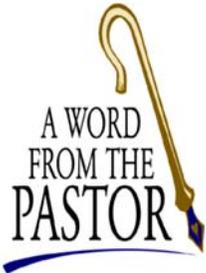


# The Messenger

A newsletter of the people of First Lutheran Church, Waltham

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham  
The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor  
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On Saturday, October 24, 11 members of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill, Pennsylvania were killed in their own house of worship. According to news reports the shooter walked into the building and yelled, "All Jews must die."

The next evening, I joined with many others in the Waltham Community at a service led by Rabbi David Finkelstein at Temple Beth Israel in Waltham. During that service, Rabbi David invited his close friend Pastor Ángel Marrero to speak. Padre Ángel spoke with deep humility and his address included these words.

*It is important for me as a Christian priest to publicly recognize that Anti-Semitism is baked into the bones of Christianity. The church cannot be a good neighbor to the Jewish people until we continually acknowledge, repudiate and repent for our participation in this sinful ideology. We must call it out on the lips, writings, and actions of thinkers, theologians, scholars, priests, popes, councils, and saints of our world-wide Christian faith.*

Why call it out? In part, because too few Christians understand what is meant by saying that Anti-Semitism is baked into the bones of Christianity. This is not the place for a whole treatise on the subject, but here I will offer one reflection.

Much of the history of Anti-Semitism draws upon a form of Biblical interpretation that ignores the setting in which certain books of the Bible were written. This is particularly true of the Gospel of John. John is a wonderful Gospel filled with stories and sayings central to our faith. However, John in several places lumps together those antagonistic to Jesus and refers to them as "The Jews" (e.g. John 19:7, 12, 14, 15). Why would John repeatedly use this phrase, "The Jews," when most everyone in the story is Jewish, including the 12 disciples and Jesus himself?

The author is most certainly drawing upon his own time and context, approximately 70 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. John was writing to a small, fragile Christian community that was facing the threat of persecution from Romans. Also, in the year 100 CE "The Christians," were in fact in tension with "The Jews." Christianity had begun as a movement within Judaism; now in John's day Christians were being expelled from the synagogues and this was painful. This dislocation, anxiety, and pain shape how John retells the events of Jesus life (during the years 30-33 CE).

Also, here is one other important piece of history. In year 70 CE, some thirty years before John is writing, the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. This led to a crisis within Judaism. The sacrificial system located in the temple had been central to the faith. Now Jewish people were asking, "How can one be in relationship to God without a temple?" Two movements arose in response to this question. One was led by the Pharisees and centered on the study of Torah. It was said that Torah was the light of the world, Torah was the bread of life, and that the study of Torah would keep one connected to God. The second movement was Christianity. The early Christians proclaimed that Jesus risen from the dead was the light of the world, Jesus was the bread of life, and that Jesus would keep one connected to God. In this moment there were two movements, in a way competing with one another; and they were cousins! We still are cousins, and now there need not be any competition.

In the year 100 CE, Judaism was the more dominant religion. Christianity was young, small, and fragile; and John perceives "The Jews" as a threat. Two centuries later, under Emperor Constantine, Christianity became the dominant religion; ever since, Jewish people everywhere have too often lived in fear of "The Christians." This is what we must repent of!

Let us embrace our own faith fully. "Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6) for us; and let no one take that from us. But then let us refrain from insisting that everyone else's way must be the same as ours. "I have other sheep not of this fold," Jesus said (John 10:16).

Let us remember how Christians and Jews are both woven into God's story. Listen to how this is so beautifully articulated in one of our Eucharistic prayers,

*You molded us in your image, and with mercy higher than the mountains, with grace deeper than the seas, you blessed the Israelites and cherished them as your own. That also we, estranged and dying, might be adopted to live in your Spirit, and so you called to us through the life and death of Jesus. In the night in which he was betrayed ...*

Finally, let us follow Jesus' instruction to love our neighbor and be makers of peace.

May God bless all those who mourn the dead in Pittsburg. May God strengthen the Jewish people, many of whom continue to live in fear of Christians. And may God use us to be agents of reconciliation for the sake of the healing of the world.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

## Nurturing Faith

### Adult Forum Sundays 9:15 am

**On November 4 and 18** - Vicar Athena will lead an adult forum focused on the question, "What is the Bible?" going deeper into authorship, historical context, varied genres of writing, etc.

**November 11** - This is the weekend of our annual fall retreat; thus Vicar Athena and Pastor Maehl will be away. Pastor Ángel Marrero will lead a discussion centered on the ministry of Santuario Luterano, the congregation he serves. Come and hear about the important ministries happening.

### First Communion

We celebrate with the following children who received their first communion on Reformation Sunday in some cases and All Saints Sunday in others:

Quinn Dickert,	Brett Fahey,
Henry Niemann,	Lilia Rietze,
Noah Rietze,	Madelyn Jerram.

May the risen Christ continue to strengthen them, renew their spirits, and keep them in eternal life.

### Fall Retreat November 9-11



#### FALL RETREAT

We have 12 people signed up to attend our annual fall retreat at the Blue Gentian Lodge in Londonderry, Vermont. Pastor Ángel Marrero will preach and preside at both worship services that day.



Evening Prayer

### Advent Wednesdays

**December 5, 12, 19**  
**7:15 pm**

As in years past we are planning on having a contemplative evening prayer service on the Wednesdays of Advent. Mark your calendars and try to make this part of your Christmas preparations.



### PFLAG Training Sunday, November 25

Greater Boston PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) will be offering a training on sexual orientation and gender identity on November 25, directly following the combined service. The training will offer an opportunity for participants to learn about definitions associated with sexual orientation and gender, learn about why this is an important issue for the church and hear from speakers that are a part of the LGBTQ+ community. The training will be facilitated by Sam Thomasson-Bless from our congregation. This will also be a safe space to ask questions and gain understanding about these topics.

This event is geared toward adults and youth. Note that we will be offering an opportunity for children to engage in Advent crafts at the same time, in another room. The crafts have been purchased, however we are looking for another adult or two to help facilitate. If you are able and willing to do so, please contact Pastor Maehl.

## Doing Justice, Serving All



### Sharing God's Abundance!

Join First Lutheran Church-Waltham in the **2018 Thanks For Giving** as we collect critical needs items for *Ascentria Care Alliance* (formerly Lutheran Social Services). These items will be shared with persons in need in Central and Western Massachusetts.

**It's easy!** Fill one of the "Thanks For Giving" bags available at church (or any bag!) with items from the list below and bring it to First Lutheran Church in Waltham by November 25.

- Socks and underwear
- Diapers and wipes
- Feminine products
- Baby and kid bath towels, baby shampoo
- Toiletries (including toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, soap, razors, etc.)

### Maker Fair

Sunday, December 9

On December 9th we will be holding a "Maker Fair" where handmade items, baked goods, (and other gift items) will be offered for sale; with proceeds going to support the Camp Calumet Scholarship Fund. We invite the contribution of handmade items, baked goods, and other goods or items in good condition that might be offered for sale. Items may be donated between now and the day of the sale. Items may be purchased beginning at 9:15 am (after the early service) through noon on the day of the sale.

### Stewardship Update

To date, we have received 38 pledges totaling \$198,532. Thank you to all who have responded thus far, and to many who have offered increases in their pledge. We are grateful!

We also want to pass on that at this point we are projecting a deficit on the order of \$10,000. This is due to the fact that the Korean Hope Church left last year and that there are members of the congregation who have died, moved, or are experiencing significant changes in their work. ***If you have not yet pledged and are part of the First Lutheran community would you consider doing so?*** Also, if your financial circumstances have changed for the better, might you be in a position to offer more, as a way helping to carry more of the load for others who now find themselves in a position of needing to carry less?

May God continue to provide all we truly need, and use us to bless others.



**There are multiple ways to give to First Lutheran.**

1. ***Cash or Check in the offering plate or through the U.S Mail.*** Tried and true and always welcome!
2. ***Simply Giving Program: Automatic regular debits from your bank account.*** Fill out a form, return it to the church office, and your recurring donations will come out of your bank account automatically.
3. ***"GivePlus Church" mobile phone app. New!*** This can be used for one time donations, retreat payments, Equal Exchange purchases **and** it can also be used to manage your recurring Simply Giving donations. Search on "GivePlus Church" wherever you get your Apps. Be sure the company is Vanco and the logo is as above. In order to link with an existing Simply Giving account, you will need the email associated with the account. Please contact the church office if you need help.
4. ***Coming soon—online giving through our website.***

## Walking Together in God's Love

### Our thanks to:

**Vicar Athena and Sam Thomasson** for leading a confirmation class sleepover on October 13th.

**Meg Maehl, Susan Pintus, and Isabella van der Weide** for sharing stories from their faith journey during worship in October.

**Norman and Mary Ellen Adams** for coordinating the property committee's work day on October 27; and thanks to all who came to clean, polish, and perform light maintenance tasks.

**Members of the Board of the Nelson Memorial Apartments** for attending to tenant concerns, overseeing maintenance issues, and helping others with the application process for our five units of affordable housing. (Note: if you know of a senior who would like an application for an apartment, please contact the church office).

### Young Adult Group Update

As part of my internship experience, I am working to coordinate a new young adult group at First Lutheran with events planned throughout the year. Our first event was in September when a group of us met at Panera to get to know one another and talk about activities for the coming year. Then in October we went apple picking and to a pumpkin patch for fun and fellowship. This month we have entered in a team in the Waltham Partnership for Youth's trivia fund raiser. Looking ahead, I am working on a grant proposal for youth and young adults to help sponsor a service and learning trip to Puerto Rico in June (note, this trip will be open to all adults and youth in the congregation). If you are a young adult or know one looking for community and fellowship with their peers of faith, please contact me.

Faithfully, Vicar Athena

### Winter Clothing Drive

We continue to invite donations of winter clothing (*coats, hats, gloves, boots, etc*) to be shared with international students at Brandeis University (*many of whom have come from countries with warmer climates*) and with the children of the Waltham Family School. We will be accepting donations through November 25.

*"If you have two coats give one away,"  
John the Baptist (Luke 3:11)*

### New White Paraments

Thanks to generous donations to the Paraments Fund, we have purchased new white paraments that will be used on All Saints Sunday and then in the seasons of Christmas and Easter. Our plan is to replace all of our paraments, one seasonal color per year. Last year we purchased a new blue set for the season of Advent. This year white, and hopefully next year we will purchase a green set for the long season of Pentecost. Our thanks to Cynthia Niiler for all her help working with members of the Beautification Committee and others to determine style and design and for overseeing the ordering process with the distributor.

### Confirmation Outing

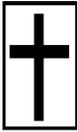
On Sunday, November 11 members of the confirmation class will be visiting the Good Neighbor Chinese Lutheran Church in Quincy. They will participate in worship at 9:00 am (in Mandarin and Cantonese) and will have conversation (in English) with church members following.

### Parent Night Out

**Saturday, November 17, 5:00-8:00 pm**

Members of the Confirmation Class will be hosting a parents night out on November 17. Parents are invited to drop children off at 5 pm and pick them up by 8:00 pm. We invite a donation of \$10-\$15 per hour to support our youth ministry. Please RSVP to Pastor Maehl if you plan on participating.

## Walking Together in God's Love



*From the  
Vicar*

On Sunday, November 5, I led my first adult forum at First Lutheran. Thank you to those who attended! We talked about the Bible because biblical literacy is a passion of mine and I believe we

are struggling with biblical literacy as a country and as people of faith. In the adult forum, we talked about how the Bible is a library of books with many authors, genres, contexts, and styles of writing. Some of the 'simple' questions we ask about the Bible such as "Is it true?" or "When was it written?" become much more complex when we think of the Bible as a library of books. For example, we would not go to the Waltham Public library and ask "When was this library written?" It is important to take seriously the rich history and stories that make up our Bible and to examine the lenses we read it through. There is much to be learned and much hope to be gained through our Holy Scriptures. The folks in attendance on Sunday asked that I share some of the books I referenced in the presentation, so here are the titles and authors:

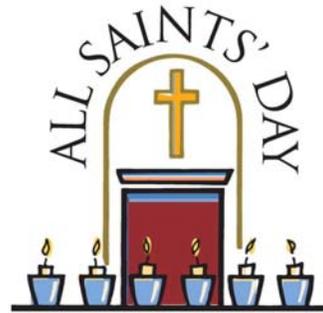
Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again, by Rachel Held Evans

What is the Bible? How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything, by Rob Bell

One quote that stands out to me from Rob Bell's writing is when he says this about the Bible: "Real people, writing in real places, at real times, choosing to include some material, choosing to leave out other material. And it turns out that what they wrote about was love and fear and debt and duty and doubt and anger and skepticism and hate and technology and shame and hope and betrayal -- the very struggles and issues we're still talking about thousands of years later. And that's why it's so important to not read it like it dropped out of the sky. Because in doing so, you miss the solidarity that comes from realizing that this is a profoundly human book."

I am grateful to have the opportunity to explore our Holy Scriptures together in community and I look forward to further study and discussion together.

Blessings, Vicar Athena



On Sunday November 4, we remembered those in our congregation who have died and those whom have been on our prayer list this past year and who have died. We give thanks to God for the promise of eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### **Those in our congregation who have died:**

Mimi Ham

Hildegard MacLean

### **Those on our prayer list who have died:**

Steve Connearney (*friend of First Lutheran*)

Eloi Dupuis (*Nelson Tenant*)

Walter Eisler (*friend of the Gaisers & the Pintuses*)

Joann Green (*mother of a colleague of Sarah Rauhut*)

Barbara Haffman (*cousin of Susan Pintus*)

George Kelleher (*father/father-in-law of Jim and Christine Kelleher*)

Twila Long (*mother of Connie Spickler, friend of the Ostrandens*)

Dianne Seymour (*friend of Jim and Pam Sperry*)

James Shread Sr. (*grandfather of John and Ryan Shread*)

John Tungseth (*cousin of Curt Schroeder*)

Norma Jean Wiberg (*mother of a friend of Lu-Ann Kimker*)

## Walking Together in God's Love

### Prayer Concerns



**Members of our First Lutheran Community:** Marquette Alexander; Sally Ann Biter; Ernie Gaiser; Christina Danielson; Connie Danielson; Rosy Hebert; Steve Latter; Lorne MacArthur; Kathryn McCowan; Cynthia Niiler, Joan Niiler.

**Friends and Family:** Christiansen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Magnus Forsman (*great-nephew of Rut Johnson*); Pelle Geholm (*twin brother of Rut Johnson*); Susan Goslin (*friend of Joan Clemens*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Terri Koopman (*aunt of Matt Jerram*); Emily Lewis and her parents (*friends of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Joy Lewis (*friend of Joan Clemmens and Curt Schroeder*); Eudeen MacSweeney (*friend of Rut Johnson*); Stephen Manz (*nephew of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Jason Mihalko (*friend of Matt Jerram*); Nellie Pintus (*sister of Paul Pintus*); Ralph Platfoot (*uncle of LuAnn Kimker*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Betty Schroeder (*aunt of Cury Schroeder*); Doug Sewich (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Judy Vichniac (*friend of Susan Pintus*), Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

**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.*

### Senior Classics



Many of our most delightful meetings are the conversations among just ourselves over lunch. On October 23, we enjoyed goat cheese quiche, chicken salad, and a scrumptious chocolate cake to celebrate Rut's and Connie's birthdays. At some meetings, we gather around one big oval for a unified conversation, but this time several small groups evolved, perhaps facilitated by a slightly zigzag table arrangement. One group considered different Christian practices, such as monastic traditions, and explored how we can borrow from them to enrich our experiences of worship and service. In a lighter vein, another group was fascinated by a discovery in the Pearson room – a box of dolls, imaginatively dressed in colorfully patterned garments. One even wore buttoned-up shoes and had red hair that was real. Some members of the group remembered the dolls they played with as children. Others remembered friends who are no longer with us. It was great fun to see everyone engaged in lively discussions.

Our November meeting is scheduled for the third Thursday of the month, so mark November 15 on your calendar.

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham**

**Ministers:** The people of the congregation

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

Ms. Cynthia Niiler,  
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firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

Vicar Athena Bless, Intern  
abless@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 November 25—last Sunday

**Sunday Learning Hour:**

9:15 am

**Visit us on the Web at:**



Find us on  
**Facebook**

[www.firstlutheranwaltham.org](http://www.firstlutheranwaltham.org)

and on Facebook at First Lutheran  
Church - Waltham, MA

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

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