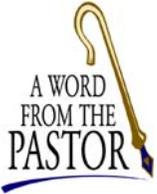


The Messenger

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

October 2020
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A reading from Genesis, chapter 3:

Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' God said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.'

This is a story of disruption. Adam and Eve (representing of all humanity) have recently disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. Perhaps they had thought they'd be left alone to do as they pleased in the newly created world; however God shows up and God's mere presence disrupts their evening walk. Before the encounter they hide in fear, hoping to avoid the question they know is coming, "What have you been up to?" Each respond in a way that seeks to sidestep responsibility by blaming another; but to no avail. God sees, God knows, and God's disruption will forever alter their future.

Throughout the scriptures the pattern will repeat. Someone or some group will assume that they can do as they please in God's world; for instance, Pharaoh enslaving the Israelites, later Israel's kings oppressing the poor, and in the time of Jesus the leaders of the Roman Empire collaborating with religious elites to create and control a vast underclass. In each case God appeared (through Moses, through the prophets, through Jesus); and in each case God's appearance was received as good news by those oppressed and as a troubling disruption for the oppressors.

We now are living in a time of disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting our individual lives and also all our major institutions. It is disrupting politics, it is disrupting the economy, it is disrupting the planet.

I make no claims as to the source of the COVID virus. Was it a random mutation? Was it orchestrated by God? I do not know and do not care to know. I will add that, considering the Holocaust in particular, I personally reject the notion that "everything that happens is God's will." At the same time, I do believe that God shows up in the midst of all tragedies, hardships, and suffering; and that God will use even "bad things" for God's purposes, including disruption.

Over the past decades many, many leaders here and abroad have been walking in the 'garden' that is this world believing they have been left alone to do as they pleased; and in smaller ways so have we all. As a result, 2 billion people in the world subsist on less than \$2 per day, one-third of the world's agricultural land has disappeared in the last 40 years, and competitive capitalism has left massive anxiety and depression in its wake.

We will continue to pray for an end to the pandemic, a righting of the economy, and end to suffering. At the same time, let us pay attention to the disruptions.

I leave you with questions to prayerfully ponder; imagine that God is asking them.

- "Where are you?"
- "What needs to stop, end, die?"
- "What is waiting to be born?"

Walk with those questions, trusting that God is present with you,

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Nurturing Faith

Saturday Outdoor Communion

Continuing

4:30 pm

In September we offered outdoor communion services on three Saturdays. There were, on average, about 30 participants. We remained socially distant, but were able to receive communion and enjoy some conversation in the parking lot afterwards.

Because of the positive response, we are going to continue in October. A few notes about each Saturday service:

- We gather in the parking lot where there is ample room to be socially distant
- Participants bring their own chairs or blankets, and masks.
- The service lasts 25-30 minutes
- If we are going to cancel due to weather, it will be posted on our website by 3:30 pm

If you desire communion and/or seeing others from church you are most welcome to join us. Our thanks to Curt Schroeder and Alan Sieving for all their help setting up the sound system.

Weekly Rhythm

We continue to offer the following prayer and worship opportunities:

Wednesday 7:00 pm- Evening Prayer

Via Facebook Live

Saturday 4:30 pm - Outdoor Communion

In Person

Sunday 10:30 am - Virtual Worship

Via Facebook Live

Note that the Facebook Live services can be watched in real time, or anytime after the event. Simply go to www.firstlutheranwaltham.org/ resources and you can access former services.

Santuario Update

As was noted in the September newsletter, Padre Ángel Marrero has left Santuario and is serving as the new rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Hyde Park. We recently learned that Pastor Cassandra Chavez will be serving as the transitional pastor. Pastor Cassandra serves as the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lawrence, MA and will also be taking on the worship leadership and pastoral care duties of Santuario.

Here's a little biographical information from the Redeemer Lutheran Church web site:

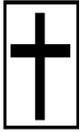
Cassandra grew up between small town Rhode Island and the big city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia. Her whole life she has lived between homes and cultures and this is reflected in her many expressions of faith. She is passionate about following Jesus to continue the work of freedom and justice in the world.

We look forward to seeing how the ministry of Santuario continues to evolve and will be exploring new ways our two congregations might connect. Please keep both our congregations in your prayers.

Farewell and Godspeed to Padre Ángel

On Sunday, October 4 during our virtual worship service we will give thanks for the ministry of Padre Ángel Marrero who has been part of the First Lutheran community for the last seven year. It was in the fall of 2013 that he began his yearlong internship with us (then a student at the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia). Following the completion of his seminary studies he received the call to start a new congregation in the summer of 2015. The first worship service of the newly formed Santuario congregation was on the first Sunday of Advent in 2015. Over the years he has preached at First Lutheran, collaborated with VBS and service trips, and blessed us in many other ways. On Sunday, Oct 4 we will give thanks for his ministry.

Walking Together in God's Love



*From the
Vicar*

Despite having lived in rural areas around the country, I now realize that I am a city slicker. I love to live in the city. I love the anonymity. I

love hearing many people talk in languages diverse. I love the cute shops. I love that the city forces me to bear witness to the paradox of those that don't have enough and those that have abundance - as I smile to the unhoused person, a coffee and sandwich in hand, in front of a high rise building with a man in a nice suit walking out the front. Many find it beneficial to play calming noises of rain or rushing water when trying to fall asleep. However, when I am home with my family in the country, I opt for setting my sleep machine to city noises, which my family can never understand.

Now that I have settled in the area, I am beginning to love it more and more because of its city feel and noises and also because it has incredible woods, parks, and hiking trails. If you don't already know, my dog Cosmo loves to take walks and hikes. These are an absolute necessity because he will crazily run around my apartment if he doesn't take one each and every day.

This spectrum of the woods to Moody street has helped me to become better at witnessing God's presence in the world. As a young person and as an advocate, I tend to scrutinize the injustice and despair I see in the world. In our political, environmental, and economic climate today, it is easy to do just that. During a global pandemic, we are now bearing witness to the structural inequalities that we can no longer avoid. But then I take a hike. I see the bees buzzing around the gorgeous flowers that grow just under the church's big stain glass window. In the woods of Stonehurst, I stand in awe and purposely try to get lost because I no longer feel afraid of the vast expanse. As I run after Cosmo as he runs down a path to take a drink of water from the Charles River, I find myself singing "Down to the River to Pray." As I walk down Everett Street, I behold the beau-

ty of a little one attempting to run away from their dad. Their dad has a coffee thermos in hand as he nods to me and says, "it is too early in the morning for this." I hear siblings across the street giggling with joy, enjoying the comfortable, cool autumn evening. As messed up as the world is, God is here. God is with us. Cosmo running gleefully to the river for a drink is God's reminder of my baptismal promises. The bees and flowers remind me of God's majesty and care, even for these things we take for granted. That little kid reminds us that God's love is overflowing, and sometimes, yes, it comes early in the morning, and we need coffee in hand to wake us up and follow. It may take a walk through the woods or a trip to the farmer's market for us to allow ourselves to behold God's promises to us simply: we are loved, and all shall be well. In this time of changing colors, may we behold God's beauty and presence around and within us.

Vicar Wylie

Youth Gift Project

On two Sundays in September, a group of post confirmation youth gathered to prepare gift packages to be mailed to members of the congregation who have retired. Packages contained handwritten notes, a book of puzzles, and a small portion of a larger loaf of communion bread that the youth had baked and individually wrapped.

Our thanks to Kayali Pandian for coordinating the bread baking and for all the other youth who collaborated: Sally Ann Biter, Nick Hoff, Isaac Maehl, Julia and Maggie Niemann, and Justin Sjodin

Walking Together in God's Love

Financial Update

Through August we are running slightly behind in regular offerings, though there has been an outpouring of care demonstrated in gifts to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Recently discretionary funds have been used to provide relief during a time of temporary loss of income, helping transition to a new vocation, and with moving. Additionally, we continue to provide 5,000 diapers each month for the Waltham Diaper Depot and have been providing groceries through Waltham Mutual Aid.



In October we will be gathering financial pledges for the coming year. Specifically we are asking for pledges for the General Fund first, (which pays for the basic operating of the church), and then from those who are willing, additional pledges are welcomed for the Intern Fund. These are the two

Funds that most impact our budgeting process. Gifts to other funds like the Capital Improvement Fund, Pastor's Discretionary Fund, Memorial Fund, or Calumet Scholarship Fund may be made at any time with the need of a pledge.

In the next week, information will be sent out via email and US postal mail. In preparation, we ask that each person prayerfully consider the age-old, enduring question of Christian stewardship, *"Of all that God has given me, what am I being led to use for myself, what am I being led to share with the church, and what am I being led to give away in the care of others."*

Pledges may be emailed to our Financial Secretary Peter Pinch. Our thanks to all who contribute toward the ministry that God has entrusted to us through First Lutheran. Your gifts are a blessing!



Dear Pastor Maehl and Congregation,

Thank you so much for the support, prayers and cards. A special thanks to the choir for participating at Richard's funeral, as having the hymns that he so loved much is something he would have appreciated.

First Lutheran was always his second home and played a big part as to why he became the wonderful husband, father and friend to many.

Our warmest appreciation,
Rut, Lars and Erik Johnson

Dear People of First Lutheran,

Thank you so much for all of your compassionate words, notes of sympathy, and prayers as we grieved our father/grandfather Don Maehl's death on September 1. We are grateful for his life and example, for the simple graveside service held on September 4 in NJ, and for the promises in Christ that he has been gathered up in God's loving embrace.

The support of our church community has been a great blessing through it all.

In Gratitude,
Tom, Meg, Katie, and Isaac

Dear People of First Lutheran,

Thanks for the many cards and notes and the nice parcel with bread from the youth. I miss you all.

Lots of Love,
Connie Danielson

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



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

Friends and Family: Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Greta Carlson (*friend of Connie Danielson*); Christiansen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Emily Clemens (*niece of Joan Clemens*); Lavara Clemens (*mother of Joan Clemens*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Marlin Emschweiler and his family (*cousin of Joyce Anderson and Bud Crouse*); Chuck Flinner (*father of Kat Flinner*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Nancy Jewell (*cousin of Joan Clemens*); Ellen Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's mother*); Robert Leddon (*family friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Sylvia and Chris Lee-Thompson (*friend of Susan Pintus*); Myles Martins and parents (*infant nephew of Cat Niemann*); Tom Maxwell (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*); Jason Mihalko (*friend of Matt Jerram*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Margarita Rivera (*friend of Rachel Nederhoff*); Margie Schroeder (*Curt Schroeder's mom*); Doug Sewich (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Matthew Stanhope (*partner of Jane Danielson*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

For those who grieve: the family and friends of Richard Johnson; the family and friends of Phillip Thomas Herkamp (*brother of Mary Ellen Adams*).

For our partners: 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.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham

Ministers: The people of the congregation

Staff: The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
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Ms. Cynthia Niiler,
Director of Music and Parish Secretary
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Vicar Wylie Cook, Intern
wcook@ses.plts.edu

Council: President: Ann Sjodin
Vice-President: LuAnn Kimker
Secretary: Susan Pintus
Treasurer: Scott Niemann

Holly Diaz
Sammy Kalisa
Janice Ostrander
Susan Pintus
Curt Schroeder
Julie Weeden

Sunday Worship:

10:30 am via Facebook Live

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.