



First Word

The monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church

Do You Know? 2020 High School Seniors

By Marnie Dahle Backer, Youth & Family Director



Senior Year... a time for looking back and looking ahead. In a move of solidarity and understanding for seniors, social media has taken to folks sharing their senior photos, class of 2004 or 1986 (as seen here by my senior picture).

No prior senior class has ever had the final couple months of their high school career look quite like the class of 2020. Emotions seem to be all over the board—which they would be in a “normal” year as well, but very different emotions. Senior Recognition Milestone Day should be happening in May, a wonderful day to celebrate our seniors with a brunch, a video, and wrapping them in the beautiful quilts made by the FLC Quilters. But alas... the way we are used to doing things is changing, changing, changing! May all this change remind them and all of us that one thing never changes—the claim God has on us—he will never let us go. We can cling to that promise!

Typically in the senior video, we invite all the seniors to come to the church, answer a few questions about their lives, faith, and First Lutheran. We compile those together and share it at the brunch and then with the congregation. We hope to still do that later this summer, but in the meantime, a few of the seniors have given us a sneak peak of their answers.



Taylor Neely, O’Gorman High School, University of Nebraska: One of the most meaningful experiences I have had at First Lutheran would definitely be the amazing opportunity to go on the Peru mission trip with some of my family and other

people from our church. My eyes were really opened by God through both the beauty of the country and through the loving embrace of the people we’ve never met before or who even spoke the same language as us.

My faith definitely helped me get through the passing of my grandpa a few years ago. Because of his progressive dementia, my family knew where this path would take him; however, it forced us to do the hardest thing ever: to watch and wait. All of a sudden I felt a great pressure on myself to try to be the rock for the rest of my family, which was what made me turn to God in that situation. Knowing that God has a greater plan for all of us and will never leave our sides is one of the most comforting factors of our faith, and I am forever thankful for it.



Max Martin, Lincoln High School, US Military Academy in West Point: In the last couple months, I had been applying to the federal service academies, and my shoulder problems popped up as a red flag during this

because you must be medically qualified to attend. I had dreamed of going to West Point for most of high school, and now I was really close, but I got notified that I was medically disqualified. It was a heart-breaking moment, and I thought my dream was over. However, I kept praying that I would receive a medical waiver (very few are given out). I was angry that

God had let me have this dream to only rip it from me at the last minute. At a certain point, though, I realized that many of the characters in the Bible had the same thing going on with them. Noah had his whole world ripped apart when God flooded the Earth, Moses wandered in the desert for 40 years, and God allowed Jonah to be eaten by a whale. So I just kept praying that God would lead me on the path that I was meant to be on. If West Point wasn’t it, I was going to trust him. Eventually I was awarded a medical waiver, and that made me realize how this was the path for me, and it gave me a new flare for this that not only was I going there to serve my country but also my God because He had personally put me there.

Faith truly is everything for me. I’ve made sure my future plans include easy access to pastoral staff and strong faith communities so I can continue to grow and deepen my faith. I have been sent on this path by God and so much like Moses and the disciples, I will keep in close contact throughout my journey with Him because He is everything.



Brooke Kokenge, Lincoln High School, SDSU: The first thing I think of is the mission trip to NYC and helping people get free groceries. The person who stood out was a blind man, and I had to explain what each item was. He was so kind and positive.

A person of faith I admire or have learned from is my grandma, obviously, because she’s the only “super” religious person in my family. Without her I probably would have never gone to youth group as a kid. She taught me that God will always love me no matter what.



Lauren Williams, Harrisburg High School, Augustana University: The most meaningful experience that I’ve had at First Lutheran Church is getting confirmed. My confirmation was something that I prepared for since my first day of Sunday

School. As I knelt in front of God with the hands of pastors, ministers, and my parents on my head, I felt the love of those who had supported me throughout my faith journey. I know that I’m incredibly lucky to have this kind of life-long support, and I’m so grateful to First Lutheran for providing it.

When I go to college this fall, my life will change in many ways. I won’t be living with my family, I won’t see my friends every day, and I will be (for the most part) living independently. However, my faith is something that will remain a constant part of my life. Also, faith is something that brings people together. I’m planning on attending a college that is affiliated with the ELCA, and I think my faith will connect me with other people on campus.

My confirmation Bible verse was Proverbs 3:5-6. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” I love this verse because it reminds me of God’s plan for me. It’s hard not to worry about life and all the decisions one must make, especially as a high school senior who has to decide what to do with the rest of her life! But, this verse is comforting as it reminds me that all of my worries are out of my control and in God’s control.



Garrett Masters, Lincoln High School, Institute of Performing and Recording Arts in Minneapolis: I really appreciated the National Youth Gathering in Houston. It was great to meet cool people from across the country and

play music for the South Dakota state worship. When I was younger, my mom would bring me to help out with Food to You distributions. I learned that God uses our hands to do great things.

A person of faith I admire is Larry Olson, director of the Praise Band. He has taught me so much in terms of music and faith. His support is meaningful in everything I do. I hope to serve with my musical gifts in the future.

As I look to the future, I hope to find a Christian community and be involved no matter where I go. I love the way Christians come together to do good things, such as feeding the hungry or helping those in need.



Eli Moore, Lincoln High School, St. Olaf College: My confirmation verse was Ephesians 2:8. I liked it because it lets me know that my faith in Him will be rewarded unconditionally. He chose me. Nothing I have done will change that.

As most people do, I have a plan for my future, but I’m still not a hundred percent sure what will happen. This thought is both exciting and scary. However, I can find comfort in the fact that God will be watching over me and that anything that happens to me is part of His plan. Knowing this, I shall go into the future ready for anything.



Cole Olson, Beresford High School, Mitchell Technical Institute: My confirmation verse was Luke 1:5, and it reads “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.” I like this verse because it tells me that no

matter how bad your situation is, there’s always a silver lining. There will always be something good out of every situation. I live my life by that.

I have had a lot of meaningful experiences at First Lutheran, but the one that I think about the most was going to Flathead Bible Camp in Montana. This trip was super fun with an awesome group of kids. It was on that trip that I really realized that faith is more than going to church on Sunday; faith to me is believing that God is there for you no matter what you do. Ever since that trip, I have thought about God more and more and started to try to understand his word better.





Pentecost: Filled with New Wine

By Lars Olson, Executive Pastor



"But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power." - Acts 2:24

In the Bible accounts of the days following Jesus' resurrection, there are 50 days between Easter and Pentecost. In those in-between weeks, Jesus appeared many times to various people so that even though the news was too strange to believe, people just couldn't help themselves. Too many people, too many stories, too many eyewitness accounts meant that even though his resurrection was irrational and unreasonable, nevertheless it was true. Jesus was alive beyond death, and he was coming to his people to give them hope in his new life.

Yet still, on the day of Pentecost, after appearing to the disciples and others for 50 days, there weren't a whole lot of Christian believers. Many in Jerusalem still doubted the resurrection news and convinced themselves that the disciples who had seen Jesus either made up the stories to cover up their grief or to keep their revolution going. The beginning of Acts even tells us that the disciples asked Jesus if "this is the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" It's an understandable question when you believe that Jesus was going to start a revolution.

Pentecost, however, is not a revolution, movement, or any kind of social reform that we might hope for. Instead, Pentecost is the giving of the Holy Spirit who empowers the disciples and the believers gathered together to go into the world to preach, to proclaim the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection. There aren't any other goals, principles

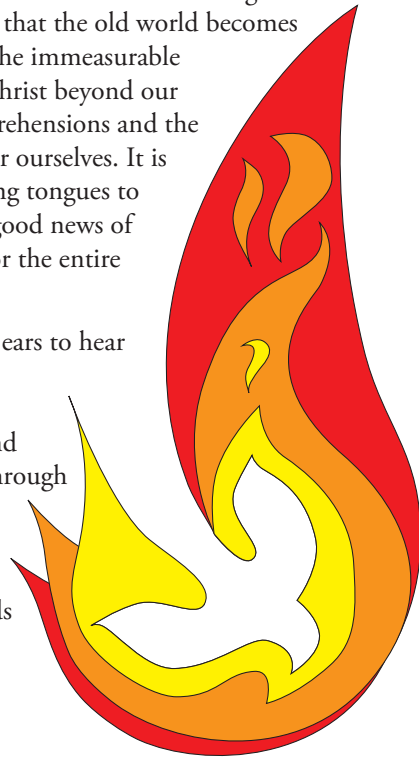
to follow, or measurable outcomes. Just go and preach to every nation, in any language, to any ears that will hear the good news.

This is so far from our normal way of living. We always have goals. We need measured outcomes to know if we are making a difference in the world. How else can we be sure we are doing God's work in the world? So maybe you can get an idea of how strange Pentecost and the good news of Jesus' resurrection are in a dying world. Maybe that's why they were accused of being drunk and filled with new wine!

New wine is exactly the point. You cannot put new wine in old wine skins, for they will burst. Pentecost is the pouring out of new wine through the Holy Spirit so that the old world becomes flooded with the immeasurable goodness of Christ beyond our rational comprehensions and the goals we set for ourselves. It is the Spirit giving tongues to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ for the entire world to hear!

God gave you ears to hear and trust the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection through this season of Easter, to Pentecost, and to the ends of the earth.

Pastor Lars



Giving Ministry Support

By Shad Carney, Stewardship & Giving Board

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought so many changes over the last few weeks, and these changes bring uncertainty, and uncertainty causes worry. Right now, people are worried for their families, their health, and even for their jobs and income. Nobody knows how long it will last, when worries might stabilize, or what the next challenge might bring.

It's a difficult situation for sure. And it is exactly times like these when the message of hope in Christ is so critical. Thankfully, our media ministry continues to play a vital role in spreading God's word throughout our community, and our church staff and members are adjusting to care for one another.

However, the effects of social distancing have eliminated in-person worship attendance, which affects regular, weekly, in-person giving. I believe it's times like these that are meant to sharpen our faith and give us an opportunity to find creative ways we can continue to support our community.

One simple way to give support at this time is through online giving. First Lutheran has a number of ways to give and support our ministries when we cannot gather in-person. Find them all at flcsf.org/give.

- **Simply Giving:** Give automatically from your bank account. You choose the amount and schedule. Visit flcsf.org/give.
 - ***Text-to-Give:** Give a one-time gift by texting any amount to 84321.
 - ***Church Center app:** Download to give via iPhone or Android.
 - **Mail (not online!):** You can send your offering through the mail to 327 S Dakota Ave; Sioux Falls, SD 57104.
- *Please note:** if you are donating for the first time via the Church Center app or through texting, you will need to first setup your payment information by confirming your identity.



Thank you for your generous support! May you continue to be blessed as you bless others with your generous and selfless giving. For questions or help in setting up an online account, please contact Jody Byrners at (605) 336-3734 ext. 211.

New Podcast Series, May 3-24

By John Christopherson, Senior Pastor



Three Classic Interpretations of the Atonement: In Light of St. Matthew's Gospel

"Why Jesus Died: Interpreting the Atonement"

*"It is the greatness and heart of the Christian message that God, as manifest in the Christ of the Cross, totally participates in the dying of a child, in the condemnation of the criminal, in the disintegration of the mind, in starvation and famine, and even in the human rejection of Himself. There is no human condition into which the divine presence does not penetrate. This is what the Cross, the most extreme of all human conditions, tells us." (Paul Tillich; *The Eternal Now*, p.46)*

The Introduction of this series will be followed by three podcasts on three classic interpretations of the atoning work of Christ upon the cross. The series will further conversation based on USD Law School Professor Emeritus Jon Van Patten's excellent podcast forum on April 4, "The Trial of Jesus: from An Attorney's Perspective." Van Patten's podcast can be found at flcsf.org/podcasts under the **Educational Forums** button. From May 3 through May 24 you can listen to podcasts posted on our FLC website as well as download various worksheets. The reason for this "furthered conversation" is quite timely, as we reflect back upon the Season of Lent and forward into the Season of Easter. But also, because the verdict that was shared by the attorneys and former judges who were part of the forum, as well as the opinion of "the jury" of other participants, was of a strong and unanimous consensus: "Jesus was innocent of any of the charges that were brought before Herod and Pilate. So why did he 'have to' die? What in the world was Jesus doing on a cross for heaven's sake?!"

Read the series Introduction and find the upcoming Podcasts on the FLC website under the Media tab or flcsf.org/podcasts.

What Have We Learned?

Staff has been calling First Lutheran members during this COVID-19 isolation time to let you know about special Holy Week broadcasts and just to visit about how you are getting along. We reached many of you, but were surprised at how many of the telephone numbers we have in our computer system were disconnected, invalid or not the member we were trying to contact. Have you dropped your landline and gone to a cell phone only? If so, please call the church at (605) 336-3734 and let us know. We want to stay in touch with you. Thank you.

Thank you March Media Sponsors

March 1: Radio-in memory of Dr. Doris Eggers Huseboe; her parents, Delbert and Erna Eggers; and her grandparents, Claus and Mary Eggers and Richard and Lena Schneider through a gift to the FLC Foundation. Television-in loving memory of Paul Willadsen by Donna Willadsen.

March 8: Radio-in loving memory of Marie Steen, through a bequest by her daughter, L. Inez Rognley, to the FLC Foundation. Television-in loving celebration of the memory of David and Susan Lankford through a gift by their family and friends to the FLC Foundation.

March 15: Radio-in memory of Norman Salem, whose birthday would have been on March 19, by his daughters Karla and Karen and their families. Closed captioning-in memory of Vernon "Bud" Long for his 92nd birthday on March 20, by his family and friends.

Television-in honor of Orville Hill's 96th birthday on March 17 by Orville Hill and his daughter Arlys (Ken) Reitan.

March 22: Radio-In loving memory of Ted and LaVonne Gunderson from their son Gregg. Closed captioning-In loving memory of Albert and Esther Berdahl by Elaine Johnson, Mary Ellen Lantis, Richard Berdahl, and families. Television-In loving memory of Darrell Moseson, who died one year ago on March 12, 2019, by his wife Marilyn Moseson and family.

March 29: Radio and closed captioning-By a member who is thankful for the First Lutheran Church family. Television-In honor of the First Lutheran Church's pastors and staff who are working diligently to keep ministry happening during this difficult time.

Sponsorships available

Help us share the good news of Jesus Christ beyond our sanctuary into peoples' homes. Please consider sponsoring a radio broadcast (\$155), television broadcast (\$1300), or closed captioning (\$150). To learn how you can be a Media Ministry sponsor to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a special life event, please call the church at (605) 336-3734. Call for June and later dates.

May 3: *Closed captioning sponsor needed.* Radio and television fully sponsored.

May 10: *Closed captioning sponsor needed.* Radio and television fully sponsored.

May 17: *Radio, television, and Closed captioning sponsors needed.*

May 24: *Closed captioning sponsor needed.* Radio and television are fully sponsored.

May 31: *Radio and Closed captioning sponsors needed.* Television fully sponsored.

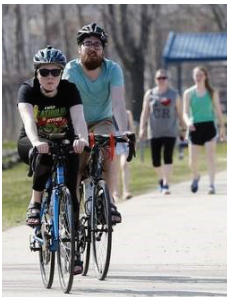
CARE AND HEALTH MINISTRY



Marathon/Century Ride Challenge

By John Hegg

The Caring and Health ministry team is acutely aware of the benefits of exercise during this unusual period of isolation and stress dealing with COVID-19.



We are challenging all FLC members and friends, young or old, to walk or run a marathon of 26 miles or bike a century ride (100 miles) over 21 days, May 7-27. This is a great way for families to engage in a physical exercise project together with some possible competition or singles to participate in a personal wellness program. All who complete the challenge will have their names entered in a drawing for Scheel's gift cards and be included in a Marathon/Century Ride Honor Roll in a summer First Word and be invited to a celebration in the fall.

- All participants must register with John Hegg, johnhegg@sio.midco.net with name(s) and email address of each participant by May 7. John should be notified when the challenge has been completed, on or before May 27.
- Any exercise equipment that records miles or steps is acceptable.
- For conformity, 2,250 steps will be

equal to one mile. Kids 5th grade and under use 2,000 steps per mile.

- Those without a pedometer, Fitbit, or similar device, mark out a quarter-, half-, or one-mile route by the car odometer. Or, count steps manually.
- There are half- and one-mile markers on the bike path.
- Families and groups can get creative competing with/encouraging each other, e.g. the first in the group to complete the challenge earns something.

What a great challenge for families and people of all ages to engage in an exercise program! And what a special way to incorporate devotions before, after, or during each daily exercise event.

Please email John with ideas, suggestions, or advice relative to this unique event. We are all in this together.

Life Transitions

Baptisms

March 8 Briar Jane Mullin, daughter of Dan and April Mullin
March 15 Ellis Leo Rezac, son of Daniel and Christina Rezac

Deaths

March 3 Ronald Cade
March 6 Dorothy Austad
March 20 Darlene Colwill
March 20 Julianne Simko

Stepping into Health

A great number of First Lutheran members recognize this connection and have joyfully embraced the Stepping into Health program sponsored by the Caring and Health Ministry Team. Exercise has become increasingly important in our present virus environment.

The eleventh three-month walking/running program ended on March 31. Forty-five First Lutheran members began January 1 and 40 completing all three months with an impressive total of 29,460,310 steps run or walked. Congratulations to all who completed the exercise program and understand the importance of exercise for our physical and mental health.

The top five were Kris Stark, Birgit Peterson, Dave Wilson, Terry Cosand and Beth Monson who will receive a special gift card. Those whose names were drawn for a gift card were Arlene Bich, Linda Braun, Carol Knapp, and Sandra Pedersen.

Blood Drive

Blood drive at First Lutheran May 17. Watch for details on the FLC website soon.

NAMIWalks Your Way

Join us on Saturday, May 30, for NAMIWalks South Dakota Your Way! With so many of our lives compromised and constrained, you get to make NAMIWalks your own. You can walk around your block, walk around your garden, walk with a wok in your kitchen. If you work from home, walk at home. You can form a team and see who is the funniest, fastest or most artistic. You can "Hula hoop for hope." You can self-fundraise while you self-quarantine.

Help A Neighbor

First Lutheran urgently needs drivers for its weekday Meals on Wheels route! Drivers pick up meals at Active Generations, deliver meals along the assigned route (about a dozen stops, 2 hours time, drive 25 miles), and return containers to Active Generations. Orientation and ride-along included. Drive once per month or "as needed." Contact Donna Jahr (605) 339-1983 ext. 202 or djahr@flcsf.org.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN



A Product of Faith

By Kathy Stelzer, FLCW President

A century ago, history tells us that First Lutheran Church was coming about because of faith. Our congregational members, leaders, and pastors have been talking about it this year of the 100th anniversary. Today we remember the women of the small churches of the pioneering prairies talking of wanting their babies baptized in the Lutheran tradition as they gathered to sew and find fellowship.

Facing many difficulties, faith in their God helped them to determine a vision for their families' futures in this, their new homeland. These women were domestic engineers, work assistants to their husbands, gardeners, teachers of their children, and church starters.

With cookbooks, baked goods, and apron sales, they helped to create and build our beautiful First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. Over the years, the women worked to assist in establishing area churches; service agencies; educational institutions; and local, national, and global missions. At the same time, the First Lutheran Church Women continued to provide and enjoy the fellowship of their Christian growth and service together. Over the years of serving various church functions, especially funerals, their annual bazaar became a major church wide event that continues to result in great support of missions locally, nationally, and globally.

Our nation was recently invaded by the unknown in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of this writing, most of us are sheltered in place and unable to meet because of community constraints for personal safety. First Lutheran Church has followed the prescribed guidelines. Because of our forward-reaching congregation, we have both a TV and internet presence. Various groups within the congregation are supporting each other, including the women, and helping others. Our faith has not been removed, and our support

for each other continues. Psalm 133:1 declares how wonderful and pleasant our unity is.

Today as the nation works toward a return to a NEW normal, we will adjust, too. Currently, we can continue to support ourselves and each other in prayer, Bible study, and by helping one another. When activities safely reconvene, all will be notified. In the meantime, I am available for questions (595-8442) along with the following:

- JoAnn Gibson (351-5801) has prepared quilting projects that can be picked up at the church to work on at home.
- Sharyl Wolf (521-1026) has suggested we work on old and new bazaar projects. Also, look for new recipes for our various baked goods and candy shops, as they are some of our fastest-selling items, usually running out.
- Jean Hoff (941-7352) continues to handle all anniversary reception activities even as they are on hold for the time being.

Our faith is still there because God has not moved. A friend said, "A good picture of our time would be a globe with a God's pause button above it." Psalm 46:10 says: "Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." The gospels tell us to have faith, trust, and rest in Him. Additionally, we have included Psalm 23 Insights, and Janet Naessig, an officer serving First Lutheran Church Women from the local to national level over a half-century time frame, has described the changes for women she has seen in that time period. As we consider all, our heritage of faith in the eternal God will propel us forward as we lean into it. With this faith may the Resurrected Christ be our continued rest and strength.



FINANCIAL SERVICES



March Gifts and Memorials

Gifts to the First Lutheran Church Foundation in memory of Darlene Colwill by Dorothy Grevlos, Ruth Werner; **Bud Entringer** by Dorothy Grevlos, Don & Florence Toft

Gifts to FLC Foundation-Media Ministry in memory of Bud Entringer by Bill & Rachel Burggraaf

Gifts to the First Lutheran Church Media Ministry in honor of Orville Hill's Birthday by Bob & Carolyn Bauman

Gifts to Media Ministry in memory of Dorothy Austad by Lester & Shirley Bly, Kathy Stelzer; **Phyllis Berkland** by First Lutheran Church Women (FLCW); **Elva Brudvig** by FLCW; **Rasma Bembers** by FLCW; **Kathleen Clark** by Barb Matson, Ardeen Mulder; **Darlene Colwill** by Elaine Berg, Michael & Ann Costanzo, Jim & Sandy Fink, Mary Ann Hallberg, Randall & Roxanne Heimbeck, Ron & Sheryl Kelso, Roger & Bev Lamp, Robert Mathiesen, Betty Pfeifle, Terry & Cleo Sorensen, Phil & Candace Trautman; **Bud Entringer** by Darlene Colwill, Phyllis Day, Don & Judy Erickson, Friends and Family, Alma Kallesen, Roger & Bev Lamp, Barb Matson, Tracie Osthus, Sandra Pedersen, Lois Peterson, Pr. Franklin Pudas, James & Wadetta Ricketts, Mike & Gloria Simpson, Kathy Stelzer, Doug Uthe, Donna Van Houten, Hazel Wek; **Cheryl Grevlos** by Eugene & Betty Erickson, FLCW, Jerry & Jill Franken, James & Colleen Stavig, Bonnie Stavig; **Jeremy Halstenson** by Cheryl Satterlee; **Dean Hopper** by Jeffrey & Sarah Herbert; **Howard Hovland** by Howard & Lou Ann Paulson; **Ruth Johnson** by Cheryl Satterlee; **Marit Pudas** by

Pamela Olson; **Eileen Quanbeck** by FLCW; **Doris Salem** by FLCW; **Allen Schular** by Jim & Deann Clark, Darlene Colwill; **Peggy Uthe** by Carol Bormann, Marilyn Eikanger, First Lutheran Church Women, Willis & Phyllis Hanson, Alma Kallesen, Tom & Martha Nelson, Don & Florence Toft, Jeffrey Toft; **Loren Van Houten** by Jo Ann Arends, Brad & Darla Brinkman, Phyllis Day, Glennys Erickson, Betty Fiderler, Sandy Holleman, Carolyn Krueker, Juanita Nesje, Donna Van Houten

Gifts to Evangelism and Outreach Ministry in memory of Bud Entringer by Lowell & Paula Bartels

Gifts to the Music Ministry in memory of Marit Pudas by Cheryl Satterlee; **Eileen Quanbeck** by Barb Matson

Financial Update as of March 2020

Total Revenue, year-to-date

2020 Budget \$498,479
2020 Actual \$531,045
2019 Actual \$443,412

Total Expenses, year-to-date

2020 Budget \$568,030
2020 Actual \$519,960
2019 Actual \$550,618

YTD Net Profit/Loss \$11,085

Contract For Deed, Ideal . \$188,187

HVAC System \$743,082

Worship Attendance 1,313*

*No services held at First Lutheran March 21/22 and March 28/29.

EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH MINISTRY



Hello? Is anyone out there?

By Jeff Backer,
Associate Pastor of Evangelism & Outreach



As we continue to isolate ourselves from one another during these times of physical distancing, I have heard more and more people talk about the oppression of isolation. Each day, I have been blessed to have conversations with many people, where there is almost exuberance in talking with someone.

The week before Palm Sunday, several volunteers and I helped the Youth & Family staff distribute Palm Sunday activity packets to 113 families. I personally had nine packets to deliver, and I found that when I knocked or rang the doorbell, every door was opened, and a good conversation ensued. I was telling the other pastors that even kids that hardly even grunt at you most of the time were excited to talk and share what they had been up to.

To be honest, the last couple of weeks have been a real struggle in that though we have had a long history of broadcasting our services, it is quite different to hold worship when there is no one sitting in the sanctuary. I appreciate that our custodians and limited staff have taken time to sit in the sanctuary during taping, but it is just not the same.

I was telling someone that I had a little moment a few weeks ago when I was preaching for the Wednesday midweek Lenten service on The Humbled. As I was preaching, there was a little voice in my head that said, “No one is listening!”

The night before, my family and I had watched the movie “Yesterday.” This movie is about an up-and-coming music artist who hits it big when he starts playing songs from The Beatles because by some affect on the world, he is the only one who can remember them. At one point, this young artist travels to Liverpool, England, to research the basis of some of the top hit

songs of The Beatles like “Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” and most specifically, “Eleanor Rigby.” I learned that the name Eleanor Rigby was actually a name on a tombstone that was used to create this fictional character the song pays tribute to. But it is a line in that song that spoke to me in my existential moment of preaching: “Father McKenzie, writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear”.

“No one is listening!”

These are the words that the devil tried to whisper in my ear in that moment to close my mouth.

But you were listening...

In the days after that midweek Lenten service was streamed on our website, I heard from many of you. God’s Word had gone from my mouth out into the world through the work of the Holy Spirit via the internet and had found residence in your ears, and more specifically, came to you in faith.

Friends, social distancing is not what we were created to do. We can certainly physically distance, but we need our social interaction with others—and especially with God. To quote Pastor John in a recent sermon, “Jesus Christ did not social distance.” He is present everywhere he needs to be, but most specifically in his Word.

St. Paul reminds us in Romans, chapter 10, that faith comes by what is heard, and in these times where faith is challenged in all kinds of ways, God shows up in His Son and speaks his calming voice of peace and hope into our chaos and our uncertainty. We need to hear what God is saying right now. Otherwise, it is just the voice of the tempter, the great liar who will continue to have voice in the world. Shut him out!

Listen to Christ’s promise anew, “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

Peace be with you...

Pr. Jeff



May Special Offering: Pine Ridge Retreat Center

By Jordan Brockhoff, Evangelism & Outreach Board

During the month of May, gifts for the special offering envelope will support the Pine Ridge Retreat Center. The Pine Ridge Retreat Center allows those outside of the Pine Ridge community to interact with and learn more about the Lakota people living in Pine Ridge.

The Pine Ridge Reservation is 2.1 million acres and consists of Oglala Lakota County, Bennett County, and the southern half of Jackson County. It is also one of the poorest communities in the United States, with life expectancies of just 47 years for men and 55 years for women. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 18,834 individuals live on the reservation.

The Pine Ridge Retreat Center lives by the phrase Mitakuye Oyasin, meaning we are all related. People who visit the retreat center will learn more about the Lakota people, visit with them and participate in the community, and address the poverty that exists on the reservation. There is also a religious presence on the reservation and a mission to spread God’s word.

Gifts and prayers are integral to the Retreat Center’s continued success! Please consider making a gift to support the Pine Ridge Retreat Center by using one of the special offering envelopes provided by the church or writing “Pine Ridge Retreat Center” on the memo line of a check made out to First Lutheran Church. Remember the Pine Ridge Reservation and the Retreat Center in your prayers.

Special offering envelopes are included with your regular offering envelopes. If you do not have one, you may note *Special Offering for Pine Ridge* on your check and mail to First Lutheran, or visit flcsf.org/give to make an online donation.

For more information about the Pine Ridge Reservation and/or the retreat center, visit pineridgeretreatcenter.org and re-member.org/pine-ridge-reservation.aspx.

Non Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 32
Madison, SD

First Word

First Word is the monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD for members of the congregation and others upon request. Opinions expressed in First Word are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the FLC congregation or staff. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions.

Newsletter submissions are due the first business day of the month. Please submit articles or questions regarding First Word to Communications Director, Jodi Hoyt, at jhoyt@flcsf.org. Reader feedback is welcome.

First Word is available online to read or download at flcsf.org/firstword.

WORSHIP SERVICES

During this uncertain time of COVID-19, all of our worship services are offered via broadcast only. A minimal staff comes together at the church to record each service.

Sunday at 8 a.m. Live on KELO-FM (101.9)

Sunday at 11 a.m. Broadcast on
KSFY Sioux Falls, KPRY Pierre,
and KABY Aberdeen

Telecasts available at youtube.com/flcsf

Council Highlights

March 26, 2020

- Gifts are slowing due to church being closed.
- Discussed the outreach and external partnerships that we have to help in the community (e.g. Food to You).
- Two visitation pastors are in quarantine due to travel.
- Ministry is continuing with the new normal.
- Pastor Lars will be going on sabbatical for 3 months starting May 15.
- Thanks to Pastor Katherine and Jordan Stone for coordinating phone buddies.
- Youth & Family have been creative on how to connect members with Bible studies and education.
- All staff are taking unpaid leave or a 20% hours reduction.
- An Operating Reserve Policy to maintain a reserve of between 10% and 15% of operating budget was approved.
- Capital Campaign home visits are temporarily suspended due to need to keep people out of others homes for visits and also due to the stock market being down which would impact major gifts. We are thankful for the gifts continuing to come in to pay the HVAC debt.
- Actively working on the hiring for the Director of Administration position.

First Word
First Lutheran Church
327 S Dakota Ave
Sioux Falls SD 57104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED