

Living Connected... To GOD & EACH OTHER

September 2020

SENIOR PASTOR'S COLUMN

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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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

The Caller Newsletter is

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Editor: Joyce Weaver,
joycew@flech.org

MAY IT BE SO ...

I am part of an interfaith group of pastors, rabbis and imams on Facebook for communal and spiritual responses to COVID. It is one of the best things I have found during the coronavirus pandemic. Criticism and disrespectful arguments are not tolerated.

Instead, there is listening, sharing and wondering about how to lead our faith communities in the midst of the pandemic: What are you doing about funerals? About children's ministry? Have you had problems using the Zoom app for worship? Do you have people struggling with mental health issues? And on and on and on.

The administrators for the group have given these guidelines:

- "This is a community for clergy to discuss:
- preventive measures to be considered
- compassionate and pastoral responses to our communities
- balancing social distancing with need for belonging and community
- values based approaches and frameworks to make hard decisions
- cultivating spiritual practices and guides for our congregations
- tools and ideas for alternative delivery methods of programs, classes and services
- our own wellbeing
- working with our leadership
- any other related topics including moral support for one another"

There is support, listening, debate, input, questions...and respect! Whether you are a

Christian pastor, a Jewish rabbi, or an Islamic imam.

Please note: There are no inter-religious criticisms; no claiming right belief and putting other faiths down; no arguments. There IS debate, and questions, and lots and lots of listening and support. Egos have been set aside within this group.

I see this Facebook page as a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. Each person in this group takes their faith very seriously. They care deeply about the communities they serve. They ask questions across religious boundaries, such as, "How does your faith tradition understand the story of Jacob wrestling with God in the 32nd Chapter of Genesis?" We may not agree with the points raised by other faiths, but we are all enriched by the conversation.

I pray our conversations this fall about the future of our nation, the upcoming national election, and our response to COVID-19 could all be discussed in such a way! With listening, consideration, and each person respected. Without negativity, memes that offend, and oversimplification issues that are not simply resolved. What if we established some ground rules for our communications with each other?

And each person is respected. May it be so. (Which is a translation from Hebrew for "Amen.")

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox
Senior Pastor

COVID Updates:

WORSHIP UPDATE

The Church Council voted on Aug. 25, 2020, to continue online worship as our primary form of gathering through the end of this year. Until a vaccine is available, we will have to wait to gather safely. Thank you for your support during COVID-19, both spiritually, emotionally, physically and financially. Stay tuned for more details as we get closer to December.

COMMUNITY MEAL

No Community Meal will be available on Sept. 6. We've kept serving meals every week since the COVID quarantine began (including Easter) and we're going to give our staff and volunteers some time off so we can begin fall on Sept. 13 with new energy!

ANNUAL FIRST DAY, SEPT. 13!

Worship online with a new worship series at 10 AM about God's Promises, and a Bible Study on the book of Philemon (pg. 3).

Join us online, and then in person for:

11 AM – 12 PM: Community Meal and Garden Veggies served curbside; Holy Communion served to you in your car; Blessings for Educators & Students in your car or during **12 PM Family Courtyard Carnival** (see pg. 4)

BUILDING POLICIES

We continue to update and refine our building policies and procedures during the pandemic.

- ◆ When you come into the building, even just for a few minutes, you need to wear a mask AND register with simple health questions and temperature-taking.
- Please don't come to church without scheduling an appointment, or if you have any COVID-like symptoms. Drop-In visits expose the staff to higher risks, as well as our guests.
- Staff will continue to work from home most of the time, depending on ministry needs. Zoom meetings and emails help us to coordinate our work.

TESFA ACADEMY & COVID

Our tenant charter school is currently planning to begin with a hybrid school plan. Each classroom will have 25% of students attend school each day, Monday-Thursday. On Fridays, students would learn at home with their teachers online.

NEW ADDRESS?

Have you moved during COVID? Please let us know if you have an updated address, so we can offer a blessing for your new residence. And if you are moving away from First Lutheran, let us know that, too. We'd like to record a farewell & Godspeed prayer with you and your family. Someday, we will be back together for indoor Worship on Sundays and we'd be disappointed to find out you have left the area during COVID.

INNOVATION/ADAPTATION

We are looking at fall events with new eyes! If we can't meet as we have in the past, what could make faith milestones and annual events exciting in new ways? Staff and the council have been having conversations about this, and we hope you'll find the innovations we're planning meaningful and faithful.

HOLIDAY MARKET (Postponed)

November's Holiday Market will not take place as we have done in previous years because of the coronavirus. Watch for the possibility of an Easter Market in early spring with goodies for entertaining!

SCANDINAVIAN LUTEFISK & MEATBALL SUPPER

(Cancelled for January 2021)

A highlight of our year is the gathering of people who come to our church on a cold January Saturday to enjoy a hot meal of Scandinavian foods! We have had to face that this delightful day puts too many people at risk -- our guests, as well as the dozens of people who prepare and serve.

NEW BUILDING UPDATES

- We received a grant and have installed new AED equipment for emergency use.
- Our elevator has been updated and inspected by local authorities.
- Our older bus has had some needed repairs to the transmission.
- Phase I of the parking lot resurfacing: we have repaved the entire driveway from Polk to Tyler. Phase II will happen in 2021, along with our rain garden project.
- Electrical hand dryers have been installed in all of the school restrooms.

NEW MEMBER & STAFF UPDATES

(see pg. 3 for details)

2020 Giving and Financial Updates

From the Board of Finance
(through July 2020)

PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP)

First Lutheran Church (FLC) applied for and received a federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan, using grant dollars from the CARES Act. This was awarded on April 16, 2020 in the amount of \$103,000. This program has allowed us to keep our staff working and serving our community.

Per the terms of the PPP and Act, the proceeds of this Loan are to be used for:

- ◆ Payroll Costs
 - ◆ Mortgage interest payments (but not mortgage prepayments or principal payments)
 - ◆ Utility payments
- Seventy-five percent of the proceeds of this loan must be used for payroll expenses. And all or part of the loan may be forgiven if the borrower satisfies and complies with the terms and conditions for loan forgiveness under the Act and Rules of the PPP.

FLC has used up the entire balance accordingly and fully expects the loan to be forgiven. (Yeah!!!)

GIVING UPDATE

In addition, our congregational offering giving through July 31, 2020 was at \$225,040. We had budgeted at \$232,625, thus showing a minimal shortfall of \$7,625. Considering the challenges with COVID-19, the Finance Board feels really encouraged by the continued generosity of our congregation during this time.

Thanks to the continued giving and the PPP loan, we have not had to use funds from our reserve fund, as was budgeted. We are so grateful for where we are at, but we still want to remind and encourage our members to continue their strong support for First Lutheran Church.

New Mobile Giving App: GIVE PLUS

You can now support the church with this mobile app at no cost to you.

GIVE PLUS
A VANCOR COMPANY

Staff Updates

Julie Wilson is serving as our Interim Operations Manager, Part Time. She is overseeing facility management, building contracts, and office staff. Julie is a Licensed Graduate Social Worker (LGSW) who also works as the General Manager for an assisted living management company. She has a background in property and office management, as well as Continuous Quality Improvement facilitation. Julie is married to her husband Paul and they have two furry children, Daisy and Asoka. She enjoys gardening (heralding from a farming family) and good conversation over coffee.



Drew Stolba serves as First Lutheran's Handbell Dir. and A/V Coordinator while currently producing the weekly online services. He has a B.A. in music with a Minor in Jazz Studies from the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, IA and a A.A.S. in Audio Production and Engineering from IPR in Minneapolis, MN. Outside of church Drew enjoys spending time with his wonderful wife Becca and their two daughters Eleanor and Evelyn. You can usually find him grilling or smoking meats while the girls run circles around him in their backyard.



Dave Reilly is another familiar face at First Lutheran. Dave is continuing his business accounting work as our Interim Finance Manager. Dave has a BBA in Finance from Western Connecticut and has applied his finance and technology skills in both large and small corporate environments for the past thirty years. Dave and his wife Amy have two sons, Kevin & Sean and look forward to gaining a new daughter-in-law this fall.



New Member

Please Welcome Dorothea Opheim!

Dorothea was born and raised in Fergus Falls, MN. After high school, she attended Nurses Training at Swedish Hospital in Minneapolis, receiving her RN degree in about 1951. She further studied Public Health at the UofM, and served for over 20 years as a Public Health Nurse in St. Cloud, Glenwood, and hospitals such as North Memorial. She retired from nursing in 1990, and moved with her husband to Washington state. Her husband passed away in 2017, and she recently made the decision to move back to Minnesota to be near family.

Dorothea is the mother of First Lutheran members Judie Opheim (with whom she is now living) and Kari Hauser, along with two other daughters who live in Minnesota and a son who lives in Germany. She enjoys reading, bible classes, music, cooking (she's well-known for her cookies) and especially socializing. She looks forward to the time when she can freely mingle and worship with friends at First Lutheran.

If you would like to drop Dorothea a note or update your church directory, here's her contact information:
3422 Stinson Blvd. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418, 612-789-6595



New Member

If you are interested in joining the membership of First Lutheran Church, please contact the church office. 763-788-9653, joyce@flcch.org



Thank you from Ardis Hanson...

Thanks to Friends & Staff of First Lutheran Church that made my 90th Birthday so enjoyable! Your kindness and thoughtfulness was really appreciated. *May God Bless you all.*

Small Groups & Studies

Sunday Coffee Break Bible Study

Starting on Sept. 13, we will begin a five week study on the book of Philemon. This is Paul's letter to a Christian brother. It deals with themes of forgiveness and grace, challenging Christians to live as Christ modeled for us.

Everyone is welcome to join us for our Bible studies using Zoom at 8:30 on Sunday mornings. You can find the link on the church website in the calendar. Or, contact Michelle Edwards at shell-lyn@hotmail.com



First Lutheran Book Club is Back!

If you have a love for reading, consider connecting with other like-minds. Join them on Wednesday, Sept. 16 for a 20-minute Sidewalk Worship, followed by a distancing discussion on the book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Tubman. Contact: Char, 763-572-1220, chararich@gmail.com

In partnership with the *Young At Heart Ministry*, the FLC Book Club is planning a 'Meet the Author' event for Tuesday, Oct. 19. Keith McConnell, a FLC member, will share the excitement of having his first mystery novel published.

Friday Laughter & Cuisine. Singles, age 55+ gather outdoors to eat and socialize on Fridays at 5 PM. Join them at Sullivan Park (750 Parkside Lane, Columbia Heights 55421). Please bring your own: supper, drink & chair. Questions to: Karen Peterson, karenpeterson303@gmail.com

50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

On Sunday, Oct. 18, we will recognize this special anniversary of the Lutheran church in the United States.

We have a rich history of Women's Circles here at First Lutheran. Those still together include: Hillside, Hope, Rachel & WELCA.



MINISTRY NEWS

First Day Carnival! Sept. 13, 12 PM

First Day Carnival for children, youth and their families in the Courtyard! This year's celebration includes Bible Milestone, Blessings for Educators & Students, Cotton Candy & physical distancing Carnival Games! *Sunday School and Confirmation packets will be available for students to pick-up!*

Sunday School Begins Sunday, Sept. 20 11 - 11:35 AM on ZOOM (following Online Worship)

Children grow in their faith in God by experiencing stories of the Bible and lay the foundation for lifelong faith. Ages 3 – Grade 5 gather to experience a Bible story brought to life through creative story-telling, life application, games and prayer online.

We've got classes for Preschool and Grades K, 3 & 5. All classes meet at 11 AM all together on ZOOM to check in, read the Bible Story together and play an opening game. Kids then go to a Zoom breakout room with their Sunday School teachers to their classrooms to discuss the bible story, do activities and pray together. **Parents are always welcome to stay with your child during Sunday School! Special needs children are welcomed.*

One Sunday a month, we will gather outdoors at church, for an optional, safe and fun activity. We ask everyone to wear a mask and stay distanced. On the gathering Sunday, we won't meet online. Questions? Contact: Rachel, rachel@flcch.org

Confirmation Begins Sunday, Sept. 20 11 - 11:35 AM on ZOOM (following Online Worship)

This year of middle school is going to be like no other. The usual stresses of pre-teens and teens are added to this totally uncertain time. We here at FLC want to walk alongside your middle-schooler in confirmation. We will focus on real life issues and questions in our online classes. Register today!

Confirmation runs from Grades 6 – 8, and ends with the Rite of Confirmation in the fall of Grade 9. In our program, young people form supportive small groups, review core teachings of the Christian faith, serve others, and develop faith practices.

We'll send out some learning activities each week, usually a short video or a slide presentation, for youth to review at home. Then we will gather on Sundays for prayers, highs and lows and a discussion on how to apply the learning to our life.

Register for Confirmation here: <https://flcch.org/grow-in-faith/children-youth/confirmation/>

Youth Group Bonfire Wednesdays, Sept. 16, 30 & Oct. 7, 21

Join us for this fall's 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



Music Ministry Contest

What is Your Favorite Hymn/Song? Do you have hymns or songs that you enjoy singing or hearing? Every time that you hear it, it brings you back to a happy place. Maybe it brings you back to a sad memory. These could be songs from childhood, Sunday School class, traditional hymns or more contemporary songs. During the fall months, we are going to have a favorite hymn/song contest. Please email your favorites and we will use the top five in worship during the fall months. The criteria are as follows: 1) The song must be religious. 2) It could be an African- American Spiritual, Traditional Hymn, a Contemporary or Gospel Song. Please no Christmas Carols (we don't want to rush Christmas). Please email to: jeffrey@flcch.org Happy hunting!



**American
Red Cross** **Blood
Drive**

Did you know that every blood donation can save up to three lives? With the increasing demand for live-saving blood, First Lutheran has been invited to serve as a donor station; helping to supply the need to hospitals and patients.

We would first need to secure a list of 30 people who would be willing to donate. *Covid safety precautions are required.* Families may consider donating together (a signed parental or guardian form is needed for under age 18).

If you would like to be considered as a donor this fall, please notify the church office to be added to the Interest Survey list. You would later be contacted to confirm, once a date is set. Please contact Joyce, 763-788-9653, joycew@flcch.org

Religious Book Donations

The Board of Spiritual Growth has been working to create a Little Free Library since visiting our current church library is not available at this time. Now, we are looking to fill it. We are specifically seeking books, both fiction and nonfiction, that have a spiritually beneficial theme. We want this library to provide material that builds us up. *Thank you to Gary Berg for the beautiful work on this design.*



MINISTRY NEWS



Thank you to our AMAZING volunteers who provide 300 meals a week to neighbors in our community! Normally we take the summer off of serving meals, but we served through the summer months to help support our neighbors struggling social isolation and food insecurity.



Outdoor After School Begins Sept. 22

In an abundance of caution, After School will be held outside this fall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30 - 6 PM.

Thank you for continuing to support this ministry that provides social, emotional, and educational support to families in our community. After School will offer tutoring help, basketball, playground games, and soccer. Dinner will be served at 5:30 PM in the Courtyard. Kids and volunteers will get their temperatures taken and be asked to wear masks.

If you would like to volunteer we need tutors, playground supervisors, and help preparing dinner in the kitchen.

To volunteer to help, please contact Nathan Roberts, nathanr@flcch.org or call the church office, 763-788-9653.



Community Lunch Begins Again Sept. 13, 11 AM - Noon

Starting Sept. 13, Rock & Kari Hauser and a team of volunteers will be serving up their signature delicious meals for our drive-thru this fall. Our Pastoral team will offer weekly prayers & counseling, & monthly communion (Sept. 13, Oct. 4)

If you or your family would like to volunteer to help, please contact Nathan Roberts, nathanr@flcch.org or call the church office, 763-788-9653.



Better Conversations about Race and Racism

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6 - 7:30 PM

We want to keep these important conversations going with an outdoor book club where we will discuss the One Minnesota Book of the Month! *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, edited by Sun Yung Shin.

The book centers around conversations about racial disparities in Minnesota through essays written by Native American writers and writers of color. Pizza and fruit will be served for dinner (\$5 suggested donation).

For more information or to register for this conversation, contact Nathan Roberts, nathanr@flcch.org or call the church office, 763-788-9653.



Pancake Breakfast Sunday, Oct. 11, 9:30 AM - Noon

We are going to have the classic Pancake Breakfast served right up to your car window! Proceeds to benefit SACA. If you would like to volunteer, contact Larry Bugbee, lbugbee@msn.com



Fall Family Event Oct. 11

Nothing says *fall* like pumpkin decorating and caramel apples! Come, join the fun on Sunday, Oct. 11 at 12 PM in the church Courtyard.



Trick or Treat at Church Thursday, Oct. 29, 4:30 - 6:30 PM

Families are invited to Trick or Treat at the outside doors of the church! It will be a fun all ages activity and neighbors are welcome to join. Costumes and masks encouraged.



First Lutheran Church
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WEB: flcch.org / PH: 763-788-9653

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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: 763-788-9653

Come, see what's happening at First this fall!

