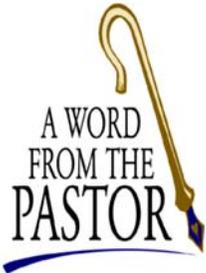


The Messenger

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

December 2019
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Wait, Watch, Prepare, Repent

These are Advent words; but how do we live them.? If we are busy, how do we *watch*? If we are young, how do we *repent*? If we are old, for what other than death do we *prepare*?

Perhaps one way is simply to pay more attention: more attention in our interactions with others, more attention in nature, more attention in worship and prayer. In Advent, I find myself returning to certain poets whom I sense are gifted at paying attention, Mary Oliver being one of them. Notice in the following poem how she invites us to pay attention...

"Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

For those who struggle to pay attention, I invite you to our Wednesday services of evening prayer. Each service will include another of Mary Oliver's poems with a guided reflection; as well as silence, prayer, and song.

Blessings upon your Advent, Pastor Maehl



Christmas Eve, December 24

6:40 pm Pre-service music

7:00 pm Worship

Join us on Christmas Eve for our traditional worship with special music, candle lighting, carols, Holy Communion, and the proclamation of the Christmas Gospel. Pre-service music will begin at 6:40 and there will be light refreshments following. Consider inviting friends and neighbors who may not have a worship home, and consider bringing a refreshment to share.

Christmas Morning, December 25

10:00 am

Join us for a service of lessons and carols with Holy Communion. Feel free to dress informally, kids can even come in their pajamas.

Sunday, December 29

9:30 am One Service

We will have one service at 9:30 pm with Pastor Angelika Zollfrank preaching and presiding.

Nurturing Faith



Advent Wednesdays

December 4, 11, 18
7:15 pm

On the **Wednesdays in Advent** we will have a contemplative evening prayer service beginning at 7:15 pm, followed by refreshments.

Amidst the increased pace and demands of the season, considering carving out this time to attend to the waiting, prayer, repentance, and hope-

fulness to which the season calls us ... and at the same time mysteriously offers.

Adult Forums Sundays 9:15am

December 8, 15 : Mary & the Christmas Story: In the season of Advent as we anticipate the coming of Christ, we will take some time to reflect on Mary and the Christmas Story through scripture and visual artistic representations. Join us on the 8th to explore images of Mary and on the 15th to talk about the birth of Jesus.

December 22: Christmas Pageant: during the learning hour the children will enact parts of the Christmas story in Founder's Hall with the adults joining in the singing of some of the best loved Christmas carols.

Advent Devotional Hardcopy, Facebook, Email

We have additional copies of an Advent devotional book entitled, Come, Lord Jesus: Devotions for the Home; please contact the church office if interested.. Also, Pastor Maehl will be posting a daily reflection on the church Facebook page. If you are not a Facebook user and would like these daily reflections emailed to you, please email Pastor Maehl at tmaehl@rcn.com.



CAROLING

All are welcome to join us for our annual afternoon of Christmas caroling. We will gather at the church, leaving at 3:00 pm to carpool to a variety of residences. Note that children are most welcome. Caroling is a great way to bring Christmas cheer to others, and a way to enter into the season more deeply ourselves. Please join us.

Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 15
3:00 PM

The Great Wall of Prayer

In early November, the Post-confirmation youth group put up a "prayer wall" inside the parking lot entrance of the church, with the invitation to post prayers. Thank you to all who participated. Here are a few prayers from the wall ...

For friends and family: George, Cassie, Connie, Patricia, Gina, Kenn, Grandparents, Jim, Tom, Dottie, Nina, Cassie, Elle, Michel, Dot, Andrea, Ralph, Peter, Mildred, Assie

For peace for all people and the whole world

For equality for people of all race, ethnicity, religion, and gender

For good health and healing of those who are sick

For safe travel and play during the holidays

For everyone to feel love

For refugees to feel comforted, protected, hopeful, and safe

For all suffering from depression and mental health

For understanding among everyone in our world

For those who have died

For Pastors Ángel and Tom & all our church leaders

For patience and understanding

For God's light to shine on us, guide us in our work, and protect us on the journey

Prayers from the wall will be burned at the Congregational Retreat to Calumet in February.

Doing Justice, Serving All



Thanks to everyone who brought in bags of personal care items as part of our **Thanks For Giving Challenge**. We've had a good response collecting roughly 30 bags with personal care items. All of the items collected will be donated to Ascentria Care Alliance and will be distributed to resettled refugees and other persons in need in various communities in Massachusetts. **Thanks for Giving!**

Maker Fair

Sunday, December 8

On December 8th 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 giftable items. . 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.

Flash Event

On December 1st, following the late worship service there was opportunity to write Christmas cards to refugee families in detention centers, also to families in the Waltham Family School, and to a relative of someone in our congregation who is currently in prison. Thanks to the members of the Justice and Service team for all their work facilitating this event.

Pledge Update

We've had a strong response to our stewardship appeal. Thank you to so many of you for taking seriously our responsibility to provide for the mission of the church and for your faithful financial giving. The following are statistics from our Fall appeal:

- Thus far, this year we have received 38 pledges totaling \$255,960
- Given increases and decreases, new pledges and people who have moved away or died, we have a net increase of \$8,127 over last year.

The finance committee is now at work preparing a draft budget for 2019 that will be reviewed by the church council and presented at the congregational meeting. Please plan on attending the annual meeting following worship on January 26. Members of the finance committee include: Scott Niemann, Susan Pintus, and Brad Nederhoff.

Intern Update

We are delighted to report that along with the pledges to the general budget there were also pledges of \$28,124 to the Intern Fund. Additionally, the Board of the Nelson Memorial Apartments has pledged \$11,000 toward our next intern. This will allow us to begin making plans for an intern for the 2019-2020 academic year. We are so grateful to all who support this important ministry that:

- Blesses each intern with an opportunity to learn through their year of full-time work at First Lutheran,
- Blesses First Lutheran with the unique gifts for ministry that each intern brings
- Blesses the wider church by providing a robust site for ministry.

Walking Together in God's Love



Parents Night Out
December 7th
5:00 -8:00 pm

There is a parents night out scheduled for Saturday December 7th. It is being hosted by our youth (along with Vicar Courtney and Emily Kobak). The suggested donation is \$30 per family. We will serve pizza and snacks for dinner, and the youth have planned a variety of activities for the children. The youth are hoping that through this event they might raise some money for youth events and provide parents with a night free from the responsibility of their kids.



Our thanks to:

Mary Ellen and Norman Adams, LuAnn Kimker, Doris Speer, Cynthia Niiler, Carol Hansen, Vicar Courtney, Janice Ostrander, and Ann Sjodin for "greening" the church in preparation for Advent.

Fall Retreat Update

A group of 13 participated in our annual Fall Retreat in Londonderry, Vermont. We focused on discernment and techniques for practicing discernment individually and with others in community. We also enjoyed great food, games, conversation, and one another's company. Our next Fall retreat is scheduled for November 6-8, 2020.

Calumet Winter Retreat

February 21-23



Our annual winter retreat to Camp Calumet is scheduled for Feb. 21-23. Everyone is welcome to this retreat, children and adults. Mark your calendars and watch for more details about signing up coming in January.



Chaplains on the Way Gift Cards

Once again we are collecting \$5 or \$10 gift cards to Dunkin Donuts or McDonalds, as well as \$8-\$12 Charlie Cards (for transportation). These will be given to persons in need in our community through the ministry of Chaplains on the Way. Gift cards may be mailed or dropped off in the church office.

Chaplains On the Way (COTW) is one of our First Lutheran partner organizations. The chaplains provide spiritual care to many of our homeless and at risk neighbors. Note that on Sunday, February 9th, one of the COTW chaplains will speak at the adult forum. Come and learn in greater depth about COTW and their ministry.

Christmas Party

December 19th
11:45 am

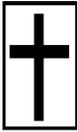


SENIOR CLASSICS CHRISTMAS PARTY

In November, the seniors had a good visit and black forest chocolate cake for Larry's birthday.

Our annual Senior Classics Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 19. Everyone bring some of your favorite holiday goodies to share for our potluck meal. We will also share conversation and fellowship and have a chance to sing some Christmas carols. . Anyone who has the time (and inclination) is welcome to join us.

Walking Together in God's Love



*From the
Vicar*

*"Some things never change,
turn around and the time has
flown. Some things stay the
same, though the future re-
mains unknown. May our good*

*luck last, may our past be past. Time's moving fast,
it's true, some things never change."*

- Some Things Never Change, Frozen II

I love Disney movies, there's something comforting and familiar about them that touches me no matter how old I get. During the Thanksgiving holiday I had the opportunity to see Frozen 2 with my sister and have since been listening to the soundtrack on repeat. The song quoted above "Some Things Never Change" has really been sticking with me. The main characters of the Frozen franchise: Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, Sven, and Olaf are singing about the fact that everything around them is changing, and yet, there are some things in life that never change, namely, their love for one another.

In the last month a lot of things have changed – we quickly went from the bright colors of fall right into the first snowfall. The sun shines for fewer hours showering us in darkness and the cold of winter. It's the time of year for midterms and final exams, end of year numbers and reports, and the preparations for Christmas. Yet despite all the changes happening around us, some things never change. Now that the darkness has set in, the light inside of each of us shines a little bit brighter in the world. A light of hope and joy, friendship and love during this holiday season.

The light and love of God will never change, it can't be hidden under a bushel forever, it can't be blown out for good, so long as we are here to continue telling the story and sharing the light and love of God. One of my favorite Advent traditions is lighting the Advent Wreath. This light started as one candle and grew to be two, three, and four, until on Christmas Eve my mom lit every possible candle in our house, filling it with warmth and light. We would then go to a candle-light service on Christ-

mas Eve where candles filled the sanctuary and lined the church property shining the light of God for all to see.

Though the future remains unknown, though time is moving fast, some things never change: the light and love of God goes with you to brighten the darkness each and every day.

- Vicar Courtney

Danish Christmas Service Saturday, December 21, 3:00 pm

Once again, the Danish Society of Massachusetts is offering their annual Christmas service in Danish here at First Lutheran Church. If you know anyone who speaks or understands Danish, please invite them.

Post-Confirmation Youth Cereal Sunday January 5th

For our first meeting in the new year, all post confirmation youth are invited to bring a box of their favorite cereal to share during our Sunday Learning Hour time at 9:15. Let's ring off the new year with fun and fellowship and frosted flakes (or whatever your favorite cereal is).

- Vicar Courtney

Farewell and Godspeed

On Sunday, November 24 we bid farewell to Laura Nederhoff who is moving to Maine with her husband Matt Costanza. We're thank for all that Laura has given to our community including serving as a Sunday school teacher and VBS leader, regularly sharing her musical gifts, and coordinating our library. We wish her blessings in her new home and community.

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



Members of our First Lutheran Community: Marquette Alexander; Penny Alexander; Sarah Allen; Connie Danielson; Rosy Hebert; Steve Latter; Lorne MacArthur; Kathryn McCowan; Cynthia Niiler; Joan and Jüri Niiler; Pam Sperry, Jane Wolley.

Friends and Family: Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Christiansen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Magnus Forsman (*great-nephew of Rut Johnson*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Nancy Jewell (*cousin of Joan Clemens*); Ellen Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's mother*); Eudeen MacSweeney (*friend of Rut Johnson*); Myles Martins and parents (*infant nephew of Cat Niemann*); Jason Mihalko (*friend of Matt Jerram*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); 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.



Annual Meeting

Save the Date

Annual Meeting
after worship

Sunday, January 26, 2020

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 Courtney Smith, Intern
csmith@uls.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 am & 10:30 am
Last Sunday (12/29) at 9:30 am

Sunday Learning Hour:

9:15 am

Visit us on the Web at:



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.