could use a little “pick me up” as one of our February activities. Our focus thus far, which will continue into February, has been centered on how angels helped, protected and communicated in the Bible, and how they help us now. Our stories and crafts will reflect these stories. Our Sunday school continues to meet on Zoom, usually meeting twice a month on Saturday mornings around 9:00. As always, we are looking for "guest readers" for our Zoom classes. Join us, it's fun. Contact the church office if you're inspired to be one of our readers!



Karlie's Angel



Eli's Angel

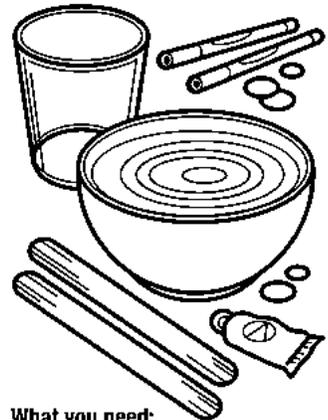
BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES



Our Tuesday morning study of Bible women will continue on Feb. 2nd & 9th at 10 a.m. Beginning on Feb. 24th, we'll move to having Lenten studies on Wednesdays at noon and 6 p.m. We use Zoom for the studies and you can Zoom from your computer or just from your telephone. Contact the office for more information. We'd love to have new members!

Loving embraces

Express your love and friendship with handcrafted bracelets.



What you need:

- Adult help
- Bowl of boiling water
- Wide wooden craft sticks
- Glass cup
- Markers, paint or decorative tape

What you do:

1. Pour about 3 cups of boiling water into a bowl. Soak sticks in the water about 30 minutes.
2. Remove sticks and slowly, gently bend them into a curve.
3. To maintain the shape, place curved sticks inside a glass cup overnight to dry completely.
4. Remove and decorate the bracelets, which make fun Valentine's Day gifts.



Is prayer your steering wheel
or your spare tire?

...Corrie ten Boom

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Operation Christmas Stocking is a year around project that provides gift bags for Serenity Inn, visitors to First Lutheran's Food Pantry and stockings filled with age appropriate items for their children/grandchildren. You can help us out by donating the following items:

For men and women: Socks, toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, bar soap, travel toiletries, gloves and hats for men, pocket tissues

For children: Coloring books and activity books (they don't have to be a Christmas theme), crayons or magic markers, mittens, toothbrushes/toothpaste, small toys (Matchbox cars, Playdoh, card games etc.)

We also except cash donations to purchase the above items.



Thanks From..

The residents of Serenity Inns, some of whom told the director it was the best Christmas they ever had, after receiving the gift bags from Operation Christmas Stocking.

From one resident:

The meaning of Christmas has always been something that I struggled to define. This year, the meaning of Christmas became clear to me by the kindness of people I don't even know, but now appreciate and consider friends of mine.

First, I'd like to say thank you, thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart. For this recovering guy it could not have been more special. What all of you have done is take the bitterness of the holidays away. Carrying this feeling the way I did, for as long as I did, made me believe it was permanent. As a matter of fact it may have even been a part of why I never felt I belonged or why I chose to use drugs in the first place.

This Christmas when I woke up, I saw packages full of love, personal care, sheer goodness and angel-like thought. From the beginning I have felt that Serenity Inns is different. You have all confirmed that feeling.

It is said that it is never the physical gift that counts but the thought that counts. Well your thoughts are written all over my heart. And I would like you to know that you've made a friend and I don't take saying that lightly. My hope is that every holiday from here on will mirror this one. The only difference I'd like to make or offer, is that I would like to be the one spreading Christmas cheer and doing things for others. It felt really special getting gifts and encouragement but now I'd like to be on the other side of the table and be a joy and peace giver like all of you.

Again I'd like to say thank you for being who all of you are, and please be proud that this house and I, for one, won't be the same.

Your friend, Willie





THE SOUL OF CHRISTIANITY

A Christ-centered life does not mean a life in which one sings hymns, reads Scripture and edifies his neighbors by hanging texts on the walls. One does not become a Christian by doing a good deed a day, nor by go-getting for religion, nor by engaging in economic and political reform movements, even though these things are done from the noblest of human motives. A Christian is one who, believing that Christ is the Son of God, has that Christ-life in his soul. —Fulton Sheen

First Lutheran Scholarship Fund



Members of First Lutheran Church are eligible to apply for a Scholarship Grant. Grants are awarded to College students (priority given to accredited Lutheran Colleges), ELCA Seminary students and persons attending workshops, seminars, educational classes and other church related training opportunities. Scholarship Grant Guidelines and application forms can be obtained by contacting the First Lutheran Church office.

GREETINGS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST:

2021 has finally arrived after a long, struggling and challenging 2020. Challenges continue to exit for the Church Council as we move forward toward safe worship and any prospective opportunities, working with the community agencies to remain current on the COVID crisis statutes, along with the other ELCA churches within our cluster.

The nominating committee is actively seeking those that feel to answer the call to serve on the Mission Exploration Team and/or the FLC Council leadership role. PLEASE allow the Holy Spirit to talk to your heart, mind and soul and listen with intent to the call of service in the capacity of interest.

I want to share Hebrews 3:17---"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no benefit to you".

Serving our Lord and Savior is rewarding and when HE has given so much for us, service is a simple thank you. Serving as Council President has been an honor, amazing learning opportunity and spiritual growth experience. Thank you to the Council, Pastor Josh and the FLC congregation.

Blessings,
Heidi Leiser-O'Neil, Council President

Meet Our Members...

Susan Winter was raised in West Allis and has three brothers - one of them is Mike Plicka. Greta is "my terrific sister-in-law". Susan belonged to First Lutheran until she met her late husband, Rick. He was Episcopalian and she joined him in his church. On January 1, 2007, they retired to Horseshoe Bend, Arkansas. When Rick passed way in May of 2018, Susan moved back to West Allis to be with her family. She returned to First Lutheran and is so happy to be back - and were happy to have her as she's a regular volunteer for our food pantry. Susan enjoys reading, doing crossword puzzles, listening to various music, and especially spending time with her 4 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.





How do we show love?

*(clockwise from left)
We show love in a 70
year marriage
(Warren & Joan
Hirschinger,
2/15/51), by caring
for family, caring for
animals, loving our
grandchildren and
cooking for family.
Love in so many
ways!*



I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

John 13:34





February Birthdays

- 2/1 Shirley Armato
- 2/10 Nora Kocan
- 2/14 Kent Nicolet
- 2/15 Thomas Herbert
- 2/25 Lavone Reis

February Anniversaries

- 2/15 Warren & Joan Hirschinger 70 yrs.



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

- Carline Erickson, Diane Gallegos, Dale Hedman, Joan Hirschinger, Ben Miller, Jim Ribnek, Mary Selner, Jan Stasiak, Rachel Tripi, Cooper Venticue, Kimberly Zappa and Becky

Supporting Our Church - It's Easy!

First Lutheran offers Simply Giving, through which you can donate weekly or monthly without having to write out checks. You can also make donations on our website. For more information contact Dave Grulke or the church office.



Be sure to "Like" First Lutheran on Facebook and share with your friends!

Friendly Reminder

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.



What was the name of Moses' wife?

- A. Miriam
- B. Jochebed
- C. Zipporah
- D. Leah



Answer: See Exodus 2:21.

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

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Permit No. 3633

Mailed on 1-25-21

Electronic Service Requested

Dated Material
Please deliver by 1-31-21



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

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***Worship With Us Online at:
www.firstlutheranelca.org***

Please check our website for information on
our weekly worship services.

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



Journey Through Lent

If you no longer wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please contact the church office.