

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

September 2021



**FROM THE
PASTOR**

TAKING ON THE CHALLENGES OF AN ABUNDANT LIFE

Have you ever heard the famous Nike slogan “Just Do It”? Well, I have a friend from college named James who embodies this saying. When I first met James, he was visiting the school I was attending, Trinity Lutheran College outside of Seattle. I found out that he had been on the cover of the Lutheran Magazine that summer because he had biked across a large portion of the United States to support Lutheran Prison Ministries. I found out it was pretty common for James to do things like this. If he got an idea in his head he said, “Why not?” rather than worry about reasons not to do something. True, this sometimes got him and others into a bit trouble, but I admire this trait in James and others. People who try new things and embrace challenges remind me what it means to live an abundant life in Christ.

I remember the time James and two other friends tried to convince me to spontaneously climb Mount Rainier. This is the mountain that people climb to train for Mount Everest. It is so big that it can be seen from almost anywhere in Western Washington. Had they trained...“No”. Did they have equipment?...“No”, but they could get some. Did they have to turn around in a snowstorm...“Yes”. Did all 6’5” of James have to carry my 5’5” friend down half the mountain after he got injured...“Yes”! The last time I talked with James, he nonchalantly mentioned that he was donating a kidney the next day. Was it to a family member or someone close to him? No, it was someone he knew from church but he wasn’t a jerk so why not.

Recently, I got a text from another college friend that let me know that James was still being James, though a bit more mellow these days, but now his son Shep was carrying on the tradition. James and Shep, I found out, were featured on the CBS Evening News. Shep at eight years old had gotten inspired by stories of James’ biking and loved biking with his dad, so he asked if they could spend the summer biking to the Statue of Liberty together. The only challenge was they live in Seattle. But they talked it over and made a plan and they actually did it. That was in 2019, but the trip was cut short when Shep started getting headaches on the road and James took him to a hospital. It turned out that Shep had diabetes. But that didn’t stop them this summer and CBS News did a story on them in June and in August when they completed their journey.

So that is a long introduction to say I am inspired by James and Shep enough to say “Just Do It”... only with slightly smaller goals! I am biking in the Outreach for Hope Fundraiser in September along with my stepson Paul. Do I have a bike yet?... “No, but I know someone who can get me one”. We would love it if you cheer us on, join us or make a pledge to support the wonderful ministries of Outreach for Hope, which do a world of good for those in need and are housed and supported in urban ELCA Congregations. And I hope that you may find inspiration from James and Shep and others in life who say “Just Do It” as you participate in church activities or other new experiences.

.....*Pastor Josh*



Thank You!

NOTES RECEIVED FROM RECIPIENTS OF ENDOWMENT FUND DONATIONS.

“On behalf of the residents, staff and board of **SERENITY INNS**, we want to thank you for your generous financial gift given in August, 2021. This gift assists us in meeting the daily needs of our recovering residents and helps us provide quality programming as they learn to live in recovery. We are grateful for your partnership and we sincerely appreciate your commitment to our ministry and mission. Blessings, Carla Stensberg, Treasurer.”

“Thank you for your very generous donation on July 13, 2021 to **STREET ANGELS**. Street Angels is honored to be the recipient of your charitable contribution. Our goal is to make an immediate impact on Milwaukee’s most vulnerable population while also providing guidance toward a brighter path for their future. Through your generosity we are able to reach this goal three nights per week to provide nutritious meals, blankets, clothing, emergency needs, a support system, HOPE, and most importantly, connections to resources for shelter and housing. Gratefully, Eva Welch & Shelly Sarasin, Co-Founders.”

“Thank you very much for your generous gift on July 13 for programming for older adults. Your donation allows older adults in our community to engage in meaningful experiences which improve the quality of their lives. We are so grateful for your generosity, and we look forward to aging well together! With gratitude, Cathy Wood, President/CEO, **SERVING OLDER ADULTS.**”

“Thanks so much for the donation to **AN EXCEPTIONAL CHORUS**. We really appreciate it! The money will be used for the 2022 chorus trip to Nashville. Often, this is the only vacation the members get. Thanks so much, Linda Grulke, Secretary.”



Faithbook Quip

God is my boss
and I am his employee.
I'm very thankful for my everyday
salary called blessings..
And a reward called Eternal Life.
Amen
- Positivity in Life



This is the day
the Lord has made



SUPPORT PASTOR JOSH!

Pastor Josh is going to participate in this year’s Outreach for Hope Ride, Run, Walk for the First Lutheran Team. Want to join him? Contact the church office. You can sponsor Pastor Josh by using an envelope in the narthex.

Christian Education

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION



During the Mission Planning Teams' Exploration of Our Context, our Mission Education Sessions will focus on Tools for Listening to Our Community and Understanding People.

In order to reach out to others effectively, it is important to know who you are so you can fully see and hear others, their strengths and their needs. In the next two months, I invite you to stay after church with the Mission Planning Team and learn more about yourself and how to see and hear others in your own life and our communities.

Sept 5: How to See a Congregation:
Church Life Cycles

Sept 12: Intro to Collaborative Ministry

Sept 19: Pastor Josh on Vacation

Sept 26: Understanding People:
Wholeness Wheel



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



On Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room we're continuing our study of the book "In The Shadow of the Galilean". Contact Pastor Josh or the church office for more information.



GUEST SPEAKERS AT FIRST LUTHERAN

On two consecutive Sundays in August, we had guest speakers who represented not only our Synod, but the Lutheran church in El Salvador. Rev. Matt Short, Asst. to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, shared with us the importance of listening in carrying out God's mission. He took a picture of the green banners we have behind the altar and said he would use them as an example throughout the synod.

On Aug. 15th, Linda Muth, spoke during the sermon about Jesus as the Bread of Life, and at Adult Ed about Los Heroes, a church in El Salvador, and their sewing school's mission to create "Days for Girls" kits for the community.



Over the past two months the Mission Planning Team has been reflecting on "Our Story" as we have reviewed and studied the history of First Lutheran and learned more about what it means to be a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Greater Milwaukee Synod. We learned a lot that will inspire us as we continue in our work, exploring "Our Context" in September and October before discerning Our Calling as we close out 2021 and prepare to present our mission recommendations to the Council and Congregation at our Annual Meeting in February.

I wanted to share some of what we learned about Our Story. Many of us learned that First Lutheran was formed after several families and Rev B.C. Qually left Mount Hope Lutheran. We don't yet know exactly what the dispute was about, but we know that these members of Mount Hope felt strongly enough to begin meeting in homes as they determined what type of faith community they would form. They applied to become a congregation in the Norwegian Lutheran Church but were denied, because they didn't want two congregations in dispute so close geographically. It took two years of negotiations between denominations before being accepted as a congregation in the United Lutheran Church in America. Pastor Qually was able to transfer to the ULCA and was installed as the first pastor of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church on November 7, 1926, but they weren't accepted as a congregation in that denomination until September of 1927 and weren't named First until 1928.

One of the most intriguing parts of this origin story made First a unique Lutheran congregation right from the beginning. During an era when many denominational lines were defined by ethnicity as much as theology, First became a Norwegian Lutheran church inside of a German Lutheran denomination. I wonder if First would have emerged with more of an appreciation for diversity of backgrounds and theological perspectives than many ethnically myopic churches of this immigrant era. First Lutheran also created ecumenical partnerships in its early years, worshipping in a church rented from a Presbyterian

Congregation on Orchard and 73rd Street, and after becoming First English Lutheran Church of West Allis, they purchased the building in the Summer of 1929.

Another important moment in the history of First came during a time of crisis. After weathering the first of years of the Great Depression and even making several improvements to the church building, First did not have financial resources to support a new pastor. However, the Board of Missions and Synod called a Mission pastor named F.A. Bloch in the Summer of 1936 to address the needs of this young congregation and stabilize its membership and finances. Though Pastor Bloch was only pastor at First for a year, his energetic leadership led to a reorganization of the congregation and refinancing debt. In the following years the congregation grew while paying off its debts, despite several changes in pastoral leadership.

I believe God had a hand in keeping this congregation going, and all those who came to the church and were blessed by its ministry can thank the short "interim" work of Pastor Bloch for setting a new course. As one of the few trained interim pastor in the Greater Milwaukee Synod and currently as a term pastor here at First, it is heartening to know that the very existence of First was ensured through the call of an early interim pastor, and the association with the larger church who supported that ministry. There are many other stories of courage and leadership that we dug into as part of our exploration of First's history including identifying and coordinating one of the first major service ministry collaborations in West Allis with five neighboring congregations to form H.O.L.I.E. (Housing of Low Income Elderly). In the early 70's First Lutheran also took initiative in forming one of the first food pantries in the region. We are blessed by the memories of these stories and key moments in First's history. When we remember God's faithfulness in the past it helps remind us that God is with us still as we discern what is next for this congregation.

.....Pastor Josh

Bits and Pieces

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FRIENDLY PHONE CALL PROGRAM



ERAS has a need for volunteers to place calls as a part of their Friendly Phone Call Program.

The Friendly Phone Call Program seeks to decrease social isolation and reduce the feelings of loneliness in their senior clients. Though guidelines are constantly changing regarding COVID-19, the Friendly Phone Call Program allows clients a safe and consistent way to socially engage with others from the comfort of their own homes.

There are currently 70 clients in Milwaukee County and 50 clients in Waukesha County in need of a Friendly Phone Call volunteer.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact:

Milwaukee County: Gabby Huff at Gabby.Huff@eras.org or (414) 488-6931

Waukesha County: Marisa Strothenke at Marisa.Strothenke@Eras.org or (262) 522-2402

Sam and Karlie shared special guinea pig time with Lavone (right).



Right after being handed their cream puffs by Gov. Evers, Deb & Steve Johnson posed for pics with the sign - and then Deb got distracted and tipped her cream puff on the floor!

LIBRARY SQUARE MINISTRY

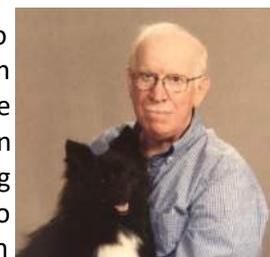


Pastor Josh will be conducting communion services at Library Square on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:30. It would be great to have a member go along each month to assist with communion and build relationships there. If anyone is interested, please contact Pastor Josh or the church office.

Meet Our Members

We are grateful for Steve's presence among us and that coming to First and listening to education hours made him want to become a member. Steve lives near First Lutheran and recently retired after a career working for electronic companies in the Milwaukee area. Like Pastor Josh, Steve loves Scandinavian Folk Schools and has participated in courses at the Clearing School in Door County. Steve is an avid birder and is also a big fan of all the Milwaukee and Wisconsin sports teams. Steve has had a subscription to the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra for many years. Steve's brother and nephew are in the catering and restaurant business.

Steve comes to us after being an active member of Our Savior Lutheran on Wisconsin Avenue which closed in 2020. Steve was the head usher at Our Savior and has also participated in choir in the past. He also supported Our Savior's other neighborhood outreach programs. One of Pastor Josh's good friends from seminary was a member there as well. And as we found out after some detective work, our other new member Jenny was also a member of Our Savior where she was baptized as a baby. So the Holy Spirit seems to be connecting First and Our Savior of late!



How We Give Back

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Operation Christmas Stocking is a year-round project that provides gift bags for residents of Serenity Inns and the clients of First Lutheran's Food Pantry, as well as stockings filled with age appropriate items for the clients' children/grandchildren. We would like to thank the First Lutheran Church Endowment Committee for their generous donation to our program. You can help us out by shopping to fill the bags and stockings. Contact the office for a list of needed items.

Respectfully submitted,
Co/Chairs Greta Plicka/Colleen Siarnicki

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands: one for helping yourself, the other for helping others..... Audrey Hepburn



On August 18th we received a donation from Pick and Save. They donated their bag donation to our Food Pantry. Thank you to Mike Temke and Pastor for making two trips to the Pick and Save on 84th and Bluemound to pick up more than 100 bags of food filled with peanut butter, jelly, soup, pasta, and so much more.



We continue to be grateful for the support we receive from Feeding America, Woman's Club of West Allis 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.

Beginning in October, we plan to change the food pantry hours to 10-11:30am. Members of the congregation are welcome to visit us on Friday mornings.



Mike and Greta (above left), Judi and John (left) along with Mike and Bob (right) worked hard on Aug. 18th transporting, unloading and sorting the food donations from shoppers at the Pick 'n Save on Lyon St. in Milwaukee. Thanks to manager Rose for thinking of us!



This 'n That Around Here

September Birthdays

9/3 Jeanette Zeinert
9/12 Jesse Rofritz
9/14 Jeanie Stummeier
9/18 Sharan Kruschka
9/22 Mary McNeal
9/27 Dale Phillippo
9/30 Werner Bayer
9/30 Sharon Phillippo



September Anniversaries

9/22 Colleen & Spencer Siarnicki 20 yrs.



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

Scott Ehlers, Doris Ehlert, Cindy Halver-son, Joan Hirschinger, Cindy Kuhs, Carol Leonard, Dawn Lychwick, Mary McNeal, Judi Parworth, Jim Ribnek, Christina Wil- liams and Becky.

We extend our sympathy to Sharon Phil-ippo and her family following the death of her sister, Carla Syut.

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

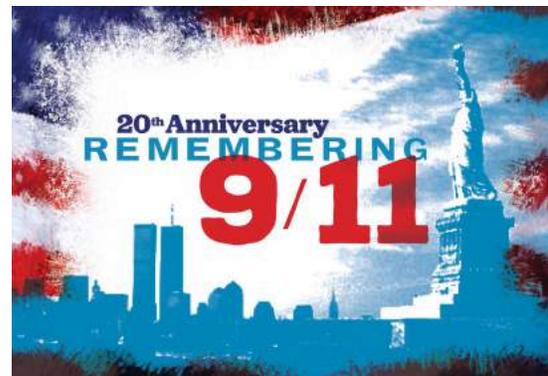


How many times in the Old Testament do people cross a body of water on dry ground?

- A. once
- B. twice
- C. three times
- D. four times



Answer: See Exodus 14; Joshua 3; 2 Kings 2



A Prayer for 9/11

God of love we place in your loving arms the thousands of innocent lives that were lost on that unforgettable morning of September 11, 2001. We also remember the courage of the countless men and women who put their lives at risk in order to rescue, alleviate and bring solace to the afflicted. Help us to continue to work for a world free from every form of hatred, violence and ignorance. May terrorism -- in all its forms -- disappear from the face of the earth. Amen.

- Fr. Alberto Cutie

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.

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

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

7400 W. Lapham St.
West Allis, WI

E-mail: firstlutheranelca@att.net

Phone: 414-476-4664

Worship With Us:

In Person on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Online at:

www.firstlutheranelca.org

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

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

**First Lutheran Sunday School
begins on**

**SATURDAY!
SEPTEMBER 11th
At 9:00 a.m.**

**Sunday School will take place
every other Saturday.
This year's theme will be angels.
All children pre-school thru 5th
grade are welcome!**



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