



First Lutheran Church **SEPTEMBER 2020**

Worship Sun. 9:30 am
Listen on the radio 1020am or FM 97.7
www.channel977.com
Livestream on YouTube, link found on website

402 South Court Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
Phone: 218-739-3348
www.firstlutheranchurchff.org
office@flcff.org

Mission Statement: "As faithful disciples, we serve God and welcome all people with open hearts".

What if We Could?

Have you ever pondered this question, completing it with a dream or idea of your own?

Following devotions and prayer led by Pastor Gretchen, our August church council meeting began with each member taking turns questioning, "What if we could..." and then filling the blank with our own thoughts. For answers, we looked to First Lutheran Church's mission statement, **"As faithful disciples, we serve God and welcome all people with open hearts."**



We listened to what is important to each of us. We also learned we had some commonly held ideas. Several of us took it as a long-term question, voicing the need for a major mission or outreach project beyond our walls: something we could all embrace together. Some proposed shorter-term goals, especially in response to living within pandemic-related limitations.

One council member recalled the congregation's past work with Tanzania – a relationship we committed to for many years. Since the 1960s, First Lutheran took an important leading role, along with other congregations, supporting the work of David and Eunice Simonson. Partnering with people of Tanzania, we built schools and hospitals. We helped empower people to advance their communities with improved healthcare, education, sustainable agriculture, and more.

Other council members echoed the mission theme in our ability to respond to local need, such as hunger and poverty, right here in our community. We discussed setting higher goals for supporting benevolences. We hold a great deal of resources and can respond to global and local need.

We also talked about the coronavirus and its challenge for us to find new ways of worshiping and connecting, such as in small groups and with even more intentional use of technology. Of course, we all hope this is a shorter-term need, but it may just lead us to some surprisingly positive outcomes.

If you're like me these past months, you've been mourning the loss of worship as we know it. We also may feel we've experienced so much change over the past few years that perhaps we as a church needed to focus more inwardly for a while, rather than outwardly.

I'm currently reading "Falling Upward" by Richard Rohr. Early in the book, he introduces the idea that we typically need to lose something or give something up before we gain something new. We need to fall down before moving up. He writes about this notion working in our lives on both a personal level and an organizational level, such as in our churches.

"The familiar and the habitual are so falsely reassuring, and most of us make our homes there permanently," he writes. "The new is always by definition unfamiliar and untested, so God, life, destiny, suffering have to give us a push – usually a big one – or we will not go."

Parallel to the Council's discussion, the Discipleship Team prepared a survey casting the "what if" question further, along with other questions about our relationships as members of First Lutheran Church, and allowing each of us to respond.

As we journey together, I hope you will prayerfully consider the "what if" question. Together with our Christ-centered mission, it may lead us to a new place overflowing with the work of the Holy Spirit.

~ Steve Guttormson, Congregation President



Be the Light

Matthew 5:14

The new school year is here, and yet we are still dealing with a lot of change. In these difficult days, it seems that we could all use some light. This is how we came up with our Sunday School theme this year. "Be the Light," in these dark days, you are the light for someone. Through your kindness to others, your love for your family, your love for our community and earth, and your love for God you help to let your light shine and lift those up around you to shine also.

Our Sunday School program is going to look a little different this year. We are still unable to worship in person, and therefore cannot have Sunday School in person either. We are offering a monthly take home lesson. This would be a take home bag or box containing a Bible lesson with activities to go with that lesson that are age appropriate for your children (ages 1 through 6th grade). Pick up or delivery would be available the first Sunday of the month. Please register online: www.flcff.org/sunday-school-registration

Our plan for Sunday School is flexible and it may change as we progress through this time.

Blessings!

Kristy Wicklund, Director of Children's Ministry
Kristy@flcff.org
(218) 531-9544
Remind App: Sunday School-@flcss18

Our Preschool 1 students (3 year olds) will be getting a special doorstep gift this month, their own SPARK Story Book Bibles. Congratulations Preschool 1!

Eddie Haarstad	Brynn Hintz	Theodore Kitzman
Loveya Lockett	Brayden Muchow	Abigail Reese
August Rogers	Madison Schmidt	Emma Wheeler
	Amelia Wicklund	

First Lutheran Church Sunday School

Remind App: Sunday School-@flcss18

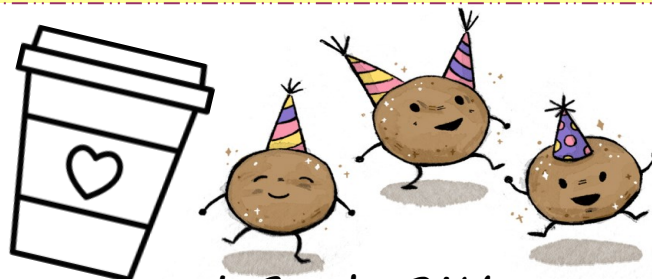
Rally Sunday

We are kicking off our Sunday School year with something that many of us have been missing, donut holes! We are inviting everyone, young and old, to drive thru for some donut holes and coffee or lemonade. It will be so fun to share this familiar experience with all our congregation again. Sunday School students, when you get your donuts, you can also get your first Sunday School lesson!

Also, during this event, we will be accepting donations for the Salvation Army program which helps people in need in Otter Tail County pay for their utilities. We want to help them to keep their lights on.

Donut Holes & Coffee or Lemonade Drive-Thru

Rally Sunday, September 13 10:30-11:30



2nd Grade Bibles

A special milestone is approaching for our 2nd graders, receiving of their first Bible. 2nd graders and their families are invited to a Bible class and will receive their Bibles following the class.

Rain date September 27th.

Receiving of 2nd Grade Bibles

Sunday, September 20th at 11:00 a.m.

FLC Upper Parking Lot

Congratulations 2nd Graders!

Gabriella Anderson	Charlie Cederberg	Lane Coleman
Samuel Haarstad	Kinzley Krein	Alizeya Lockett
Oscar Nelson	Maya Stortroen	Rylee Torgerson
Isaac Wagner	Kolten Walls	Zoey Warren

FLY K-6 is a Wednesday after school program for Kindergarten through 6th grade students. It's a time to connect, grow in faith, and have fun. FLY is going to look a little different this Fall. With safety and health in mind, we are going to start off the year with our meetings in Roosevelt Park. Kristy will meet the children at the Kennedy School bus pick up/drop off and we will walk over to the park. We will still have snacks, a lesson, and play some no-contact games.

Please register online: www.flcff.org/sunday-school-registration

Lessons:

Sept. 16– Be the Light

Sept. 23–The Vineyard Workers

Sept. 30– The Chief Priests



K-6th

Remind App
@flyk6



**First
Communion**

**August 16
2020**



Note: We did follow the state guidelines for wearing of masks. However, the masks were removed just long enough for the photographer to get a picture for the students and their families.

**8th Graders
August 9**



**9th Graders
August 23**



A congregational survey regarding return to in-person worship has been developed by the Discipleship Committee. The survey is posted in the Weekly Blast or can be found at: www.flcfff.org/covid-survey. Copies have also been enclosed with the bulletin to those who receive their bulletin in the mail. **If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, please call the office at 739-3348.** We appreciate your input on this survey!



**Attention First Lutheran Community!!!
Donut Holes & Coffee or Lemonade Drive-Thru**

Sunday, September 13, 2020 from 10:30-11:30, Canopy Upper Level Parking Lot

Please be sure to stop by for a donut hole and beverage. We will also be distributing Worship Kits and Sunday School Lessons at the drive-thru.

Also, during this event, we will be accepting donations for the Salvation Army program which helps people in need in Ottertail County pay for their utilities. We want to help them to keep their lights on!!



This is Naomi and I would also like to thank you for making Mom's 90th birthday so special with your emails and photos, thoughts and prayers. You can see the picture of her holding the scrapbook. She calls it her treasure book. (It is the type of book that pages can be added, so anyone wanting to still send messages and photos can.). Since I am her side-kick, I included a photo of me at her side. The setting was wonderful - sun shining, palm trees rustling and swaying, sound of waves crashing on the beach, and the sounds of laughter and good times. I will include a poem that my niece, Sophie Lenferna, in Mauritius sent to Nana.



God now whispered to the palms -
Did you hear the news?
It's someone's 90th birthday today,
Please prepare your songs.
So the wind rustled the palms long fronds,
The ocean lapped the shores,
The sand shimmied across the beach, and
Each crab then clapped their claws.
The fish flapped their fins
And the birds sang the chorus,
Then the turtles hatched and asked
'Is this song for us?'



'No' said the hermit, have a look over there.
See that beautiful woman sitting in that chair?
She's as gentle as the breeze,
And as warm as the sun.
And today's her birthday,
So let's have some fun!



A Vicar's Thoughts...

It's September already.

September. That word brings mixed feelings. I grieve over the loss of summer and the eventual return of the old arctic blasts. I rejoice in the harvests and beautiful fall colors. I anticipate the increased activities with school starting. But this September brings one other emotion: Frustration.

It has been six months since COVID wove its way intricately into our lives. Many of us are anxious to get on with our lives—only to find our lives are no longer the same. Life may feel more lonely, fearful, or frustrating. Sometimes there is no good choice—each option brings uncertainty.

BUT our lives do have certainty. You and I can be certain, absolutely certain, that God loves us, and *nothing* will remove that love. Sometimes we can lose that certainty. When I do, I need reminders. This comic is my latest reminder. It reminds me I need to have patience; that God has patience with me. Patience is like a muscle -- it needs to be exercised once in a while. I took a step back mentally and thought about how and where I needed patience. That reflection brought me comfort.

How do you remember that God loves you and walks with you?

How do you take a step back mentally to see what you need?

Where do you need patience in your life?

If you want to chat more about patience, or Noah or something totally different, let me know. I am in the office Sept 1st to 15th M-TH 8:00 to 3:30. You can call/text me at 218-321-0967 or email me at Lynn@flcff.org.

As we wander into September, I am grateful that we are all walking together through this pandemic.

Gratefully,

Vicar Lynn



Please mark your calendars and plan to stop by the church and take time for prayer and meditation. **The sanctuary will be open beginning in September on Tuesday's mornings from 12-2 pm and Thursday afternoons from 4-6 pm.** There will be either an organist or pianist playing throughout the allotted times for your enjoyment. In addition there will be the offering of self serve Holy Communion and guided prayers for your spiritual nourishment. Pastor Gretchen will be available for one on one social distanced conversation prior to, or following your prayer time. Please contact the church office for additional information as would be helpful.



Hello First Lutheran Ladies,



Women's Bible Study

I so miss having a connection with you all, and with COVID, our return to worship remains uncertain. I have been wanting to be a part of a **Women's Bible Study** at First Lutheran for a long time, and I think it's time to organize one to start this Fall! I have been talking with Pastor Gretchen about this, and it looks like we could meet on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. or Wednesdays at 7:00 a.m., socially distanced at the church. We thought these time choices would give an opportunity for all women that are interested in joining.

We will start with one of the books of the New Testament. Pastor Gretchen will find a good study guide and she will be leading the bible study to start with. Who knows, maybe one of us will be bold enough to lead sometimes as well! If you are interested in joining, please let the office know (739-3348 or office@flcff.org) and indicate which time you would prefer. I am looking forward to seeing where we can go with growing our faith through this Women's Bible Study.



God Bless, Lorri Holt

Church Council First Lutheran

Executive Committee

Steve Guttormson, President

George Mathison, VP

Debbie Opatz, Secretary

Suzanne Demuth, Treasurer

Term ending 2021

Abbey Kwapinski

Harriet Wicklund

Sara Koch

JoAn Whitlock

Term ending 2022

Suzanne Demuth

Jennifer Frank

Debbie Opatz

Jennifer Woore

Ron Spangler

Michael Wicklund

Missy Mattson

Leslie Flugstad



Meals by Wheels September 8—11

(note: no delivery September 7)

Since we cannot utilize our traditional means of sign up, please contact me by text or phone call (701-238-0276)

or via email

(77jennifer@msn.com) to let me know of your willingness to help/preferred routes/dates of availability. Please know that this request does not supersede any current recommendations--please use your best judgement in volunteering.



We are exploring interest in a Men's Bible Study this Fall.

The study would be socially distanced, and on Tuesday or Thursday mornings at 7:00

a.m. Please contact Pastor Gretchen if you are interested:

pastorg@flcff.org or call

218 321-0995



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY



Craft & Chili Fundraiser

will be hosted by the Fellowship committee some time in the future (date to be determined).

This is just a reminder to keep working on your favorite craft if you are interested in donating items to the event.

Keep on CRAFTING!

Wheelchair available!

Please call the church office at 739-3348 if you are in need of a wheelchair.





The Worship Corner
by the
Worship & Music
Committee

A hymn is simply a song written for the purpose of adoration or prayer. The Greek word “hymnos” means a song of praise. Each of us has our own favorites. Songs that deal with our human experience are meaningful and necessary, but looking UP at the amazing God we serve and focusing solely on Him can transform our lives. A list of Top Ten Hymns of all time might be arguable, but we’ll take a look at their history and readers can decide their own favorites in the coming months.

#10 on our Hymn Hit List is When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (ELW p. 803). Isaac Watts (1674-1748) is considered to be the “Father of English Hymnody”. Having written nearly 800 hymn texts, this is considered to be his best and most meaningful. The song was written to prepare us for the Lord’s Supper and the text takes us from personal reflection to bold testimony to total surrender. “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.” The tune is known as Hamburg and was written by Lowell Mason (1792-1872).



**First Lutheran shirts and vests
available!! \$20.00**

**Shirts are located on the
counter outside the office
window.
Please pay in the office.**



*All women are encouraged to
join our Love Days
and/or Hannah Circle!*



A message from WELCA to Love Days Quilters and Hannah Circle,

Thank you for your replies regarding the opening up of our WELCA gatherings in September. Due to the Coronavirus, most of you do not feel comfortable in groups settings. We will postpone all Fall gatherings through December. We will evaluate again in January 2021.

We all are anxious to be together and continue our Bible studies and Mission projects.

Some of you are sewing from home as well. We thank you. May God bless you with good health and contentment.

With our caring wishes, Gayle Fitz & Donna Quam

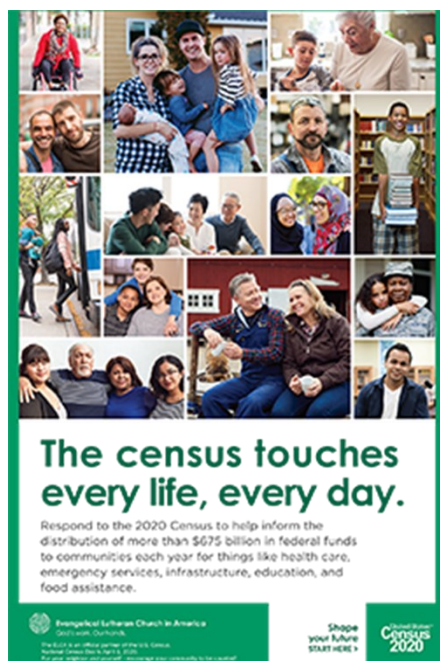


Katie Haugrud offered a suggestion to Quilters—to have the quilting room open on Mondays, beginning in October with a maximum of 7 women to meet, if SMART team approves, and following the guidelines of wearing masks, using sanitizers, and social distancing.

If you are interested, please contact Katie at 218 826-6791.



Kristy needs up to 8 people to help assemble kits for the congregation and Sunday School students on Tuesday, September 8th at 5:00 p.m. Please contact the office (793-3348) if you are available to help. Thank you!



Remember to
complete your
census for your
household.

Go to
my2020census.gov
or call
844-330-2020.



The ELCA is an official partner of the 2020 Census as we work toward a just world where all are fed and further our commitment to greater justice in public policy and the electoral process. Did you know that more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities is based on census data? An accurate count taken every 10 years determines electoral maps and ensures that resources more justly go where they are needed most, including to vital programs that combat poverty and hunger and support people in need. National Census Day is April 1, 2020. For your neighbor and yourself - encourage your community to be counted!



A "fermata" in music, means to hold or pause. The First Lutheran Senior Choir has come upon a whopper of a fermata! Until it is safe to do so, we will not be singing together. I miss you all!

Sincerely, *Janel Trosvig*

Worship With Us on the Radio, YouTube and PEG Access

The ELCA churches of Fergus Falls have joined together to provide worship opportunities on Sunday mornings. **We will continue with the services closed to the public.** The Smart Team is working on a plan for return to worship and church activities—we will provide updates as they are available. Services will be live-streamed on YouTube and on-air on KJJK AM 1020 or Channel 977 FM97.7 at 9:30am on Sundays. (FLC, Augustana & Hope)

To access YouTube go to the First Lutheran website: www.firstlutheranchurchff.org. You can livestream or watch later. Our worship services are being aired on PEG Access Channel 8. The schedule does change, so be sure to check the website at <http://pegaccess.com/channel8programming.html> for current times.



Communication from the Foundation Intern Team (FIT)

In Philippians 2:5-11, the Apostle Paul offers us love and encouragement by sharing who Jesus is and what he is like. Paul wants us to be of the same mind as Jesus, having a love that regards others as better than ourselves. This makes us want to share our blessings, be compassionate, be genuine and recognize our self in relation to our Lord. And all of this is what Vicar Lynn already knew before she even came to the people of First Lutheran.

It did not take the team long to figure out that God gave us a beautiful blessing, with a name tag that says "Vicar Lynn Melchior". Our team is to be a gift to her, and so far she has been a gift to us. We watch her sermons online, we share our thoughts with her, we watch her engagements in other parts of the services, we listen to her on the Morning Watch Radio Program, and we see her on burial videos of our deceased members. She shares a monthly document of what transpires in First Lutheran life. The team meets with her once a month using an agenda set up by the FIT chair and Vicar Lynn. She keeps in email or phone contact with team members.

Through all of this we have learned that Vicar Lynn is like-minded and loves our Lord, is humble, genuine, and compassionate. She already is an integral part of our lives at First Lutheran.

Pastor Gretchen, the Church Council, the staff, and FIT and are so very grateful to God for Vicar Lynn's never ending love and talents.

FIT Chair,
Vicki Hanneman