

# News & Views

First Lutheran Church

May, 2023



FROM THE



PASTOR

## SEEING A VIBRANT AND IMAGINATIVE CONGREGATION

God is doing some really interesting and wonderful things through the First community, and we have had a chance in this last month to test our capacity for change and new events. You can look at vibrant photos of events and activities in this newsletter to see what God has been up to here!

Our latest event, Trivia Happy Hour on April 30<sup>th</sup> hosted by our council secretary Gayle's son Michael Falk, who won the Jeopardy Tournament of Champions in 2006, is an event that invites collaboration and creativity through our little church! In the Vision Statement we adopted at our Annual Meeting in February we said, "We will be seen as a vibrant and imaginative congregation and a resource in many communities and networks, as we connect with our neighbors locally and worldwide." The last month of activity we wasted no time living into that vision!

We were good stewards of our church home with 12 members and friends participate in Spring Cleaning at First, installing a new sound system and painting the sanctuary walls in time for Holy Week Services! We hosted an Easter Egg Hunt, in cooperation with former Saint John's members, that was enjoyed by 70 community members. Many parents and grandparents were emotionally grateful for this experience of grace when I talked with them at the door before and after the experience. I loved seeing how our Sunday School kids stepped up in leadership roles for the Hunt—welcoming and personally interacting with the kids that came— and also being a part of worship service in the First Lutheran Players Palm Sunday Play. We hosted five ecumenical congregations for an incredibly moving "Seven Last Cries of Jesus" service on Good Friday, featuring diverse voices and music. It was one of the most meaningful services I have experienced and I have heard similar responses from those who participated.

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## What's Been Happening Here



We cleaned and prepped for our Easter egg hunt, previously celebrated at St John's Lutheran.



FIRST LUTHERAN'S  
MISSION:

Nourished by the generous  
love of Jesus,  
we welcome ALL to grow  
in faith, serve with joy,  
and share God's many  
blessings.



The hunt took place the week before Easter, and invited neighborhood children and their families to share the fun and meal. Postcards, designed and printed to advertise more events for children and adults, were tucked into treat bags for participants.





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This last month gave us a lot to celebrate and reflect on as we continue to grow into our new Mission, Vision, and Values. It also was a little tiring! In the next two months, we will have fewer events as we focus our efforts and energy on reorganizing our congregation to better support our ministries, activities, and growth.

- Our outreach has improved through these recent events and we have several people interested in becoming new members.
- We have created a new volunteer coordinator position, and reorganized our council agenda, committee and team structure in order to reflect our new mission as well as be more inviting to new people and more supportive of new activity.
- A revitalized Stewardship Team will help create a new Time and Talent Survey this fall as we help match people's gifts and interests with opportunities in the church.
- We are also planning to hire someone to help with media, technology, and promotional materials.
- In the summer we will form a Worship and Music Team to assess our worship experience and propose ways of improving it.
- A Listening Team will be formed in the fall to connect with our neighbors and neighborhood to assess what needs and interests are identified that First could respond to.

We are creating an infrastructure for active ministry, and learning to be a church that moves with the speed of the Holy Spirit! Thank you for all the time and talents you have given as a part of First Lutheran. I look forward to growing in faith, serving with joy and sharing God's many blessings together as part of this community of believers.

**PASTOR JOSH**



**COFFEE  
AND...**



**PLEASE JOIN US IN  
JUNE TO LEARN MORE  
AT COFFEE AND...**

First Lutheran members will present on their recent investigations of synod-affiliated organizations and training last fall. Participants will share what they learned about the organizations and if First could learn from these organizations or benefit from affiliation.

**June 4<sup>th</sup>—MICAHA Public Meeting**

(Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope) Attended by Werner Bayer and Pastor Josh.

MICAHA is our local interfaith community organizing group, which focuses on a variety of local justice issues with members of faith communities across the metro.

**June 11<sup>th</sup>—Deconstructing Racism Training**

attended by Steve Oakland, Gaye Falk, Marie LePage, Deb Johnson, Pastor Josh

All congregational leaders in our synod are encouraged to participate in a Deconstructing Racism Training to help them understand racism in society, their own bias, and ways to be actively anti-racist and more inclusive as a congregation.

**June 18<sup>th</sup>—Council Meeting No Presentation**

**June 25<sup>th</sup>—"RIC We Love 2022" Attended by Joy Dowd and Gary Hanson.**

*The purpose of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program.*

The Greater Milwaukee Synod is an RIC Synod but not all churches are RIC. Martin Luther and Mount Zion are RIC congregations and Mount Hope recently became RIC.

## Council News and More

### FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Have you looked around the sanctuary lately? The cracks have been repaired, the walls have been painted and the windows have been cleaned. It looks bright, cheerful and inviting. Thanks to all who helped and thanks to Jon Krueger, the painting contractor, who did a wonderful job and was so pleasant and professional about it.

You've probably noticed that the sound system has been redone. The lapel mics, as well as the other mics, are all working and making the worship service more enjoyable.

We hosted a Good Friday service attended by several neighboring churches. The music was outstanding and the diverse mixture of clergy participating was inspiring, to say the least. Thanks to Pastor Josh for all the effort and planning he put into it, and all the volunteers who worked to make the celebration successful. The participation from the neighboring churches was encouraging.

There are a number of special events planned for the church in the coming year, starting with our Trivia Happy Hour led by Michael Falk on April 30th.

I am looking forward to working with all of you and making the next year an exciting one at First Lutheran Church.

Sincerely, Werner Bayer



*Are you interested in becoming a member at First? A New Member Class is forming. Talk to Pastor Josh about being a part of a gathering in May.*

### COUNCIL ACTIONS APRIL 23RD MEETING



- We reordered our agenda and ministry committees/teams according to the vision outline and new mission statement.
- We confirmed the assignments of council representatives/reporters to teams and committees.
- Pastor Josh and Werner will coach the council reps as they help organize the activity and work of their teams and committees.
- A new Volunteer Coordinator Position was created and filled by Joy Dowd

### WHAT'S PASTOR JOSH BEEN LEARNING?



Last month Pastor Josh participated in a listening session with Crossways Camping Ministries (Pine Lake) about what they were doing to connect with churches and new campers.

Pastor Josh also participated in a Faithful Innovation Webinar and Book Launch (a group connected to Luther Seminary that includes the GMS Director of Evangelical Mission Matthew Short) and their power point was a great summary of how churches can understand and lead in the midst of great cultural and congregational changes. Contact Pastor Josh to receive a link to watch this webinar.



On Monday, April 17th, we were blessed to receive 330 lbs. of food from St. Luke's Lutheran in Greendale! They will be continuing to support our food pantry, and we greatly appreciate their generosity. We continue to be grateful for the support we receive from Festival Foods, Feeding America, Aggies Bakery and Cake Shop 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.

## Connect With Us

### **Thankful, Thoughtful Thursdays**



Our Palm Sunday lesson helped us understand the meaning behind our First Lutheran Players skit which was presented during the Palm Sunday worship service. Our class during Holy Week really helped us understand what a big gift Easter was.

Children ages 4k—Age 12 are welcome to join us from 5-6pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. Each class includes a snack, lesson, a cooking/science/ or acting related activity, a craft and even occasional pizza parties.

### **First Communion Class! Saturday, May 6th 12:00-2:00 p.m.**

We will be hosting First's First Communion Class on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> from noon-2pm. We will start with a meal and talk about the early church's celebration of the Lord's Supper and Agape Meal. Then we will learn more about what the Bible and Martin Luther teach us about this sacrament. People of all ages are invited to attend, whether you've ever had a class like this or just want a refresher. If you are interested in participating please contact Pastor Josh.



### **GREATER MILWAUKEE SYNOD NEWS**



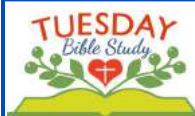
Join us on Tuesday, May 9th, at 10am in the Fireside Room for a Stewardship webinar, **"Equipping the Saints"**. Learn how to *"Come together to find new ways to follow Jesus, form communities and love all."*

### **This year's Synod Assembly will be held on June 2-3 at the Italian Community Center.**

Our congregation is allotted two adult and one youth or young adult voting member. If you can't come to the assembly, you can attend the Keynote Dinner on Fri. at 5:30 p.m. and hear keynote speaker Pardeep Kaleka. You could also attend the assembly worship service on June 2nd featuring Rev. Ken Wheeler. Contact Pastor Josh or Barb if you're interested in attending.

Did you know.... that the "Equipping the Saints" Mission Appeal helps provide grants to congregations for innovative projects to reach more people in the name of Jesus.

Collaboration grants through Outreach for Hope can build partnerships among congregations, organizations, and communities.



### **TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**

We continue to watch and discuss The Chosen. You know the story of Jesus and his disciples, so you can join us without feeling like you missed anything. You can also catch up and watch online on your own schedule.

On May 9th we'll participate in a Stewardship webinar.

New attendees are always welcome! Join us in the Fireside Room at 10 a.m. each Tuesday. If you can't join us in person, you can join us via Zoom. Contact Pastor Josh or the church office for more information.

## This 'n That Around Here



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

*Shirley Cogan, Marty Duke, Dolores Hurst, Marissa Guijo, John Isaacson, Monica Lam, Vince, Becky, Steve and Margie*

We remember in prayer the family of Carol Leonard as they grieve her loss. We pray that the promise of eternal life with Christ brings them comfort at this time.



### Support Our Wedding Re-Sale Event

Saturday, Aug. 5th

10am - 3pm

*Newlyweds can sell their wedding or bridesmaid gowns, bouquets, candles, decorations, etc! Future brides can shop for needed items.*

*Take some flyers to local businesses and spread the word to family and friends!*



According to Peter, at what time of day did the Holy Spirit come upon the disciples on Pentecost?

- A. 9 a.m.
- B. Noon
- C. 3:30 p.m.
- D. 9 p.m.



Answer: See Acts 2:15



### Birthdays

5/3 - Jackie Bayer  
 5/4 - Daniel Sopha  
 5/13 - Heidi Leiser  
 5/14 - Shirley Cogan  
 5/14 - Lori Marquez  
 5/15 - Amy Guthrie  
 5/16 - Jenny Caraas  
 5/26 - Jamie Schoberg  
 5/27 - Robert Gardner

### Anniversaries

5/1 - Deb & Steve Johnson - 30 yrs.  
 5/2 - Mike & Greta Plicka - 36 yrs.  
 5/4 - Dale & Sharon Phillippo - 60 yrs.  
 5/11 - Earl & Jean Casto - 55 yrs.  
 5/27 - Terry & Joyce Favre - 45 yrs.

A 96-year-old lady was a faithful attendant at my women's Bible studies. She came with her lessons prepared and knew all the answers. One day a tactless member asked her, "Why do you work so hard on these lessons when you're so old and it doesn't matter?" Little Bess Elkins looked up and said confidently, "I'm cramming for my finals."

—Florence Littauer, Women's Devotional Bible



**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.

#### Save your ink!

Remember to save your printer ink cartridges when you're done with them and bring them to the office. We receive \$2 each toward purchases at Office Depot - up to \$20 per month.



## More Events and Members



Above, from top right, Pastor Josh and Jesse prepared the palms for Palm Sunday, the Milwaukee Myanmar Christian Church music team, the Mt. Hope band and pastors from First Lutheran, First United Methodist, First Baptist Church of West Allis, Milwaukee Myanmar Christian Church and Mt. Hope Lutheran Church. Paul and Sarah (L) view the Savannah fountain while on vacation. Below left, Mike takes a break by the Gulf of Mexico while on vacation in Biloxi, MS. Joy joined LaVerne Williams and her family in Steven's Point to celebrate LaVerne's 95th birthday.



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

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**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)**

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West Allis, WI

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Phone: 414-476-4664

***Worship With Us:***

***Sundays at 10:00 a.m.***

***May 3 at 6:00 p.m.***

***Service of Prayer and Healing***

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm

Office located at 7400 W. Lapham, West Allis

(414)476-4664



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