

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

September, 2023



"FINDING YOUR FIT AT FIRST"

SEPTEMBER 10th 10am-Noon

A Church is more than a building or the leadership of the pastor and few people, it is all of us working together, following a call to join in God's mission.

My son has recently completed the Harry Potter series. If you have been praying for my family after the birth of our daughter, your prayers may have been realized in helping a nine year old be occupied with thousands of pages, while his parents tried to figure out how to care for a newborn!

There was a time when Harry Potter was considered a bad influence on children, especially Christian children, because its characters are witches and wizards and that in itself raised questions for some more conservative Christians. However, if you read the series as a whole knowing the story of Jesus you will see that few stories throughout literature do a better job of letting the general public in on the power of Jesus and his passion. While the church has been in steady decline in the last few decades in Europe even more than the United States, and in many ways has failed to communicate the gospel effectively to people who are not being raised in churches, the Harry Potter series and musicians like U2 have kept the gospel in the public's mind through their success in pop culture.

How do we as a church enter into this story and important work? When we celebrate what God is doing outside church walls it can be inspiring for who we are inside and outside of our church building.

A congregation is a gift because it is an opportunity to discover and share our gifts in and through community.

How do we find our gifts? On September 10th we are inviting the congregation to participate in a special event, similar to the successful Rejoice Sunday we did last December. The event on September 10th from 10-noon will help you find a place where you can gain a sense of belonging and purpose as part of our church.

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Mark your calendar!

Sunday, Sept. 10th, our "Finding Your Fit at First" event will take place.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with each other and enjoy a meal together.

See Pastor Josh's article (L) for details.



September 6th at 6:00 p.m.

In the courtyard

Bring your lawn chair, join us for worship and stay for refreshments afterward. Mt. Hope musicians will lead us in the Holden Evening Worship.

Keeping Busy!



Lavone and Karlie enjoyed a ladies day out together (above L)

Greta presented Mike with a declaration from Mayor Devine at Mike's 75th birthday party (above center).

Deb and Steve took a trip to the Michigan dunes at Ludington (above R).

Pastor Peterson's debut on a local TV station to invite the community to GriefShare at his church, Lutheran Church of the Cross in Laguna Woods, CA (below).

Some of the quilters (R) attended a preview luncheon at Lutherdale for the annual Quilt Fest.

Werner and his daughters (bottom right) enjoyed a day out at German Fest.





WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

Erik and Tina Kremers and Teddy
 Becky Niedo and Mark Henschel
 Mike and Barb Lindner
 Linda Newton
 Josiah Rose
 Alexis Colgrove & Corey Schmidt
 Ron Schneider

From the Pastor.....

Cont. from p. 1

There are many ways to participate in the life of a church and when we are engaged with growing, serving, and sharing as a member of a church our faith is more vital and lives are more full.

When only a few people carry most of the work it can lead to burnout and frustration. There is good news as we try to change that experience and share the load in a way that doesn't feel like a burden. Our members are returning and we welcomed 12 people as new members (see the list above) at the end of August. We have done the work of organizing our teams and committees and readying our church for growth and greater involvement by more people. Two temporary teams that will be active in the next six months are a Community Listening Team and a Music and Worship Assessment Team, guided by a mission coach provided by the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

Harry Potter's story begins with going to a school for wizards where new students put on a magical hat which tells them which house at the school they will be a part of. We do not have a magical hat to help us in our sorting of members into roles and calls, but we have the Holy Spirit that cares for us and guides us in our life of faith, awakening calls within us to serve in ways that may surprise us! For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 1 Cor 12:12. *I pray that you consider your call and involvement at First this year, and ask that everyone be a part of our special worship and event on September 10th.*

Pastor Josh



Actions taken by Council 8/20/2023

- Council voted to endorse the purchase of a defibrillator by the Scholarship Committee to donate to the Church, and provide for training on the equipment.
- Council voted to donate \$300 to Mt. Hope's Hope Closet in appreciation for music provided for summer Wednesday night services.
- Money donated to Hope Closet will be paid from the Council's discretionary funds from gifts to the church.
- The \$3100 discretionary fund the Council received from gifts to the church will be added to the \$4100 from gift money given for benevolence (as mandated by the gift policy approved by the congregation.) The gift to Hope Closet will be included in the list of beneficiaries.

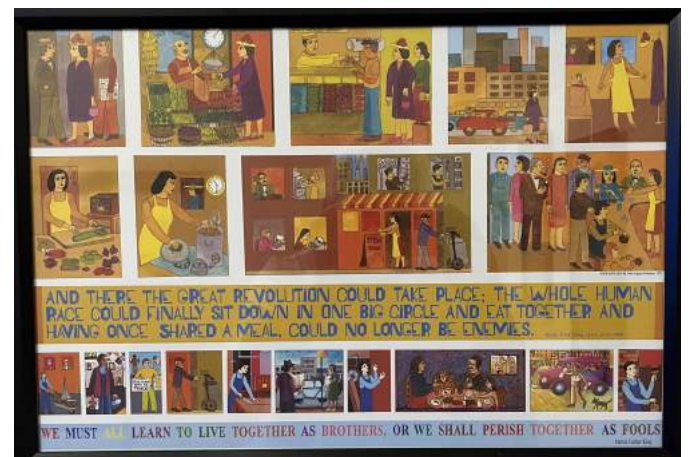
Our Beautiful Church

Please take a moment to visit our new art and prayer area in the narthex. Pastor Josh and Marie LePage have been working with other members of the church on organizing and displaying art. A priority was to feature new art and artists that will help us show that we are not a church that only features art from the past, but also vibrant art from the last 50 years.

Our art and prayer area features art of religious artist John August Swanson, an artist who was based in Southern California, whose work celebrates his Mexican and Swedish heritage and his Catholic and Lutheran faith backgrounds. The presence of his art in ELCA churches has become a signal of vibrancy and connection with a living faith. They feature bright colors to represent Biblical scenes and to highlight issues connecting faith, justice and creation care.

Pastor Josh's grandmother made John August Swanson the first art and theology speaker at Mount Carmel Lutheran Retreat Center. The family established the speaker series as a memorial to Josh's grandfather in the mid-1990's. After that John August Swanson remained friends with the family and Pastor Josh. The art that is displayed comes from a collection of posters the artist prepared for Pastor Josh with an invitation to visit to his studio in Los Angeles. But Pastor Josh got the invitation while traveling to Milwaukee to start his interim call at Mount Zion Lutheran.

Pastor Josh states, "The promise of this art blessed the journey and new call to Milwaukee and I am blessed to be able to share it with First Lutheran as a celebration of my call to continue as pastor here last year, and to celebrate the art and friendship of this wonderful artist who passed away last October". To find out more about John August Swanson and see more of his work you can visit <https://johnaugustswanson.com/>



FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

On September 10th we will be having a gathering after service at which you will be introduced to the various committees and activities taking place in our church.

The committees are made up of volunteers from the congregation--each committee is led directly or indirectly by Pastor Josh and has a liaison who reports to the church council.

Committee activities include reaching outside the church into the neighborhood to help where help is needed. We are also trying to draw people into the activities in the church, reaching out electronically on Facebook and our website. We are welcoming people when they enter the church. There are finance committees trying to raise funds for the church, as well as sharing what we have through various outreach benevolence spending.

Finally there is the church council, which is the board of directors made up of volunteer members serving for a designated period of time.

I encourage all of you to look at these opportunities to help with the work of the church. All of these things are done on a part-time basis. It gives you an opportunity to work closely with fellow members while getting to know them better, and you can spend as much or little of your time as you wish.

Remember, if the church is going to be successful it is because of people like you using your God given talents and some of your time. And a side benefit is you're going to enjoy getting to know your fellow members better and helping to make our church a place that we all want to be a part of.

Sincerely,
Werner Bayer, Council President



Lutheran Church Of The Great Spirit
is sponsoring a free seminar on Indigenous History and Spirituality on Sat., Sept. 16, at Unity Lutheran Church. Indigenous food, crafts and art will be sold.

Fish Boil

North Cape Lutheran's Door County style fish boil will be held on Sat., Sept. 30th. Outdoor seating & live music! \$18

The Greater Milwaukee Synod

is looking for two childcare providers for an upcoming event being held at Lutherdale Youth Camp in Elkhorn. Providers will receive \$20.00/hour, meals and (if needed) onsite lodging.

First Lutheran Holiday Craft & Vendor Fair

Our fair is coming up fast, and we're going to need your help! We'll have 30 vendors and delicious lunch. Keep an eye on the bulletin inserts for ways you can contribute and participate in this event.

***For we are God's coworkers, working together;
you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9***

This 'n That Around Here



After Elijah was taken up to heaven, his newly commissioned successor, Elisha, performed two miracles. The first was making a poisonous stream's water safe to drink. What did Elisha toss into the water that made it wholesome?

- A. a stick
- B. a new bowl
- C. bread
- D. salt

Answer: See 2 Kings 2:19-22



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

David Frailey, Marissa Guijo, Jan Pleur, Graham Sackett, Elizabeth, Bob, Vince and Margie

We remember also Dave Grulke and his family as they mourn the loss of Dave's father, Emil Grulke.



Birthdays

- 9/12 - Jesse Rofritz
- 9/13 - Nadia Bivens
- 9/14 - Jeanie Stummeier
- 9/18 - Sharan Kruschka
- 9/22 - Mary McNeal
- 9/27 - Dale Phillippo
- 9/30 - Werner Bayer
- 9/30 - Sharon Phillippo

Anniversaries

- 9/22 - Colleen & Spencer Siarnicki - 22 yrs.



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.

Listen to the loving voice

Figurative thieves are all around: Illness steals time and energy. Inflation robs many of financial stability. The bandit of social media chips away at our productivity, self-esteem and quality time with loved ones. Prejudice and oppression prey on certain groups of people. Doubtless, you can think of other thieves and bandits.

But above their noise, listen for another sound: A warm voice whose loving tone calls us by name. A voice that puts us at ease because it's familiar as a favorite blanket, a path we can walk in the dark, a song we know by heart. That voice rising above any force that would steal and kill and destroy is, according to John 10, the loving voice of God made known in Jesus, caring for us as a good shepherd does his sheep. And lest you get confused, thinking God is angry and judgmental, think again. That is the sound of thieves and bandits; don't listen to them, don't follow them, don't give them your heart!

"I came," says Jesus the Shepherd-Gate-Messiah-Savior, "that [you] may have life and have it abundantly" (v. 10, NRSV). —Heidi Hyland Mann

What We've Been Doing



On Aug. 27th, Teddy Kremers was baptized and celebrated (above R). The quilters created the Teddy bear quilt for him. At Bible Study on Aug. 1st we celebrated the 15th anniversary of Pastor Josh's ordination (L). Pastor Josh welcomed the Mt. Hope musicians (R) at our Aug. 2nd outdoor worship.



Representatives from Mt. Hope spoke with us at Coffee And.. about what it means to become a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) church.



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:

Sundays at 10 a.m.

Sept. 6, outdoors in our courtyard, at 6 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm
Office located at 7400 W. Lapham, West Allis



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