



the Spire

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020 SPIRE

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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FIRST LUTHERAN STAFF

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2020 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Alyson Kloeckner - Treasurer
Joe Rice - Finance/Stewardship
Wendy Erickson - President
Life and Growth/Personnel
John Laidlaw - Stewardship/Education
Cyd Mark - Vice President/ Worship
Jean Fjelsted - Worship
Matt Stinson - Stewardship
Mary Weberg - Christian Action
Mark Jaeger - Property
Bunny Kulstad - Life and Growth
Jon Ubbelohde - Property
Judie Bowes - Personnel
Elaine Ahern - Education

UPDATE

During this time we are reaching out as many ways as we can. We send weekly emails, if you don't get them contact the church office to get added to the list. office@firstlutheranrw.com or 651-388-9311.

We also have a small group making calls to all of our members. Please let them know if there is anything we can be doing for you. Contact us if you didn't get a call or if you know someone that needs a call.

We will continue to add information to our website and update you all as best as we can.

For those that do not have an email address or internet access we will be delivering a bulletin with the sermon and songs included so you can continue to worship on Sundays.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

There will be no gatherings for worship HOWEVER all the worship services will be available on-line at www.firstlutheranrw.com.

The service for Saturday evening and Sunday morning will be available on Sunday at 9:30 so you can watch it live or watch the video later.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Kaitlynn Kukuska, Marcia Krause, Jenny Edmonds, Bob Swanson, Horst Radtke, Janet Larson, Crystal Swanson, Carol Peterson, Doris Johnson, Bob Weir, Jim Miller, Dan Jones, Darrell Nelson, Cheryl Youmans, Holly (Dissel) Benson and children, Dylan Michel family, Carol Krie, John Oleson, Edla Bodelson, Ray Boggess, Jerry, Arthur Sharot Sr., Leah Larsen, Laura Anderson, Glenda Anderson, Tom Sasse, Jerry Krie, Jon Kinneman, Grosso family, Richard Jonas, Nikki Mahoney, John, Janice French, Nils Fauchild.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. Proverbs 3:5

FROM THE PASTOR

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We are living in challenging times. Most of us have never lived through anything like this. As bad as these times are there have been some bright spots. We have seen people doing what they can to help others. We have seen this with our people of First Lutheran. One of the things I have enjoyed that has come out of this COVID 19 crisis is all the good jokes. Jokes are one of the things that keep us sane. We have joked that when it comes to staying home, lying on the couch, watching tv and snacking to level the curve, help our medical people and save lives; this is something we have been working at our whole lives. For some of us, this is funny because there is some truth to it.

When it comes to having some experience and resources to face adversity, people of faith are really at an advantage. Scripture holds so many examples of people of faith like you and me who have faced challenging times only to find that God has seen them through it as the psalmist writes.



*¹⁶ But I will sing of your might;
I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.
For you have been a fortress for me
and a refuge on the day of my distress.
¹⁷ O my strength, I will sing praises to you,
for you, O God, are my fortress,
the God who shows me steadfast love.* Psalm 59 Nrsv

There are those who try to put God to the test misunderstanding what it means to “keep the faith” They claim that if they believe nothing will happen to them only to put themselves and the rest of us at risk. The devil tried to tempt Jesus this way as we read from the gospel of Luke. ⁹ Then the devil* took him (Jesus) to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you”, ¹¹and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”’ But Jesus answered him ¹²... ‘It is said, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’



There is a difference between putting God to the test and trusting in God’s love for us in Jesus Christ. We stand in a long line of Saints, people of faith through the centuries, people like you and me who with stood all the world could throw at them through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Facing adversity is not new for people of faith. This one is just a new twist. Be safe, hang tough and hang on to Jesus.

Your’s in Christ,
Pastor Arte

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP HASSANALLY

One of my strongest memories of my time as pastor at St. Luke is standing in the pulpit and preaching on Genesis 12. That passage, along with portions of Exodus, are the Biblical texts that most shaped my time as pastor there. Particularly, the first time I preached Genesis 12 and told the congregation I believed the Spirit was calling us to something new we just didn't know what it looked like quite yet. I preached that passage and that message over and over again in my time there. All the while never having a full appreciation for the ways the Spirit was using those words to shape us as a people.

It was years of preaching a sense that the Spirit was calling us forward into unknown lands before the lived experience of the congregation was one of moving into a new season of life together. Before we did the practical work of walking into a new land there were years of Spirit led conversations and worship services and discernment. None of this happened exclusively through the pulpit, but through congregational leaders, and children and youth ministries, and spending time in the community. We didn't really know what we were doing and there wasn't really a long-term plan (which, admittedly, made some people nervous). We just kept trying to live into our baptismal identity as the People of God in our community and we held fast to the notion that the Spirit was up to something even if we couldn't articulate what that was exactly.

I have been reflecting on that season of ministry as we live together into another unknown reality. I've been wondering about how the Spirit might be using our words and conversations and worship services to shape us into the people we will need to be in the new land we are moving toward. I've returned to the prayer of Moses in Exodus 33, "do not let us go where your glory is not." And I've been considering how, in so many ways, this feels like a wilderness journey. It feels as though we are living in the space between Egypt and the Promised Land. The space in which we are formed and shaped and we can't quite see the end.

It can be a disconcerting space to live in, so I am reassured by the fact that it's a space the People of God seem to inhabit fairly regularly in Scripture.

I've also been wondering about what kind of posturing might leave us most open to the shaping work of the Spirit in this time.

I have been reflecting a lot on fasting. The reality is there is much we are fasting from in this time: some of it by our choosing and some of it not. This period of fasting has led to questions of self-reflection. What am I fasting from and why? What do I miss about that which I fast from? What can my desire to end this fast teach me? Is this longing a veil for another aching I haven't yet acknowledged? In what ways am I tempted to feed myself with something else instead of allowing myself to feel the hunger of a fast? I've also been thinking about the human desire to avoid suffering at all costs and the truth that God works in the midst of suffering. What kinds of lessons might we be open to if we are willing to sit in the difficult, uncomfortable, painful spaces for a while? What can others, including our global partners, teach us about faithful living in the midst of widespread suffering?

And all of these questions have led me to another: what kinds of learning and formation might this unique time in the life of the church open us up to?

These, of course, are not questions to be answered as much as they are questions to be pondered. And I wonder if that might be one of the important disciplines we are invited to in this wilderness space. I wonder if there is an opportunity for us as pastors, deacons, and leaders...as people to linger in this wilderness space and ask questions, open ourselves to possibilities, and allow the Spirit to mold and shape us for the land that is to come.

I realize that your response to this might be: she clearly doesn't realize how much we have to do. And yet, I am not writing to ask you to do anything. I am asking you to pay attention to this time. I am encouraging you to be aware of the discoveries you are making, the questions you are asking, the voices you are hearing. I am encouraging you to allow yourself to live in this wilderness space for just a while without resisting. And I am reminding you that you are not alone: the Spirit is at work among us and we are part of the communion of saints. It is the same God who spoke to Abram, who freed the Israelites, who claimed Jesus and who called you by name, that leads us now.

May the Spirit who was at work in creation and is at work in us today shape us and form us for the new lands to come.

In Christ,
Bishop Regina Hassanally

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

First Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
April 14th, 2020

Members Present by ZOOM: Elaine Ahern, John Laidlaw, Mary Weberg, Wendy Erickson, Cyd Mark, Mark Jaeger, Bunny Kulstad, Jean Fjelsted, Judie Bowes. Alison Kloeckner, Jon Ubbelohde

Staff Present: Pastor Arte Sharot.

Devotions by Jean Fjelstad

The meeting was called to order by Wendy Erickson, council president.

Due to the restrictions imposed due to Covid19, this council meeting was attended through ZOOM (video communication). The meeting was informal and we did not use Robert's Rules of Order. There were no committee meetings in April.

Treasurer's Report: Aly reported that even though Covid19 restrictions permitted only a partial month of church attendance, monthly income was still acceptable. The weekly deposits were down approximately \$2,000. Aly is currently in the process of applying for a loan for FLC through the Federal Paycheck Protection Act. The loan provides payroll support for 8 weeks and is forgiven if employee and compensation levels are maintained. We do not intend to reduce or lay off staff at this point.

Staff Reports:

- Pastor Arte
- Tina
- Marilee
- MSC to accept staff reports as presented

Ministry Team Reports:

No team meetings were held. No reports.

Old Business/Updates

Bunny reported that the pan fundraiser was complete and anyone who purchased a pan had been notified.

Pastor Arte shared the following:

-Glenda Wersal has been officially hired as our new Administrative Assistant and will begin onsite

when our office reopens. Glenda has been in several times to volunteer and she has received online tutorials for office related software.

-Lenten services continued online. Both Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday services were presented online using last year's services with a new message embedded.

-Calls to church members were well received and appreciated. There was some need for food delivery.

-The Living Last Supper play was a great success! Thank you to all of our incredible performers and tech support for making it possible.

- Bulletins and messages are available for delivery to congregants upon request. Approximately 50 have been delivered each week so far.

-Sid reported that he is currently up to date on all church projects and no new property issues have been reported to date.

New Business:

No new business reported at this time.

The next regular church council meeting is scheduled for May 12th, 2020 with Joe Rice providing devotions and treats.

Respectfully submitted,

Cyd Mark

A Note from the Finance Committee

Thank you to everyone who has been diligent in mailing, dropping off, or continuing your donations online. Thanks to all of you we have been able to continue fully staffed, holding online book/bible studies, giving at home Sunday/Wednesday school opportunities for our youth, and keep our obligations to the mission and outreach groups in our community that we support. We hope that your generosity is able to continue until we are all able to meet again in prayer as a congregation.

Thank you for the kind notes, emails and prayers, and we continue to pray for all of your health and safety as well.

The Finance Team

MUSIC MINISTRIES

From Marilee Anderson, Director of Music Ministries

One of the satirical questions going around the handbell sites on Facebook is "What will handbell ringing be like when we actually have to stand and ring 6 feet apart?" Comical but maybe not so funny are statements like "maybe we have to develop a new technique like throwing a bell pass to the person you share bells with." Or "Is anyone thinking about how many more table (bells) we might need when we can finally get together again." That equals 13 ringers time 6 feet apart equals a whopping 78 feet of tables!!!! Or "Hey, we can make masks to match our gloves or our concert attire!!"

All silliness aside, thoughts like this are a real thing with the musicians in church, schools, communities etc. While we are all very anxious as singers and ringers to get back to together to make music, we do wonder what the future will look like for us all.

As a church musician, I have missed all of you.....Chancel Choir, Joyful Ringers, Kids Rock Children's Choir, Praise Team and the congregation. Your musical message is so important in our worship life. To hear, you the congregation, sing each week touches my heart as we raise our voices to praise God.

I am thankful for the five people who have generously volunteered to help with singing during our live stream Sunday morning services. If you notice, we try to social distance as much as we can.

We all look forward to the day when we can all be together again.

Stay safe, social distance, wash your hands.

To God Be the Glory!!!

MARCH 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR March 2020				
	March Actual	Budgeted March	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted
OPERATING INCOME				
General Fund Pledges	29,727	32,917	110,222	98,751
Mission Support	40	63	130	189
Other Income	7,422	4,286	(73,162)	(61,674)
Total Income	33,603	37,715	122,829	111,697
OPERATING EXPENSES				
General Operating Expenses	29,741	39,130	105,442	119,477
ELCA Benevolence	2,084	2,083	4,168	4,166
Other Outside Giving	1,325	1,325	3,974	3,973
Total Expenses	33,150	42,538	113,584	127,616
Income vs. Expenses	\$453	-\$4,823	\$9,246	-\$15,919
Beginning Cash Balance 1/1/20	\$ 119,267	Operating Fund Balance 1/1/20	\$	(258)
Ending Cash Balance 03/31/2020	\$ 138,837	Operating Fund Balance 03/30/2020	\$	14,787

This and that...

These are the upcoming readings for the Month of May. We encourage you all to read them and reach out to a friend to share, discuss and pray.

WEEK OF MAY 3

Acts 2:42-47

The believers' common life

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.
(Ps. 23:1)

1 Peter 2:19-25

Follow the shepherd, even in suffering

John 10:1-10

Christ the shepherd

WEEK OF MAY 10

Acts 7:55-60

The martyrdom of Stephen

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
(Ps. 31:5)

1 Peter 2:2-10

God's people chosen to proclaim God's mighty acts

John 14:1-14

Christ the way, truth, and life

WEEK OF MAY 17

Acts 17:22-31

Paul's message to the Athenians

Psalm 66:8-20

Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard. (Ps. 66:8)

1 Peter 3:13-22

The days of Noah, a sign of baptism

John 14:15-21

Christ our advocate

WEEK OF MAY 24

Acts 1:6-14

Jesus' companions at prayer after his departure

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds. (Ps. 68:4)

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

God will sustain and restore those who suffer

John 17:1-11

Christ's prayer for his disciples

MESSAGE FROM TINA

So this is what it feels like when everything is on hold, huh? We are very grateful for the technology that has enabled us to continue ministry in many areas. We are sad that we don't get to see each other in-person, I especially miss everyone so much! With that being said, there are still ways we have been able to gather. Our high-school group Christ & Coffee has continued to meet with Zoom. Please contact Tina if you are in grades 9-12 and would like to join us. Our Women & Wine group also meets with zoom and has fun and is thankful we can still connect. We continue to look for ways to have meaningful time together while we are all at home being safe.

During this time of physical distancing I hope you are all well, and are able to get outside and enjoy God's beautiful creation each day. I look forward to seeing you in person at sometime, vitally soon, and continue to pray for all our families at home!

Please feel free to call, text or email me if you have any questions about faith formation at home, or if you just need to talk.

Peace to you all,
Tina

HOSPITALIZATIONS AND ILLNESS

Hospitals no longer notify churches when their members are admitted for care. If you are ill or hospitalized and would like a pastoral visit or to be on the church prayer list, please notify us at (651)388-9311 or office@firstlutheranrw.com.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Call the church office at (651)388-9311 or e-mail your prayer requests to office@firstlutheranrw.com. If you want a pastoral visit or would like to be included on the prayer list or prayer chain, please call the church office or Pat Swanson, (651)388-7032.

MAY PRAYER & ACTIVITY CALENDAR 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Those dealing with heart trouble	2 Police officers
3 9:30 AM Drive-in Worship & On-line	4 That judges would rule with justice	5 Conservationists and zoologists	6 5:30 PM On-line Family Worship	7 Those who have betrayed our trust	8 Therapists and counselors	9 Physicists and other scientists
10 9:30 AM Drive-in Worship & On-line	11 Cancer patients and their doctors	12 Seminary students	13 5:30 PM On-line Family Worship	14 Evangelism ministries	15 Restaurant staff	16 People facing mental health challenges
17 9:30 AM Drive-in Worship & On-line	18 Endangered animal species	19 Those studying the catechism	20 5:30 PM On-line Family Worship	21 People awaiting good news	22 Mentors and those they guide	23 Those who work in national parks
24 9:30 AM Drive-in Worship & On-line	25 Grandparents	26 Those struggling to forgive	27 5:30 PM On-line Family Worship	28 The well-being of various bird species	29 Families growing by adoption	30 Worship leaders
31 9:30 AM Drive-in Worship & On-line						

We have several copies of "Christ in Our Home" devotional booklets, regular print and large print, at church. Let us know if you would like one mailed or delivered to you.



First Lutheran Church

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MAY 2020

***Broadcasting live to the church parking lot!
Beginning Sunday, May 3 at 9:30 a.m.***

Join us beginning Sunday, May 3 at 9:30 AM when First Lutheran Church will broadcast its services **LIVE** to the church parking lot! With a bit of technology and the magical help of David Carlstrom, you will be able to take part in our morning services from the comfort and safety of your car.

Come and be a part of our “drive-in worship.” It’s a first for First!

