

THE FIRST WORD

November 2020



Be Like a Tree

I recently read an article by Drew Benson, PHD, LP that touched me. **I love trees.** Drew writes that trees are a great metaphor for how we navigate these times we are living in right now. He suggests three things to ponder.

First, Trees are designed to adapt. They adjust to the conditions around them. Think of a favorite tree - does it look the same today as it did in July or January? We can benefit from the ability to adapt too. Our ability to adapt seems to increase our ability to be resilient.

Trees are rooted. We only see the trunk and the leaves or needles, but they are rooted. Roots help the tree to grow wider and taller. I don't know about you, but I have had to grow deeper and stronger roots this year. I have had to find what keeps me grounded and lean into that grounding that rootedness to keep me vital and resilient during these last months.

Trees do better together. Trees do better in community including a diverse community called the forest. In a forest trees help one another thrive. This time of COVID has left many of us feeling lonely and isolated. Our outdoor worship services have been for me a joy to see you. We are social creatures, and that connectiveness helps us to be resilient.

So, who else is in your forest and how might new seedlings be planted as we move toward Thanksgiving, Christmas, and a New Year? What might give you life and resilience. Do not forget to pray about it too.

*They are like trees planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither.
In all they do they prosper.
Psalm 1:3*



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS ON NOVEMBER 1 - Remember to Change Your Clocks!



First Evangelical Lutheran Church

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October 23, 2020

Faithful people of Christ-

It is after a great deal of prayer, deliberation, and thoughtful discussion that First Lutheran's Church Council has made the difficult decision to continue to remain closed for in-person worship for the time being. With the increasing Covid numbers throughout our community, county, state and the Midwest, we cannot ignore the risk we may unknowingly put our fellow parishioners in, if we were to gather together as we would like.

Please believe me when we say we do not take any of these decisions lightly and when faced with only uncomfortable choices, we elected the choice we could most comfortably feel at peace with.

We are so very grateful for the innovative ways in which First Lutheran has been able to meet us spiritually. From Wednesday evening services on the lawn or parking lot, to drive through communion, to pre-recorded worship and children's messages, and now live streaming services. Ministry is continuing despite the challenges posed to us!

Know that we are holding all of you in prayer as we navigate this unwelcome reality. We are forever thankful for the gifts and stewardship you have continued to provide.

We will continue to monitor the Covid situation on a monthly basis, considering recommendations from the Southeastern MN Synod, ELCA, MDH and CDC. Our next council meeting is scheduled for November 18th. Please know these decisions are not those of Pastor Julie alone. If you would like to discuss these decisions further, please reach out to one of the church council members.

We thank you for your grace as we attempt to lead with very few road maps to follow for times such as these.

Peace and Blessings-

Amy Lee, on behalf of First Lutheran Church Council

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES — OCTOBER 21, 2020 — 8:00 PM

Welcome and Call to Order: Amy Lee

Present: Amy Lee, Harris Haugen, Don Herrlich, Pastor Julie Rogness, Bill Lewis, Cindy Lewis, Lucas Shurson, Tanya Short, Carrie Doehling and Sandy Doehling

Devotions: Pastor Julie ~ Psalm 46 ~ God is our refuge and strength.

Adopt Agenda: M/S Harris/Bill, Approved

Secretary's Report: M/S Don/Amy, Approved

Treasurer's Report: M/S Bill/Harris, Approved.

09/30/20: Checking Account Balance **\$3,030.35** Memorial Account Balance **\$525**

Pastor's Report: Worship Services - Sunday mornings - 4 (online two live stream), Testing new Sling Studio, One Sunday off - Synod worship for service, Wednesday Worship - 4 (now finished because of weather), Drive by Communion with food shelf option - 1, Planning for worship with Annette especially for Confirmation and All Saints, Committee Meetings - KAI internship, Worship (2 meetings), Stewardship, Weddings and Rehearsals - Musgjerd and Dodds, Premarital meeting (done for 2020), Memorial/Funeral for Gary Strandemo (2), John Shelstad's daughter, Burial for Jordan Benesh, Making connections in as many ways as possible now, Clergy Coaching - 2 people, Round Table with Lucas, Preparing for Confirmation with 9th graders - making stoles and finishing up Confirmation with 7th and 8th graders has begun in person may move to online, Prerecording music for Sunday with singers and Annette. **Looking Forward:** Spring!, Confirmation Sunday, All Saints Sunday, Pastor Emily Carson preaching for FLCW Sunday (11/22/2020) - celebration of 50 years of women's ordination, Baptism of William Samuelson - Saturday, Nov 7, Advent - Theme - Those Who Dream, Continuing Education Event - Theological Festival, Seeking 30 second horizontal videos from families giving thanks.

Continuing Business:

- 1) Reopening
 - a. Worship - Upon the recommendation from the Worship/Evangelism Committee to postpone reopening the building for services, church remains closed with live streaming only and will be reevaluated at the November Council Meeting. M/S Tanya/Harris, Approved.
 - b. Effective 07/19/20, in-building meetings will be limited to church committees and AA only, must be scheduled with Annette and held solely in the fellowship hall. All parties must practice social distancing, wear masks and sanitize area prior to leaving the building.
- 2) Sunday School remains closed while Confirmation classes will meet via Zoom.
- 3) Live Streaming and Live Service Update. See 1a.
- 4) ELCA Social Statement is an ongoing conversation with more info to come.

New Business:

- 1) Technology position. Thoughtful discussion to include this new role in the 2021 budget.
- 2) Reflection Question #1 to ponder and discuss at next meeting:
 - ~ What is our definition of Church and how has it changed over these past few months?

Committee Reports:

FLCW: Did not meet. Next meeting 11/02/2020 at 7:00 pm to wrap up the year.

Youth Representative: Carrie highlighted the KW School Homecoming activities taking place the week of 10/19 including 5 youth from First representing the royalty court. Norah Rechtzigel, Alex Lee, Corrie Born, Katie Van Epps and Carrie Doehling.

Worship/Evangelism - Met 10/20/2020. Discussed Sunday's soft opening with the following concerns:

- Ushers did not actively follow protocol including:
-Opening door to enter.

- Showing people the hand sanitizer.
- Promoting social distancing when entering/writing name/phone.
- Ushering people in to front of church to allow social distancing.
- Ushering people out of church starting with the back.
- Masking - noted at least one person not wearing mask for entire service.

Recommend for future:

- Coaching for ushers to promote adherence to protocol.
- Entering church from north doors to avoid bottle neck when entering.
- Ushers would be able to see people coming and open doors.
- Hand sanitizer placed near offering plate.
- Announce masking policy with need to close down if not adhered to.
- Need for self-policing.

Addressed concern of Pastor and worship assistant standing close and not wearing masks.

- Committee felt comfortable with this as long as worship assistant and Pastor feel comfortable.

***Confirmation next Sunday will be with household members only.

Long discussion about the safety of church reopening with the knowledge that at least 3 Parishioners have tested positive for COVID-19 with the following recommendations.

- > Delay for one month and reevaluate to see what the virus does in our community, possibly stay with school policy.
- > Coaching of ushers to follow protocol.
- > Discuss with property and management possible need for air purifier.
- > Need to adhere to strict mask mandate.
- > When reopen, recommend NO singing adhering to CDC/MDH and ELCA protocols.

*** > Will also need to proactively plan for Christmas services thinking about alternative ways to worship as a church family.

Other items:

Need for planning assistance regarding rules for return to worship, funerals, weddings.

Property and Management - Met 10/19/2020 with the following notes provided by Brad Nesseth. The committee met briefly with Council VP Harris Haugen to be updated on the topic of the high school monument. That committee has formally organized and now goes by the name "Kenyon School Monument Group LLC." They have also taken additional steps demonstrating their strong desire to proceed with the monument subject to the formal approval of First Lutheran. With these steps, it would be the committee's recommendation that the topic of the monument be added to the council agenda items for discussion on Wednesday, October 21st. *Harris was designated to represent the church council to move to approve the plan to erect the insured monument with construction to begin Spring 2021.* M/S Harris/Don. Approved.

Stewardship - Met 10/12/2020 with the following minutes submitted by Tanya Short.

1. *Living Lutheran Generosity Project:* Dan working on article for First Lutheran members.
2. *Food Shelf Update:* Food Shelf is transitioning to new leadership. Needs continue.
3. *Stephen Deal Article in Newsletter:* Missionaries share news in their quarterly newsletters to us; committee will share more in our own newsletter.
4. *Fundraiser Discussion-History-COVID-19:* Discussion held regarding continuing the tradition of a Fall Festival. Pastor assures that overall stewardship and giving remains consistent even through the pandemic. At this time, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the annual Fall fundraiser cannot be held. There are still community members in need of local grocery and hardware store items. Stewardship committee will host a drive for monetary donations and local gift cards to Kenyon Market and Ace Hardware during the months of November and December. Cards should be in denominations of \$20-\$40 and can be dropped off with Pastor Julie.
5. *Council:* Tanya will attend October 21 church council meeting.

Youth and Education - The following minutes were provided by Carmen Nesseth.

Old Business:

1. Bibles to third graders: Chayton Berge, Abel Eggert, Mason Fink and Lillian Flom were given Bibles during a video presentation which was shown during October 4 worship.
2. Ditch pick-up: 4 families (12 members) assisted with pick-up. Thanks!

New Business:

1. Pastor Julie is asking for **volunteers for worship assistant & kids message**. This is open to every member of the church. Anna did 10/4 and Lucas did 10/11.
2. **Community Scavenger Hunt** was sent (10/9) to Sunday School Families hoping they would participate & photos posted on Facebook.
3. **Operation Christmas Child**: Members may fill a box or contribute **\$9** towards shipping and handling. Must be dropped off at church by November 16. Contact Carmen with questions.
4. **In-building Sunday School** is per council approval. Committee to meet on Tuesday, October 27 at 6:30 pm.

Long Range Planning/Endowment/Personnel Committee/KAIC - minutes submitted by Carmen Nesseth.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Two students, Cass Kern and Lauren Berg, contacted the committee regarding scholarship funds. Larry Lehman, our treasurer, informed us that both girls have received all their funds for undergraduate work. Carmen has informed the girls of this.
2. Larry made the recommendation that we switch the Mission Investment Fund over to a 3-year fixed rate at 2%. We will take a penalty for early withdrawal, which will come out "committee discretion". Pat Schreiber seconded it, all were in favor of this action, carried.

Next Meeting: January 2021

Next Meeting: November 18, 2020 at 7:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

Devotions: Bill Lewis

Adjournment: M/S Don/Harris, Approved

Closing with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Doehling



CONFIRMED IN THE FAITH: Sunday, October 25, 2020
*Jakob Kirchmann, Norah Rehtzigel, Benjamin Short,
 Dakota Temple, Mason Torgeson, William Van Epps*



REMEMBERING THE SAINTS: All Saints Day, November 1, 2020

On this day our reading and liturgy call us to keep in mind all who have died in Christ and whose baptism is complete. During our worship we will remember those in our congregation who have died since All Saints Day 2019 with the lighting of a candle and tolling of bell.



Ken Skok
Bob Erslund
Edward Klingsporn
Geneva Canton
Tyler Hein
Lyle Canton
Kirsten Shelstad

Howard Ronken
Donna Malloy
Mike Ostgaard
Jeanne Ellingson
Carol Kumm Wallaker
Gary Strandemo

Gordy Anderson
Earl Fredrickson
Norma Huseth
Janis Wobshall
Richard Rasmussen
Jordan Benesh



Samaritan's Purse "Operation Christmas Child

Once again First Lutheran Sunday School will be gathering Shoe Boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Members may **donate \$9** for shipping & handling or **pack a box** to drop off at church by **November 16**.

Go to: www.samaritanspurse.org/occ for gift ideas.
 Contact Carmen for any questions.

THANKOFFERING SUNDAY — November 22, 2020

Guest Preacher: Pastor Emily Carson
We celebrate 50 years of women's ordination



ADVENT BEGINS: Sunday, November 29
 ~ Our Theme ~

Those Who Dream

- First Sunday in Advent** - *Those Who Dream...keep awake* (HOPE)
- Second Sunday in Advent** - *Those Who Dream...prepare the way* (PEACE)
- Third Sunday in Advent** - *Those Who Dream...sow joy* (JOY)
- Fourth Sunday in Advent** - *Those Who Dream...are not alone* (LOVE)

This theme is for the dreamers in all of us - those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets, angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dream for our world.

STEWARDSHIP MEMOS

Missionary Update — Central America

It has been 7 months since the first case of COVID 19 was detected in Central America. Central America fared well during the first 3 months of the pandemic but the last 4 months it has been a different story. In Costa Rica, confirmed cases went from 3000 to 80,000. Included is a brief story about how companion churches are providing vital care and support to individuals and families that are especially vulnerable.

- Lutheran Churches in Central America are part of the global response to the pandemic, supported by offerings to Lutheran Disaster Response. Guatemala was one of the first companion churches to organize delivery of emergency food assistance to villages in rural areas. Emergency food aid is a short-term remedy, but longer term response will be needed. One response will be SEED which will promote sustainable farming and gardening so that rural villages can grow more of their own food.

Your companion in Global Mission
Stephen Deal, ELCA Missionary Costa Rica

Practicing Generosity through the Generations

Stewardship Article by Dan Rogness

Through my years as a “pastor’s kid” and a “pastor’s spouse”, I have seen so many people who practice generosity within their church. Ultimately, this generosity exemplifies our gratitude to God. After moving from Kenyon at the age of 4 ½, I then grew up in Wyoming and Montana. Those early years of my life were shaped, in part, through multiple home visits with my dad (the pastor) to homes of parishioners. My gratitude was to receive a cookie or other treat during that home visit, but I also saw that people with little gave much to their church. Those people had the spirit of giving.

My dad was as humble as they come. He showed how humility is a key part of generosity. Important personal words come to mind for stewardship, including kindness, fulfillment, humbleness, and contentment. I like the definition of generosity that says it is,

“the habit of giving freely without expecting anything.”

So, do you have the spirit of giving ... of practicing generosity? One of my favorite bible verses is from GALATIANS 6:2, “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” I believe that stewardship and our generosity fit together with this verse whereby our gifts help us to bear other’s burdens around our community and our world.

GIFT CARD DRIVE During November & December

Hosted by Stewardship Committee



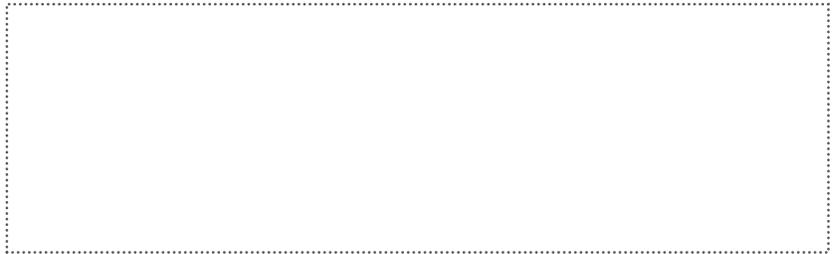
LOCAL Gift Cards in denominations of \$20 up to \$40 will be accepted and distributed to community members in need. We are accepting gift cards from local business such as The Kenyon Market and Kenyon ACE Hardware. The cards & gift certificates can be purchased and dropped off with Pastor Julie. We also will be accepting monetary donations for this drive. Make a note in the memo section of your check, "Gift Card DRIVE" or make a note on the cash envelope.

If you know of a family or person in need of these services, contact Pastor Julie, to add them to the list.

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

309 Forest Street, Kenyon, MN 55946

NOVEMBER Newsletter



FIRST LUTHERAN STAFF

Pastor—Julie Rogness; KAI Intern Pastor—Lucas Shurson
Admin.Asst—Annette Thunhorst; Accountant —Julie Dyr Dahl
Custodian—Betty Redfield; Youth/Family—Carmen Nesseth
Missionaries: Stephen Deal, Patrick & Jacqueline Bencke, & Karen Anderson
Partner Cong.— Ilongero Lutheran/Tanzania.

FIRST LUTHERAN CONNECTIONS

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Church E-Mail: firstlutherankenyon@gmail.com Church Office Phone: 789-5261

MISSION STATEMENT OF FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

“Through God we are creating a vibrant, welcoming faith community, embracing all, providing harmony among generations, while lending compassion locally and globally.”