


# News & Views

First Lutheran Church

February, 2022



 **FROM THE PASTOR** As we move into the month of February we begin a new year in the life of our church, starting with the annual meeting and shifting to a new group of leaders on council. We are grateful for many new leaders, and some who have taken a break from leadership who are willing to step into a leadership role once again. Many people who enter into leadership, fear finding themselves carrying too much of a burden and burning out from the load. I know many members of First have had this experience and also had good experiences of leadership, with the results of their hard work apparent and celebrated by the congregation. There is always pressure within congregational leadership to do things yourself and not share leadership or the burdens of responsibilities. This issue is not just one we experience, here in this place, but a common experience we share with our ancestors in their faith communities.

I am reminded of the story of Moses and his father-in-law Jethro from the 18<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Book of Exodus. Jethro visited Moses and inquired about his health, and the next day he saw Moses work from morning until night helping his community with their problems on his own. After Jethro witnesses this, he offered some advice, and didn't beat around the bush with Moses!

*<sup>14</sup> When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" <sup>15</sup> Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. <sup>16</sup> When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God." <sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup> You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. <sup>19</sup> Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; <sup>20</sup> teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do."*

Continued p. 2



Be sure to join us on February 6th immediately following the worship service. This is an exceptionally important meeting. Help shape the future of First Lutheran.



Worship with us  
March 2, 2022  
5:30 p.m.

## FROM THE PASTOR

Continued from p. 1

God used this good advice from Jethro to change Moses' behavior, and ready him for the sharing of the Ten Commandments with the Israelite community, so all the people could be aware of God's intentions and desire for their life in community.

Leadership is always easier if the burden is shared. Jesus tells us that if we follow him our yoke is easy and our burden light. I think within a congregation the work is lighter when we function as a community who shares burdens and carries the load of ministry work together. Too often in congregations one or two people or families end up carrying more of the load. And with aging congregations, younger members especially can sometimes feel overburdened and intimidated by the expectations for their participation. We are called into a Christian community that supports each other in the important work of ministry.

And just like Jethro's advice to Moses, people can do more on their own if they are well informed. As First Lutheran moves forward with important conversations about our future and the work of the church to maintain and grow our ministries, greater transparency can aid in our congregation doing the work we are called to together. Annual meetings are one way that the leadership of the church offers that transparency and opportunity to make changes.

Of course if people don't engage in the information and choose not to take ownership of choices about the future, it is harder for a congregation to function and thrive. We are intended to use our gifts, times and talents within the congregation, rather than burning us out. In a healthy congregation, our work and time in the church community will energize us to go out into the community around us, listening to and serving our neighbors, and sharing the good news of Jesus with them in a variety of ways. We are all called to be that community at First Lutheran and when people are invested in God's work together, the Spirit can do amazing things through them, and lift up new leadership and possibilities. But remember even Moses needed a little help remembering that this was true!

Pastor Josh

## Come and Take Part

### TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



On Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room or on Zoom we're learning about the disciples of Jesus and 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.

### SUNDAY MORNING ADULT ED 1/2 HR.



Pay special attention to Pastor Josh's announcements on Sunday mornings for information on Adult Ed. which will resume during Lent.



### TAKE NOTE!

If you have children or grandchildren who are not already taking part in our Sunday School, please contact the church office for information. We always have room for more children to join in learning about Jesus through stories and crafts.



**OPERATION  
CHRISTMAS STOCKING  
DECEMBER ACTIVITIES**

We are always looking for items that we need to fill our totes/socks for men, women and children that visit our Food Pantry. Stores will soon be putting their winter clothing on sale. We could use men's gloves, and mittens for boys and girls. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Co/Chairs Greta Plicka and Colleen Siarnicki



**Thanks  
for the  
Donations!**

For anyone wishing to donate food to our Food Pantry here is a list of items that we include in a bag: canned tuna/chicken/ham, pasta, pasta sauce, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, jelly, fruit, rice/potatoes, beans, soup, canned vegetables, cereal, toilet paper and a snack (small bag of chips or granola bars). We offer an exchange table where people can pick extra items such as flour, cake mix, cooking oil, cocoa/coffee, crackers, cleaning products, beans dried/canned, pancake mix, syrup, raisins etc.



**FOOD PANTRY  
NEWS**

First Lutheran's Food Pantry is open every Friday from 10:00 to 12:00. We have been averaging about 25 people coming for bags and food. Visitors can come in weekly for bread and food that we pick up from Feeding America and Festival Foods. Although we are never sure what Festival Foods will give us, here is an idea of what we have been receiving: assortment of breads/rolls, bakery (cakes, muffins, brownies, cookies, etc.), deli items (sliced ham/turkey, prepared meals, cheese, a variety of spreads, taco platters, pre-cooked chickens etc), vegetables (onions, potatoes, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers). The left over food is delivered to Sunrise Apartments in West Allis. The congregation is welcome to come in and pick up food on Fridays too. Please let your friends and neighbors know about First Lutheran's Food Pantry.

Mike Plicka & John Hrovat



**SOUPER  
BOWL**

Bring your cans of soup with you on "Souperbowl Sunday", Feb. 13th, and help support our food pantry.

## First Lutheran's Future



The following is an excerpt from the Mission Planning Team's report and recommendations. If you have not received the full version, please contact the church office.

### **Assessment of First Lutheran:**

First's vitality and ability to function at a high level of ministry is being tested by an aging population, decrease in active members, and the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these realities, the members of the Mission Planning Team see hope for the future, and a community that is more willing to address challenges and make changes than many other congregations. We know First has a smaller capacity to engage in new mission projects and ministries currently, based on the factors affecting our congregation, but through the work of the Mission Team we have seen a willingness to meet those challenges and put in the work of addressing them.

### **Our Call:**

**The Mission Planning Team has engaged in important work, guided by the Spirit, recognizing how God has encouraged and inspired us through this process. We lean into the Biblical witness of Exodus 18 in which even Moses was reminded that sharing ministry responsibilities could benefit the greater community and God's work. We also have been inspired by the words of Peter at Pentecost in Acts 2 that reminded the first disciples and all who were witnesses that the words of the prophets were alive in their midst, reminding them that the Spirit of the Lord is alive and with us, as our young see visions and the old dream dreams!**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MISSION PLANNING TEAM:**

In the first six months of 2022, we recommend that the Mission Team continue to assess and determine more specific options for First Lutheran. Other First members will be invited to join the team to help complete this work. The team will use the Greater Milwaukee Synod's [Holy Conversations](#) resource to further discern our path. While we recommend a primary focus on exploring partnership possibilities in the short term, we will continue to explore the possibility of these and other transformation options.

### **Working with ELCA Churches in Our Area:**

We recommend continuing our existing dialogue with four other ELCA churches in the West Allis Area (Luther Memorial, Saint John's, Mount Hope, and Holy Trinity).

In the coming year we recommend that First Lutheran engage in activity that can lead to stronger relationships with these congregations through the following actions, that do not add many new responsibilities.

WORSHIP: Engage in shared worship and pulpit exchanges.

PRAYER: Regular prayer for the other congregations and ministries in worship.

SERVICE: Invite our congregation members to volunteer at community service ministries at the other congregations (especially at times when more volunteers are needed or they can learn about the history of the ministry and people volunteering and those served there).

FELLOWSHIP: Inviting the other congregations into fun activities at our churches or in our communities, especially events where a larger critical mass of participation would be beneficial (such as our Craft Fair, Concerts, outdoor meals., etc.).

### **In Our Neighborhood:**

Other congregations in our neighborhood have expressed interest in sharing ministries with us. As a beginning, we could consider joint events (like the Pet Blessing we shared with First Methodist and supporting the active food pantry outreach of Apostle Presbyterian).

*Continued on p. 5*

## Mission Planning Cont.

### Here at First:

Exterior and Interior Updates: The Mission Team would like to help update and improve how First presents itself, in our building and on our property. The purpose of this work would be to refresh public areas, in order to make First more welcoming and inviting to our members and visitors.

Perform an assessment of the areas of public storage and art displayed in our church.

Take down the art and other items currently displayed and display them in a more thoughtful manner.

Create a space for a rotating display of art donated to our church, along with a story of that art.

Worship and Music: The Mission Team has no strong recommendation to change the worship style or worship time in the coming year. However, we recommend that worship service times should be consistent and well advertised.

Evening services could be an area where First offers a variety of liturgical formats, including contemporary services.

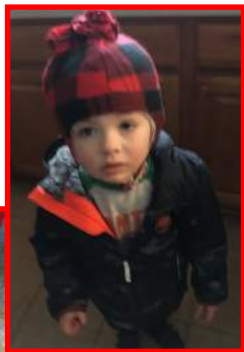
Online worship and digital ministry can be further developed and implemented to provide useful options for connecting our community with others outside of our building.

### What is our guide for making decisions?

**We will recommend moving forward with partnerships and changes if we believe they will help our members live into God's mission with vitality and clarity, and provide more resources for the mission and ministries we are called to.**

## Members and Friends

Lori is pretty proud of her kids, Sam & Karlie. Sam is having a great hockey season, and Karlie is learning to cook.



Colleen's cat, Pauly, decided to wrap himself up for Christmas, while her dog, Penny, got a new sweater for Christmas.



Mike and Geta Plicka's grandson, Harrison, had fun with Megan visiting Santa. He also enjoys counting Grandpa's silver dollars!

## This 'n That Around Here

### Show the Love Donation Drive

This Valentine's holiday launches the first Show the Love Donation Drive supporting WISH (Women Initiate Self-Healing and Hope). WISH is a support, empowerment, and educational group for women who are in an abusive relationship or have been in an abusive relationship. The group helps women gain support, insight and strength from other women who have experienced domestic violence. If you'd like to be a part of this drive and donate items to treat women who have been in abusive relationships, go to:

[www.westalliswi.gov/showthelove](http://www.westalliswi.gov/showthelove)

### Food for Thought

The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as "Dr. Love" for writing about the topic, said, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine's Day is as good a reminder as any.

### Many thanks!

Pat Zuback sends a big thank-you to the First Lutheran bakers for the delicious Christmas treats. And... a special thanks to Linda Grulke for the opportunity to visit and catch up with First Lutheran.

### Get Your Tiny Tins Now!

The West Allis Masterminds' Tiny Tins are now officially for sale! The West Allis Masterminds provide West Allis small businesses a supportive community that ensures long-term success and survival. The Masterminds are a group of local, independent business owners who collaborate to support and promote West Allis entrepreneurship. Tiny Tins are just \$25 and include over \$200 worth of savings! There are still some available at several downtown businesses. Contact City Hall for information on where to find them.

### Biblical Love Notes

The following compliments from the Song of Solomon may not go over well on Valentine's Day:



- \* "I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots" (1:9).
- \* "Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead" (4:1).
- \* "Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing" (4:2).
- \* "Your neck is like the tower of David, built in courses" (4:4).
- \* "[Your] eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set" (5:12).
- \* "Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat" (7:2).

On the other hand, how about this one: "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (4:7).



## Thanks for the Donations!

We appreciate the generous donations of food from Festival Foods and the West Allis Women's Club.

## This 'n That Around Here

 FEBRUARY 2022

### February Birthdays

2/1 Shirley Armato  
2/14 Kent Nicolet  
2/16 Kale Schoberg  
2/23 Jenny Wudtke  
2/25 Lavone Reis

### February Anniversaries

2/15 Warren & Joan Hirschinger 71 yrs.



- Don't forget to save your ink cartridges from your home printers and bring them to the church office. We get rewards for each cartridge turned in, and those rewards help lower our office supply costs. Thanks!
- Take a minute to sign up for altar flowers and/or the eternal light.
- Think about signing up for online giving. Save yourself the trouble of writing out checks each week or month, and have your offerings direct deposited to First. Contact the office for more information.

 Find us on Facebook

*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, Shirley Cogan, Scott Ehlers, Joan Hirschinger, Samantha Logston, Roger and Tina Ritz, Susan Winter, Becky, Margie and Sylvia



In the book of Revelation, who or what is "prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband"?

- A. The church
- B. The Spirit
- C. Mary Magdalene
- D. The new Jerusalem



Answer: See Revelation 21:2.



"Be my valentine ... Be my valentine ... Be my valentine ..."

Here's what's happening!

Feb. 6 - 11:00 a.m. - Annual Congregational Mtg.  
Feb. 13 - Souperbowl Sunday! Bring your soup!  
Mar. 2 - 5:30 p.m. - Ash Wednesday worship

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

Mailed on 1-26-22

Electronic Service Requested

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**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)**

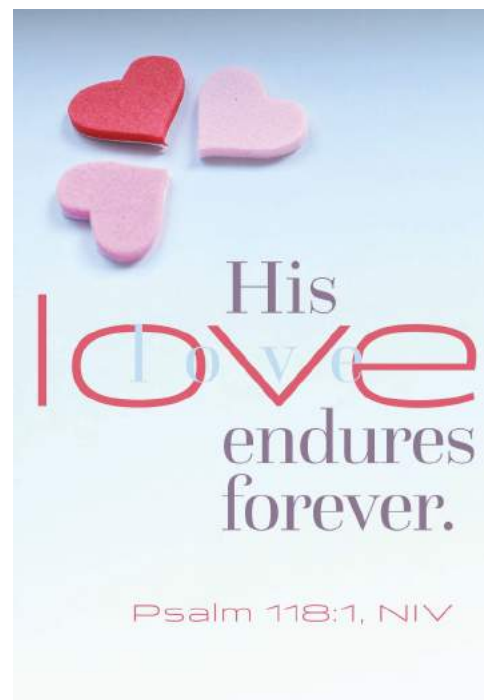
7400 W. Lapham St.  
West Allis, WI

E-mail: [firstlutheranelca@att.net](mailto: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.