

Living Connected... TO GOD & EACH OTHER

April - May 2022



SENIOR PASTOR'S COLUMN

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Sunday Worship:

8:45 & 10 AM

YouTube & Facebook Live
(All Age Worship)

Pastoral Staff:

Bonnie Wilcox
Senior Pastor
Jill Bergman
Associate Pastor

The Caller Newsletter is
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Editor: Joyce Weaver,
joycew@flcch.org

A year ago, we prepared to worship on Easter morning in the Sanctuary for the first time in a year! My column ended with this “Remember” wisdom:

What have we experienced and learned about being the Children of God in the last twelve months?

This spring feels like a bigger-than-usual **resurrection** time to me – a sharp decline in COVID deaths and infections, an early switch to Daylight Savings Time, along with more minutes of sunshine every day, and deep snow piles disappearing – all signs for more time outside and with people for whom we care, including our siblings at church.

My extended family will gather in early April after the combination of a Midwest blizzard and Covid infections canceled our plans in January. How I long to see how the children are growing, to share stories and laughter, to spend time outside, and to worship together as family on Sunday morning at the lodge where we are staying!

There is joy in these days, even as sorrow may also be present. It can even feel like sorrow is sometimes our chief emotion, and joy seems fleeting. A favorite woman of

*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*

faith, Kate Bowler wrote in 2019.

“By failing to experience joy, even in the midst of crappy times, we can be engulfed entirely by our circumstances.

But it need not be so. We do not have to reduce ourselves to someone who exists only to endure hardship. In our suffering we must not exile ourselves from the love of God or of our daily joys. If we rejoice in all the capabilities and opportunities that remain with us—from sitting with a coffee for a minute in the sunshine to finding the right word for a bit of work we’ve been fussing over—we can grab the present by the scruff of the neck and smile—knowing no matter how diminished we might be by disease or horrible circumstance, we are not finished, not by a long shot. You are loved. You are loved. You are loved. And that is worth celebrating.” Kate Bowler, *“Rejoicing in the Midst of Sorrow”*

We haven’t lost another year to COVID. God has been with us, helping us connect in new and unusual and exciting ways – and sending us to others in need. We are rediscovering how God is at work with, among, and beyond us.

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox
Senior Pastor

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Why Is Lent Purple?

Many of you may be asking yourself why there is so much purple in Lent? How did purple become the favored color of the penitential season of Lent?

Purple symbolizes royalty as well as the royalty of Christ the King. Before the crucifixion of Jesus, he was dressed in a purple cloak with an inscription above his head that read "King of the Jews."

Purple dye was a precious commodity and it was very difficult to manufacture. Purple cloth was expensive and was a sign of royalty and nobility. Often the only people who could afford to purchase cloth were kings and emperors. They would often dress entirely in purple to make known their wealth and power. Therefore, dressing Christ in a purple cloak before his crucifixion was a symbolic act.

When we see the purple banners during Lent, we are reminded of the penitential season we are in and what Christ gave up for our sins. The purple banners will soon be replaced with the gold and white banners of Easter!

Lent 2022: Ash Wednesday / Candle Lighting



Worship - Holy Week, Easter and Beyond

Dates to put on your calendar!

Wednesday, April 6: Last Midweek Lenten Service, 7 PM

Our guest preacher is Rev. Dr. Robert Holst, retired president of Concordia University-St. Paul, who will talk about Psalm 23 as experienced through his work in New Guinea and frequent visits to the Holy Land.

April 10, Palm Sunday Worship 8:45 & 10 AM

Our annual youth fundraiser Brunch will be offering two serving times 9:15-10 AM and 11 AM -12:30 PM.

Maundy Thursday & Good Friday, 7 PM

First Lutheran's Last Supper Drama (see page 4)



April 17, Easter Sunday Services 8 AM & 10 AM

Both services will be held in the Sanctuary and led by special music. *Live streaming at 10 AM*

Sunday, April 24, Holy Humor Sunday!

Wear your most colorful, spring-like clothing, plus a springtime (silly?) hat or headband or scarf or tie or socks!



May 22 Worship 8:45 & 10 AM

Lots of happenings at 11:15 AM: Our Last Day celebrations of the school year! Dedication of the new courtyard furnishings, a great meal, and lots of fun activities for children and youth! This is also the last 8:45 am service and last Community Meal until the fall.

June 5 Pentecost Sunday

Outdoor Worship (weather permitting) at 10 AM & recognition of our 2022 High School Seniors!

Remember, our weekly 10 AM service is live streamed via our YouTube Channel!



Spring Concert at FLC

Sunday, April 24 at 3 PM

Please join classical guitarist Jeremy Hiniker and Jeffrey Patry in a concert at FLC. Jeremy will be playing some solo guitar music as well as collaborating with Jeffrey Patry on piano and organ.

Welcome spring with an afternoon of wonderful music! This concert is free and open to the public and all are welcome!



Staff, Building Operations & Finance Updates:

Julie Wilson, who is a member of our church, took on our building operations and financial systems the fall of 2020. We were all still living in lock-down mode from Covid-19, and Julie immediately helped us set up policies for building use and other issues as we began to re-open our building. We are grateful for this and other leadership she has provided. Julie has resigned from her position at FLC but will continue to be part of our church. She begins a new position directing an at-home senior support service agency in April. We give thanks for her work among and with us.

Clergy Financial Resources has been selected by the Finance Board and Church Council to perform bookkeeping responsibilities for First Lutheran Church effective March 2022. They will provide us with the following bookkeeping services -

Accounts receivable	Credit card postings/reconciliations
Accounts payable	Employee expense reports
Payroll postings	Fixed assets accounting
Bank reconciliations	Monthly financial statements

Do you have questions about this contract? Contact Pastor Bonnie Wilcox, Treasurer Kathy Ballard, or Board of Finance Chair Wendy Watson.

Our Personnel Committee and Pastor Bonnie Wilcox are working together on a staffing model for administration, building operations, and bookkeeping. If you have questions, contact Pastor Bonnie Wilcox, or Dorothy Markowitz, Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Council Update:

\$50,000 grant awarded by MWMO to FLC

On March 13, 2022, First Lutheran was named as a grant recipient for 2022-2023 by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) in the amount of \$50,000 for our parking lot/clean water project, as we described it in our application:

“To build a filtration basin to collect storm water from our facility and parking lot in order to reduce the pollutants that enter the storm sewer. In addition, we will remove old-growth plantings near our entrance and increase handicapped parking and safe pedestrian access to our main entrance. We will resurface our parking lot, which sits atop an old landfill on our property, improving the elevation to prevent some freeze-thaw areas that have broken up part of the asphalt surface. The first lift of this portion of the project was done in 2020.”

This grant is only available to our church as we complete this project within the next year.

MWMO oversees the urban watershed that drains directly into the Mississippi River. It is a joint-powers local government unit and one of approximately three dozen watershed organizations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. MWMO's member communities include Columbia Heights, Fridley, Hilltop, and Minneapolis.

Please contact Pastor Bonnie Wilcox if you are interested in helping to move this project forward to completion.



Janitor Staff at First Lutheran

Following the retirement of Roger Johnson as head custodian, First Lutheran's building maintenance and cleaning will be overseen by volunteers Larry Bugbee, Bruce Shellito, and janitorial staff, Derek Sabot.

COVID Update: Effective March 9, 2022

Masks are optional in church. We follow the CDC guidelines based on county levels of risk, as well as wastewater monitoring by the University of Minnesota.

At publication of this newsletter, Anoka, Hennepin, and Ramsey County are at low risk of infections. Therefore, people may choose to wear a mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should not come to church.

Please be aware that if the Community Risk levels go up again, we will return to requiring masks, and will give you as much notice as possible. *Thank you for your cooperation.*

Finding a New Tenant for the Education Wing

You will recall that our church has retained a realtor to help us find a new education tenant for the classrooms on the 2nd floor of our facility. As of mid-March, conversations continue with several groups with no final agreements signed. This work continues.

We may expand our search for tenants to look at non-profits and other service-oriented tenants. With more tenants, it will require more staff coordination. We have a group of leaders working on this new hoped-for revenue opportunity.

We appreciate the work of Julie Wilson, Nathan Roberts, Larry Bugbee, Gary Berg, Paul Eddy, Chris Larson, David Hagen, John Miller, Randy Bergman, and Warren Watson who have worked on retaining a realtor and/or doing some great “spruce-up” work in the education wing.

MINISTRY NEWS

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Bible study is offered at 8:30 & 11:15 AM (same study at different times) in Katie Luther Cellar & via Zoom. Participants should feel free to bring in their coffee, morning cookie or snack. If attending the later study, participants can get their community lunch first and bring it in, or enjoy lunch afterwards at 12:15 PM.

All are welcome to join any Sunday! Questions to Michelle Edwards, 763-300-8419, shell-lyn@hotmail.com



The Board of Spiritual Growth will be offering two prayer vigils in the months of April & June.

EASTER PRAYER VIGIL (Virtual)

This virtual prayer vigil will be held on the Easter Vigil traditional day of the Saturday before Easter, April 16. It is intended to help our faith community grow in our relationship with God and to contemplate the miracle of Easter. We have created a Google Sheet sign up form which provides 30 minute windows for individuals to pray. The event will be from 8 AM - 8 PM. We will stream a video of the FLC Chapel on a loop on our YouTube channel to help pray-ers to focus and create a sacred space even as they pray offsite. We will need 24 individual windows to be claimed by people from our faith community. You can sign up with this link: [Easter Prayer Vigil](https://www.flcch.org) or visit our website: [flcch.org](https://www.flcch.org)

PENTECOST PRAYER VIGIL (In-Person)

An in-person prayer vigil to commemorate Pentecost will be held at FLC on the Saturday prior to Pentecost, June 4 from 9-11:30 AM. It will be open to all who are interested but especially those anticipating their adult confirmation the following day. The event will feature guided prayer, the opportunity for all to pray in the group, possibly in diverse languages, and end with a meal.

COME TO OUR DRAMA, THE LAST SUPPER

We will be performing our annual Last Supper live and in person, after missing the last two years. Come for a fresh take on this life changing story.

Please plan to attend on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, April 14 & 15 at 7 PM. You may also enjoy it again via live streamed!



COMMUNION CELEBRATION

We will celebrate completion of our March 20 class on Maundy Thursday during our Last Supper drama which will be held on **April 14 at 7 PM** this year.



ADULT CONFIRMATION

The Board of Spiritual Growth will offer an in-person adult confirmation class on four Wednesdays following Easter for the purpose of helping adults better understand our Lutheran founding beliefs and traditions. The classes, led by Randy Bergman, will be held from 7-8 PM on April 20, 27 & May 4, 11. Completion of the class will culminate in the Rite of Confirmation on Pentecost June 5 during our worship service. Register by contacting Pastor Jill, jill@flcch.org or Randy Bergman, randyparkplace@gmail.com

YOUNG AT HEART EVENT

Our April meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20. We will visit the Como Park Conservatory and Zoo in St. Paul. The Conservatory is an indoor venue that will feature the annual Easter garden. We will follow that with a stroll thru the Zoo. Here's a look at our schedule:

- 10:30 AM meet at FLC for rides
- 11:15 AM conservatory reservation; \$5 donation suggested
- 12:15 PM stroll thru the zoo (weather permitting)
- 1:15 PM lunch on your own at The House of Wong, 1135 Larpenteur, Roseville (Chinese and American classics) in a private dining room.

FIRST LUTHERAN BOOK CLUB

Join the Book Club at 10 AM for fellowship, refreshments and a monthly book discussion!
April 20: "The Cross Under the Acacia Tree" by Jim Klobuchar.
May 18: "The Dressmaker of Khair Khana" by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon.
Contact: Char, charzarich@gmail.com

SINGLES 55+

Singles, age 55+ gather to eat and socialize on Fridays at 5 PM. During the colder months they meet at First Lutheran. Emails are sent out weekly to invite interested Singles and advise you of any meeting changes. Please bring your own: supper, drink & a mask. Contact Faith with questions or to be included in the group's email. 612-799-4245, whitefa@comcast.net

MISSION WORKSHOP

All those interested in helping to make quilts with Mission Workshop are welcomed to join in Katie Luther Cellar, 9 AM-Noon on Wednesdays, April 13 & 27. To confirm schedule, contact Lisa at 763-789-4101. Feel free to leave a call-back message.

RETIREMENT THANK YOU

Roger Johnson would like to express his extreme gratitude to the FLC folks for your 25 years of support and friendships, and for the meaningful cards and gifts received in his honor.

CHILDREN YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY NEWS

PALM SUNDAY BRUNCH & EGG HUNT, APRIL 10

Palm Sunday Brunch Youth Fundraiser

Served: 9:15-10 AM
& 11 AM-12:30 PM

Egg bake, fresh fruit, pastry & orange juice
\$5/meal suggested donation



Egg Hunt

11:30 AM - Sunday School children are invited to an egg-hunt with candy and fun in the church Courtyard.



Tree of Healing ELCA World Hunger VBS Wednesday Evenings

Jun 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13

Intergenerational VBS

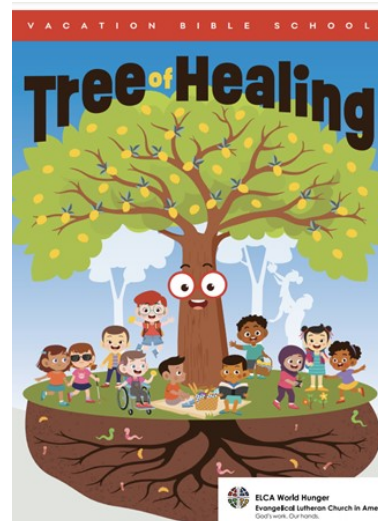
- 5:30-6:00 PM - Dinner
- 6:00 PM - Family Worship

Games, Crafts, Small Group Time

Station Rotations (20 min.) 6:30-6:50 PM,
6:50-7:10 PM, 7:10-7:30 PM

7:30 PM Special Weekly Activity

- Jungle Bounce House
- Ice Cream Sundae Bar
- Water Games
- Bonfire with S'mores



Earth Day Adopt a Park Clean-up

April 24 during Sunday School



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. We'll have a special treat of cupcakes to celebrate.

Last Day Party!

Sunday, May 22
11 AM - 12 PM in the Courtyard



Join us to celebrate a wonderful year of Sunday School, Confirmation and Community Meals. We'll have a grill-out, treats and a Bouncy House.

Summer Stretch Local Mission Trip

July 18-22 (approx. time
9 AM to 4 PM daily)



Students entering Grades 5-8

- Cost is \$50, scholarships available
- Bring lunch & snack money from home

Service & Fun Opportunities:

- Feed My Starving Children
- Waterpark
- Service within the community
- More to be announced soon!

In partnership with Nativity Lutheran in St. Anthony.

Service Learning Camps to the North Shore July 24-29



High School Trip for youth entering Grades 9-12.

- Cost is \$400, scholarships available

Service & Fun Opportunities:

- Community Partners in Two Harbors
- Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center
- Loaves & Fishes in Duluth
- Superior Hiking Trail
- Gooseberry Falls State Park

LAKE WAPOGASSET LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMP



Wapo Seeds Camp, completed Grades 1-3
\$225, scholarships available
August 5-7, 2022

Wapo Youth Camp, completed Grades 4-8
\$545, scholarships available
August 7-12, 2022

Ox Lake Roots, completed Grades 9-12
\$545, scholarships available
August 7-12, 2022



Graduation Appreciation in Worship!
Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 5.



Nathan Roberts with Community members gathered to meet neighbors negatively affected by HavenBrook Homes.

Walking with HavenBrook Rental Residents. In January 2022, the City Council of Columbia Heights revoked the rental license of a national landlord company called HavenBrook Homes. For months the company had refused to fix up their 21 rental properties in Columbia Heights. But this meant that 21 families, including a family from our After School program, were facing leaving their homes.

Nathan Roberts and a group of community members spent time over the last two months with these families to provide pastoral care and ensured they were connected with rental rights lawyers. First Lutheran held community meetings with residents and lawyers. One resident said, "I have never been to First Lutheran and I am so blown away by all the care your church shows for the community and my family. Thank you."

As a result of our community work HavenBrook Homes got a lot of bad press. The renters are being allowed to stay in their homes and repairs have begun. The Attorney General of Minnesota opened an investigation into the company's poor practices as a landlord with over 600 homes in the metro area. On behalf of the 21 residents, thank you for supporting our community renters.

Nathan Roberts Paternity Leave

Nathan Roberts and his wife Emile Robinson are expecting their first child in June! He will be on paternity leave for six weeks (June to mid-July).

On behalf of his family, Nathan is so grateful to be able to spend these beautiful weeks with his child. Please contact Pastor Bonnie Wilcox if you have questions related to Hospitality or Outreach during this time.



Thank you to everyone who came out for the powerful storytelling night on addiction and mental health in February.

How to Have Better Conversations about Race & Racism: Small Group Discussions in May.

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 Caucasian people, but all are welcome. Discussions will be held on Wednesdays, May 4 - 25, 6-7:30 PM. Event is free. \$5 suggested donation for dinner. Contact: Nathan Roberts, nathanr@flcch.org

Courtyard Furniture Dedication

As you may have noticed, our concrete courtyard furniture is over a decade old and is cracked and crumbling (one of the benches broke and nearly broke a youth's leg!). A Memorial and Endowment grant will purchase four park benches and a picnic table. *We are so grateful to the committee.*

We will prayerfully dedicate the new furniture at the Last Day of Sunday School party in the Courtyard Sunday, May 22 following worship.

Two of the benches are engraved with the names of Jane Bugbee and Roger Johnson in honor of their retirement after many years of faithful service at First Lutheran.

If you would like to make a donation to help purchase additional patio furniture in honor of a loved one, please contact the church office. There are more pieces that could be added.



First Lutheran Educational Partner Search. First Lutheran continues to work with a realtor to find an educational partner to rent our classroom spaces. Please continue to pray for the right fit. Contact Nathan Roberts or Pastor Bonnie Wilcox with questions.



After School-Jon Lueth reads "The Lorax"

After School at First Lutheran

We are so grateful to the volunteers and staff who continue to support our students at After School on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We have an amazing team of crafters (Like Linda Fowler and Karen Mattison) who help prepare fun art projects, volunteers to play basketball, and Nurse Jane and Larry Bugbee continue to serve delicious food.



Join FLC's 6K Walk for World Vision Saturday, May 21

Want to make a meaningful difference by taking a walk? Join FLC's team for the Global 6K for Water, a virtual event sponsored by World Vision. The proceeds will go to help provide children and families with clean water. If you'd like the option of walking with the group, the event will be held on May 21 (start time & route TBD). To join the FLC team, contact Sonja Ketchum for details, sonja.ketchum@gmail.com, 763-607-5352.

We Welcome First Lutheran's New Members, Spring Class of 2022!



Arlen & Marit Solem
Greta, Trygve, Immanuel
4023 Monroe St. NE,
Columbia Heights, MN 55421
Arlen: 715-497-0491 / Marit: 715-379-5121



Jan McFall
2000 Argonne Dr. NE
Columbia Heights,
MN 55421
952-484-5634



Derek Borgan-Sabot
6051 University Ave
NE, #232
Fridley, MN 55432
763-438-4388



Robin Chamberlain
6818 Camden Ave N.
Brooklyn Center,
MN 55430
612-327-3403

New Member Class

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 fall New Member Orientation, email Pastor Jill, jillb@flcch.org or Pastor Bonnie, bonnie@flcch.org



Pictured here, Robin's granddaughter, Layla Rae

Daniel and Renee Caron
Isaac & Brooke
2823 Forest Dale Road
New Brighton, MN 55112
Daniel: 507-330-1868
Renee: 608-577-2088

Community Garden - Spring News!

Our community garden has been awarded a grant of \$3,000 from the Statewide Health Improvement Project administered by Anoka County. Dan Fishbeck and the volunteers will begin working this spring to prepare the garden. If you are interested in volunteering, contact the church office.



Marigold's Spring Fishing...Inside & Out!

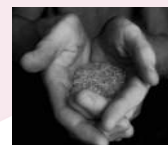
The teachers and students of our Daycare Program like to work!

Everyday the whole Marigold community is so grateful to be part of such a vibrant, hardworking, and loving community. It is exactly what the young child needs. Our program is blossoming because of this beautiful place. *Thank you. Brenda Haak*



GIVING

First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights 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:

- Drop off your **Check or Cash** during Sunday Worship or send a check thru the mail. Please use an offering envelope so we can give you credit for your gift.

- Stock Transfers to FLC**
- Electronic Funds Transfer** See our website, flcch.org (upper right hand corner) to set your donation frequency.
- 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. Choose weekly or monthly offerings.

For more information, contact the church office, 763-788-9653, info@flcch.org

GIVEPLUS⁺ You can also support the church with this free mobile app!
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SUNDAY WORSHIP
8:45 & 10 AM

10 AM WORSHIP
ALSO AVAILABLE
ONLINE- LIVE
STREAMED VIA
YOUTUBE &
FACEBOOK LIVE

SUNDAY MEAL
11 AM - 12:30 PM

CHURCH OFFICE
is open by appointment
due to COVID-19 crisis.

Please check our
website or call for any
updates: 763-788-9653

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

Don't miss Worship, Music & Family Fun at First!



WORSHIP WITH US!
EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 17,
8 AM & 10 AM

Both services will be held in the Sanctuary
and led by special music.
Live streaming at 10 AM

