

News & Views

*First Lutheran Church
October 2021*



GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS... AND GENEROUS HEARTS!

Every September the ELCA invites congregations to participate in a God's Work Our Hands Saturday or Sunday that is often spent doing a community service experience with a worship service on site rather than at the church. We didn't take that step this year, but we did have a special Saturday service on September 18th to lift up all the service that our members do in this community and beyond, and all the opportunities our members have to serve others.

We gathered around Scripture that rings loudly in the hearts and minds of those in this church: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35) and "whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Mark 9: 37).

We are all called to be servants when we are called to be disciples. Luther said that the freedom of being a Christian meant that you were simultaneously Lord of All and Servant of All. What we do and how we give as a congregation comes from that biblical and theological call as we support hospitality and service for others in our community.

First Lutheran is supported by the generosity of our members past and present, and we also give beyond our front doors. Some of that service is hands on. Our congregation is known for our food pantry, one of the first in our area. Our homegrown ministry, Operation Christmas Stocking, has invited other congregations to open their hearts with generosity. Our Sew and Sew Quilters are preparing for their Quilt Blessing on Sunday, October 3rd, before the quilts are donated to Lutheran World Relief.

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PET BLESSING



Join us for First Lutheran's
"Blessing of the Animals"

**Saturday, October 9th
at 10:00 a.m.**

Pets must be leashed or in a carrier. Depending on the number attending, we will try to provide an individual blessing for each pet.

Some animals may be difficult to transport, so if you are not able to bring your pet, bring a photograph or fill out the Pet Blessing form available in the narthex or the church office. Return the form to church and a blessing will be said for your pet. You can also call the church office to have your pet's name added to the blessing.

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Giving is also a part of what Lutherans do and while it may not be active service it helps us be the hands and feet of Christ as we support vital ministries and organizations in our neighborhoods and around the globe. Perhaps you've seen people wearing the T-shirts "Live Generously". That's the mantra of the Lutheran fraternal organization Thrivent and members of the ELCA do just that, giving more per member to disaster relief and other causes than any other denomination. We also support the ministries and efforts of Lutheran Services in America who through their diverse and varied organizations serve one in fifty Americans every year!

This year our benevolence was given to the Greater Milwaukee Synod and ELCA and that supports our denominational mission and ministry. And with the generous gift that is our endowment fund, we are able to give even more to Lutheran World Relief, Serenity Inn, ERAS Senior Network, Street Angels, Operation Christmas Stocking, Serving Older Adults, Outreach for Hope, An Exceptional Chorus and Los Heroes Sewing School in El Salvador. We are impacting our community in many positive ways through these gifts.

In the last month we have also promoted more ways to give locally by sponsoring Paul and I in our bike ride to raise money for Outreach for Hope and also to address relief efforts for Afghan Refugees through Lutheran Social Services and those affected by the Earthquake in Haiti and wildfires in the United States through Lutheran Disaster Response.

When we share in these efforts we are able to really make a difference in people's lives when they most need it and stand with the vulnerable who most need to know God's love through human care. I am grateful whenever First Lutheran gets right in the middle of these efforts because it is inspiring and brings us closer to Jesus, just as he taught us that when we serve those in need we also serve him.

Thank you for your service and generosity! Let's celebrate what we have done this year and cheer on new efforts to come!

Pastor Josh

VOICE FROM THE MISSION PLANNING TEAM

First Lutheran Church formed in 1925 as a group of neighbors, who had worshipped at Mount Hope, seeing a need for a new place for Lutheran worship, charitable outreach and social activities. We know this because the Mission Planning Team has been researching our church history.

But now, 96 years later, not only has the neighborhood changed, but the church has become more of service organization in addition to being a place of worship and social connections.

Having learned more about the First story now we will focus on our context in West Allis. There are 7 churches of different denominations within a 4-block perimeter of First Lutheran as well as 4 other ELCA congregations within spitting distance.

The Mission Team has set out to meet our church neighbors through visits and phone calls. We are trying to understand their philosophy, mission and where they see their place in the community. We hope this will help us to better see First Lutheran's future mission and maybe ways we can partner with our neighborhood churches more.

Pastor Josh has been leading us through lectures and discussion meetings. Pastor, Jackie and Werner attended a recent virtual conference called Inhabit put on by the Parish Collective a collaborative ministry organization based in Seattle. We heard stories of congregations from California to South Carolina to New Zealand talk about the challenges of being church and caring for our communities. Some of us are also reading a book that inspired the Parish Collective called "The New Parish".

Keep us all in your prayers and please participate in the Mission Sessions after church.

Werner Bayer



Cooper has put his mark on the timeline.
Have you?

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. 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.

Oct. 10 - Understanding People: Wholeness Wheel

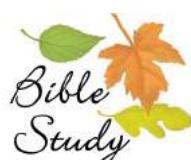
Oct. 17 - Understanding People: Love Languages

Oct. 24 - Understanding People: Personality Types

Oct. 31 - Understanding People: Multiple Intelligences



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



On Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room we're finishing our study of the book "In The Shadow of the Galilean". In mid-October we'll begin watching the video series "Chosen". Starting date will be advertised in the bulletin. Contact Pastor Josh or the church office for more information.



This Fall, the Sunday School is finishing the curriculum on angels.

The Christmas program will be a radio show. Because our student numbers are low, we need **adult volunteers who are young at heart** to participate with us. Since it will be audio only, I would like to have a contest for the congregation to guess the actors. The winner will be announced at church.

So..... interested volunteers are needed. If you're willing, let the church office know, but keep it a secret otherwise!



The New
Doors
Are In!



REMINDERS.....

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Lists of items needed for Operation Christmas Stocking are available. Contact the office if you'd like one.

October is Clergy Appreciation Month. We need to pray often and caringly for our pastor, church leaders and their families. The role is challenging, so support them spiritually and ask God to reveal his love and grace to these special servants.



Thanks to Those Who've Served

Robert Gardner was privileged to participate in Southeast Wisconsin's Stars and Stripes Honor Flight on August 28th, 2021. Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, Inc. honors veterans with a life-changing trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the memorials and experience a day of honor and thanks for their service to our country.

Robert served in the Air Force as a firefighter based in Europe during the Korean War. Many nights were spent in the forests of Southern France with the mission of containing fires of downed airplanes. His service in the Air Force fueled his interest in flying and he continued as a recreational pilot until he settled down with his family.



The honor flight was arranged by his son, Patrick Gardner who was honored to accompany his father on the flight. Covid-19 derailed Robert's earlier flight plans, but that didn't stop Stars and Stripes Honor Flight from arranging a parade to honor these men and women on August 29, 2020. This parade ran from West Allis to the War Memorial with crowds of people lining the route. The organization's attention to detail is astounding.

Finally, Robert's trip was made possible a few weeks ago in late August. He and his son arrived at General Mitchell Airport early for a 6:30am direct flight to Washington D.C.. Upon landing the veterans were greeted by volunteers who helped coordinate their next endeavor and wish them well. Visits to the various War Memorials, National Mall and Arlington Cemetery filled the day. The feeling of appreciation, respect, and honor filled each aspect of the trip, and the memories will be cherished. The culmination of the day was a welcome home parade in the main concourse of General Mitchell airport, where hundreds of people from the community gathered to cheer and honor these veterans, who so unselfishly served our Country.



Robert's closing thought is that he doesn't have words to describe how amazing the day was. *"It was truly a wonderful, wonderful day and I am so thankful to the hundreds of volunteers and my son who worked to make this possible. I am so grateful and privileged to have experienced this organization's generosity".*

Bits and Pieces

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.



Vicar Elise Hynek, Elsie Boese's great-niece, is doing her internship at Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan. We wish her a fulfilling internship and look forward to hearing more about it.



Deacon John Bennethum is doing well living in Oconomowoc, and is still keeping tabs on First Lutheran and the Tripoli Shrine Temple membership.



Joy Dowd's grandson Logan, 13, caught a 34" Northern Pike during a visit to Pewaukee Lake in September.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Your Church Council has four vacancies at this time, and it is important that they be filled with members who are willing to guide First Lutheran as we move into the future. Are you willing to serve your church? Do you have questions? Call the church office with your name and contact information and we will call you.

We are gathering information to update the audio/video capabilities of the church and we will soon be discussing options to replace our nonfunctional fire alert system. Covid 19 continues to be an issue, and will probably be so for the foreseeable future.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me.

Earl Casto, Council President

FOR LOVE OF ANIMALS



St. Francis of Assisi, known for his affection for animals, is honored on October 4. Some congregations observe this day by blessing pets, remembering that God pronounced animals — along with all creation — good. God saved not only Noah's family but animals of all kinds from the Flood. And despite Jonah's protests, God had compassion on Nineveh — "and [its] many animals" (Jonah 4:11). How intriguing that the prophet adds this point!

Care for all living creatures is clearly part of the divine character. Animals don't do anything to earn God's favor except be themselves. From this, we can learn that God pours out love unconditionally.

Bring your pets to our pet blessing on Oct. 9th (see p. 1). And if you don't have any pets, come anyway to be reminded of the love God has for all creatures.

Food For Thought....

One way Satan attacks Christians is by reminding us of our sins, both of commission (wrongdoing) and omission (neglecting to do right). And one way we can fight back is by remembering our baptism. The reformer Martin Luther recommended pondering that sacrament daily, whenever we wash our face, because "in baptism sins are drowned."



Getting dressed can serve as another frequent reminder, Luther says, because baptism is the "daily garment ... the Christian is to wear all the time." He writes, "Christ instituted holy baptism ... to clothe you with his righteousness. It is tantamount to his saying, 'My righteousness shall be your righteousness; my innocence, your innocence. Your sins indeed are great, but by baptism I bestow on you my righteousness; I strip death from you and clothe you with my life.'"

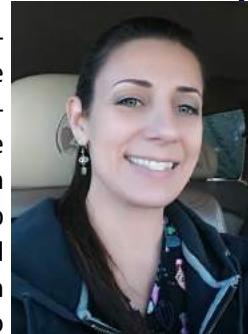
WHAT GOD IS LIKE

Before her death in 2019, Rachel Held Evans started writing a book with her young children in mind. The goal was to help them explore images for God, who is love. *What Is God Like?* (co-authored by Matthew Turner) acknowledges, "That's a very big question, one that people from places all around the world have wondered about since the beginning of time." The book highlights such biblical images for God as an eagle, a shepherd, a fort, wind, an artist, a "strong and safe" mother, and a "gentle and safe" father.

Just as Evans remained open to questions as a means to grow in faith, her book concludes: "Keep searching. Keep wondering. ... But whenever you aren't sure what God is like, think about what makes you feel safe ... brave ... loved. That's what God is like." What images for God come to your mind? Indeed, what is God like — for you?

Meet Our Members

Jenny Wudtke has returned to the Milwaukee area after living in Minnesota and Tennessee. She came to First Lutheran through her friendship with Mary McNeal and works nearby. When Jenny said she wanted to join a church, Mary brought her to First. Mary served as Jenny's baptismal sponsor in an affirmation of baptism service. Jenny's faith journey has been unique and interesting, and we are grateful that God has brought her to First. She enjoys reading the Bible and listening to sermons and Christian contemporary music. Jenny was also a lead preschool teacher for many years and has a history of rescuing animals and likes First's connection with pets. Jenny loves to write and is currently working with an agent at Christian Faith Publishing in an effort to submit her first book. It should be completed by October 15th – a date she chose in her dad's honor as that was his birthday.



On November 7, we will be celebrating the lives of those who have died during the past year. If you have names you would like remembered during the service, prayer request forms will be available in the narthex in mid-October. You can also call the church office with names.

This 'n That Around Here

October Birthdays

- 10/1 Gail Sopa
- 10/3 Marie LePage
- 10/11 Linda Grulke
- 10/11 Donna Schwartz
- 10/15 Samuel Guthrie
- 10/17 Earl Casto
- 10/22 Gloria Grassell
- 10/22 Gary Hanson



October Anniversaries

- 10/26 Gail & Dan Sopa 47 yrs.

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.

Bible Quiz

Hebrews 11 is called the Hall of Faith because it's a partial list of ancestors who lived out their belief in God. Who is named in this chapter?

- A. Adam, Eve and Seth
- B. Abel, Enoch, Noah and Sarah
- C. Moses' parents, Moses and Rahab
- D. Deborah, Bathsheba and Huldah
- E. A and B
- F. B and C
- G. C and D



"I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." —Martin Luther



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

Scott Ehlers, Doris Ehlert, Cindy Halverson, Joan Hirschinger, Mary McNeal, Judi Parworth, Barbara Pechacek, Roger and Tina Ritz, Becky, Kurt and Sylvia.

We extend our sympathy to Leona Buth and her family following the death of her husband, Harold.



"Quiet! I want to hear what's trending."

Thanks to everyone who donated to the First Lutheran Team (Pastor Josh and Paul) for the Outreach for Hope Run, Ride, Walk on Sept. 26. OFH supports struggling churches in Milwaukee continue to serve their members and neighbors.



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

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

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Worship With Us:

In Person on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
Online at:
www.firstlutheranelca.org

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