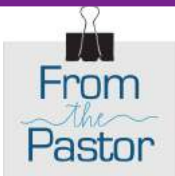


# News & Views

First Lutheran Church

March, 2021



## Good News! The Mission Planning Team Is Being Formed!

After its approval at the First Lutheran Annual Meeting in February we will be moving forward in the creation of a new team that will focus on how we meet this moment with the gifts God has given us and the vision and mission God has put before us!

I get excited when I talk about the Mission Planning Team, because it comes from the initial proposal that I presented to the Council and Call Committee last year at this time. In that proposal, I charted out how I was sensing God calling me to First Lutheran and the ways I felt I could use my background and training to best support this community, at this particular moment in its life. I decided to present this proposal at the start of my call, because I wanted to hear whether this congregation felt that call too! And you did!

### But what was that proposal?

As I listened and talked with leaders while discerning this call, I assessed that while you would not need to have a full Mission Exploration Team (MET) to be formed, the way churches do in the interim process, I felt that some of the lessons and learnings of Mission Exploration would help First Lutheran at this time. This would give First a structured way to look at our past experience, our present community and context, and the values and identity we choose to carry with us into the future.

I would supplement the MET Process with some of the useful tools, practices and knowledge I've received in my training as an ELCA Mission Developer, Interim Ministry Network, as a Community Organizer through the PICO Network (People Empowering Communities through Organizing). I want more people to know what I know and to help equip the team for their work, but this will also help us to be great leaders in the congregation and community. These sessions will cover some of the topics of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Discipleship that I talked about in my proposal.

Our time together as a Mission Planning Team will be centered in prayer as we invite the Holy Spirit and God's Wisdom into our work and discernment. Learning to listen to God helps us listen to others and the world around us.

*Continued p. 2*



## PREPARING FOR HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday - March 28  
Maundy Thursday - April 1  
Good Friday - April 2  
Easter Sunday - April 4

For times and locations of Holy Week worship services, please check our First Lutheran website:  
[www.firstlutheranelca.org](http://www.firstlutheranelca.org)

And like the disciples being sent out two by two, we will send out team members to listen and learn in specific ways based on what they are most interested in and what they feel most called to learn about.

- Some team members will learn more about churches in our neighborhood and how our story and purpose can thrive in the midst of them and how we can work together to serve the needs of the neighborhood.
- Others will focus on possibilities for collaboration and church redevelopments, studying creative ways this works in other places, and participating in a recently formed Area Ministry Strategy dialogue with pastors and leaders of four other ELCA congregations in West Allis. And we may find ourselves invited into mission exploration work with other congregations that are doing that at the same time we are.
- Other team members could be called to engage in the work of the synod and the ELCA, to review and experience resources that they are recommending. This can include participating in events like the Together in Mission Gatherings in February, Anti-Racism Trainings or reviewing resources provided to congregations that we often just don't know about.
- Others could study new models and best practices for being church, in our denomination and outside of it, to inspire us and give us ideas.

We will bring our work back to the larger group and the congregation and in the process, I hope the MPT, shaped by what we are hearing and learning, can become the heart of our community as we move into the future and invite more people in.

Like a MET, we want the team to be representative of the congregation, and have a diversity of demographics, experiences and opinions. Through the Nominating Committee process for Council we also talked to people about being on the MPT and I have been very encouraged by the response. The team will be nominated by the Council at our February meeting, but we won't get started in earnest until March, so if you are still interested in joining this group just let the office know and I'll reach out to you about it!

I hope you will consider being a part of this exciting and valuable experience!

Pastor Josh

**Bible Quiz**

As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, they longingly remembered some of the foods they'd had in Egypt. Which foods were not mentioned?

- A. carrots and potatoes
- B. onions and garlic
- C. fish and leeks
- D. melons and cucumbers



Answer: See Numbers 11:4-6

**Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,**

*Psalm 25:2---"Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."*

This is one of my favorite Bible verses and one that I repeat many times, especially during times of difficulty, times of change and uncertainty but also for times when experiencing success and positive results for God is our Savior and hope today and always.

Thank you to all who participated in our virtual annual meeting. A special thank you to Dave for your expertise and efforts so that we could all access and participate and Pastor for support and guidance---FLC is blessed with your presence. The Holy Spirit guided and directed our thoughts, discussions and decisions with His divine intervention and wisdom, and will continue to do so as brothers and sisters in Christ of FLC move forward into the next year. I have every confidence that we are guided by Jesus for the betterment of His kingdom. We will meet any challenges with wisdom and strength and the spiritual needs of each other as a Christian community and for those not here yet seeking God's word, comfort and blessings.

May God continue to bless us and keep us all safe and healthy in His loving hands and care.

**Blessings,  
Heidi Leiser-O'Neil**

# Christian Life

## MARCH SUNDAY SCHOOL



Our focus will continue to be centered on how angels helped, protected and communicated in the Bible, and how they help us now. In Feb. the class made valentines for some of our homebound members (below) and had fun making snow angels outside the church. Our stories and crafts will reflect these stories. We continue 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!



## BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES



Studying Scripture together can help us see God's light in our lives during our Lenten journeys and I hope you will join us for our Lenten Series on the theme of light. Sessions will take place on Wednesdays at 12 noon and 6 p.m. Please RSVP to participate and you will receive a link and phone number to use to join in these zoom sessions!

**Session 1: The Light of Truth** - Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>  
Being honest with God means being honest with ourselves. During Ash Wednesday we hear the words of Psalm 51 attributed to David, and remember the story of the Prophet Nathan shining the light of truth on him in a way that led to repentance.

**Session 2: The Light of Liberation** - Mar. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
"Then your light will break forth like the dawn... and your night will become as noonday" Isaiah 58: 8-10. We will study the call of God to a communal fast of service and liberation. This is the section of scripture that is posted on the walls of First Lutheran's food pantry.

**Session 3: The Light of Christ** - Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>  
Jesus is referred to and refers to himself as light. What does this mean for him, in the Biblical narrative and in our lives?

**Session 4: Seeing the Light** - Mar. 17<sup>th</sup>  
Jesus' healings of blind people often refer to an understanding of light and a call to have eyes to see the kingdom of God all around us.

**Session 5: Let Your Light Shine** - Mar. 24<sup>th</sup>  
Our baptisms end with the call to "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt 5: 16). How do we understand our call to share, reflect, and magnify the light of God in our own lives?



### **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 and grandchildren. Lists of needed items are available from the church office.

### **THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS!**

We've been contacted by non-members who have offered to volunteer with the pantry and we are grateful for their willingness to serve. At this time we're limiting the number of people in the building, and don't need extra help. However.....we're hoping that when the Covid risk has lessened, we'll be able to open up and will have more need for help. Thanks to those who have contacted us! We'll keep your information and notify you when the time comes!

### **FRIENDLY PHONE CALL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**



While social distancing helps keep seniors safe from exposure to illness, it can take a toll on their mental health. According to the Univ. of Chicago, the coronavirus pandemic has made about one third of adults age 70 and older lonelier than usual. To help decrease the feelings of loneliness and increase positive community engagements, Eras created the Weekly Friendly Phone Call Program. Volunteers are matched with one or more senior clients and engage in friendly weekly phone calls. Currently nearly 300 seniors are on our waiting list to receive a weekly friendly phone call. To volunteer, call (414) 488-6505 for Milwaukee Co. or (262) 522-2402 in Waukesha Co.



### **WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE PANTRY?**



During the pandemic the Food Pantry at First Lutheran Church has only been closed five times. Some of these closures were due to Holidays and one Friday in March was to develop a plan that would make it possible for us to serve our community in a safe manner. Throughout the pandemic we have helped an average of 17 families each week with a bag of food and another 17 people come for bakery, meat, bread, fruits, vegetables and eggs. February has been a challenging month due to the dangerous wind chills and cold weather. The frigid temperatures did not stop one loyal food pantry client from riding his bike from Muskego for his weekly visit (right). We are grateful for the support we receive from Feeding America, Sendik's Wauwatosa, and donations in cash or food from area schools, churches and members of our congregation. We would not be able to operate without the help of our volunteers that pick up food, bread, and assist during our Friday operating hours. We will continue to make adjustments as needed due to pandemic and weather issues.



*Trust in the Lord and do good;  
dwell in the land  
and enjoy safe pasture.  
Psalm 37:3*



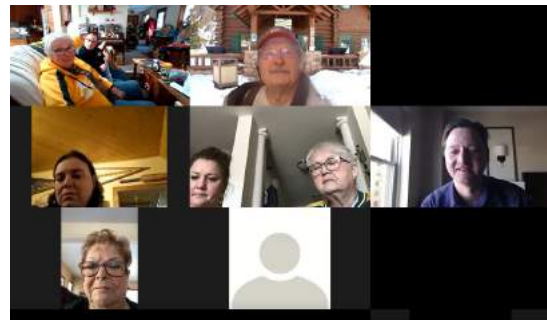
## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Our Zoom based annual meeting was attended by 25 members. Below is a summary of the actions taken at the meeting:

- Congratulations to the following members who were elected to serve a one year term on the Council, Heidi Leiser, Colleen Siarnicki, Susan Winter and Earl Casto.
- Approved a resolution to change the 2021 Council meeting schedule from monthly to quarterly.
- The 2021 proposed budget was amended to include \$11,500.00 in musician fees for music for services.
- A decision was made to send 100% of our designated benevolence donations to the Greater Milwaukee Synod to support many worldwide ministries in 2021. The Endowment Fund committee will consider donations to local initiatives.
- Approved a resolution to create a Mission Planning Team to work with Pastor Josh for the next year to discover what God is calling us to do in service and ministry.

All council actions for 2020 were approved.

Right: Just some of the people visible on the screen for our Zoom meeting.



## Meet Our Members...

As I thought back, church has always been a part of my life. I was born and raised in what was North Milwaukee. A community made up of mostly Germans & Russians who left their country and found their way to Milwaukee. My great-grandparents and grandparents were Germans who lived in a small part of Russia. They left quickly when the Russians wanted my grandfather in the Russian Army. I was baptized and confirmed at North Trinity church. Every Sunday Pastor Liesner had one of his three sermons in German. Mom sang in choir, grandma was in Ladies Aid and I taught Sunday school after I was confirmed. I don't recall my great-grandparents going to church, but I remember them singing out of their German hymnal and reading the Bible. I still have both books, though they are well worn and brittle with age. I learned some of those old songs in German and am sad to say I don't speak it anymore. We all lived there until my dad came home from from the war when I was three and we moved down the block to a house that my dad built. I went to Custer H.S. and music was my favorite thing. I got to go to two all city chorus events. I moved to West Allis at age 22 and my neighbor Marie Peterson brought me to First Lutheran. My church family has seen me through so many phases of my life. Many of my 1st Lutheran friends have passed away, but I have beautiful memories of them. I have served on council several times, was in charge of Sunday school, vacation Bible school and helped with so many projects I can't count. My favorite was the Christmas cookie sale. I was in choir for about 25 yrs. and so enjoyed the special friendships gained through the years. Music was always part of my life: Grandpa played violin, mom played accordion & organ and her sister played piano. None of them ever had a lesson. I was married for 47 years to a wonderful man and have two daughters and three step children. I have 3 grandchildren and 5 great -grands. My children are truly the wind beneath my wings. Because of three failed hip surgeries I can no longer do the physical things I would like to do. I garden when I can, embroider when I can't, and enjoy a large variety of crafts. I also enjoy theatre (musicals of course). My hope is to one day volunteer at Sunset playhouse Now, like so many of you I am home, and glad to be there too. I pray everyday that this crazy thing will end soon. Wishing blessings and good health to all! .....*Sandy Wymelenberg*





## Valentine Love is in the Air!



*Valentine Fun.....* (Clockwise from top left) Hazel and Harvey share a valentine giggle; Barb's new grandson Landon decorates valentine cookies, Jeanie's dog Benji wears his valentine finest as he greets people at her decorated door.

**Pastor Josh and Sarah are getting married in March!** "This engagement ring is symbolic of the winding path we've had to navigate through this pandemic year and non-traditional wedding planning, with blue sapphires reminding us of Lake Michigan, on the shores of which these two people from opposite coasts met and fell in love! We look forward to having a reception with First Lutheran when it is safer to do so."




**TIME TO ORDER EASTER FLOWERS**

Contact the church office if you'd like to order flowers. Deadline for orders and payment is March 19th.

Single Lily -\$12  
 Double Lily -\$25  
 Hyacinths, Daffodils or Tulips - \$12  
 Blue or Pink Hydrangea - \$25  
 Assorted Daisy Mums - \$15  
 Azalea - \$22






Easter Flowers

**PUZZLE** 

**BIRDS IN THE WORD**

The Bible mentions many kinds of birds. How many have you seen?

Directions: Unscramble the bird names, using the Bible references and pictures as clues. Then insert the final unscrambled bird name to complete the passage below.

	VDEO	_____	(Genesis 8:8)
	LWO	_____	(Psalm 102:6)
	GEELA	_____	(Isaiah 40:31)
	TOKRS	_____	(Jeremiah 8:7)
	APROSWRS	_____	

"Are not five \_\_\_\_\_ sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ... Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many \_\_\_\_\_."

LUKE 12:6-7, NIV

### March Birthdays

- 3/2 Audrey Enloe
- 3/3 Jason Zehe
- 3/4 David Grulke
- 3/11 Joyce Favre
- 3/12 Jonathan Flores
- 3/14 Sharon Smith
- 3/15 Erin Anderson
- 3/15 Wesley Anderson
- 3/16 Joan Hirschinger
- 3/18 Isabella Dixon
- 3/18 Katelyn Kocan
- 3/27 Dolores Hurst
- 3/28 Samuel Marquez

### March Anniversaries

3/24 Lori & Joel Marquez 13 yrs.

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



Carleen Erickson, Diane Gallegos, Dale Hedman, Joan Hirschinger, Ben Miller, Jan Pleur, Rachel Tripi, Kimberly Zappa and Becky

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.



### WHERE DOES OUR BENEVOLENCE GO NOW?

At our Annual Meeting on Feb.7, we voted to send all Benevolence to the Greater Milwaukee Synod, with the Endowment Committee looking into supporting outside agencies with Endowment funds. These are some of the programs supported by our Synod:

**Breaking the Chains Church** – a Lutheran congregation inside the Felmers Chaney Correctional Center

**Care to Military Families** – Synod support to help returning combat veterans reintegrate into their communities

**Diakonia** – A two year faith formation and theological education program

**El Salvador** – strongly focusing on building mutual relationships in which we learn from each other and grow in faith together

**Lutheran Campus Ministry** - Campus ministry helps students grow in a faith that addresses their head, heart, and hands

**Lutheran Social Services** - empowers people to live their best lives by offering a path to recovery from addiction or mental illness, a home that's safe and affordable, a family to thrive in, independence and a life that is truly their own

**Meru** - A partnership between the Greater Milwaukee Synod and the Diocese of Meru-Tanzania which includes partnerships between churches, support of health care clinics and the Mt. Meru Coffee Project

**Outreach for Hope** – supports life-giving ministries that serve with the people of low income communities in the Greater Milwaukee Synod

**Project RETURN** – helps ex-incarcerated men and women make a positive, permanent return to community, family and friends

**Women of the ELCA** – making quilts, school and personal kits for distribution in the U.S. and around the world, as well as working to support efforts to end child sex-trafficking

First Lutheran Church  
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Please check our website for information on  
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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.