



the Spire

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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. (This does not effect your hard copy newsletter)

Please let us know if there is anything we can be doing for you. Contact us 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 are delivering bulletins with the sermon and songs included so you can continue to worship on Sundays if you can't be here.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

IN-PERSON WORSHIP BEGINS SEPTEMBER 13 9:30AM after a practice run on August 30th. The Labor day Sunday service September 6th will be online.

All the worship services will be available on-line at www.firstlutheranrw.com.

The service for Sunday mornings will be available at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday so you can watch it live or watch the video later.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Kaitlynn Kuskuska, Marcia Krause, Jenny Edmonds, Bob Swanson, Horst Radtke, Crystal Swanson, Carol Peterson, Doris Johnson, Bob Weir, Jim Miller, Dan Jones, Darrell Nelson, Cheryl Youmans, Dylan Michel family, John Oleson, Edla Bodelson, Ray Boggess, Leah Larsen, Laura Anderson, Jerry Krie, Grosso family, Richard Jonas, Nikki Mahoney, Arlan Johnson, John, Brooklyn, Jerry & Louise Mewhorter, Lunde family, Joan Grottan and Bill.

Prayer Ministry needs your help in updating our Prayer list. Please look it over and let the office know if you have any additions or changes (removal) to the list. Call the office 651-388-9311 or send an email to: **office@firstlutheranrw.com** Thank you.

FROM THE PASTOR



10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. ¹⁴If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵If the work is burned, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

We live in challenging times. We are facing things we have never faced before so we have no frame of reference to help us decide what to do. In these challenging times we are tested. We may not be tested with fire but with results. God wants you to pass the test. If you do not pass the test, it is God's will that you are better for it. That you learn from your mistakes. God wants you to find a better way or become a better you.

When things go our way we generally continue along that path. Why would we change? What we are doing is working for us. But when we are tested and it doesn't go well, we must ask ourselves what can we do better.

Yet our greatest test is whether we will hold firm to our faith. We may succeed or fail in the challenges we face but through it all the most important thing is to keep the faith. For example, the school is making plans for the coming academic year. Those plans may succeed and they may not. If they fail for one reason or another they will need to change those plans. Failure can be devastating if we tie our self-worth to it. But even in failure we need to keep the faith, especially in failure, we must keep the faith. In faith Christ gives us the confidence and ability to learn from our mistakes and become better. Faith in Christ gives us the confidence to fail in order to be more perfect for the sake of Christ and his work in the world.

Here at First Lutheran we will be trying to restart with worship and activities. We live in challenging and dangerous times. We face not only the challenge of the task of providing worship, education, fellowship and out reach but also the challenge to keep people safe. It's not easy but we will do the best we can with the responsibility we have. And we will do it in faith in Jesus Christ for we believe we are his temple.

God bless,
Pastor Arte

Moving Forward

WHEN WE OPEN

We are almost ready to open. Our task force has been planning for everyone's safety. We want to do our best to keep you and everyone around you safe.

We have a congregation with many high at-risk members and our intent is to keep people as safe as possible.

Here are some of the things to remember:

- Stay home if you feel ill.
- Stay home if you are in a high risk category for getting the virus.
- Wear a mask to protect yourself and those in our congregation.
- We will spread out. We will begin at the front door. Families can come in together but the rest of us will be asked to stay 6 feet apart.
- Sanitizer will be available at the front door .
- We will ask that everyone follow directions for navigating the building. We will have everyone keep to the right.
- No social congregating inside the building.
- The nursery will be locked. The water fountains will be unavailable. Please use the bathrooms only when necessary.
- We will make sure that all the possible surfaces that people could have touched will be wiped down before and after each service
- Worship will be different. The down side: no singing or group responses. We will have solos and video music. The up side: shorter services, unless you want longer sermons.

We extend our prayers & sympathy to the families of the following:

Aaron Kimball passed June 25th

Janet D Larson passed August 12th

Arthur Sharot Sr passed August 15th

Margy Filson passed August 22nd

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.

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP HASSANALLY

August 20, 2020

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:22-23*

I have yet to meet a single person who has not been challenged by this pandemic. The reality is this pandemic is hard for everyone. That isn't to say there haven't been opportunities for growth or new learnings. It is to say: this is hard for everyone. Pastors, deacons, congregational leaders, teachers, nurses, hospital administrators, school boards and superintendents, government leaders, school bus drivers, CNAs, construction workers, parents, those with underlying health conditions, the homebound...the list goes on. Pandemic living has brought new challenges to all of us.

As we look to the beginning of a new school year and the start of a new program year, I want to offer you a framework for thinking. This framework is rooted in grace and a reflection on what embodied grace might look like in this time.

First, it is essential we understand pandemic living is hard for all of us. Many of us are being tasked with making decisions that feel impossible. Stress and anxiety surge as we have difficult conversations and try to navigate a way forward. This is likely true for you. Remember, it is true of the people around you too. Allow this recognition to fuel empathy and compassion.

Extend this compassion to others and yourself. This grace and compassion might come in the form of adjusted expectations. The truth is we cannot do things the way we have always done them. The best science available tells us we need to make adjustments for the sake of our health and the health of our neighbors. Some of these adjustments are small: wash your hands more often and count to twenty when you do. Some of them take more time getting used to: wear a mask in indoor public gathering spaces. Some of them feel huge, like we're making changes and we don't yet know the outcome: school comes to mind.

These adjustments can feel overwhelming, especially if we are more committed to the way we do something rather than the reason. Let me explain with an illustration.

In your congregation there is likely a particular way confirmation classes happen. Perhaps you meet in the youth room on Wednesday evenings for an hour with thirteen kids. The pastor teaches a lesson. Everyone eats ice cream. It is lovely. These are the ways you are used to having confirmation in your congregation. The reason you have confirmation is to teach the faith to the children of your congregation. The reason you have confirmation is so students know they are loved by God. The reason you serve ice cream at confirmation is so kids have time to connect and build a community of faith in a social setting.

If we can adjust our expectations around the ways we do things and instead focus on the reasons we do things we might find space to continue living in this pandemic reality with a bit more freedom and grace. The same applies to worship and Bible study and outreach and all the other wonderful things your congregation does. You can continue to worship. You can continue to learn. You can continue to serve your community. You might just have to continue to find new ways to do so.

I know it can be exhausting to have to try so many new things. Which is why we must also adjust our expectations of ourselves. We aren't going to get every new thing right the first time. I don't.

Maybe the first time you held an outdoor worship service it was a disaster. Perhaps the microphones didn't work and the wind blew everything over. The ways might need to be adjusted. That's okay. If you remember the reason for gathering your perspective might shift. Focusing on the reasons we do things allows us to focus on what is essential and work out from there. If the reason for worship is to gather people to worship God, be fed through the proclamation of the Word and be sent into the world for service...well there are a myriad of ways this can happen. Focusing on the reasons frees us from fixating on the ways. The ways have to change. The reasons do not.

I understand we might be feeling decision fatigue and yet, there are more decisions ahead. We are going to have to continue to adjust and do things differently. Be sure to pay attention to your expectations of yourself and others. Do the expectations you have fit our current reality? Do your expectations need to be adjusted in light of all the other changes taking place?

Together, we are finding new ways forward. We are forging new paths and doing things in ways we haven't done them before. Adjust your expectations to ensure there is room for experimentation, failure, and plenty of grace.

Our sense of grace, of course, is rooted in the one thing that does not change: the steadfast love of God.

Other things might shift. The presence of the Spirit, the faithfulness of God, the hope of the resurrection - these things remain. Proclaiming this good news is reason to continue in the work God has called us to even if the ways we do so continue to change.

In this with you.

In Christ,

Bishop Regina Hassanally

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

First Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
July 14th, 2020

Members Present by ZOOM: Mary Weberg, Jean Fjelsted, Elaine Ahern, John Laidlaw, Wendy Erickson, Cyd Mark, Judy Bowes, Jon Ubbelohde, Alyson Kloeckner

Staff Present: Pastor Arte Sharot
Guest: Penny Oleson, Reopening Committee

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). Our primary reason for this council meeting was to discuss reopening preparedness plan and dates.

Treasurer's Report: Aly reported that our finances are status quo.

Staff Reports:

- Pastor Arte
- Music

Ministry Team Reports: Ministry teams did not meet in July

Reopening Task Force:

Penny Oleson attended our Zoom meeting to update us on the progress of our reopening task force. There are a few items that need to be completed before the plan can be validated. The committee hopes to complete these items before our next council meeting on 8/11/20.

New Business:

Target Reopening dates:

August 30th- we plan to have a "practice run" worship service with 25-30 people in attendance. This will help us determine if our plan needs adjustment.

September 13th (Rally Sunday)- Currently, this is our targeted reopening date. These dates are considered "target dates" due to the limited predictability of Covid 19.

Respectfully submitted, Cyd Mark

MUSIC MINISTRIES

What will FLC's Music Ministries be like this fall?

From the Director of Music Ministries, Marilee Anderson

Much reading, praying and pondering of what music ministry will look like this fall has been done over the summer. One thing I know for sure is that I miss all of the musicians who share gifts and talents. It is really hard to plan worship when there should be no live singing or responses.

While singing in larger groups is not recommended (which also includes congregational singing) and no wind instruments should play but percussion and strings can perform.

Because handbells are a percussion instrument, the Joyful Ringers and Bells of the Bluffs will be getting together to ring this fall. We will practice physically distanced and taking all the cleaning/safety procedures.

We have taken out the choir platforms for now and have moved the praise band equipment to behind the altar. We can have small groups like the Praise Team sing from that area because they are only a few people and will be distanced quite a bit from the congregation. Also, other singing/cantoring/reading will be able to be done there. With the open space across the front, physical distancing can take place easier.

There will be a combination of some live and some recorded music for the worship services as we go live. I have spent part of the summer learning programs to put together virtual music.

I have invited some people to prepare music to record for worship. We continue to explore this option.

Members of the Chancel Choir will be hearing from me sometime in September for some ideas I have for you singing together. Be patient and wait for it.

Children's Choir: You will also be hearing from me for ideas on how we can create music together. I am working with Christian Education on what procedures they will be taking for fall gathering. Again.....wait for it.

A big thank you to the COVID choir most of whom were at church for the live stream every Sunday to help lead hymns. Cheri Roberts, Kelly Kolby, Jean Fjelsted, Sandy Sharot and Rollie Meffert have really helped during this time.

So as in all things, wait patiently and keep praying and I will keep you posted on what the New Normal may be. And in all things—

To God Be the Glory (soli deo gloria)

Marilee

JUNE 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR June 2020

OPERATING INCOME	June Actual	Budgeted June	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted
General Fund Pledges	35,261	32,917	191,064	197,502
Mission Support	30	63	160	378
Other Income	1,899	4,286	(154,034)	(160,614)
Total Income	38,396	37,115	213,194	225,344
OPERATING EXPENSES	June Actual	Budgeted June	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted
General Operating Expenses	26,747	39,513	196,837	235,186
ELCA Benevolence	2,084	2,084	12,504	12,500
Other Outside Giving	1,325	1,325	7,947	7,946
Total Expenses	30,156	42,922	217,288	255,632
Income vs. Expenses	\$8,240	-\$5,807	-\$4,094	-\$30,288
Beginning Cash Balance 1/1/20	\$ 119,267	Operating Fund Balance 1/1/20	\$ (258)	
Ending Cash Balance 06/30/2020	\$ 178,244	Operating Fund Balance 06/30/2020	\$ 1,248	

JULY 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR July 2020

OPERATING INCOME	July Actual	Budgeted July	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted
General Fund Pledges	24,914	32,917	215,978	230,419
Mission Support	-	63	160	441
Other Income	12,276	4,286	(178,948)	(193,594)
Total Income	27,961	36,714	241,155	262,048
OPERATING EXPENSES	July Actual	Budgeted July	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted
General Operating Expenses	30,724	39,015	227,560	274,201
ELCA Benevolence	2,084	2,083	14,588	14,583
Other Outside Giving	1,325	1,324	9,272	9,270
Total Expenses	34,132	42,422	251,420	298,054
Income vs. Expenses	-\$6,171	-\$5,708	-\$10,265	-\$36,006
Beginning Cash Balance 1/1/20	\$ 119,267	Operating Fund Balance 1/1/20	\$ (258)	
Ending Cash Balance 07/31/2020	\$ 173,017	Operating Fund Balance 07/31/2020	\$ (4,723)	

SEPTEMBER PRAYER & ACTIVITIES 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 11:00am Staff Mtg 2pm Mindfulness (on hold) 4:00pm Property 5:00pm Executive 6pm Team	2 8:30am Men's Bible Study 12:00pm reSet Wednesday (on hold)	3 7pm MOPS in the Garden	4	5
6 9:30am Worship Online	7 Office closed - Holiday	8 11:00am Staff Mtg 2pm Mindfulness (on hold) 4:00pm Finance 6:30pm Executive	9 8:30am Men's Bible Study 12:00pm reSet Wednesday (on hold) 1:00pm Quilting	10	11	12
13 9:30am Worship	14	15 11:00am Staff Mtg 2pm Mindfulness (on hold) 4pm Piano Lessons 7pm Eve Circle	16 8:30am Men's Bible Study 9:30am Martha 10am Mary Circle- Conference Room 12pm reSet Wednesday (on hold)	17 5pm Bells of the Bluffs Annual Mtg in Conference Room	18	19
20 9:30am Worship	21 6:30pm Girl Scouts	22 11:00am Staff Mtg 2pm Mindfulness (on hold) 4pm Piano Lessons	23 8:30am Men's Bible Study 12pm reSet Wednesday (on hold) 1:00pm Quilting	24 5pm Bells of the Bluffs	25	26
27 9:30am Worship	28	29 11:00am Staff Mtg 2pm Mindfulness (on hold) 4pm Piano Lessons	30 8:30am Men's Bible Study 12pm reSet Wednesday (on hold)			

These are the upcoming readings for September.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 13
Genesis 2:4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8
Creation and Fall

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20
Genesis 15:1-6
God's Promise to Abraham

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 27
Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21
God Works through Joseph



Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Church School

Letters will be coming home about our plans for faith formation this fall. We will start September with providing virtual learning options and transition to in-person lessons in October. We will continue provide a virtual lesson each week for any families that would prefer that option to in-person learning. We do plan on watching the numbers and following the formula that the state issues for the safer school plans to help guide us on whether we should be in-person or virtual faith formation.

We will be sending letters and emails home to all those we have on our lists. Please contact Tina if you have not been receiving any emails or letters in the past few months to make sure we have current contact information for you. We thank you all for your patience as we continue to work on offering the best faith formation plans we can while keeping our volunteers and participants safe.

September

- Virtual learning for Preschool to Grade 8
- In-person learning for 9th Grade

October

- In Person learning offered for all students



**God's work.
Our hands.**

This year we are doing a donation drive for God's work. Our hands. Sunday

Please consider making a donation for the Youth Outreach toiletry pantry.

They give youth in need items they don't have access to, and are stocking up right now for the beginning of the school year.

Please bring the following items:

Full size:

Shampoo Conditioner

Body Wash

Deodorant

Feminine hygiene products

There will be donation collection bins in the narthex for you to use. These items can be dropped off during the month of September when the building is open.

2020 Church School Registration

Your child should be 3 years of age before September 1, 2020 to enroll in the preschool class.

Family Information:

Parent Name:	Parent Name:
Address:	Address:
Phone #:	Phone #:
E-mail:	E-mail:

Student Information:

Child's Name:	2020-2021 Grade:
Date of Birth:	Age:
Attending On: (Circle One) Sunday Wednesday	
Kid's Rock Children's Choir (if available**) Yes_____ No_____	
Special Info/Allergies:	

Child's Name:	2020-2021 Grade:
Date of Birth:	Age:
Attending On: (Circle One) Sunday Wednesday	
Kid's Rock Children's Choir (if available**) Yes_____ No_____	
Special Info/Allergies:	

Child's Name:	2020-2021 Grade:
Date of Birth:	Age:
Attending On: (Circle One) Sunday Wednesday	
Kid's Rock Children's Choir (if available**) Yes_____ No_____	
Special Info/Allergies:	

I authorize First Lutheran Church to create photographs, video and audio recordings of my child, as well as written or recorded oral descriptions of my child's work and church projects (if applicable). These materials will be used for church purposes only. (Sign on line below)

Are you interested in helping with Church School? Yes_____ No_____

I would like virtual only lessons for my family Yes_____ No_____

**Please note: Due to Covid-19 all plans are subject to change at any time this year and we will be communicating with you via email or phone calls any time there is a change. **

First Lutheran Church

615 West 5th Street
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651.388.9311

Address Service Requested

September 2020

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HAPPENINGS

Faith in Action

Need for Drivers! The numbers of drivers are down 20% but the need keeps growing. Please call Faith in Action 651-327-2400 or Diane Ringeisen 651-380-3838.

Grief Group & Support

Due to social distancing guidelines related to preventing the spread of COVID-19, the Mayo Clinic Hospice Bereavement Programs for Fall 2020, including Adult Grief Support Groups and Healing Adventures Youth Grief Camp are canceled.

Please know that bereavement support remains available through telephone contacts. For bereavement support please contact us at: 1-800-679-9084 or 507-284-4002. E-mail: rsthospicebereavement@mayo.edu.