

# Living Connected... To GOD & EACH OTHER

August 2020

SENIOR PASTOR'S COLUMN

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### Worship:

Sunday - 10 AM  
YouTube & Facebook Live  
(All Age Worship)  
Wednesday - 10 AM  
Outdoor or Commons

### Pastoral Staff:

Bonnie Wilcox  
Senior Pastor  
Jill Bergman  
Associate Pastor

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## THE BOOK OF RUTH: FINDING GOD'S WAY

What I find most fascinating about the story of Ruth in the Old Testament: What happens *after* the book has ended. Ruth is a "foreigner" who marries into the family of God-followers who eventually have some very famous descendants: King David, King Solomon, and... Jesus!

The Old Testament law of God's people often meant following purity laws and choosing spouses from among your own people -- not from people who were not God-followers.

Ruth is the daughter-in-law of a God-follower named Naomi. Naomi and her husband and sons moved to a new country because of the poor conditions in their homeland. In this new country, they were expected to remain for the rest of their lives, and the sons married women from this new land.

Sadly, hard times fell again to this family: Naomi's husband, and her two sons, all died, leaving three widows with no means of support. (Women did not inherit land in those days).

Heartbroken, Naomi must return to a place that has to take her in: her homeland among the true God-followers. Her daughters-in-law, who are devoted to her, want to go with her, but she pushes them away. Only Ruth is persistent and determined to go with Naomi.

And she claims Naomi's faith as her own: "Your God will be my God," Ruth pledges to Naomi. (Ruth 1:16) And off they go.

Over four weeks, from August 9 to the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, we'll explore the four chapters of the Book of

Ruth. How is it that a woman (!) named Ruth, foreign-born (!) and unrelated to any God-followers except through marriage (!)

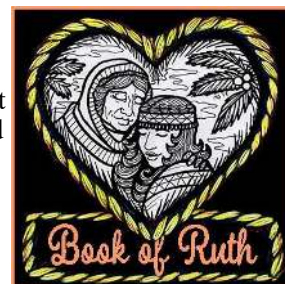
becomes one of only FOUR WOMEN named in Jesus' genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew?

I have a friend who didn't like his DNA-ancestry test results because he did not identify as 100% Swedish (he is a 4th generation Minnesotan)! Today, many of us still hold on to the idea that we value being 100%, or should "marry within our own kind," however one might define the phrase.

Think of the comfort it brought to hearers in Jesus' day to hear that he was not only descended from kings, but also from outsiders, as well people who were important to Jesus' story who did what some might have labelled "unseemly" reputations. And yet, these faithful women: Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba, and Ruth, are lifted up as important ancestors in spite of the labels some placed on them.

We'll also use tele-drama again, "*Ruth & Naomi Take the Oregon Trail*," to explore this story with faithfulness and humor. The Oregon Trail computer game allowed young people a virtual 1850 wild west adventure of fording rivers, hunting buffalo, falling prey to disease, and some things "only 90s kids will remember."

Pastor Bonnie Wilcox  
Email: [bonnie@flcch.org](mailto:bonnie@flcch.org)





## When Will We Return to Worship?

We will continue to slowly return to in-person opportunities at church, but Sunday worship will likely be a last step. Accommodating enough people, ensuring a safe environment, and limiting singing, are all obstacles we continue to explore.

In the meantime, please take advantage of opportunities to enjoy in-person fellowship, service and worship in outdoor settings, and occasionally, inside the church building. These include:

1. All-family VBS (see page 4)
2. Wednesday morning Communion service, 10 AM in person on the sidewalk in front of church -- ADVANCE REGISTRATION is required.
3. Community Meal, Sundays, 11 AM to 12 PM. Holy Communion served to you in your car on the first Sunday of the month -- Next time is August 5.
4. Delivery of After School Meals (we're looking for a volunteer bus driver).
5. Community Gardening - Saturday mornings to harvest, and ANY DAY to weed!
6. Friday 55+ Singles Group.



Screenshot of Sunday Children's Story

## Recent Pastoral Acts



Marriage of CYF Intern  
Alexis Huseby and  
Jeremy Mattson  
July 24, 2020



Baptism of Sarah Opal Voll & Jubilee DeAnne Jackie  
Pearson (daughter of Sarah Voll & Anthony Pearson)  
June 28, 2020

Funeral of Glenn Swenson, July 16, 2020  
*And remembering those who died in 2020.*

Anderson, Dorothy 5/15  
Colvin, Herb 5/13  
Fisher, Beverly 1/2  
Fouks Karen 7/6  
Jarvi, Sally 3/23  
Jeska, Marge 7/19  
Meyen, Walter 5/22  
Palm, Curtis 1/6  
Rogich, Bettye 5/27  
Rothbauer, Cecelia 1/6  
Swenson, Glenn 7/7



## MINISTRY NEWS

### Happy Birthday!

Please join in celebrating First Lutheran member Marvin Strandlund, our 90th Birthday for August!



*Hugs and prayers to... Marvin Strandlund*



*Here's a peek at a couple of new repairs...  
Driveway Project &  
Paul Eddy refinishing the window ledges.*



### Sunday Morning Bible Study Coffee Break

Grab a cup of coffee and join Michelle Edwards in a guided discussion on Paul's teachings on law, salvation and the redeeming, transforming work of God in our lives and what is yet to come.

The study begins live at 8:30 AM each Sunday with a brief check-in of guests. *This ZOOM study is also recorded and can be watched at any time.*

For questions about the Bible study or how to connect, contact Michelle Edwards, 763-300-8419, [shell-lyn@hotmail.com](mailto:shell-lyn@hotmail.com)

If you'd like to schedule a ZOOM meeting for your Ministry Group, contact Joyce, [joyce@flcch.org](mailto:joyce@flcch.org) or leave a message at the church office.



### Friday Night 55+ Singles Gathering

The picture shows the 55+ Singles Group (and pets) celebrating July birthdays at Sullivan Park in Columbia Heights. (Masks were removed for photo). Consider joining them on Friday nights at 5 PM. The view is awesome and breeze from the lake helps to keep the temperature down. They plan to meet here for Friday dinner gatherings throughout the summer and into the fall, weather permitting.

Location: Sullivan Park (750 Parkside Lane, Columbia Heights) 55421. Please bring your own: supper, drink and chair (picnic tables available, but easier if you bring a chair). Question? Contact Faith White, [whitefa@comcast.net](mailto:whitefa@comcast.net)

## GIVING



First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights (FLCCH) is financed by the generous, direct monetary gifts of its members and friends.

There are several ways you can bless this mission of Jesus with your gifts:

- 1) Drop off your **Check or Cash** during Sunday's Drive-thru Prayer & Meal or send a check thru the mail. Please use an offering envelope so we can give you credit for your gift.
- 2) **Electronic Funds Transfer** from our website, [flcch.org](http://flcch.org) (upper right hand corner). Set up a one-time or recurring donation.
- 3) **Bill Pay**. Follow the directions of your bank or credit union to create First Lutheran as a Payee at 1555 40<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421, and choose to make a regular weekly or monthly offering.
- 4) **Stock Transfer to the Church**.

For more information, contact the church office, 763-788-9653.

### Undergraduate Scholarship Funds available from First Lutheran

The overall objective of this scholarship program is to support First Lutheran members who are enrolled in an accredited Christian College. The application deadline is September 1, 2020. To receive a scholarship application, contact Joyce, [joycew@flcch.org](mailto:joycew@flcch.org)

## Walk-through Outdoor Vacation Bible School For All Ages, August 3-7

Get ready for a family adventure at First Lutheran Church as we learn about God's grace through our Vacation Bible School program: Knights of the North Castle.



Come to experience music, Bible stories, science experiments and crafts in small groups each night. Families will sign up for a time slot and walk through all the stations on the grounds of First Lutheran Church in the evenings. After you've visited each station families will pick up picnic lunches and a discussion guide so they can have dinner together and discuss what they've learned. *We will stay socially distanced, with no-contact activities and invite families to wear masks.*

**We are seeking volunteers to make this a great experience!**

Teens and adults needed to help with the stations and also to pack meals during the day. Please contact Rachel, [rachel@flcch.org](mailto:rachel@flcch.org)



## Youth & Family Visit the George Floyd Memorial

A group of 20 youth and adults from First Lutheran visited the memorial for George Floyd at the corner of 38th and Chicago in Minneapolis on July 11. We began with a prayerful visit to the site, observing the art and flowers that were placed there in remembrance of George Floyd. Parents and pastors reflected with the youth at an art installation nearby commemorating many African Americans killed in police custody or targeted because of race.

Our group then visited a local church, Christ Church International in the Powderhorn neighborhood, to help with a food distribution event for over 200 families. Our youth and families had a powerful time learning about the issues of systemic racism and injustice in our world. We prayed and worked in joy on this hot day!



## Youth Group Bonfire Wednesday, Aug. 12, 6-8 PM

Join us for another socially distanced outdoor bonfire with prayer, Bible study and games!

Chairs will be kept more than six feet apart, no food or utensils will be shared, and youth are invited to wear masks. Contact: Rachel, [rachel@flcch.org](mailto:rachel@flcch.org)

## Sunday School

Join Rachel reading the Bible story on Facebook live at 9:45 AM. Sunday school activities are sent out weekly for kids to follow along during the Sunday worship service.

Music class with Miss Janet for toddlers and preschoolers is live on ZOOM each Sunday at 12 PM. Please contact Rachel for the link. [rachel@flcch.org](mailto:rachel@flcch.org)

## We are seeking Sunday School teachers for the fall!

**Time commitment: 1 hour/week**

Are you interested in helping our families develop faith in the lives of our kids? We need you! We are seeking faithful and caring adults and teens to help us think creatively about Sunday School this year. We are looking at an online experience with lessons in the mail and outdoors, socially distanced events too.

## Family Water Day!

We had 55 people attend our family Water Play day on Sunday, July 12 in the Courtyard at church. We kicked off our HopeFULL series with a Camp Wapo-style event, including a 50-foot slip-n-slide, water balloons, a water fight, freeze pops and more.



Our families appreciated the chance to play together --- many children soaked their parents and even their Pastor! It was good to be together and to pray for one another.

## It has been an inspiring month of Living Connected to our Neighborhood at a Safe Physical Distance!



Cookie Bakers sign up three times a week to make cookies for our meal deliveries. You can sign up at Meal Train or email [nathanr@flcch.org](mailto:nathanr@flcch.org) <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/91ldlo>



A dozen volunteers help to provide and serve 125 meals each Sunday Mornings to Seniors and Families!



45 people participated in our three discussion groups on *How to Have Better Conversations on Race and Racism*. For over half of the attendees, this was their first time attending an event at First Lutheran! People are so passionate about how we can support our neighbors of color!



Volunteers planting, weeding, and picking veggies to provide a curbside Farmer's Market with fresh produce from the FLC Community Garden! *What a beautiful ministry to provide on Sundays!* Left over vegetables are used to make meals for our After School families and donate to Southern Anoka County Food Shelf! (SACA)



Sunday Community Lunch Drive Thru has members picking-up extra meals for those who are isolated in their senior living buildings!

## Help is Appreciated!

Please contact Nathan Roberts via the church office or [nathanr@flcch.org](mailto:nathanr@flcch.org) if you are interested in...

- ☐ Baking Cookies (50 for Tuesdays, Thursdays & 200 for Sundays)
- ☐ Serving Community Lunch
- ☐ Prepping and delivering After School Meals in the church van
- ☐ Attending the Discussion Group on Race and Racism



## How to Have Better Conversations about Race & Racism

Wednesdays, Aug. 12 - Sept. 2, 6 - 7:30 PM

As a white person, talking about race and racism is hard and can be very uncomfortable. Let's practice discussing race and racism in healthy, productive ways. This group is designed for white people, but all are welcome.

Pizza and Fruit dinner (\$5 suggested donation). Sign up with Nathan Roberts - Anti-racism trainer & Director of Community Engagement at First Lutheran Church, [nathanr@flcch.org](mailto:nathanr@flcch.org)

**Southern Anoka Community Assistance (SACA) Food shelf** has volunteer opportunities to consider:

- 1) Packing and/or delivering food boxes one Saturday a month
  - 2) Assist with fresh produce distribution at SACA Aug. 8 & 22, Sept. 12 & 26, Oct. 10.
- Contact Larry Bugbee: 612-812-1633, [lbugbee@msn.com](mailto:lbugbee@msn.com)



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## RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

**SUNDAY ONLINE  
WORSHIP 10 AM  
YOUTUBE &  
FACEBOOK LIVE**

**SUNDAY MEAL  
SERVED CURBSIDE  
DRIVE-THRU  
11 AM—12 PM**

CHURCH OFFICE  
is currently closed due  
to COVID-19 crisis.

Please check our  
website or call for any  
updates.

*Come, see what's happening at First!*

