

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

January, 2022



NEW BEGINNINGS 2022

Last year I wrote an article called “New Beginnings” for my January newsletter article. New Beginnings 2022 has some similarities to what we were reflecting on and what we were looking forward to last year. Last year I wanted to bring to light the “New Beginnings” sign over our door and how a prominent message like that can create a cultural expectation for the community here. We may walk past it or other aspects of our building because we are so used to them, but for newcomers they may really stand out and form a perception of the community at First.

Last January, I began calling for the formation of the Mission Planning Team, which was approved at the annual meeting in February. Members of First Lutheran answered the call to join the team and we began our work in earnest in May of last year. As the Mission Team concludes their work in January, we are going deeper into some important and difficult topics and also going back to where we started in that article as we ask ourselves what our church looks like to a newcomer. And more than just the physical impressions, we also are asking what part of our values and story we are ready to share with someone who knocks on our door, or more likely, someone we meet in the community and tell about our church.

I am so grateful for all the people that responded to be a part of the Mission Planning Team. We have learned and grown a lot together. We did some detective work exploring the history of the congregation and community. We explored potential partnerships with other churches and engagement with organizations and groups in our neighborhood, and we got better at defining what we saw as our neighborhood. A lot has changed since First Lutheran began its journey as a congregation in 1925, and the congregation has changed as well. We don't have all the answers but we have moved the work of the church forward with the hours we have spent following through on research and engaging in dialogue with each other and guests.

“One
resolution
I have
made,
and
try always
to keep,
is this:
to
rise
above
the
little
things.”

John Burroughs



FROM THE PASTOR

Continued from p. 1

The Mission Team recognizes that our congregation and most congregations are facing many challenges including this covid pandemic, which again is threatening our hard-fought returns to normalcy with a rise in cases this winter and new variants that are extremely transmissible. As a group of gathered disciples in this congregation, we are called to be good stewards of our resources and our time, and that means living into the current moment with wisdom and leadership. And we are called to recognize the reality of other challenges like aging members and declining membership. The Mission Team was charged with helping the congregation develop a mission strategy for the next 5-10 years. It may be difficult to imagine what this congregation will look like even that far into the future, but the team held up many strengths of First Lutheran and saw many opportunities, while also being called to address what we see as weaknesses and threats to continuing in the same status quo.

The “new beginning” options that we will present to the congregation at the congregational meeting in February will offer paths that may recommend changes including partnering with other congregations more closely, in order to find more paths forward and calls to follow together. It is also possible for us to continue as a community of faith in this place without that partnership. In order to do so as good stewards and disciples, we must look with more vigor at our mission, values and purpose, to understand why we exist and what drives us to continue to invite people in and have energy to go out into our communities to tell that story. Our mission strategy in the next 5-10 years may lead us to present a different message to newcomers and new ways of inviting people into our unique community. Or our mission may be shared with other congregations bringing us closer to people we don’t yet know. We don’t know where the future will take us, but we know where the Holy Spirit is at work. Prepare to be surprised and to be called to new beginnings. No matter how we approach the coming years, I am glad our work as a Mission Team has helped us remember what is valuable and unique about this congregation and what we take with us into God’s call to mission now and in the future.

.....Pastor Josh

Christian Education



SUNDAY MORNING ADULT ED 1/2 HR.

Pay special attention to Pastor Josh’s announcements on Sunday mornings for the Adult Ed topics each week. On Jan. 9th, during Adult Ed 1/2 hr. Pastor Josh will be giving a summary of the Mission Planning Team’s work. On Jan. 30th the church council will prep the congregation for the annual meeting. Topics for the other weeks will be announced in advance.

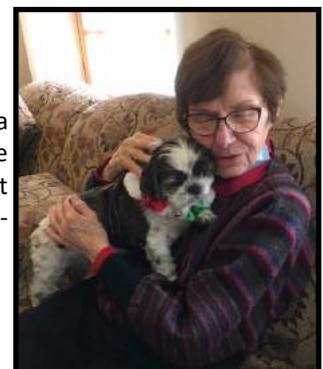
Everyone is invited to these sessions. They are important and should prove interesting. Your input will be welcome.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



On Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room we’re watching episodes of “The Chosen”, the story of the life of Christ, as well as having interesting discussions about his disciples who WERE ‘the chosen’. You don’t need to have seen previous episodes to get something out of the discussions and movie. It’s all fascinating. Contact Pastor Josh or the church office for more information.

Marie snuck in a chance to cuddle with Cooper at Bible Study before Christmas.



Social Ministry



OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

On Friday, December 3rd and Friday, December 10th we handed out decorated mason jars filled with laundry detergent, Christmas mugs filled with hot chocolate, candy canes and chocolates, framed holiday cards, gift bags for the men (23) and women(15) who visited our pantry, as well as 51 stockings filled with age appropriate items for their children and grandchildren. Stuffed animals and books were displayed for parents and grandparents to pick for their children and grandchildren. We also provided snowman candy bars to essential workers. Twenty-one men at the ELCA Synod Serenity Inn Program received totes and Holiday mugs to help them celebrate the holidays. Special Thank You to Jaqueline and Warner Bayer for coordinating the Serenity Inn Program. See pictures below.

We would like to thank the members of First Lutheran Church, Community Members and First Lutheran Church Endowment Committee who donated cash and items used to fill the gift bags and toys for the children's stockings.

Greta Plicka & Colleen Siarnicki



FOOD PANTRY NEWS

Our Food Pantry Clients received an extra bonus during the Holidays in 2021. On Friday November 19th and December 17th all visitors to the Food Pantry received a free bag of food, regardless of whether or not they were eligible.

We continue to be grateful for the support we receive from Festival Foods, 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.

Members of the congregation are welcome to visit us on Friday mornings from 10:00-12:00.

Mike Plicka & John Hrovat

We give thanks for the generous donations of food from Village at Manor Park, Pick 'n Save West Allis, Feeding America, the Women's Club of West Allis and the West Allis Community Improvement Foundation. We're also grateful for the generous financial donations from the Women's Club of West Allis and the West Allis Community Improvement Foundation which help with the purchase of products we can't get through Feeding America.



First Lutheran's Future



Your Mission Planning Team has been working hard for months to move toward what the "New Beginning" will be for First Lutheran. They have had many meetings, visited other churches, met with leaders of area churches and organizations and looked back at the history of the church.

The information they've gained and their recommendations to the church will be presented at the Annual Meeting on Feb. 6th following the church service. This will be one of the most impactful annual meetings in the last few decades as we make decisions about the future direction of First Lutheran.

We hope you'll make every effort to attend, whether in person or by Zoom. Letters with the Zoom link will be sent to all active members prior to the meeting.

Please make a point of thanking the members of the Team for their time and dedication: Jackie & Werner Bayer, Joy Dowd, Gayle Falk, Gary Hanson, Marie LePage, Jesse Rofritz, Jeanie Stummeier, Carla Ullerich, Susan Winter and Pastor Josh.

SO HELP ME GOD

No matter how firm our resolutions, we can't make ourselves better people *by ourselves*. God empowers our good works when we rely on his aid.

H.P. Nichols, a 19th-century poet, wrote:

*If I resolve, with the new year, a better child to be,
'Twill do no good at all, I fear, but rather harm to me,
Unless I try, with every day, no angry word to speak;
Unless, each morn, to God I pray to keep me mild and meek.
Then let me try with all my might, and may God help me too,
Always to choose the way that's right, whatever act I do.*



ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, FEB. 6TH

11:00 A.M.

ZOOM OPTION
AVAILABLE

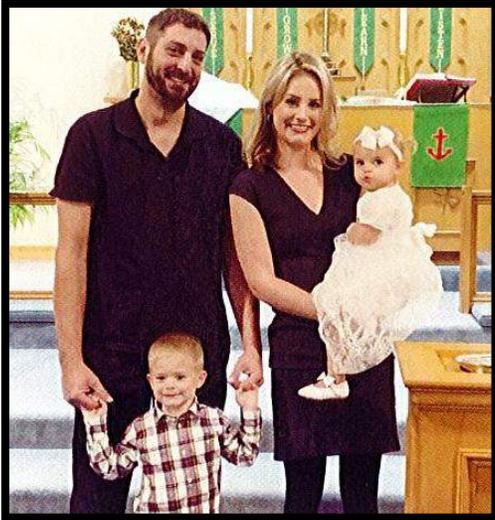


NEW MEMBERS NEEDED

We need several new members for our church council. The council meets quarterly, and the executive committee (officers) meet more often. If you're interested in taking on a role in the future of First Lutheran, contact Earl Casto or the church office. For more information, you can contact Earl, or any of the other current members: Colleen Siarnicki, Dave Grulke, Lori Marquez, Gary Hanson, Susan Winter and Janell Cyrus.

*Committee and
program reports
for the annual
meeting are due
Jan. 15th!*

Members and Friends



Michael and Tayler Hurst with their children Huston and Reagan following Reagan's baptism.



Karlie and Sam (left) are ready for their Christmas concert at school. Sam (right) helps with the family project making pasteles, a traditional Puerto Rican dish made with pork, plantains, olives, peppers and spices.



Pastor Peterson (not pictured) and Lois were able to spend Thanksgiving with their son and his family in California.



Linda and Dave Grulke worked with the Sunday School children to record their parts in "Stealing Christmas - From Here to Eternity". The Christmas program was recorded as an old-time radio show, with many of the characters portrayed by members of the congregation. Jackie Bayer came the closest to guessing who all the characters were - 12 out of 18!

Thanks Received

"All of us at Group 23, Wednesday AA, want to express our sincere thanks to First Lutheran Church for welcoming us these past few years. The past two years have been especially hard on all of us, and yet, First Lutheran Church opened its doors to us. So once again, we thank all of you."

"Thank you for everything you do for us."...Serenity Inns

What's special to us?



Jeanie's angel collection hangs in her window.



An embroidery picture done by Barb's mom.



Meanwhile, in the Marquez household, Lavone admires her new pillow, while Karlie works her new remote-controlled vehicle.



The Grulkes celebrated with (top left) Seth, Laurel, Eli and Beth; Gwen & Eli (above); Eli & Santa Matt (left). A good time was obviously had by all!



Deb and Steve Johnson enjoyed a visit with their son, Alex, who came from Swampscott, MA

On Dec. 8th the quilters held their annual Christmas luncheon. Entertainment and background music was provided by Werner Bayer and Larry Wirth with a little help from Pastor Josh!



This 'n That Around Here



January Birthdays

- 1/1 Nancy Krizan
- 1/11 Carla Ullerich
- 1/12 Maria Sanchez
- 1/21 John Isaacson

January Anniversaries

1/14 Wayne & Lucy Wagner 61 yrs.

Lakota Prayer

*Great Mystery,
teach me how to trust
my heart,
my mind,
my intuition,
my inner knowing,
the senses of my body,
the blessings of my spirit.
Teach me to trust these things
so that I may enter my Sacred Space
and love beyond my fear,
and thus Walk in Balance
with the passing of each glorious Sun.*



*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.



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

John Bennethum, Michelle Dreiling, Scott Ehlers, Joan Hirschinger, Samantha Logston, Roger and Tina Ritz, Michelle, Becky, Kurt, Margie, Sylvia and all of those affected by the Waukesha parade tragedy.



After Sarah died, Abraham remarried. What was his second wife's name?

- A. Miriam
- B. Keturah
- C. Bathsheba
- D. Tamar

Answer: See Genesis 25:1



"I decided to give everyone on my list a 3-D printer and let them make their own gifts."

Here's what's happening!

- Jan. 5 - 1:00 p.m. - Mission Planning Team Mtg.
- Jan. 6 - 7:00 p.m. - Church Council Mtg.
- Jan. 15 - Reports due for Annual Report
- Feb. 6 - 11:00 a.m. - Annual Congregational Mtg.

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 every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

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



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