

# Living Connected...

## TO GOD & EACH OTHER

April - June 2023

Illustration by Adam Niklewicz,  
in *Christian Century* magazine, 2018

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*

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“

**God is not threatened by changes in the church.** *God will find a way to continue to touch people's lives.” Rev. Donna Schaper in Christian Century magazine.*

I have never thought of changes in the church in quite this way before. But I believe and preach, I hope, that God is always connected to the church and its people. Always.

After Easter, a group of leaders appointed by the church council will begin work with Jeff Kjellberg of Kairos & Associates, to do some “mission-forward” planning. **They will continue to consider: What is our relationship with our building?** These questions will shape the work of this group. Once again, I ask you to consider, to request additional information, and to hold these questions in conversation and prayer:

1. **Long-term, is this how we want to spend our staff energy and volunteer hours? Are we called by God to continue to maintain a facility that is larger than we need for Sunday mornings and evening ministries? Do we still feel called to host a charter school?**
2. **Is our building truly aligned with the long term needs of Columbia Heights and First Lutheran's mission to “Live Connected to God and one another?”**
3. **Or, is the Spirit calling us to invest our time and resources in some other way?**

As our current tenants consider expansion, staff members are negotiating lease amendments, and spending time in

conversation about how best to use the Upper Level of our facility.

Our leadership is also working on some large facility projects: re-roofing the Sanctuary, as well as repairing or replacing the cupola; a facility-wide electrical project to upgrade lighting outside and inside our building with more energy-efficient fixtures and bulbs; reviewing opportunities regarding our property and liability insurance coverage; and negotiating service contracts for ongoing maintenance of our electrical/boiler systems, as well as the computer replacements and other technology that is so important to daily operations, as well as worship planning.

It may help us to look at the words of Jesus from the Gospel of John: “I am the Light of the World.” A familiar hymn includes these words based on I John:

In him (Jesus) there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both ali  
[from *I Want to Walk as a Child of Light*, ELW 815]

Light both illuminates the need for change, and may shine a light to follow for bold and brave decisions. “There is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it.” — Amanda Gorman, inauguration poem, *The Hill We Climb*.

*Pastor's column continues on pg. 2*

# WORSHIP

*Pastor's column continued*

Let us continue in conversation, wondering and pondering how God is calling First Lutheran Church to "live connected to God and each other." We are a community center for Columbia Heights for people of all walks of life, including those who do not attend our church for worship. This is important work, for we never know what seeds are planted that will sprout faithness in the future.

*Rev. Bonnie Wilcox*  
Senior Pastor



## Easter Worship Series: *For the Care of Creation*

**Sundays after Easter Sunday**  
**April 16 - May 21, 2023**



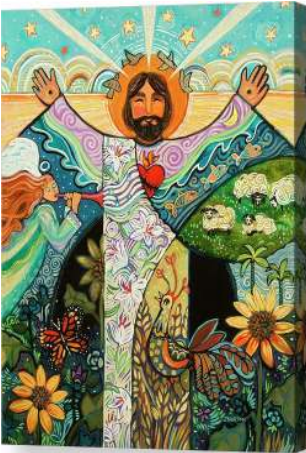
We are planning worship that focuses on the days of Creation:

- \* Apr. 16 - Day 1: Light
- \* Apr. 23 - Day 2: Atmosphere / Firmament
- \* Apr. 30 - Day 3: Dry ground & Plants
- \* May 7 - Day 4: Sun, Moon & Stars
- \* May 14 - Day 5: Birds & Sea Creatures
- \* May 21 - Day 6: Land, Animals & Humans

*How much* have we saved at First Lutheran by replacing fluorescent light bulbs in the school rooms? What might be gained by using clover in place of grass? Could solar energy be a good investment? Come for worship - and conversation!

For each theme, we'll explore ways our church has worked to be good stewards of what God has given us, as well as plans we are working on to care for God's creation at 40th Ave & Polk & Tyler in Columbia Heights!

## HOLY WEEK & EASTER SCHEDULE



### **PALM SUNDAY**

**April 2**

Worship at 8:45 or 10 AM (the 10 AM service includes a scene from our "Last Supper" Drama) with our annual Youth Brunch Fundraiser, too!

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY**

**April 6 & 7, 7 PM**

Presentation of the "Last Supper" Drama

### **EASTER SUNDAY**

**April 9, 8 & 10 AM** Worship in the Sanctuary. Both services include the choir, the Campanile Bells, a brass quartet and organ.

### **MAY 21 WORSHIP**

**8:45 & 10 AM**

**11:15 AM:** Our Last Day celebrations of the school year! This is also the last 8:45 worship service & Community Meal until the fall.

### **MAY 28 PENTECOST SUNDAY**

**10 AM Outdoor Worship** (weather permitting) & recognition of our 2023 High School Seniors!

**Easter Garden**...in honor or celebration of a loved one. You are invited to contribute to the celebratory flower display on Easter Sunday. Cost is \$12 per flower arrangement. A sign up list is at the desk in the Commons. Deadline to order is Sunday, April 2. Flowers can be taken home after the 10 AM Easter service.



*Children's 'Story Time' with Pastor Bonnie Wilcox - 2023*





## COME TO OUR DRAMA, THE LAST SUPPER

Our annual tradition of bringing the story of Jesus to the stage is back. Plan to attend the performances of our Last Supper Reenactment at 7 PM on Maundy Thursday, April 6 or Good Friday, April 7. While it's an old, old story, there are always new perspectives to be explored and we tend to have a lot of fun exploring!

**Interested in a Bus Ride to the Drama?** Please contact the church office if you would like a scheduled pick-up on the church bus.



*Is it time for you to receive the life-affirming gift of baptism? Do you long to share this gift with someone you love?*

The Sacrament of Baptism looks a bit different while we are working to keep everyone safe from the pandemic, but GOD'S GIFTS NEVER STOP.

We would love to welcome you or your loved ones into the family of God. We begin with an orientation that we will hold over Zoom or by phone. If now is the time, please contact Pastor Jill to set up your orientation and to discuss the blessing of belonging to God's family. [jillb@flcch.org](mailto:jillb@flcch.org)



## 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 a morning coffee or snack. If attending the later study, grab a community lunch to bring in, or enjoy lunch at 12:15 PM. *(Please see the church bulletin in May for the summer schedule)*

All are welcome to join any Sunday! Questions to Michelle Edwards, 763-300-8419, [shell-lyn@hotmail.com](mailto:shell-lyn@hotmail.com)

## FIX-IT CLINIC AT FIRST!

**April 1, 10 AM - 1 PM**

Have broken stuff lying around? Don't trash it - fix it! Come to Anoka County's Fix-it clinic at First Lutheran to meet with an expert fixer to help repair your favorite lamps, coffee makers, clothing, vacuums, etc. Please bring any replacement parts.

## FIRST LUTHERAN BOOK CLUB

The Book Club will be meeting at 10 AM on April 19. Plan to join them for fellowship, refreshments and a monthly book discussion on 'The Crooked Street' by Brian Freeman. For more info contact Char, [charzarich@gmail.com](mailto:charzarich@gmail.com)

## IMPACT SERVICES/MEALS ON

**WHEELS** is looking for volunteer drivers to deliver meals Monday thru Friday. There are several routes in the Southern Anoka County area, most can be delivered within an hour. Meals & route directions are picked up at Allina Hospital-Unity Campus, Fridley at 11 AM. Please contact Anita Dillenburg, 763-755-7839.



## FINANCIAL PEACE UNIV

Our most recent Financial Peace University class has ended and we want to celebrate the accomplishments of our participants. Our team of 9 people were able to pay off almost \$21,000 in non-mortgage debt and save over \$37,000 in just 9 weeks!

We were also able to say goodbye to 5 credit cards. More than anything we have learned how to have peace as we manage our finances and lives for the glory of God. Good work, team!

**SINGLES 55+** gather to eat and socialize bi-monthly on Fridays at 5 PM. Emails are sent to notify interested Singles of meeting opportunities. Contact: Faith 612-799-4245, [whitefa@comcast.net](mailto:whitefa@comcast.net)

## FACILITY RENTAL

Looking for a beautiful place to host your family celebrations, reunions or a summer gathering? Consider renting space at First Lutheran. Contact: Joyce, [joyce@flcch.org](mailto:joyce@flcch.org), 763-788-9653.



*Wedding of De'Ja Whitfield & Demetrius Pearson -- 2/17/2023*

## Palm Sunday Brunch & Egg Hunt Sunday, April 2

### 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.



## Earth Day Adopt a Park Clean-up

Sunday, April 23  
(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 21  
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.

## Last Day Bonfire FLY Youth Group

Wednesday, May 31  
in the Courtyard



## Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp

Pray for our campers at Lake  
Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp!  
We have 25 kids and youth  
registered for Bible camp.

- ♦ July 21-23: Seeds Campers Grades 1-3
  - ♦ Aug. 6-11: Youth Campers Grades 4-10
- Please contact Rachel if you are interested in  
registering for camp!



# Family Worship

Wednesday nights in June!

Everyone is invited to join us for  
dinner in the church courtyard at  
5:30 PM, followed by family  
worship with the Pastors at 6 PM  
on the courtyard patio!

We'll also have weekly special  
activities including games, science  
experiments, crafts, and conclude  
by 7:30 PM.



## Youth & Young Adult Trip to Mission Jamaica

June 13-20

Thank you for your prayers for our  
team traveling to Montego Bay,  
serving at Westhaven Children's  
Home, Youth with a Mission and  
Clifton Boys Home.



## Congratulations to our 2023 High School Graduates!

Blessing during 10 AM worship  
service on June 4, including a gift  
from our congregation.



Thank you for supporting our  
youth's Pancake Breakfast! 3/5/2023

## Urban Leadership Adventure July 10-14, 2023



## Urban Leadership Adventure Local Mission Trip

July 10-14, 9 AM to 5 PM daily

For Middle & High School students.

Cost: \$35

Service & Fun Opportunities:

- ♦ Feed My Starving Children
- ♦ Waterparks
- ♦ Minneapolis Service Learning



## Shine Jesus' Light this summer at STELLAR VBS!

July 16-21

Plan to join this collaborative, city-  
wide Vacation Bible School suitable  
for all-ages. We'll meet at McKenna  
Park in Columbia Heights for dinner  
and evening VBS activities. *Crew  
leaders & volunteers are needed.*

## Missionary Support

First Lutheran is  
sending a team  
of 14 Youth & Young Adults to  
Mission Jamaica this summer!

Pray for the people of Jamaica and  
pray for our team as we prepare to  
serve. The cost for the mission trip is  
approx. \$1,850 per missionary. To  
support our trip, we will have a stock  
sale! Buy a share for \$25 and invest  
in our youth going to Mission  
Jamaica. We will have a  
shareholder's dinner in August to  
report on the return on your  
investment!







## Story Telling Night: Columbia Heights School Safety Panel April 19, 6:30 PM

We are so excited to have this wonderful panel of CoHi Public Schools leaders to help community members, families, and students understand safety protocols and procedures in Columbia Heights schools. Learn how we can help keep our young people safe at schools.

Columbia Heights Panelists:

Zena Stenvik, Superintendent of Schools  
Bondo Nyembwe, Executive Director of Educational Services

Mary Granlund, School Board Member  
Michelle Pettway, School Board Member  
Todd Wynne, High School Principal



## Earth Day Street Clean up April 22, 9 AM

We'll gather at the Columbia Heights

Public Library, 3939 Central Ave. NE at 9 AM to hand out safety vests and garbage bags. Then, we'll figure out street/park assignments for all volunteers. (Families with young children are assigned to Parks) Each group goes to their area and safely picks up trash from the sidewalks and vegetation along the sidewalks (or park).

Thanks to the City of Columbia Heights for supplying us with trash bags and additional trash pickups for the garbage! HeightsNEXT couldn't do our work without partners and volunteers like you!

**Dress for the weather.** Wear gloves to pick up trash safely. The event will be canceled if dangerous weather, otherwise, this happens rain or shine. \*All ages are welcome, children must be supervised.



## Buy Nothing Spring Event May 6, 10 AM- 1 PM

We are again partnered with Columbia Heights "Buy Nothing" group for a free swap. It's like a garage sale but everything is free! Please contact Nathan Roberts [nathanr@flecch.org](mailto:nathanr@flecch.org) if you would like to reserve a table in the Commons for your stuff. You do need to be at your table the whole event, and take home (or to Savers) whatever doesn't get re-homed. Pizza and salad served to volunteers for lunch. **On Mar. 11, we partnered for a free swap with this same group.** We had 20 people set up tables in the Commons and then 150 people of all ages came to talk, shop, and meet their neighbors.



## Oromo Ethiopian Storytelling Night

On Feb. 15, we heard inspiring stories from our Oromo Ethiopian Neighbors. Currently there are over 40,000 Oromo Ethiopians living in Minnesota and we learned more about their culture, the history of the conflict, and how refugees and immigrants resettled here.

It was wonderful to hear the important role Lutheran Refugee Resettlement played in helping Oromo families come to America. Abas Regassa, Director of Operations for Bultum Academy in our building, shared stories of playing football they made from tightly-wound plastic bags in the refugee camp. And about learning to love the Minnesota snow!



## Dinner Church Weds in Lent

This Lent we held our traditional soup supper with a twist. We had church around the dinner tables. We had a wonderful group of singers lead us in upbeat songs, the youth acted out the Bible stories, and we shared stories around the table. It was a wonderful series and we hope to do it again.



## Minnesota Capitol Trip

On Mar. 14, members of our staff went to the Minnesota Capitol to learn about the legislative process. We witnessed 100 residents living in low income senior living apartments (some are members of our church). The seniors are facing 12% rent increases year after year and they are asking for the legislature to step in and help. We heard difficult stories of seniors who have to choose between medications, gas, food, and rent.





## Campanile Handbell Ensemble Plays at the Basilica Saturday, April 29

First Lutheran's own Campanile Handbell Ensemble will be the guest ensemble at the Basilica of St. Mary in downtown Minneapolis on Saturday, April 29. The handbells will be the guest ensemble at the evening Mass. Music will begin at 4:45 PM. Come and experience music in this glorious space!



## Singers in Accord Concerts

**Saturday, May 6 at 7:30 PM & Sunday, May 7 at 4 PM**

Singers in Accord Choral Ensemble was created in 2009 and is dedicated to enriching lives and building community through the power of choral music. The group collaborates with a new conductor in each concert to create distinctive concert experiences for its singers and audience members. Join them in their concerts at First Lutheran on Saturday, May 6 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 7 at 4 PM. This concert will feature conductor Shekela Wanyama. Join them as they fill our Sanctuary with glorious sounds. More details can be found at [www.singersinaccord.org](http://www.singersinaccord.org)



## Caritas Vocal Ensemble Benefit Concert Sunday, April 30 at 3 PM

The Caritas Vocal Ensemble will present a concert to benefit our own Community Meal at First Lutheran on Sunday, April 30 at 3 PM. Caritas will perform a selection of songs to highlight care for each other and the world. Contemporary and classical expressions of cooperation and support draw us in and send us out inspired and refreshed. Join them as we rise together. A freewill offering will be taken to benefit First Lutheran's Community Meal. More details can be found at [www.caritasvocalensemble.org](http://www.caritasvocalensemble.org)



## Woven Voices Concert

**Sunday, June 4 at 2 PM**

Woven Voices is a chamber choir composed of experienced singers from various Minnesota-based choirs. They come together to joyfully explore and share choral literature written for soprano and alto voices. Join them as they present their Spring "Renewal" concert at First Lutheran on Sunday, June 4 at 2 PM. Woven Voices is the newest choral group using our fine facility for rehearsals. Freewill offerings are gratefully accepted and no ticket is required. More details can be found at [www.mnwovenvoices.com](http://www.mnwovenvoices.com)



## We Welcome First Lutheran's New Members, Spring Class of 2023!



Kent Boldt  
New address  
to be announced  
  
952-245-1905



Milly Bruss  
2550 38th Ave. NE,  
Unit 313  
St. Anthony, MN 55421  
651-283-5273



Nga (Nah) Thanh Le  
222 Heritage Lane  
Circle Pines, MN  
55014  
346-888-7200



Katie Upmann  
9615 Alvarado Ln N.  
Maple Grove, MN  
55411  
763-367-0896



Jackie Wright  
& son, Makai  
1069 Grandview Way  
CO Heights, MN 55421  
763-367-0371

## Financial Snapshot!

Hello from the desk of the Finance & Operations Manager

The last three months have been busy for me creating the General Fund Budget for 2023 and presenting it at the preliminary budget meeting, followed by the Annual Church Congregation Meeting where it was unanimously approved. On my desk this quarter was also closing out the last fiscal year as well as getting the new fiscal year off to a good start, setting a priority list for the maintenance needs of the building, working on some outstanding fund transfers, negotiating with our current tenants regarding their additional room needs for next year, getting 2021 and 2022 taxes filed and making some adjusting entries in QB to fix incorrect coding errors from 2022. There are still lots of “items to address” on my list for the next quarter but I am finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel!

As discussed at the budget meeting only a third of FLCCH's income comes from our tenants and other building use fees. The majority of income is relying on generous donors like you. So as a reminder, below are the three most common ways of giving monetary gifts to the church.

### 1) Cash Donations

Outright gifts of cash (which include donations made via check, credit card, payroll deduction and online payments) are the easiest.

### 2) Stock Donations

Appreciated publicly traded stock you've held for more than one year is long-term capital gains property, which can make one of the best charitable gifts. Why? Because you can deduct the current fair market value and avoid the capital gains tax you'd pay if you sold the property.

<b>Perpetual Reserve Balance 02/28/2023</b>	<b>\$ 110,051</b>
<b>Special Projects Balance 02/28/2023</b>	<b>\$ 213,498</b>
<b>Memorial Fund Balance 02/28/2023</b>	<b>\$ 44,842</b>
<b>Endowment MIF and Thrivent/ELCA Investments</b>	<b>\$ 1,188,578</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,777,722</b>
<b>Total Liabilities (incl mortgage)</b>	<b>\$ 1,293,601</b>
<b>Net Revenue as of 02/28/2023</b>	<b>\$ 57,525</b>

### 3) IRA Donations

Taxpayers age 70½ or older are allowed to make direct contributions from their IRA to qualified charitable organizations, up to \$100,000 per tax year. A charitable deduction can't be claimed for the contributions. But the amounts aren't deemed taxable income and can be used to satisfy an IRA owner's RMD.

If you haven't met me yet or have any financial questions/concerns, please don't hesitate to stop by my office or contact me by phone/email.

*Blessings, Jana*

Jana Deitering  
Finance & Operations  
[jana@flcch.org](mailto:jana@flcch.org)  
763-788-9653 ext. 104



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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**

**RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED**

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

