

News & Views

First Lutheran Church

April, 2024



Guest Columnist: Rev. Matthew Short

For Most People, Listening Feels Like Love

Goodness, the world and the church are changing quickly, aren't they?

I remember being a child in my ALC (later, ELCA) church, and sitting through worship services. I remember noticing the aching knees that still bent at the communion rail. I remember singing "this is the feast of victory" at the top of my lungs. I remember all those older members who cared for me like a bunch of surrogate grandparents. I am so grateful I was raised in such an environment.

Of course, a lot has changed since then. Every generation has its customs, its songs, its ways of gathering around Word and Sacrament. For 2,000 years, the Christian Church has gone through immense changes. I could write a whole other article about what has changed. But of course, one thing never changes...**God's love is for all people, and those of us closest to that truth are always called to expand the circle and make sure more folks know this, and more importantly...feel this.**

A few years ago, I ran across this quote from an author and teacher named David Augsburger:

"For most people, feeling heard is so close to feeling loved that the two are indistinguishable."

Those words have stuck with me ever since. If we want to help people feel loved, then the best thing we can do is help them to feel heard. To listen to them. To be curious about them. To take an interest in their lives.

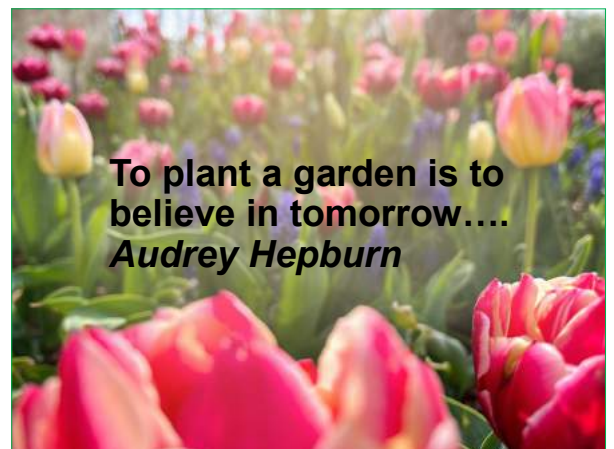
This is what those older members of my home congregation did for me. They asked me how school was going. They asked what I was interested in. They asked how I liked playing soccer (and a couple of them showed up at one of my games!) They didn't lead with their own stories...they were interested in my story. That felt like love. Later on, as I matured, I realized that the best way to feel connected to them was to turn the tables and start asking them about their stories. My hunch is that felt like love to them, too.

Continued p. 3



**Saturday,
April 13th
9:30 a.m. until ?**

More information on p. 3



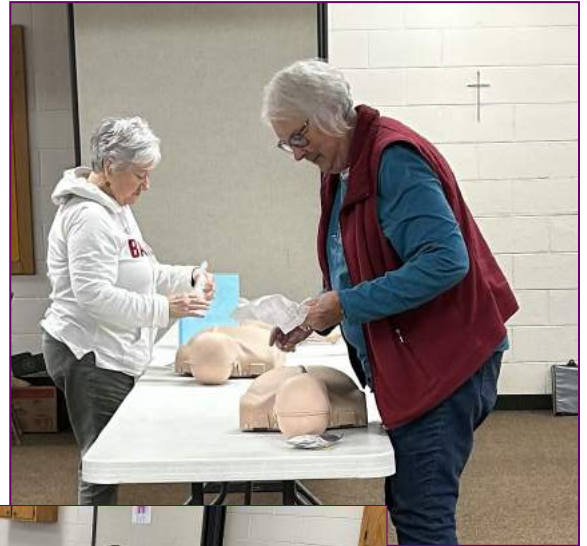
**To plant a garden is to
believe in tomorrow....
Audrey Hepburn**

What's Been Happening Here!



The Boy Scout food drive brought in a lot of food to be unloaded and sorted (L). We appreciate every bit of it!

Six of our members attended a class on the use of an AED device which we'll be installed soon. (Right and below)



IT'S PUPPET TIME AT FIRST!

The Sunday School class made puppets to demonstrate the story of the prodigal son (L). Our Sunday children's sermons have included puppets, too, including St. Patrick (Below). Pastor Matt Short (R) joined us on March 17th.



From the Guest Columnist Cont. from p. 1

In my role as the Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, the number one question I get from congregations is, “how do we get more members?” While this question is understandable, I do believe we have to challenge ourselves to go deeper and ask better questions. Those might include:

+ “How might we help those who aren’t a part of our fellowship feel the love of God in their everyday lives?”

+ “How might we take an interest in the community around us in a way that feels like love to them?”

+ What is God already up to in the lives of the people in our community, and how can we join in, loving them without the secret “hook” of hoping they join as members?

I have come to learn in this work that the more our goal is to “grow the church” the more we may struggle to do so. But the more our goal is to follow God’s lead, bless people, and help them feel loved on their turf in their everyday lives, the more the institution of the church actually gets healthier.

That’s why I am so excited about the “Adventures in Renewal” resources we have put together at the synod level. With those resources a renewal team at a congregation can receive both training and coaching from a synod-provided mission renewal and innovation coach. This approach allows each congregation to learn how to help more and more people feel heard, and loved. This is mission renewal that really makes a difference in the world!

I’ll close with a Bible passage that has become important to me in this work. It’s from the book of Jeremiah, where the prophet tells the people who are living in exile in a foreign land:

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 29:7

That’s the key, I think. It’s what those older members of my home congregation were doing with me. They sought my well-being, and in it, found vitality and life. Later on, I sought their well-being, and found vitality and life. This is how God has wired us. We seek the welfare of where we are planted. We take an interest in others. We are curious, and seek the Spirit’s lead. I can’t wait to work with the people of First Lutheran as we work toward these goals together.

Rev. Matthew Short

**TUESDAY
MORNING
BIBLE STUDY**



Our Tuesday morning group is now watching Season 4 of The Chosen. It’s not available yet for streaming, so this would be a good opportunity for you to watch and discuss it. You know the story of Jesus, so it’s easy to pick up wherever we’re starting.

If you haven’t been a part of our study group in the past, you’re welcome to join us! We meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

*If you can tie
your own shoes,*

**You’re Invited
to the
Sew & Sew Quilters
Quilting Bee**

Saturday, April 13th
9:30 a.m. until ?

Help us assemble quilts
for Lutheran World Relief.
No sewing involved.

Bring a friend!

We’ll provide beverages, sweet
treats and t-shirts. Bringing your
own lunch is optional.

The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Remember that we collect stocking items all year. Lists of needed items are located on the welcome table in the narthex. Donations can be dropped off in the Church Office. Keep a list with you for whenever you're at the dollar store, or see a good sale.

Shrimp and Scallops MPL Over Linguini

Recipes
from Matt



2 lb. Fresh peeled and deveined shrimp
1 1/2 lb. Small bay scallops, cooked and drained
8 tbsp. butter
1 med. onion, chopped
1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 tsp. crushed red pepper (more or less to taste)
Grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

Cook and drain linguini. Keep warm. Melt butter in larger no-stick frying or sauce pan. Add onion and saute for about 3 minutes. Add garlic, parsley and crushed red pepper. Stir and add scallops and shrimp, stirring constantly for 3 minutes until scallops are done (will turn from opaque to white).



The Boy Scouts held their annual Food Drive on Saturday, March 16th. The food they collected was dropped off food at First Lutheran. Boy Scouts and volunteers helped unload, weigh, sort and put the food on the shelves. Over 2,600 lbs. were received! God is good!

On Friday March 22, members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Greendale handed out Easter treats to our Food Pantry clients. They also collect food items for our food pantry several times a month.

We would appreciate donations of jelly, cereal, pasta, tuna, canned vegetables and soup.

On Monday, March 11, 2024 Mike Plicka picked up a food donation from Trinity Academy in Pewaukee, which was organized by Johnathan, a student at Trinity. He and his mother volunteer at First Lutheran Food Pantry when they are available.

We continue to be grateful for the support we receive from Festival Foods, Feeding America, Aggies Bakery and Cake Shop. Sendik's Food Market on North Avenue 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 groceries and assist during our Friday operating hours.

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

Submitted by: Mike Plicka and John Horvath



Sundays at 11 a.m.
in the Fireside Room



A WORD FROM OUR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

First Lutheran is gathering a Mission Listening Team to reach out into the community.

Pastor Matt Short, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, preached at First March 17 and gave a brief introduction to Faithful Innovation: reconnecting with God, one another, and neighbors, which will be the impetus for the new team. A consultant from the Synod will mentor the team, which will have a goal of finding out what is happening in our neighborhood, and how God is calling us to interact with others.

Pastor Short quoted Theologian and writer David Augsburger who said: "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable." In today's fast paced society, many people lack that sympathetic ear we tend to take for granted. The goal of the Listening Team will be to listen to others without any reason but being supportive.

While in the past, much religious outreach has been to "fix" people, rather than to hear them, this newer approach allows people to share their values and insights with us, so that we can learn from them and support them.

This effort is the result of the work of the original Mission Team, which studied the church, community and area organizations to better understand our strengths and weaknesses. At Rejoice Sunday in December of 2022 church members shared their values and inspirations for the future, which helped the Team form our Mission, Values and Vision statement (adopted at the annual meeting in 2023.)

Stay tuned for exciting developments as the team is formed, trained, and begins their mission in our community!

Sincerely,
Gayle Falk, Council President

Here is a reminder of the work the Mission Team left for the Mission Listening Team:

As we seek to serve in our community, we will gather a team with a process for listening to our neighbors and local partners to identify what activities are already happening in our community that we could join and what new ministries might be most valued by our neighbors including several identified by the mission team:

- Creation care and environmental stewardship activity
- After-school program or educational opportunities
- Warming room and expanded ministry for homeless
- Support and programs for families of all shapes and sizes and single parents
- Creative space and resources for artists, crafts-people and musicians

If you feel called to this exciting work of listening to our neighbors and finding what ministry we could offer would fit our communities greatest need or interest, please contact Pastor Josh.



On February 23rd, six of our members and one member each from the Tuesday and Wednesday evening groups that meet here, took part in a 5 hr. training course. They learned how to use the Automatic Electronic Defibrillator that we purchased, as well as other first aid. The class was conducted by the Red Cross. Thank you to all who attended, and to Greta Plicka for making all of the arrangements. The AED device will be installed in the narthex after Easter.

DATES TO REMEMBER!

- 4/13 - Quilting Bee
- 4/20 - Becky & Mark's Wedding!
- 5/5 - Cinco De Mayo
- 5/19 - Pentecost Sunday - Think Geraniums!
- 7.20 - Vacation Bible School

This 'n That Around Here



What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples — twice — when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?

- A. "Love one another as I have loved you."
- B. "Peace be with you."
- C. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."
- D. "I am risen!"

Answer: See John 20:19, 21.



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

David Frailey, Janet Kramer, Sharon and Dale Phillippo, Lavone Reis, LaVerne Williams, Kathy Wittenburg and Bob



Birthdays

- 4/6 - Kevin Lone
- 4/9 - Janell Cyrus
- 4/13 - Sandy Wymelenberg
- 4/14 - Louis Cyrus
- 4/14 - Sheri Newell
- 4/18 - Christina Steward
- 4/22 - LaVerne Williams
- 4/26 - Terrance Favre
- 4/29 - Colleen Siarnicki
- 4/30 - Cooper Stummeier

Anniversaries

- 4/27 - Werner & Jackie Bayer - 67 yrs.



Prayer Chain



Did you know that we have an active prayer chain here at First Lutheran? When prayer requests come in to the church, they are forwarded to the prayer chain, and each person on the chain offers up prayer. If you would like to be a part of this important ministry, contact the church office or Marie LePage.

Do you have a prayer request for the prayer chain? A need for comfort, healing, support or thanks for something good? If so, you can contact the church office or Marie LePage and your request will be forwarded on to the rest of the chain.

Remember to bring in your empty ink cartridges when you replace them. We get reward money for them from Office Depot which really helps toward the purchase of office supplies! Just drop them off in the church office. Thanks!

Please check the sign-up sheets in the narthex: Altar Flowers, Eternal Light, Sunday Volunteers, etc!

Remember to notify the church office of any address, phone or email changes!

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.) con-

Don't Forget!

What We've Been Doing



First Lutheran served a soup supper at Mt. Hope one Wednesday during Lent (above). Steve and Deb's grandson, Superman Calvin, and their son Alex (L).



Lavone and Karlie were able to spend an afternoon together.



Pearl was a big hit when Pastor Josh led worship at Library Square. Jim Smith celebrated St. Patrick's Day in full dress (L). Several members of First attended a talk at Apostle Presbyterian about the history of the hospital and grounds at the V.A., followed by a luncheon.



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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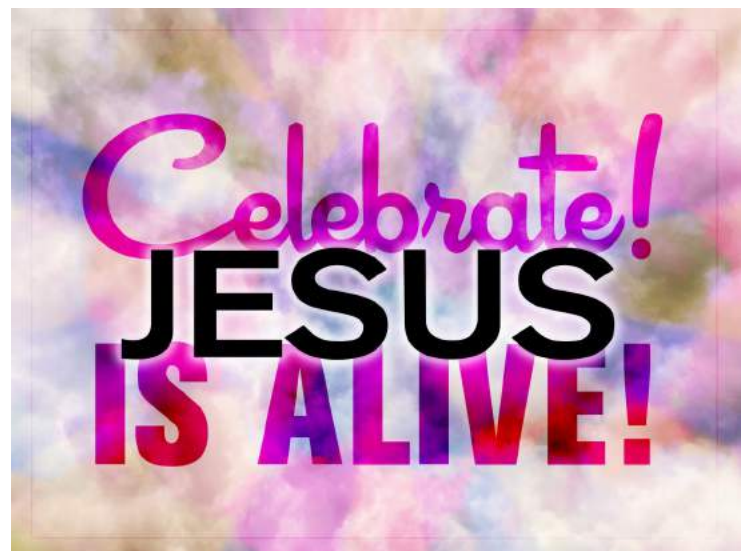
***Worship With Us:
Sundays at 10 a.m.***

***Fun & Faith for Children
Mondays, April 8 & 22
from 5-6 p.m.***

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm

Office located at 7400 W. Lapham, West Allis
(414)476-4664

**Food Pantry Hours:
Fridays, 10 a.m. - Noon**



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