

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 2021
781-893-6563
tmaehl@rcn.com



For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. (Ephesians 3:14-17)

The author of Ephesians makes several claims here; including that a) God is God of everyone (*every family in heaven and on earth*)—therefore we are related in one common humanity; and b) the power of God is at work in us, strengthening our inner being, reforming our hearts where the risen Christ comes to dwell, rooting and grounding us in love. Implicit in this verse is a call to action, but not rootless action. Instead, it is action for the sake of our common humanity that is rooted in the love of God in Christ who seeks to gather, unite, and bless in a world that seeks to alienate, divide, and oppress.

What does love require of us? Where does love lead?

It is Thursday. This morning I opened the Boston Globe and read on page one the news of the mob attack on the Capital. We all know that news. I ask myself, “What does love require of me?” and my response has mostly been to pray—for the police and national guard, for a change of heart in the protestors, for our nation.

Then on page two I read how yesterday the Trump administration, safe behind closed doors, amid all the turmoil, “embarked on an 11th hour bid to undo civil rights protections for people of color, which could have a ripple effect on women, people with disabilities, and LGBT persons... A change that would mark one of the most significant shifts in civil rights enforcement in generations.”

I ask, “What does love require of me?” and my response is to name the truth as I see it. The truth that at the heart of the protest is the heartfelt desire to keep whites and men in places higher up in a hierarchy of human beings. This is why the Confederate flag was waved in the Capital by the mob. This is why our president who has pandered to White Supremacists, mocked persons with disabilities, and bragged about groping women is beloved by those who threatened our democracy yesterday.

One common humanity, with no hierarchy based on gender, skin-color, ability, or anything else. That, I believe, is at the heart of Christ’s vision for the Kingdom of God coming on earth. I, like you, have my own personal mix of fears, judgments, self-righteousness, limited-vision, sin. I know I will speak and act imperfectly. Still, I will continue to ponder the question, “What does love require?” and seek to respond. As I expect will you.

May the love of God, at work in each of us, keep before our eyes the vision of one shared humanity; and may the risen Christ dwelling in our hearts strengthen and inspire us to be part of God’s gathering, uniting, and blessing.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Virtual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 31, 2021

11:30 am

(following virtual worship)

Due to the pandemic, we will be holding our annual meeting via zoom (a link will be shared one week prior). At this meeting we will adopt a budget for 2021 and receive written annual reports from the pastor, president and committee chairs. We will hold elections for church council and other leadership positions.

The proposed budget and all other reports will be sent via email at least one week prior; if you would like hard copies, please contact the church office.

We ask members to please make an effort to attend.

Nurturing Faith

Luther and Economics

**A Zoom Adult Forum
led by Vicar Wylie**

**Thursdays at 7:00 pm
Beginning January 14**

Did you know that Martin Luther actually advocated for economic policies in light of his reformation theology? Beginning on January 14th, join Vicar Wylie on Thursdays at 7 pm to learn more about Martin Luther and his persistence for Christians to engage in faithful economics. In the midst of current economic insecurity, we will focus on how our reformation history and tradition can offer us wisdom and courage to continue to work for faithful economic justice.

Our virtual conversations will be held via Zoom. Check the "This Week at First Lutheran" e-news for a zoom link.

Advent and Christmas Crafts

Thanks to members of the Faith Formation Team for assembling craft kits for children in the congregation ages three through 7th grade. Each kit contained a craft for each Advent Sunday, plus one for Christmas Eve. When completed, all the crafts combined to form a nativity scene. Also included was a book (with family Advent devotional) whose purchase was made possible by a gift from the Nelson Apartments Board given in memory of Jane Wolley.

Particular thanks to LuAnn and Ken Kimker, Heather Fahey, and Lori Hrdlicka for contributions to the kits; and to LuAnn Kimker, Geri Nederhoff, and Pastor Maehl for delivery.

Looking Ahead to 2021

What's not happening due to the pandemic?

Indoor In-Person Worship: We have no plans for return to indoor worship. We will continue to offer Sunday worship and Wednesday Evening Prayer via Facebook Live.

Congregational Retreat: As you may expect, our annual winter retreat to Camp Calumet has been cancelled. However, we do have retreat dates for the following year: February 25-27, 2022.

What do we hope will be happening?

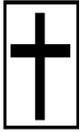
Outdoor Worship Services: When the weather gets warmer (perhaps April) we are hoping to offer outdoor worship services in the parking lot; if not every week, then several times a month.

A Youth/Young-adult Trip in Summer: We are tentatively making plans for a trip to Washington DC, (from June 26th through July 1st). The trip would include a trip to "The Hill" where we hope to meet our representatives, engaging in service through Lutheran ministries in the area, learning about advocacy, and more. The trip will be led by Vicar Wylie who formerly worked in DC. Note: youth will travel and room with family members, or members of another family who have included them in their "bubble." We expect that we will still be in the midst of the pandemic and will be practicing appropriate social distancing, masking, and other safety measures. If interested, please contact Vicar Wylie.

Christmas Thanks

Thanks to all who facilitated our outdoor Christmas Eve Service; particularly, Steve Hoff, Curt Schroeder, and Alan Sieving for all the audio set up. We had 64 people in attendance, and due to the unusually warm temperature, were quite comfortable. Also thanks to LuAnn Kimker and Ann Sjodin for decorating the sanctuary for Christmas.

Walking Together in God's Love



*From the
Vicar*

Out with the old, in with the new?

In the early days of the new year, this phrase won't seem to leave my consciousness. I sure wish 2021 is full of getting rid of the old and embracing the new. Simultaneously, the global pandemic of COVID-19 is still here amid the rapid distribution of the vaccine. The political divides and polarizations cannot seem to dissipate with a wave of a magic wand. I am hopeful of policies that relieve the economic burden of the pandemic. Still, I am critical of the ambition to address the root causes of economic insecurity for so many in our community, country, and world. It strikes me that this was a matter of concern for Martin Luther in his desire to reform the church and his society nearly 500 years ago.

Amid a culture of wanting to simply ignore or move on from our history, perhaps our history holds some knowledge that can assist us to move forward in new, yet traditional ways. We heard the beginning of John's Gospel frequently during the time of Advent and through Christmas: "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1: 1, NRSV). The writer of John's gospel thinks it is important to remind the audience that there is something significant about starting from the beginning and revisiting the past to prepare ourselves for the future.

As a person of faith and as a Lutheran in particular, I wonder if our tradition, history, liturgy, and theology have anything to do with how we organize our lives in a system called economics. And if so, how might we draw upon our faith and act faithfully in our rapidly evolving economic realities? Amid increased calls for economic reform, particularly those at the margins, how might we best advocate and work for public policies that promote what the gospel of John articulates as "abundant life for all?"

- Vicar Wylie

Nelson Apartment Opening

With a tenant moving out this month, there is now an opening of a one bedroom apartment. This is a second floor apartment, non-smoking, attached to the church building. For an application, please contact the church office.

Pastor's Discretionary Thanks

Thanks for all who contributed to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund in December. We used discretionary funds to provide \$700 in Market Basket gift cards (mostly through Waltham Mutual Aid). We also purchased, and donated 4,500 diapers in partnership with the Waltham Diaper Depot.. Thanks to our confirmation and post-confirmation youth who repackaged the diapers for distribution.

Diaper Help Opportunities

Diaper repackaging help? Each month we purchase and repackage roughly 4,500 diapers. From large boxes, diapers are put into bags of 45 and with 4-5 people the process takes roughly an hour. The repackaging happens in Founder's Hall in order that the few (masked) participants can be socially distant. If you would be willing to be part of a repackaging team, please contact Pastor Maehl.

Diaper Delivery Help? On the 3rd Saturday of each month, we deliver our repackaged diapers to McDevitt Middle School (the current site of the Diaper Depot distribution). This deliver has been done by Pastor, Isaac, and Meg Maehl along with Vicar Wylie. The 100 packages can fit in a standard hatchback, or can be divided into two cars. The process of loading, driving, and unloading takes about an hour. If you would be willing to coordinate delivery one month, please contact Pastor Maehl.

Doing Justice and Serving Others

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land

In December, we contributed \$500 to our Companion Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), which is part of the global Lutheran family, and comprises six congregations in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Jordan. The ELCJHL advocates for a just peace in Palestine and Israel, and a two-state solution. It also works to ensure education for Palestinian children, both Christian and Muslim, and has made education a high priority. To that end, the church operates schools, support for which can advance the church's societal role. The ELCJHL also is actively engaged in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. An end of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is essential to real possibilities for economic growth for both.

The original aim of these Protestant mission efforts in the Holy Land which began in the 19th century was not to create a new church in the area, but to serve the poor and provide a proper education for Christians. Only later the former pupils of the Lutheran Schools helped to establish the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Many of these members became refugees at the time the State of Israel was created.

The majority of the congregations within ELCJHL are comprised largely of families of refugees who fled their home at the time of the wars that followed the formation of Israel. Today the ELCJHL continues this call to witness through education and health care for Palestinians regardless of faith and provides for the spiritual needs of the Arab Lutheran community. The church operates schools in Ramallah, Beit Jala, Bethlehem, and Beit Sahour. There is a kindergarten in Jerusalem and two boarding homes in Beit Jala. More than 3000 pupils, boys and girls, are served.

The ELCJHL remains a Christian presence in these demanding times, providing leadership in ecumenical efforts and offering both spiritual and social services to meet the daily needs of the people facing great challenges. For more about their ministry see: https://www.globalministries.org/evangelical_lutheran_church

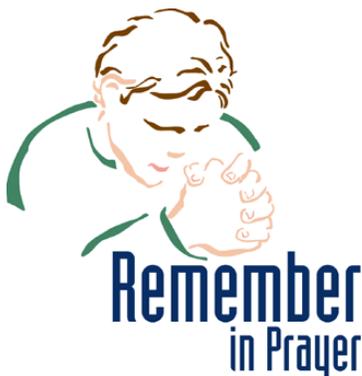


Thanks to all who have made contributions during this pandemic! Thanks too to our finance team who have developed multiple ways of contributing; including:

1. ***Cash or Check through the U.S Mail.*** Tried and true and always welcome!
2. ***Automatic regular debits from your bank account (previously known as Simply Giving).*** Forms are available in the church office. Forms may be filled out, returned to the church office, and your recurring donation will come out of your bank account automatically.
3. ***Online giving from your bank account through our website.*** You can make a one-time donation or set up a recurring donation by going to the Donate page at our website. The link takes you directly to the secure Vanco ("GivePlus Church") site. However, you will not have access to past history. There is also a credit card giving option there. Both these options have associated fees.
3. ***"GivePlus Church" mobile phone app.*** This can be used for one time donations, retreat payments, Equal Exchange purchases **and** it can also be used to manage your recurring donations, including existing Simply Giving accounts. Search on "GivePlus Church" wherever you get your mobile 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 to confirm that email. New users can get help with the app from Susan Pintus.

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*); Leslie Crowe (*friend of Connie and Jeanette Fagone*); 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*); Ellen Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's mother*); 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 Jeram*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Margarita Rivera (*friend of Rachel Nederhoff*); Margie and Roger Schroeder (*Curt Schroeder's mom*); Doug Sewich (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Sophy (*roommate of Alexa Turner*); Matthew Stanhope (*partner of Jane Danielson*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

For those who grieve: the family and friends of:

- Ruth Elander
- Robert Leddon (*family friend of LuAnn Kimker*)
- Velma Maurer (*great aunt of LuAnn Kimker*)

For our partners: Santuario Luterano, the Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation in Waltham, and for their interim leaders: Pastor Cassandra Chavez and Vicar Hector Lugo Cuadrado. 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, Camp Calumet, 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
tmaehl@rcn.com

Ms. Cynthia Niiler,
Director of Music and Parish Secretary
firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

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

Worship:

Sundays: 10:30 am

Wednesdays: 7:00 pm Evening Prayer
both via Facebook Live

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.