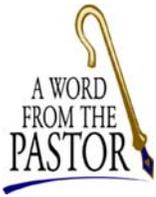


The Messenger

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/March 2019
781-893-6563
tmaehl@rcn.com



I have always appreciated the opportunity that Lent affords to draw deeper into practices that may nurture faith, hope, and love. Each year for the season of Lent many of us may try to be a bit more intentional in prayer, we may give up something or take something on, and along with regular contributions we may add something more for persons in need. Then Easter comes and Lent is over. Still we pray, still we try to practice restraint, still we give; however the joy of the Easter, the wonder of Spring, and the other rhythms of life draw us to other just-as-important intentionalities.

For me observing Lent is no holier than keeping my two-week summer vacation; they are both important parts of an annual rhythm. Lent is about rhythm. It is 40 days, but it is also 40 days each year for perhaps 80 years. I have come to believe that, over time, the keeping of the rhythms that our faith tradition offers us has the power to deepen us.

Recently I came across the following quote by Reinhold Niebuhr. I appreciated how for him, even a number like 80 years is still only one small segment of an even larger scope and rhythm. Niebuhr writes,

"Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness."

I invite you to keep the season of Lent; that is to redirect your focus upon God and matters of the spirit in some intentional way. I pray that over the long course of our lives, God's gifts of faith, hope, & love may be deepened in us all.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Keeping Lent

March 6 - Ash Wednesday Worship, 7:30 pm

A bi-lingual (English and Spanish) service will be held jointly with the Santuario congregation, with Pastor Maehl, Pastor Marre-ro, and Vicar Athena leading. The service will include confession, the optional imposition of ashes; and the receiving of Holy Communion.

March 6 - Children's Service, 6:00 pm

We are currently exploring holding a children's program where we will first burn the palms from last year to make ashes, and then in a simple service offer prayers of thanksgiving and "what we are sorry for." Watch for more details.

March 7 - "Ash Thursday," 11:30 am

We will offer a service with the optional imposition of ashes. This is provided for those who come for the Thursday knitting and for any who find it difficult to drive at night.

Lenten Wednesdays Conversation & Evening Prayer

We join with Santuario in a joint mid-week Lenten program. Each Wednesday will have conversation focused on Biblical stories of deliverance, followed by a contemplative service of evening prayer. The schedule is as follows:

7:00 Conversation

8:00 Evening Prayer

Please consider making Wednesday nights at First Lutheran part of your Lenten discipline.

Nurturing Faith

Adult Forum

Currently during the learning hour Vicar Athena is leading a discussion of some of Luther's significant writings. We have discussed the 95 Theses already, and in the coming weeks we will discuss Article IV of the Augsburg Confession (concerning justification), Luther's writings about the sacraments, and Luther's three major writings in the year 1520. Everyone is welcome to come and learn more about Martin Luther and some of his key writings.



Congregational Retreat Camp Calumet February 22-24

We currently have 58 people signed up for our annual congregational retreat to Camp Calumet in Freedom, NH. Pastor Ángel Marrero will be leading worship on Sunday, February 24. Please remember:

**Sunday, February 24
One Service at 9:30 am**

Puerto Rico Learning & Service Trip June 21-27, 2019



Note, the date of the trip has been moved to allow more flexibility for those students and parents who may be affected by snow days and a later end of the school year. If you would like to participate and have not yet done so, please contact Pastor Maehl or Jennifer Lambert. All adults, as well as youth in Middle or High School, are invited to participate.



From the Vicar

The season of Lent is upon us in the church year. Lent is a typically a somber time of reflection, penance, and self-denial. The reason Lent is a forty-day period is to reflect Jesus' forty days of being tempted in the wilderness.

Jesus went into the wilderness right after his baptism in our synoptic Gospels and there he fasts and is met by the devil or the tempter. The devil tempts Jesus by calling his identity into question. He says "If you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread" (Mt. 4:3, Lk 4:3) and, after the devil leads Jesus up to the pinnacle of the temple he says "If you are the son of God, throw yourself down from here" (Mt.4:6, Lk 4:9). It is important that the devil says "if" in both of these temptations. The tempter is calling Jesus's core identity as the Son of God into question. But Jesus who has just been baptized and called the beloved of God knows exactly who and whose he is.

In this season of Lent, as we reflect on our lives, our habits, and our faith, there may be temptations that make us question our identity. Things that make us wonder if we are a child of God, if we are worthy, if we belong. But on Ash Wednesday, we hear the words "remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." There are no "ifs" in this pronouncement. We are mortal, we are dust, and we will die. But at the same time, we are beloved, we are children of God, and we will be raised again with Christ. Our identity does not depend on what we give up for lent or what discipline we add, but our identity is in Christ who is the Son of God and at the end of the 40 days will die and rise for our sake.

Blessings,

Vicar Athena

Annual Meeting Update

Our annual meeting was held on Sunday, January 27, highlights include:

Budget: We voted a budget of \$284,273. This budget allows for a sustained level of funding for all programs, along with a 1% raise for staff. 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 2019-2020 academic year. The cost of an intern is expected to be roughly \$38,000. We were able to do this because of pledges to the Intern Fund of \$27,612 from individuals and \$10,000 from the Nelson Board.

Constitution and Bylaws: We adopted changes to our constitution that are in keeping with the Model Constitution for ELCA Congregations. We also made changes to our Bylaws to better reflect our current organizational structure. One area of extended conversation was around having a Beautification Committee. *Note that the Church council will be discussing issues raised at the annual meeting related to this, in order to explore ways to have more clarity of purpose and responsibility. Watch for more information.*

2018 Accomplishments: These include:

- Overcoming a nearly \$40,000 deficit due in large part to the departure of the Korean Hope Church.
- Participating in the ELCA National Youth Gathering and a service trip to El Salvador in the same year.
- Continued strong levels of commitment in worship, serving, giving, and supporting one another.

2019 Expectations: In the coming year we are looking forward to:

- The establishing of a post-confirmation youth group
- A service learning trip to Puerto Rico in June
- A measure of growth in membership

Elections: We elected Holly Diaz and LuAnn Kimker to the church council; and Kerry Meaney, Geri Nederhoff, and Janice Ostrander to terms on the Nelson Board. We also thanked Kevin Dickert for his service as president for the past two years; welcomed Brad Nederhoff as our new president and Ann Sjodin as vice president.

2018 Benevolence Update

Also at our annual meeting we shared some of the ways we have given beyond our own congregation:

\$27,398 given to the New England Synod to support the mission of the wider church.

\$26,641 given to support the hosting of Vicar Athena Bless and Vicar John Barton our seminary interns.

Over \$3,000 in Pastor's Discretionary funds used to assist persons in our community with: tuition, rent, retreats food, medicine, and auto repairs.

\$2,200 in our budget for Vacation Bible School so that neighbor children may be welcomed with no tuition charged.

\$2,055 from our annual budget designated for local benevolence shared with: Chaplains on the Way, The Waltham Family School, The Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, Lutheran Campus Ministry in the Fenway, The Waltham Farmer's Market, Waltham Fields Community Farm's outreach Market, and more.

Over \$1,000 in donations to feeding programs; including ELCA World Hunger, Project Bread's Walk for Hunger, the Waltham Community Food Walk (led by our children) supporting feeding programs in Waltham, and food pantries at Brandeis and First Lutheran.

Over \$2,700 to the Camp Calumet Scholarship Fund.

Over \$4,000 toward our 2018 service trip to El Salvador

Over \$5,000 toward our 2018 youth trip to Houston, Texas.

Gifts of art supplies through our VBS program for families of the Waltham Family School.

Over 30 bags filled with personal care items donated to Ascentria for resettled refugees

Food through our own food box and pantry.

Doing Justice, Serving All



Waltham Family School Fiesta Thursday, March 14

The annual Fiesta fundraiser for the Waltham Family School (WFS) is being held on Thursday March 14 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 joining with the Nelson Board in sponsoring. If you would like to join us, please contact Pastor Maehl. You may also register on your own. Tickets are \$75 per person and we have several *gratis* spots available through our sponsorship..

Last Sunday of the Month March 31 One Service at 9:30 am Followed by Clean Up

Following worship on March 31, we invite you to stay and join with others for one hour of clean up: dusting, polishing pews, washing windows, etc. Note that We do not have a maintenance person or building manager on staff; and thus the care of the building falls primarily on the few dedicated members of the property committee. Your participation would help share the load. Please join in if you are able —Pastor Maehl

Food Pantry Update

We continue to gather non-perishable food items. Much of what is collected is donated to a food pantry at Brandeis University utilized by international students and others with limited means. We also share food with neighbors through our "Blessing Box" in front of the church and our food shelf in the Pearson Room. Thanks to all who donate!

Lenten Collection

The traditional spiritual practices of Lent include additional gifts of money to those in need. Each year we like to lift up one particular organization for special offerings.

This year we are lifting up the New Comer's Academy at Waltham High School. This program helps recent immigrant youth as they face the challenge of adjusting to a new school, language, and culture. Some of the particularly vulnerable members of the student population are teen parents. For those with an infant or toddler at home, the needs for child care, diapers, formula, seasonal clothing is enormous. It is these students we will be supporting.

If you would like to make an offering at any time during Lent, you can simply mark your gift, "Lent Offering." These financial gifts will then be converted into gift cards to Hannaford, Target, T.J. Maxx, etc. Gifts of diapers and baby clothes are also welcome.



At our annual meeting on January 27th, we surprised Mary Ellen Adams with a scrapbook filled with postcards of gratitude from current and former members. Mary Ellen writes,

Thank you for the kind thoughts, fond memories recalled, and words of encouragement expressed on cards in the First Lutheran World Tour Collection I received at the annual meeting; and which I will share after worship - with chocolates. AND thank you for the special gift card for dinner - a truly super surprise treat, "Happy Sunday."

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



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

Friends and Family: Carolejeanne Care (Sarah Rauhut's mother); Christensen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Magnus Forsman (*great-nephew of Rut Johnson*); Susan Goslin (*friend of Joan Clemens*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Terri Koopman (*aunt of Matt Jerram*); Joy Lewis (*friend of Joan Clemmens and Curt Schroeder*); Glen Luce (*Christine Barrington's partner*); Eudeen MacSweeney (*friend of Rut Johnson*); Jason Mihalko (*friend of Matt Jerram*); Ralph Platfoot (*uncle of LuAnn Kimker*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Betty Schroeder (*aunt of Curt 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 those who grieve: the family and friends of Helene Walker; the family and friends of Miriam Klapper (*friend of Paul & Susan 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/remove a name to/from the prayer list, please inform the church office.



Senior Classics February and March

Three birthdays to celebrate at our February 21st meeting! Come and join us for cake.

Next month we meet for March Movie Madness on March 21st. We'll view and discuss the film "Won't you be my Neighbor," about Fred Rogers' magical way with children.

Our cook- and baker-members like to surprise us with treats from time to time, but we seldom know what or when, so bring your sandwich and join us for lively conversation at 11:45 a.m. on both days.

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
firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

Vicar Athena Bless, Intern
abless@ses.plts.edu

Council: Brad Nederhoff, President
Ann Sjodin, Vice President
Eben Rauhut, Secretary
Scott Niemann, Treasurer
Holly Diaz
Erika Jerram
LuAnn Kimker
Angela Neal
Janice Ostrander
Susan Pintus

Sunday Worship:

8:15 and 10:30 am

9:30 am on 2/24 & 3/31—last Sunday

Sunday Learning Hour:

9:15 am

Visit us on the Web at:

www.firstlutheranwaltham.org



Find us on
Facebook

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.