

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

November, 2023



From the Pastor.....

WHEN IT SEEMS NOTHING IS SACRED IN THE HOLY LAND

We have seen the photos, the viral videos, and the news segments. We hear the stories that are shared by witnesses and journalists. The terrorist attacks on people in Israel by Hamas soldiers and others are horrific and violently antisemitic. They are intended to conjure our worst nightmares of fear and powerlessness and must be unequivocally condemned. At the same time, we see the images of desperation after water and electricity were shut off in Gaza that make us long for a way to protect those who didn't ask for this fight. We hear interviews with Christians who say they are caught in the crossfire of a holy war between their neighbors. It was hard to know what to think when an Anglican Hospital full of refugees was bombed, and many rushed to judgement without evidence. Images of parents looking for children and children looking for parents amongst rubble are terrifying and traumatic. Babies are targets of terrorist brutality, while grandparents are paraded as prisoners of war—acts that announce a cruelty that we would rather not know existed. These scenes may have our full attention. But, what do we do about it? How do we talk about what is happening? Do we feel so overwhelmed with despair that we turn it off or try not to think about it? Is there any hope for peace among peoples in this holiest of lands for three religions?

It may be easiest for us to say these people have been fighting in this place for centuries and will continue to fight but that is too easy a way to write off our responsibility in this, both as Christians and as citizens of the world. When we see violence like this it is a failure of humanity not just a few people or nations. I don't think Jesus would want us to write whole peoples off or look the other way when individuals are harmed. That doesn't necessarily mean we need to stay out of it unless we pick a side or have a simplistic either-or approach.

We can be on the side of Jesus and the kingdom's values in this situation and respond with that as our inspiration, even if we don't have a perfect answer or plan. As part of our First family, we share values that shape not only how we treat each other but how we speak and act when faced with situations like we see in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, and occupied territories of Palestine. When we seek

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JOIN US!

**November 11th
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**Choose from dozens of
crafters & vendors!**

**Pulled Pork or
hot dog lunch available**



**Sunday, November 19th
4:00 p.m.**

**R. Stuart Mitchell,
baritone**

*of insights, humor,
wisdom and hope*



Jewish Museum visit. The special exhibit was "Women Pulling at the Threads of Social Discourse"



We had a beautiful day for our pet blessing. It was well attended and we had an interesting variety of pets - dogs, cats, rabbits, rats and a chicken!



Our quilters outdid themselves with the beautiful display of quilts they made for Lutheran World Relief. 32 of them!

first the kingdom of God, we seek and share values that care for **“our neighbors throughout creation”**. When we at First seek to be **“Inclusive and Kind”** that is applied to our neighbors near and far and allows us to lean on our community’s words when we personally may be speechless. We say **“We strive to form an intergenerational culture of active love for all people, and respect for the dignity of each individual, especially if they have been excluded elsewhere. We are curious about each person’s unique story and perspective and seek to learn from each other and the world around us.”** To me that means that when we are confronted with these atrocities in the Holy Land, we name that we value every human life and promote human rights in all situations including this one. That may promote counter-cultural values in a situation where enemy images, rage, and vengeance can so easily dehumanize the Israeli to the Palestinian and the Palestinian to the Israeli.

To us at home when we watch or turn off this news or any news, we also may be dehumanizing those who suffer—when we look the other way or say nothing will bring needed change. We speak to these ideas in our values when we seek to be **Transformative**, claiming that **“As 21st Century disciples we carry on the voice of the prophets, Jesus and courageous Christians when we believe God can use us to change lives, communities, institutions and systems by reflecting and promoting the counter-cultural values and practices we learn from Jesus.”** For me aligning with prophetic values means believing that the way things are, are not the way things always will be. Change is possible and peace is still possible even in situations that seem hopeless. Making that claim in the face of what we are watching and hearing from the Holy Land is a powerful witness to a kingdom not of this world and for its values that we strive toward and witness to as we live within this world that God loves.

However, you find yourself responding to what is happening in the Holy Land I ask as your pastor that you try to align with the values of the kingdom in how you respond internally, in speech, and in action, by recognizing the value and dignity of every human and not giving up hope for change even in seemingly hopeless situation.

I hope those steps towards our values during these times can lead us to other steps and actions to aid and support a long-term peace in the Middle East and elsewhere as we speak out against ongoing war and repeated cycles of violence and revenge. We do not claim to have the answers and solutions as outsiders to people who actually live in this situation of ethnic and religious tension and the reality of acts of violence. But, we can listen to all people and sides and claim the values of the kingdom in responding to what we see and hear. I pray it also inspires us to act to aid people who are suffering near and far and support all those who desire change.

Pastor Josh



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

In November we’re planning a wide range of topics, such as Barb & Chris’ Israel presentation, as well as some field trips which may include:

- West Allis Historical Society
- Black Holocaust Museum on Capitol
- Visit to or presentation from Native American Tribe/Nation

If you haven’t been a part of our study group in the past, this would be a great time to join! We meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Come check it out!

STEWARDSHIP: WHERE DO I BELONG?



Do you ever find yourself wondering, where do I belong? Whether it be at work, home, or even at church there are times when we have all asked ourselves this question.

What if through stewardship we can celebrate knowing that we do belong..... in HIM! This month we will look more closely at stewardship and how we can give back and celebrate who we are and where we belong through Jesus.

Lori Marquez

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY



On November 5, we will be remembering those of our congregation who have died in the last year. We will also remember friends and relatives who have gone before us. If you would like to have someone remembered during this service, call or email the church office.



On October 14th Steve Johnson transported 32 Sew and Sew Quilters completed quilts to a Lutheran World Relief collection site in Sturtevant WI. The quilts were then trucked to the LWR Distribution Center in St Paul, MN to be sorted, sized and bundled in preparation for shipment to countries in need all over the world.

Per LWR: Most often recipients use their LWR quilts to shield against the cold and rain. The versatility of the quilts also makes them useful as simple tents, floor coverings or a wrap to hold a baby on his mother's back.

Since we quilters here at FLC began keeping count in 1979, we've made 2,249 LWR quilts!

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE....



We continue to talk about Stewardship. Our teachers are working on the Christmas program which will be very unique and fun. It will take place on Dec. 17th during church. We welcome new students to join us for Wonderful Wednesdays on November 8 and 29th at 5:00 p.m. There's a lot to do to prepare for Christmas!

Festive Cranberry Salad

- 1 Can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C lemon juice
- 1 can (20 oz) crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 can (16 oz) whole-berry cranberry sauce
- 2 C miniature marshmallows
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C chopped pecans
- Red food coloring (optional)
- 1 carton (8 oz) froze whipped topping, thawed

In a bowl combine milk and lemon juice. Mix well. Stir in the pineapple, cranberry sauce, marshmallows, pecans and food coloring. Fold in whipped topping. Spoon into a 9 x 13 baking dish. Freeze until firm - 4 hrs. or overnight. Cut into squares.

Recipes
from Matt



We have seen an increase in the number of people visiting our food pantry

during the last few months. With the increase in the number of people requesting bags and the lack of food drives our shelves are looking pretty empty. **We would appreciate donations of jelly, cereal, pasta, and soup.**

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.

Mike Plicka and John Horvath



OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Operation Christmas Stocking is a year round project that provides gift bags for ELCA Synod Serenity Inn Program, Food Pantry clients at First Lutheran's Food Pantry and stockings filled with age appropriate items for their children/grandchildren.

We plan to fill 25 bags for the men, 25 totes for women at the food pantry and 25 gift bags which will be delivered to ELCA Synod Serenity Inn. You can help us by donating toothpaste, toothbrushes, socks (men and womens) and men's winter gloves.

We would like to thank the Endowment Committee for their \$500.00 donation to Operation Christmas Stocking.

Respectfully submitted
Co/Chairs Greta Plicka/Colleen Siarnicki

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

On October 14th the Sew and Sew quilters sent 32 beautiful quilts to be shipped overseas by Lutheran World Relief. The quilts were on display draped over many pews and the altar and altar rails.

On October 7th we had an outdoor pet blessing hosted by First Lutheran and attended by several neighboring churches. Pastor Josh and Pastor Sam from First Methodist Church blessed many cats and dogs along with a chicken and some pet rats. Everyone had fun. There are pictures posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

We have been poring through the time and talent sheets that were turned in at our "Find Your Fit" luncheon. Several of our new members, as well as our existing members, are stepping up to serve on various committees and doing some necessary work of the church. Joy Dowd, our new Volunteer Coordinator, and her team will be reaching out to our members in response to the questionnaires.

Make plans to attend our craft and vendor fair on November 11th. Colleen Siarnicki and others are working hard in preparation. This looks like it's going to be a big deal!

The annual Stewardship program will be kicking off in November.

Stuart Mitchell will be performing a concert at our church on November 19th. Anyone who has ever heard him will not want to miss this concert.

We are invited to take part in a Thanksgiving service at Luther Memorial Church on Wednesday, November 22nd, the evening before Thanksgiving.

Thank you for the wonderful response to all of these programs.

Sincerely,
Werner, Council President

DATES TO REMEMBER

11/1 - Wed. Evening Worship
11/5 - All Saints Sunday
11/11 - Craft & Vendor Fair
11/19 - R. Stuart Mitchell Concert
11/22 - Thanksgiving Eve Worship at Luther Memorial
12/3 - Advent Begins

TRIP TO THE JEWISH MUSEUM

Several members of our Tuesday Morning Bible Study group went on the road in October and hope to do so more in the coming months. It's something the Bible Study used to do on occasion, and we want to revive that tradition. My wife Sarah, who is a museum curator, and my baby daughter Pearl joined us on our trip to the Jewish Museum on Milwaukee's East Side. It's a wonderful museum that presents meaningful and powerful displays within a compact space. We came to see the quilts and textiles that were part of the special exhibit "Women Pulling at the Threads of Social Discourse". We also learned about the story of the giant textile master tapestry "Jeremiah" by Marc Chagall that hangs above that exhibit.

We spent much of our time learning about the history of the Jewish People and religious practices that shape their religious communities. It was easy to notice how the material lined up with what we read in the Bible and have been learning about in our Bible studies over the last two years focused on understanding Jesus' historical and cultural background. Of particular interest was the story of Jewish Immigration to Milwaukee. We saw familiar names and places and learned some new information. Did you know that the Jewish street peddler tradition in Milwaukee lasting longer than anywhere else?

It seemed timely to be learning about how people in Milwaukee perceived the rise of Hitler and the persecution of the Jews in Europe, shortly after the largest attack on the Jewish population since the Holocaust had just occurred in Israel. We were able to talk to the museum historian about Golda Meir's Milwaukee roots and her role in forming the State of Israel. We also talked with the staff about how they were doing and responding to these attacks and the retaliation of the Israeli military against Hamas, sometimes with civilian casualties. It was clear that we all desired peace and mourned the loss of Jewish and Palestinian lives as a result of the terrorist attacks and violence in the region. We hope for a peaceful region in the days to come.



This 'n That Around Here



Fill in the blank: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give _____ in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

- A. alms
- B. praise
- C. thanks
- D. offerings

Answer:

See 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NRSV



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

*Rita Bukowski, David Frailey,
Janet Kramer, Graham Sackett and Bob*

We remember in prayer Joy Dowd and her family following the loss of her father, Warren (Bud) Hirschinger.

TAKE TIME TO RECHARGE

"Then Jesus said, 'Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.' He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat" (Mark 6:31, NLT). Can you relate?

Especially during the holidays, we're "coming and going" so much that we often run out of steam.

Even Jesus and his disciples sought privacy and rest.

In what ways do you need a break today? Even if you're an extrovert, how can you care for your whole self during the holiday rush? Pay attention and give yourself permission to proactively recharge your battery.

—Janna Firestone



Birthdays

11/6 - Karlie Marquez
11/8 - Steve Oakland
11/17 - Joshua Graber

Anniversaries

11/15 - Gayle & Jerry Falk - 48 yrs.



Thanksgiving Humor

Why did the turkey decline dessert?
Because it was stuffed.

Why did the turkey cross the road twice?
To prove he wasn't a chicken.

Why didn't the chef season the turkey?
There wasn't enough thyme.

Why did the turkey leave the band?
People were fighting over the drumsticks.



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.

What We've Been Doing



The kids focused on sharing love during this class. They made little gifts for the congregation which will be passed out on Stewardship Sunday.

Moncher's grandson Benjamin (Jessica's son) had a great time eating his cake on his first birthday!



Eli's new beta, Hungry the fish, that he couldn't bring to the pet blessing. (L)

Elise Hynek (Elsie Boese's great-niece) with her parents, Dala and Steve, at her ordination.



Deb & Steve finally had the opportunity to meet their new grandson, Calvin. (L)

No, it's not Dancing With the Stars. It's our own Werner & Jackie, 66 years married, dancing the "elimination dance" at the wedding of their great-nephew Max Bayer. (Below)



MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Erik and Tina Kremers have lived in West Allis for several years. Both had Lutheran roots, and they started visiting churches hoping to find one that felt right. According to Tina, First was the one. They were attracted by the church's involvement in the community, but immediately loved the warm environment.

"We felt welcome from the day we got here," she explained. "And we wanted Teddy to grow up in something special." Teddy is their 6 month old son, who was baptized here on August 27th this year.

Tina works at Lake Country Child Care, and Teddy can go along to work. Erik, who attended MSOE, works for a medical device company.

Tina is from Darlington, and moved to this area with her sister in 2016. Erik is originally from Antioch, IL. The couple met when they worked at Water Street Brewery. Both value time with their extended family.

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

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U.S. Postage Paid

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Please deliver 10/30/23



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.

Wed., Nov. 1 at 6 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 22, 7:00 p.m.

***Thanksgiving Eve at Luther Memorial
2840 S 84th St., West Allis***

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.