

Living Connected...

TO GOD & EACH OTHER

Spring 2021



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Worship Hours:

10 AM Online
(All Age Worship)

Pastoral Staff:

Bonnie Wilcox
Senior Pastor

Jill Bergman
Associate Pastor

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What Do We Do Now?

“I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”
Jeremiah 29:11

Here is HOPE I see: More than 2 million Minnesotans have been vaccinated for COVID-19 as I write this, including a majority of our church staff!

As you read this column, many of us will have gathered in the Sanctuary to celebrate Jesus' power over death on Easter morning. “A future with hope” seems to be within our reach.

SO: What do we do now?

We will Live Connected as we have for the past year -- connected spiritually and emotionally, even if we cannot connect physically. Continued caution -- wearing masks indoors, physical distancing from others, washing our hands often -- will provide a safe environment for everyone.

Beyond precautions, what life looks like is up to us -- as individuals, as families, as neighborhoods, as church, as state and nation.

What shall we pick up again that wasn't possible during the Covid pandemic? I hear people say that they look forward to social gatherings most of all. Isn't that loss even more precious to us in this time?
Worshipping together in the same physical

space -- our Sanctuary -- has become more special than ever. This place where we have marked the Christmases and Easters, the commendation of our loved ones to God, the baptisms, and weddings, and confirmations, as well as the cycle of life that includes weekly worship. Priceless.

And what shall we leave behind? Consider these questions:

- a) How have we experienced God differently in the past year? Online worship was a God-send to continue to share worship with the majority of our congregation. And for the future, we will continue to provide an online experience for those unable to join us physically for worship because of a life situation or a season spent in another part of the country.
- b) What have we all learned about the value and importance of connections and community? Who do we long to see again in person who is outside our family and closest friend group? Who brings hope and sunshine to your life, even though you only see each other rarely?
- c) Where do I need to physically be to accomplish my work, since work from home has been so important this year?
- d) Many people left behind a lot of busyness and felt over-scheduled and overwhelmed. What can be let go of in the future to keep a stronger sense of

Pastor's Word continues pg. 2

- e) We've discovered the beauty of our regional, state and national parks -- what might be different about vacations in the future? More adventuring and less settling?
- f) How did we experience technology as a *boon* to our coronavirus survival? Zoom connected many of us with family and friends. Church groups kept meeting online.
- g) How did we experience technology as a *negative* in our lives? Maybe too much time "doom scrolling," and less time connecting with people we actually know?

Remember: You haven't lost a year of your life due to COVID. You've invested a year of your life in saving the lives of your family, friends, neighbors, and strangers.
- Diana Butler Bass, Christian historian and author, on Twitter, 03/05/21

*Rev. Bonnie Wilcox,
Senior Pastor*



Our Annual Holy Humor Sunday, an old tradition of the church to encourage laughter in worship to remind us of the brilliance of Jesus' resurrection and power over death!

Our Easter experience went so well that the Council has approved a plan for in-building worship again on the first and fourth Sundays of May:

Sunday, May 2
(with Holy Communion)
Sunday, May 23

Services will be held in the Sanctuary at 8:30 and 10 AM, with registration required. We will not be using the Chapel at this time as social distancing limits capacity.

Do not come to worship if you are feeling sick, or have been exposed to Covid-19.

We will cancel In-Building Worship if case rates in Anoka or Hennepin County are greater than 30 per 10,000, or by order of the Governor.

COMMUNITY MEALS will continue at 11 AM through May 23. There will be designated parking for worship to avoid congestion especially at 10 AM.

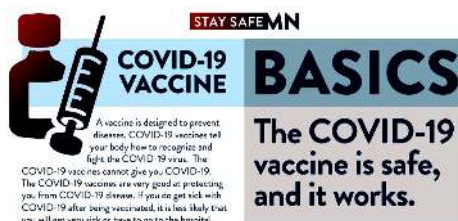


Pentecost Sunday

May 23

Celebrate an unusual and special year with us! This is also our last day of Christian Education and Community Meals this spring. We look forward to the possibility of In-Building Community Meals this fall!





Adult Forum: "Building Vaccine Confidence"

Sunday, Apr. 18, 11 AM

Hosted by: Jane Bugbee, Faith Community Nurse of FLC

Presenter: Wendy Berghorst, COVID Community Coordinator of the Minnesota Department of Health

Do you have questions about how the vaccines work and if they are safe? Are you struggling to communicate with loved ones about why they should be vaccinated or worried about side-effects of the vaccine?

Our speaker will share clear and accurate information to educate community members about COVID-19 vaccines, raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination, and address common questions and concerns. Please join us for this important conversation and get your questions answered. Forum will also be recorded and posted as a reference.

**Building Vaccine Confidence
Apr 18, 2021 at 11 AM (US)**

Join Zoom Forum: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83833299980?pwd=VktueG1yREtUZ3NFWWpSUWU4a2FrUT09>

- ☐ Meeting ID: 838 3329 9980
Passcode: 141286
- ☐ Dial in: +1 312 626 6799 (US)

The Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS) Assembly Apr. 23, 6 – 9 PM & Apr. 24, 9 AM – 1 PM

Under the theme "Jubilee Reclaimed: Opening the Way," synod assembly participants will explore Biblical insights into the general welfare of the community. We remember the Hebrew Scripture injunction to return possessions to their original owner after 50 years as a means to ensure that wealth disparity didn't arise within the community. And, we imagine the early church in Acts, where the people shared from a common purse.

What does this mean for the Church today? How do we enter into discussions of confession and absolution? Can we imagine together ways to explore opportunities for the Church to be the leading edge of caring for the vulnerable in our world?
Speakers to include: Dr. Drew Hart and Dr. Michael Osterholm

Why Should First Lutheran Live Stream?

We have worshiped online for over a year now. Something we never thought we would have to do. When everything shut down last March, it was our only option since congregations couldn't gather together safely. We recorded our services and they were put together with the expertise of Drew Stolba and Chris Larson.



Now, a year later, we are beginning to look at meeting again as a congregation in person. Many things have changed since we met together – we have learned new skills and we have adapted to new situations.

When we begin to worship together regularly, we would like to begin live streaming our services. One question you might have is what live streaming is. **Live streaming is online streaming of media simultaneously recorded and broadcasted in real time.** In other words, you can watch our service online as it is actually happening in our Sanctuary. We have a proposal to upgrade our video and audio equipment to make live streaming possible.

What are reasons for live streaming?

- 1) Live Streaming brings **community**. If you have family in other parts of the country, they can watch the service at the exact time that you are participating in person or online. My parents who live in Kansas will be able to watch their son do his thing in real time.
- 2) Live streaming encourages **outreach**. First Lutheran will be able to connect with many other people around the country or even here in Columbia Heights that might not feel comfortable stepping into a church. They will be able to sip their coffee while watching worship and connect with us online.
- 3) Live streaming **connects** with the homebound. What about those members that can't get to church because of mobility or transportation issues? They will be able to watch our service live from their home.
- 4) Live streaming will keep us in the **habit**. If you go to the lake in the summer on the weekends, you will still be able to watch our service!
- 5) **Timeliness** – There is just something special about singing with others as it is actually happening. There isn't a time delay. You will hear the announcements as they are being spoken. You will have first-hand information!

These are just a few of the many advantages to live streaming worship services. I can't wait to begin this new adventure and I am so excited to see some of you in person! Blessings to you this Easter season!

Jeffrey Patry, Director of Music Ministry



Membership at First Lutheran

Would you like to formalize your membership with our church? Remember, any time you are at worship or a class or an event, **YOU BELONG!** (Online or In-Building)



If you'd like to learn more about the process of formalizing your membership or being part of our spring New Member Orientation, email Pastor Jill, jillb@flcch.org or Pastor Bonnie, bonnie@flcch.org or leave a message in the church office, 763-788-9653.

The Painting Table: COVID Meditation & Art, led by Pastor Bonnie Wilcox

**Wednesdays, 6-7:30 PM via Zoom
April 15 - May 6, 2021**

What memories, learnings, losses and/or griefs do we carry with us after the pandemic? Join Pastor Bonnie for four weeks of reflection and simple art & journaling to mark a moment, a movement, a challenge, or a gift from the last year.

Each week, you'll receive a journal page to write or color or paint as the group works together. At the end, I hope to share with the congregation an online sample gallery of our work.

Growing Through Loss

A new *Growing through Loss* series is being held from 7 - 9 PM on Tuesdays at Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, 8211 Red Oak Drive, Mounds View, MN.

Growing through Loss provides information and support for a variety of loss and grief issues. Each session is complete in itself; attend any or all sessions through May 11. Church affiliation is not necessary. Call 763-755-5335 or visit: growingthroughloss.org for more info. No cost, donations welcome.



Hearts and Hammers'

Hearts & Hammers' mission is to provide exterior home improvement help for senior citizens, disabled adults, and veterans. Each year, (June 1 - Oct. 1) volunteers provide exterior painting and maintenance for qualifying homeowners throughout the metro area.

Homeowners can apply at heartsandhammers.org or call 651-636-0797 for more information or to request an application. *Applying does not guarantee selection.*



Young at Heart

Motorcoach Trip is Booked Oct. 18 -23, 2021

This Covid-19 episode has been a long, long time to be under a form of 'house arrest!'

Folks are getting restless. It's time to think about 'hitting the road' again. Here's one solution we have to offer.

Under the auspices of our Covid-dormant Young at Heart, a motor coach trip entitled, '*The Ark Encounter & Creation Museum*' has been booked for Monday-Saturday Oct. 18 - 23.

The Ark and the Museum are located in Williamstown, KY, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio. The Ark, built in the same dimensions as the original described in Genesis 7, was completed and opened to the public in July 2016. For a sampling of the building procedure, check the internet website entitled '[Ark Encounter](http://ArkEncounter.com)'.

Flyer details and sign-up sheet are posted on the Young at Heart bulletin board and available via e-mail by request of the church office or Paul Christensen.

Tour Rome and the Holy Land, Spring 2022

Less than a year away!

Travel is looking better all the time and we are excited to be planning our Rome and Holy Land tour for March 3-15, 2022.

Registration is open. As soon as you make your \$500 deposit, you will be placed on an email list from Pastor Wayne Skaff that highlights places and people we will get to see on our tour.



This trip is not limited to First Lutheran folks. A minimum of 35 are needed for the trip to be realized. Invite a friend.

For everyone's safety, there are additional Covid-related requirements for this trip.

- ⇒ masks are required for all
- ⇒ documented proof of the Covid-19 Vaccination(s) must be submitted at least 30 days before departure.

- * **Cost: \$565, double occupancy**
- * **\$75 due upon signing up; final payment is due Aug. 16**

If Covid wisdom calls for cancelling the entire trip, the decision will be made by Sept. 15 with full refund.

Trip is through Diamond Tours, specializing in group travel. We have had good experiences with them in years past to Washington D.C, San Antonio, and Chicago.



What a joy it will be to embark on this spiritual, archeological, and Biblical pilgrimage together!

Final payment is due Dec. 1, 2021. Contact Pastor Jill with questions or to receive a brochure.



First Lutheran Blood Drive Friday, April 16, 9 AM - 3 PM.

Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood (approximately 36,000 units daily). With no substitute for blood and no way to manufacture it, volunteer donors are essential for those in need of transfusions.

To become a donor at First Lutheran, sign-up here: [FLCCH Blood Drive](https://www.flcch.org/blood-drive)
Questions to: Joyce, 763-788-9653, joycew@flcch.org



Dear First Lutheran family...

We want to thank you for all your love, thoughts, prayers and condolences during Chester's illness and passing. Your caring has made this difficult journey a lot easier. Special Blessing to our church family. We are CONNECTED.

Clara Shattuck and family

We would like to express our deep feelings of gratitude to the Bell Ensemble, the Sanctuary Choir, and many Meal Train providers that have blessed Corin, Lyndsey and myself after the sudden loss of my wife and the girls' Mother, Tracy Barnhart.

We are so grateful for the outpouring of support from our First Lutheran friends and do not know where we would be in this difficult time without you. Thank You and God Bless You.

Blaine, Corin & Lyndsey Barnhart

Crest View Senior Living Companions



Senior residents are in desperate need of escorts for out-of-the-building companions and to go to doctor appointment with residents. This escort may take half a day or most of a day. The out of the building escort is usually three hours.

The resident and escort ride together in the provided transport, stay at the doctor's office during the visit, and ride home again with the resident. Contact Nathan, nathanr@flcch.org if you are able to help.

55+ Singles Group Fridays, 5 PM

This 55+ Singles Group is grateful to be continuing their weekly gatherings for three years now! They invite others to join them (in person or on Zoom) to check-in, socialize or picnic together. To find out more, contact Faith, 612-799-4245, whitefa@comcast.net

Community Meals Team

We are so grateful to the faithful volunteers who have served 150 weekly meals for over a year! Our last Community Meal for this season will be served on May 23. *(No meals will be offered this summer)*



A special thank you to those who participated in the March Palm Sunday Brunch fundraiser. Your support and generosity raised over \$1,000 to help send our Youth to Bible Camp!



*We appreciate the many who join & served
in this year's Easter Worship!*





FLY Youth, In-Building

April 14, 28 / May 12, 26 / June 9

We are excited to invite youth in Grades 6-12 back to church for youth group on Wednesdays from 6-8 PM.

We will require masks, conduct COVID screenings and enforce physical distancing. We'll do the lessons/games inside. *All eating will be done outside - so bring your coat!* Invite a friend and I can't wait to see you in person!

Earth Day Adopt a Park Clean-up

April 25, 12 PM



Kids, youth and families are invited to join us to clean-up our parks for Earth Day! First Lutheran has adopted Ostrander Park, across the street from church. You can meet us at church at noon to clean up our park OR choose to pick a street or park near your home.

Last Day Party!

Sunday, May 23, 11 AM - 12 PM

Join us in the church Courtyard to celebrate a wonderful year of Sunday School, Confirmation and Community Meals. We'll have a grill-out, ice cream treats and socially distanced activities and games. Masks required.



Local Youth Mission Trip

July 12-16, 9 AM-5 PM (most days)

Serve, learn and have fun in Minneapolis area for youth in Grades 6-12. \$50 per youth. Masks required.



Sunday School Easter season

This spring, Kids Sunday School lessons will be focusing on the stories of the early church after the resurrection of Jesus.

We will be doing a special **anti-racism focus**, following along with the narrative lectionary Bible stories.

- ♦ **Apr. 25 - Prejudice and Stereotypes** as we learn about Ethiopian Eunuch being baptized
- ♦ **May 2 - Curiosity and Empathy** as we discuss the Acts 15 Council in Jerusalem
- ♦ **May 9 - Colors and Cultures** as we learn about the diverse new church that formed
- ♦ **May 16 - One in Christ** from Galatians 3 as we learn about being Children of God



After School

After School is now In-Building on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 - 6 PM

Come for tutoring help, basketball, playground games, and soccer. Gym will be available indoors. 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 to help cook dinner or mentor a student please email Nathan: nathanr@flcch.org

"Who is My Neighbor?" Vacation Bible School

**June 14-18
\$25/person**



VBS invites kids and families to re-imagine what it means to be neighbors in Christ. Based on the Good Samaritan story, this five-day program contains skits, games, crafts, snacks and intentional activities for children to enjoy and learn how our faith calls us out into the world to love and serve our neighbors.

The skits for each day introduce a new character in the Good Samaritan story, starting with the lawyer who asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

This year VBS will be outdoors, require masks and have kids & families go through in small groups. We have dinner available for everyone too!

Teen and adult leaders needed. Sign up with Rachel to volunteer. **Cohorts start at 4, 5 or 6 PM each night.**



Jamboree Parade

Friday, June 25 at 5:30 PM

Mark your calendars and march with us in this year's Jamboree Parade!

Flag from FLC

Watch for the Columbia Heights Centennial Flag from First Lutheran Church to be flying on Central Ave!



Building & Grounds Updates

Spring is in the air!
Some highlights over the past few weeks at FLCCH:

- Anoka County Gathering Grant purchases were made as you know for the Gathering / Youth rooms (105 & 106) at the end of 2020. The beautiful cabinets pictured above were installed recently by our extraordinary volunteers - Larry Bugbee and Gary Berg!
- Additionally, the countertops were replaced in the staff workroom, kitchen, and bathroom; a welcomed upgrade as they were being held together with tape!
- Parking Lot Advisory Team continues to meet with our partners and MWMO grant.
- FLCCH implemented an online registration system on our website for in-building worship! We hope to see a lot more of each other soon!
- Look for more details in the future for spring cleanup! Including the wood chips in the playground in early June.
- New Occupancy Signs can be found hanging around the church. These occupancy levels were approved by council and may be updated as time goes on. Please be mindful of the numbers as you reserve spaces.
- TESFA students are back in the building!



Community Garden

Now in its ninth year, it will soon to be Community Garden time at FLC! Spring is a busy time for the garden as there is clean-up and preparation to do in April, before planting begins in May. *Many hands make light work* so if you have an interest in getting out of the house and into the fresh air, please contact the church office or Dan Fishbeck, dan.fishbeck@gmail.com Specific dates TBD.

Columbia Heights Community Market

The newly founded Market we sponsored in our parking lot two summers ago, will be returning! They are currently looking for interested vendors (growers, artists, crafts, etc.) to join them in the church parking lot on Thursdays, (July 22 - Sept. 2) from 4-7 PM. *Safety guidelines for COVID will be observed.* If interested, email: columbiaheightscommunitymarket@gmail.com

Financial Update

First Lutheran's major checking and savings accounts and balances as of February 28, 2021 are represented below. For questions or more specific details, contact Julie Wilson, 763.788.9653 x 104.

Account	Balance 2/28/21***
General Checking	\$44,271
Debt Savings	\$22,458
Mortgage & Maintenance (Building Fund)	\$34,326
Special Projects	\$556,261
Memorial Fund	\$42,806
Endowment Fund*	\$1,142,838
Perpetual Reserve Fund	\$107,369

*Endowment principal is held in perpetuity and cannot be spent ("Dollars Forever")

**Only the investment earnings are available for use with the approval of the Endowment Committee.

***Balances awaiting approval of Finance Board at the time of this report.



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) Place your **Check or Cash** in the offering plate during worship or Community Meal. Please use an offering envelope so we can give you credit for your gift.
- 2) **Electronic Funds Transfer** from our website, flcch.org (upper right hand corner). You can 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 40th Ave. NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421, and choose regular weekly/monthly offering.
- 4) **Stock Transfer to the Church**.
- 5) For more information, contact Julie Wilson in the church business office, julie@flcch.org or 763-788-9653 x104



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
**COMMUNITY MEAL
DRIVE THRU
11 AM-12 PM**
Meal Phone Line:
612-470-3509

First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights

