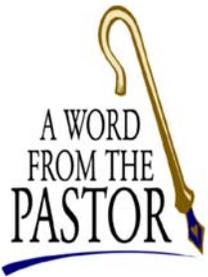


The Messenger

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

January 2018
781-893-6563
tmaehl@rcn.com



Now after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' (Mark 1:14-25)

Over several weeks in the fall, in the confirmation class we read through portions of the Gospel of Mark. We began with the above passage, announcing how Jesus' ministry was to be centered upon the Kingdom of God, or Reign of God, coming near. We then encountered story after story of Jesus bringing the reign of God near through: healing, breaking down the barriers between who was deemed clean and unclean, and calling his disciples to follow in his footsteps. We noted that Jesus welcomed, forgave, fed, and healed: men and women, children and adults, insiders and outsiders, natives and foreigners.

Toward the end of the unit I gave the youth a homework assignment, asking them to consider our own nation - our leaders and people, our laws and values - asking them to name one or more ways that they believe we are or are not in tune with the vision and purpose of Jesus. The youth had very thoughtful responses that included:

- The belief that health care should be accessible to all
- The belief that slavery and ongoing racism was/is wrong
- The belief that relief efforts following disasters in Puerto Rico and elsewhere are to be celebrated.
- The belief that travel bans targeting all people from particular nations is wrong.
- The belief that advances in forensic science which have helped free the wrongly imprisoned, and helped identify those who are truly guilty of crime, is a blessing.
- Also mentioned as being far from the vision of Jesus were the mocking of the disabled, persecution of gay people, and the labeling of Mexicans as drug dealers and rapists.

I'm thankful for our youth. For their willingness to form political opinions based upon their reading of the stories of Jesus, and for their thoughtful responses. May we follow their lead.

Blessings to you all in this new year, Pastor Maehl



*From the
Vicar*

*"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."
Amos 5: 24*

Here we are in the New Year. Now that things have calmed down from the joyous, high intensity of the holidays, I have found myself reflecting back on the past year and my time at First Lutheran Church in addition to looking forward at what is to come.

So far, I think I have been incredibly fortunate to be able to serve and learn in a healthy congregation which is trying new things and pushing itself to be innovative in serving the people within and around it. The congregation, including Pastor Maehl and my Intern Committee, has worked to push me gently and firmly into deepening my skills and knowledge of pastoral ministry while infusing me with it's spirit and passion for justice and tackling it's growing edges.

At the same time, there has been a roller coaster of national and global events which have weighed upon me. Thinking about all of the natural disasters that have regularly punctuated the last couple of months including earthquakes, storms, and floods it has made my soul hurt in sympathy for those affected and their families. In addition, watching the country become more divided in it's people and it's leadership has left me more than a little concerned.

It has been a mix of ups and downs, joys and worries looking back, and so moving forward I wanted to find something with a grounding, centering, and guiding nature. Then I thought about the Bible study group, a grounding source in itself, and a section of Amos that we looked at. In the recent times where water has been destructive and hearts have been shaken with looking for justice, I draw on the shepherd-prophet Amos' words in chapter 5, verse 24. I give a prayer of hope, that divisions can be healed and "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Happy New Year,

Vicar John Barton

Nurturing Faith

Adult Forum Sundays at 9:22 am

January 14: Luther and Economics

We will watch a portion of a presentation made by Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda who served as Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. Dr. Moe-Lobeda presents the radical, subversive side of Martin Luther, whose writings challenged the church, the economy, and the government of his own day and can do the same today. This presentation was recorded during the "Forgotten Luther Symposium" held at Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Washington, DC, November 6-7, 2015.

January 21: Lutherans & Economics:

This session will be co-led by Scott Niemann, an economist, and Pastor Maehl. We will discuss economic behaviors and how our faith does and does not contribute to those behaviors.

January 28: No Adult Forum

Join us for worship at 9:30 am with our annual meeting following.

February 4: Jesus & The Kingdom of God

On this day the confirmation class will join with the adults as together we discuss Jesus' focus on the Kingdom of God drawing near; and how that might inform our politics and economics.

Balcony Renovation

Check out our new sitting areas in the balcony. Two new platforms have been constructed and there are areas for quiet, contemplation, and reading. Over the coming weeks we will be adding additional furnishings. Our thanks to Juan Montenegro for the construction of the platforms and to The Raymond and Lucille Benedetto Trust for the funds used to finance the renovation.

Intern Update

We have been richly blessed to have hosted nine interns, and in return the wider church has been blessed through our support of the internship program. It is our hope that we might have another full time intern for the 2018-2019 academic year.

We are estimating that in order to fully fund this ministry we will need an additional \$15,000 in contributions. Might you be willing to support this ministry and help train a future pastor of the church?

- A gift of \$20 per week would provide \$1,040 in support.
- A one-time gift of any amount would help us reach our goal.

We welcome gifts to the Intern Fund at any time. Please keep the intern ministry in your prayers.

- Pastor Maehl



Christmas Thanks

Thanks to all who decorated the church and grounds, sang and played instruments, purchased poinsettias, provided food, and gathered for worship at Christmas. Also, a special thanks to Diana Dupuis who made Christmas eve children's sermon gifts for each child. Additionally, we are thankful for the many, cards, remembrances, and expressions of care that came to us at Christmas. We thank God for the First Lutheran community and all the love and support we receive from through you. We wish you all God's blessings in the new year.

Pastor Maehl, Vicar John, and Cynthia

Doing Justice, Serving All



Congregational Retreat to Camp Calumet March 9-11

Mark your calendars!

Our annual retreat for the entire congregation is scheduled for March 9-11 at Camp Calumet, located 2 ½ hours north on Lake Ossipee in Freedom, NH. We have spots reserved for 60 people and hope members and friends of all ages will come. The retreat begins after dinner on Friday and ends after lunch on Sunday.

Cost: The actual cost depends upon whether one is staying in the conference center, staff house, or village cabins. To make it simple we are asking each participant to use the following as a guide:

Adults \$150

Students \$75 (7-18 years)

Children \$0 (0-6 years)

Maximum family fee is \$500

Note that the above guide gives most everyone a discount, some smaller, some greater. We invite all participants to pay an amount that you believe to be within your means. For some that might mean the guide-amount or a bit more, for others a bit less, for others an amount significantly less.

Watch for a sign-up sheet in the Pearson Room and please consider joining us. If you are planning on attending, **please sign up by February 11** so that we can plan accordingly. Thank you.

Gifts for Others

I am grateful for gifts to the Pastor's Discretionary Funds over the past year. This has allowed me to help persons in need with meals and groceries, lodging and rent, car repairs, and more. Also, thanks too to all who donated gift cards to, McDonalds, and Dunkin Donuts in December. The folks at Chaplains on the Way were deeply grateful to have these to share with people in need over the bitter cold holidays. I thank God for such supportive care by so many.

- Pastor Maehl

2018 Dates to Remember

- January 28: One worship service at 9:30 am
Annual Meeting following
- February 14: Ash Wednesday
- February 25: One worship service at 9:30 am
Justice & Service event following
- March 9-11: Congregational Retreat to Calumet
- March 25: One worship service at 9:30 am
Spring clean up following
- March 29: Maundy Thursday
- March 30: Good Friday
- March 31: Easter Vigil
- April 1: Easter Sunday
- April 29: One worship service at 9:30 am
Waltham Food Walk following
- May 27: One worship service at 9:30 am
Luncheon Following
- June 10: Start of Summer schedule
- July 9-13: Vacation Bible School

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



Members of our First Lutheran Community: Marquette Alexander; Ernie Gaiser; Christina Danielson; Connie Danielson; Mimi Ham; Rosy Hebert; Lorne MacArthur; Kathryn McCowan; Cynthia Niiler.

Friends and Family: Robin Bordenca (*friend of Carol Hansen*); Christiansen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Steve Connearney (*friend of First Lutheran*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Walter Eisler (*friend of the Gaisers and the Pintuses*); Magnus Forsman (*great-nephew of Rut Johnson*); Pelle Geholm (*twin brother of Rut Johnson*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Terri Koopman (*aunt of Matt Jerram*); Emily Lewis and her parents (*friends of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Eudeen MacSweeney (*friend of Rut Johnson*); Stephen Manz (*nephew of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Helen Marquedant (*friend of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Doug Sewich (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*)

For those who grieve: the family and friends of Joann Green (*mother of a colleague of Sarah Rauhut*)

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/remove a name to/from the prayer list, please inform the church office.



Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 28, 2018

Worship at 9:30 m

Meeting follows

At this meeting we will adopt a budget for 2018 and receive written annual reports from the pastor, president and committee chairs. We will hold elections for church council and other leadership positions.

All members are encouraged to attend.

Please bring a food item to share at our potluck brunch.



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

Vicar John Barton, Intern
jbarton@ses.plts.edu

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

Sunday Worship:

8:15 and 10:30 am
(9:30 am on January 28)

Sunday Learning Hour:

9:15 am

Visit us on the Web at:



Find us on
Facebook

www.firstlutheranwaltham.org

and on Facebook at First Lutheran
Church - Waltham, MA

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

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