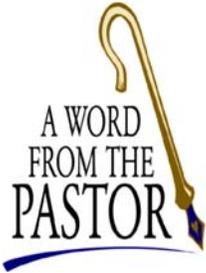


The Messenger

A newsletter of the people of First Lutheran Church, Waltham

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham
The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
www.firstlutheranwaltham.org

February 2017
781-893-6563
tmaehl@rcn.com



Rules of conventional etiquette have long taught us to avoid talking about politics or religion in public. Now, however, we are living in a moment when national politics and policies have grasped our attention, rightly so, and people are talking! This is a good thing as a democracy is always a work in progress, and this increased public discourse may have the effect of producing a more informed electorate. At the same time it is scary because the nation is so polarized, drastic changes are happening rapidly without time for discourse among our leaders, and many of us have little experience in bringing our politics and our faith into the public square.

I'm writing this to encourage you to do just that, to risk bringing your politics and your faith out into the open; not separately, but together. As an example of this, I have included a letter from our Presiding Bishop (*on page 5*). Notice that she gives her political opinion and does so by drawing deeply on her own Christian discipleship. If someone in the Church were to tell me they disagree with Bishop Eaton's analysis, I would not be offended; but I would ask, "What of your Christian faith is giving shape to your opinions?" and then I would say, "May I tell you what gives shape to my own?"

As you consider what gives shape to your own faith-based politics, I invite you to consider the following. The four Gospels tell the same general story, but each Gospel writer has a certain emphasis; and in each Gospel that emphasis is reflected in the story of the first thing Jesus does after his baptism and temptation in the wilderness. I will summarize these inaugural stories here and include prayers that we as a congregation may be shaped by them. All of this comes with my fervent hope that through our relationships and conversations, God may continue to deepen and recreate us, and bless others through us.

Matthew and **Mark** both begin with Jesus calling up on people to "Repent, for the Kingdom of God has drawn near." (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15) This is a call for people to change their minds and change their priorities. Then in both Gospels Jesus *calls* and *heals*. He *calls* his first disciples (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) who are to follow him (not just believe things about him); for in

following him they will learn what are *his* priorities. Then he begins to heal. He welcomes and heals people in his home region of Galilee, and it is also reported that his healings have positive effects upon foreigners from Syria (Matthew 4:23-24). *O Lord, may our congregation be a place where Jesus meets us and where discipleship is fostered; where we are drawn deeper into discernment of what are Jesus' priorities, and where we are equipped and strengthened to more fully live into them in our daily life. So too, may our congregation be a place of hospitality and healing for all whom God leads here.*

Luke begins with Jesus speaking in his home town congregation where he announces that at the center of his ministry will be, "Bringing good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed, and the release of debts." (Luke 4:18). Jesus then enrages his neighbors, who apparently desire these blessings for themselves, by indicating that his justice centered ministry will extend to foreigners (Luke 4:23-30). *O Lord, may our congregation be a place where Jesus' reconciling justice is experienced ourselves and extended through us to others. That is, a community where our own burdens are eased through the sharing of resources, forgiveness, and the accompanying of one another through life's difficulties; and where the burdens of others are eased through our generosity, advocacy, and our resistance to the very human urge embodied in Jesus' hometown response to keep the blessings of Jesus to our own kind.*

John begins his Gospel with Jesus calling disciples (as in Matthew and Mark), but then continues with the story of the wedding at Cana, a story unique to John. In this story Jesus turns water into wine, and interestingly only those who are the servants of others come to see and understand what happened. Still, for everyone in the community, scarcity will be replaced with abundance; abundance will be John's refrain! With Jesus at the center, there will be an abundance of food, of healing, of camaraderie, and of life that really is life; life in abundance! *May our congregation be a servant community where scarcity is turned into abundance, where we experience joy and wonder, and where we discover over and over that in our connection to Christ Jesus and to one another the essence of life does not run out.*

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Nurturing Faith

Adult Forum Sundays at 9:22 am

We continue our focus on lifting up ways we put into practice the words of the prophets who call upon us to, *"Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God."* (Micah 6:8)

February 5 - Chaplains on the Way

The director of Chaplains on the Way (COTW) Becky Sheble-Hall will be our guest speaker. The mission of COTW is to build trusting relationships with those who are experiencing homelessness, living in poverty, dealing with mental illness and/or addiction. They offer a ministry of spiritual care, listening, and companionship through life's struggles and triumphs.

February 12 - Cold Weather Kits

We will join with students in the upper Sunday school class in packing cold-weather kits to be shared with others through Chaplains on the Way. Thanks to all who have made financial donations; these have allowed us to purchase materials for 30 kits; and thanks to the Sunday school students who will be shopping for the items to go in the kits.

February 19 - Faith and Politics

Our conversation on this day will revolve around three primary questions:

1. What do we believe "following" Jesus entails (as opposed to simply "believing" things about Jesus)?
2. What is our vision for the United States, and what persons and/or experiences have given shape to that?
3. From what or whom do we draw our hope?

February 26: No adult forum.

One service at 9:30 am. Note this is the weekend of the congregational retreat.

Bible Studies

We continue to meet on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am and Wednesday evenings at 7:15 pm to discuss Brian McLaren's Book, *We Make the Road by Walking*. Here's the schedule:

- Feb 7-8 Chapter 24: Jesus and Hell
- Feb 14-15 Chapter 25: Jesus, Violence, & Power
- Feb 21-22 Chapter 26: Making it Real
- Feb 28-1 Chapter 27: A New Identity

The Beginning of Lent

March 1 - Ash Wednesday, 7:30 pm

A bi-lingual (English and Spanish) service will be held jointly with the Santuario congregation, with Pastor Maehl and Pastor Marrero leading.

February 2— "Ash Thursday," 11:30 am

We will offer a service with the imposition of ashes. This is offered for those who come either for the Thursday knitting group and/or Senior Classics, and for anyone else who may not be able to participate on Wednesday.



VBS 2017
July 10-14

Save the date! If you are interested in volunteering in any way, please contact Holly Diaz (morning director), Anne Dugan (registrar), or Pastor Maehl.

Walking Together in God's Love

Annual Meeting Update

Our annual meeting was held on Sunday, January 29. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

Budget: We voted a budget of \$275,329. This balanced budget allows for a sustained level of funding for all programs, a 3% raise for staff, and an increase in hours for our sexton/custodian. We also are continuing our practice of sharing 10% of our offering and rental income with the wider church, and 0.75% with local organizations.

Intern: We voted to host an intern for the 2017-2018 academic year. The cost of an intern is expected to be roughly \$35,000. We currently have \$23,000 in funds already given or committed; note this figure includes a generous pledge of \$10,000 from the board of the Nelson Memorial Apartments. We welcome donations to the "Intern Fund" at any time!

2016 Highlights: These include the addition of a 2nd worship service on Sundays at 8:15 am, our largest VBS program to date, a second service trip to El Salvador, the planting of a new lawn and installation of a sprinkler system, the addition of two mid-week Bible studies, our first "Mini-Walk for Hunger" that included children and raised funds for local feeding programs. Also we prepared and delivered gift baskets to all Waltham police, fire, and EMS departments on September 11; and joined with Santuario Lutherano, our sister congregation, in offering bilingual worship services on Ash Wednesday and Easter Eve.

2017 Expectations: In the coming year we are looking forward to celebrating Cynthia's Sabbatical (happening mid-May through August), the hosting of an intern, the beginning of a new 2-year confirmation program in September, and continued life through our varied worship, education, service, and fellowship opportunities.

Elections: We also elected the following officers: Kevin Dickert (president), Brad Nederhoff (vice-president), Eben Rauhut (secretary), and Scott Niemann (treasurer).

Annual Meeting Thank Yous

Along with budgets, reports, and business, at our annual meeting we also had the opportunity to say thank you to several people for their particular service.

Ardeith Froeberg: Ardeith was thanked for her deep care of others and for having coordinated events for seniors over many, many years. The congregation had secretly collected an offering and we were pleased to surprise her with the gift of flowers. Flowers from the Concord Flower Shop will be delivered to Ardeith each month over the coming year.

Reinhold Carlson: Reinhold was recognized for over 20 years of service on the board of the Nelson Memorial Apartments. Also, in his honor, the board of the Nelson Apartments established the "Reinhold Carlson Tower Doors Renovation Fund" and seeded the fund with a \$5,000 gift. We are actively pursuing quotes for this renovation project (near and dear to Reinhold) and we estimate the cost at between 15 and 20 thousand dollars. Gifts to this fund, in Reinhold's honor are most welcome.

David Kats: David is a resident of the Nelson Apartments who for over a decade has volunteered his time, coming in each Saturday to vacuum and empty garbage cans. David will no longer be performing this service and we offered public thanks

We also gave thanks to **Angela Neal** who has faithfully served as president of the congregation for the past two years; to **Scott Niemann** (treasurer) and **Peter Pinch** (financial secretary) for their efforts in coordinating the finances; and to our various ministry chairpersons: **Geri Nederhoff** (Nelson Board), **Susan Pintus** and **Jennifer Lambert** (Justice and Service Team), **Norman Adams** (Property Committee), **LuAnn Kimker** (Parish Life Committee), and **Lori Hrdlick** (Faith Formation Team).

Doing Justice, Serving All



Senior Classics

We had a fun meeting of 12 seniors on January 26. Conversation was all over the map and we had many laughs. We celebrated Paul Pintus' birthday with cake, tomatoes from Bill K., cookies from Helen Y. and Connie D., and a box of chocolates from Rosy H. Thank you all for the contributions.

Our next meeting is February 16th at 11:45 am. Bring your lunch—goodie supplied by all. Please bring a contribution for the "Coffee" fund.

PS: If you have the time—all are welcome no matter the age—Join the fun.

Last Sunday of the Month Upcoming Events

As hopefully you now know, on the last Sunday of each month there will be one worship service at 9:30 am followed a communal activity. Here are some upcoming events, please mark your calendars:

February 26: Congregational Retreat

56 people are currently signed up for our annual retreat to Camp Calumet in Freedom, NH. The Rev. John Polk, the director of Chaplaincy at Mass General Hospital will be leading worship.

March 26: Cleaning Party: After worship we invite you to stay and join one of 5-8 teams who will engage for 60 minutes of clean up: polishing pews, washing windows, raking leaves, cleaning kitchens, etc. We'll end with a pizza party.

April 30: Mini-Walk for Hunger: We will be joining with Temple Beth Israel in Waltham to host this year's mini-walk to raise funds for the Waltham Fields Community Farms. We hope to further expand the event by inviting other groups like the scouts to join us. If you have any suggested contacts, please speak with Pastor Maehl.

Nelson Board Notes

The Nelson Board continues to be busy as another new year arrives. There have been many long term, very committed individuals that have served on the Nelson Board. We have an individual who has given time and talents for 20+ years. Reinhold Carlson is that special person. Reinhold has served in many capacities over these many years and even though he is retiring from the board as an official member, he wants to assist Dennis Ostrander to continue to help as maintenance issues arise.

We would like to honor Reinhold! The board has voted to establish a fund in Reinhold Carlson's name, in the amount of \$5,000.00, toward The Tower Doors in our beautiful church. This is intended to seed this fund, with the hope that other donations will be made in Reinhold's name toward this worthy endeavor. This is an area that has been near and dear to Reinhold for many years and is something for the betterment of our church building. The Nelson Board thanks you in advance for any consideration toward a donation. We will all appreciate this and Reinhold Carlson will be honored for all his worthy service through the years.

Sincerely, by Kerry Meaney



Waltham Family School Fiesta

The annual Fiesta fundraiser for the Waltham Family School (WFS) is being held on **Thursday March 16 from 6:00 - 8:30 pm** at the Solea Restaurant on Moody Street in Waltham. The WFS is one of our partner organizations and we have had a group attend in past years. We are hoping to sponsor a table with 6-8 people from First Lutheran participating. Tickets are \$75 per person. Please contact Pastor Maehl if you are interested.

Doing Justice, Serving All

A letter from Presiding Bishop Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA issued a pastoral message addressing President Trump's executive order to restrict entry by refugees and visitors into the United States from seven predominately Muslim countries. The letter is reprinted below.

January 30, 2017

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Yesterday, we heard these words in the Gospel reading from Matthew 5:1-12, the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In the Beatitudes, Jesus lays out a vision for life in God's realm, characterized by seeing those who are often most disregarded, including the meek, the mourning and the peacemaker, as bearers of God's blessing. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to hear this Gospel, including Jesus' call for his disciples to be carriers of God's light and hope and reconciliation to a world deeply in need of them.

In this spirit, earlier last week I communicated with the Trump administration asking that it not stop the U.S. refugee admissions program or stop resettlement from any country for any period of time. The Bible calls us to welcome the stranger and treat the sojourner as we would our own citizens. I agree with the importance of keeping our country secure as the administration stated in its executive order last Friday, but I am convinced that temporarily banning vulnerable refugees will not enhance our safety nor does it reflect our values as Christians. Instead, it will cause immediate harm by separating families, disrupting lives, and denying safety and hope to brothers and sisters who are already suffering.

Refugees being resettled in the United States have fled persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political views and/or associations. They wait for years for the chance to go home. But sometimes, there is no home for them to go back to. We know from our partners at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) that only 1 percent of all refugees are chosen for resettlement.

People of faith helped start and still sustain the refugee resettlement program in the United States following World War II. As Lutherans, many of our ancestors faced the pain of having to flee their homes and the joy of being welcomed in new communities across the United States. As we have done throughout history, millions of Lutherans across the country honor our shared biblical values as well as the best of our nation's traditions by offering refuge to those most in need. We are committed to continuing ministries of welcome that support and build communities around the country and stand firmly against any policies that result in scaling back the refugee resettlement program.

We must offer safety to people fleeing religious persecution regardless of their faith tradition. Christians and other religious minorities suffer persecution and rightly deserve protection, but including additional criteria based on religion could have discriminatory effects that would go against our nation's fundamental values related to freedom of religion.

I invite ELCA congregations into learning, prayer and action on behalf of those who seek refuge on our shores. The ELCA ["Social Message on Immigration," AMMPARO strategy](#) and [LIRS resources](#) are good places to start. You can also make a donation to [Lutheran Disaster Response](#). Those who have been part of resettling refugees or have their own immigration experience have important stories to share with their communities and testimony to make. I also encourage you to consider adding your voice by calling your members of Congress to share your support for refugees and using online advocacy opportunities through current alerts at [ELCA Advocacy](#) and [LIRS](#).

In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Our Lord not only commanded us to welcome the stranger, Jesus made it clear that when we welcome the stranger into our homes and our hearts – we welcome him.

God's peace,
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



Members of our First Lutheran Community: Christina Danielson; Mimi Ham, Rosy Hebert, Ray Jahrling; Bill Kalke; Kathryn McCowan; Cynthia Niiler; Pamela Sperry.

Friends and Family: the Barazi family (*friends of the Biter's*); Brown family (*friends of the Flinner/Hoff family*); Christiansen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Irma Fox and family (*Gloria Atherton's sister*); Pelle Geholm (*twin brother of Rut Johnson*); Ray Hauck (*great nephew of Rosy Hebert*); Gail Hoftender (*sister of Geri Nederhoff*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Duke Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's father*); Ellen Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's mom*); Kurt Kresge (*step-father of Peter Pinch*); Tom Lividoti (*friend of Susan and Paul Pintus*); Eudeen MacSweeney (*friend of Rut Johnson*); Helen Marquedant (*friend of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Bob and Martha Rediehs (*uncle and aunt of Ann Sjodin*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Doug Sewich (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*); Carol Sukow (*Cathy Sukow's mom*); Michael Veit (*friend of Paul and Susan Pintus*).

For those who grieve: the family and friends of: Vicki Ostoff (*sister-in-law of Geri Nederhoff*); Steve Conneaney (*friend of First Lutheran*); Paul Oates (*Julie Wack's father and friend of The Kimker's*).

With Thanksgiving for Healing: Ann Manz (*niece of Susan and Paul Pintus*)

For our partners: For the Rev. Ángel Marrero and Santuario Luterano, the Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation in Waltham. For other organizations we actively support: the Waltham Family School, The Waltham Community Day Center, Chaplains on the Way, the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, and ELCA World Hunger.

If you would like to add (or remove) a name from the prayer list, please inform the church office

Last Sunday - One Service

**Sunday, February 26
Worship at 9:30 m**

Please remember that there is one service on the last Sunday of each month.

Note: this is the weekend of our annual congregational retreat.

Celebrations

Dear Council and Congregation,



Thank you for the lovely flowers and words of praise [given at the annual meeting]. It is my joy and pleasure to be a part of this church family.

It was Kitty Chisholm who (back in the 1990s) started the Senior Classics to bring together the retired to share ideas, and to help support each other and the church. Kitty was a great supporter of our church. A few years ago our numbers were down to 4 (Rut Johnson, Louise Selmer, Connie Danielson and me). We were close to giving up but thanks to many encouragements, and stubbornness, we are growing again joyfully!

This group truly functions as a group, with all helping. I'm thankful to all in the Senior Classics and especially to Pastor - our guide.

Thank you so very much, Ardeith Froeberg

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham

Ministers: The people of the congregation

Staff: The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
tmaehl@rcn.com

Ms. Cynthia Niiler,
Director of Music and Parish Secretary
cniilerchurch@rcn.com

Worship:

8:15 and 10:30 am
(9:30 am on Feb. 26)

Learning Hour:

9:15 am

Council: Kevin Dickert, President
Brad Nederhoff, Vice President
Eben Rauhut, Secretary
Scott Niemann, Treasurer
Erika Jerram
Jennifer Lambert
Angela Neal
Janice Ostrander
Susan Pintus
Ann Sjodin

Visit us on the Web at:

 Find us on www.firstlutheranwaltham.org
and on Facebook at First Lu-

Our Mission: We discern that Jesus Christ is calling us to:

Walk together in God's love: nurturing faith, doing justice, serving all.