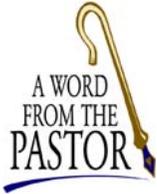


The Messenger

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 2021
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Ash Wednesday In a Time of Pandemic

We will have a virtual Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 pm on February 17. Like other celebrations of the church over this past year, our observance will be significantly impacted by the pandemic.

The first impact is, of course, that we cannot gather in person. Thus, we cannot engage in the ritual marking of ashes in quite the same way. Still, however, for those who would like to engage in this ritual, **we are making ashes available for pick up at church.** This past Sunday, the confirmation and post-confirmation youth burned palms we have added oil to the ashes and small containers are available for pick up at the church. They are inside the parking lot door. If interested, stop by the church—you may contact the church office to know when doors are open. During the virtual service, we will be inviting those who wish to partake in the ritual marking of the sign of the cross, either with ashes or with water or olive oil.

The first impact of the pandemic, not being able to gather, makes our celebration harder; the second impact in a way makes it easier. Namely, that in the face of a global pandemic we are starkly confronted with our own mortality. COVID-19 has not discriminated between so-called “good” and “bad” people; and although a vaccine is now, thankfully, being made available – we have no guarantees against some future virus. Ash Wednesday is, at its core, the day in which we are called to face our own mortality. This is not about making us feel bad, neither is this morbid; this is simply a naming of the truth, “We are dust and to dust we shall return.” We are dying—and no diet, self-help book, or spiritual discipline will save us from this. Only the death and resurrection of Christ can save us—and if you show up for Easter you will encounter the news that it does just that!

We hope you will join us for Ash Wednesday with its invitation to keep a holy Lent.

Keeping a Holy Lent

Most of know that for many Christians, Lent, the 40 day period between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, is a time for “*giving something up.*” Why? To make us more attractive to God? (*Ah, but God loves us already*) To make ourselves good, or at least approaching goodness in a world filled with bad people? (*Ah, but Jesus said only God is good.*) What if, instead, it was about making us more alive.

At its core Lent is preparation for Easter, with the Easter news that only God can save us—and does! That promise has power to reshape our lives now, in this life, before we physically die. That reshaping isn’t really about being made better, its about being made new.

We are made new when something old is put to death and something new is brought to life. Time and again what needs to die is the old selfish-self in us who struggles for control and who keeps trying to fill the emptiness with things that don’t ultimately succeed in doing so. We are made new when the Holy Spirit gives birth to a new creature inside of us who turns to God to fill the emptiness, and who trades in control for trust. With that in mind, here are some suggestions for keeping Lent:

1. **Give up** something where you have a sense that there is “too much.” Too much binge watching, too much alcohol, too much snark, too much shopping, too much of ____ (fill in the blank) that you are using to keep a sense of control and/or fill the emptiness.
2. **Take on** a regular discipline of prayer and slow, devotional reading of scripture. Prayer, to keep connected with God. Scripture, to allow the Holy Spirit to remind you who you are, and who God is, and how humans keep ending up with struggle, and how God keeps coming along side to deliver.
3. **Give away** something: money for those in need, food for the hungry, time for friends bearing burdens. This out of loyalty to God, trusting that God uses our simple acts of neighbor love to make alive.

Blessings on the Lenten journey, Pastor Maehl

Nurturing Faith

Keeping Lent

February 17 - Ash Wednesday Worship

A virtual bi-lingual (English and Spanish) service will be held jointly with the Santuario congregation. The service will begin at **7:00 pm** and will be offered via Facebook Live.

Lenten Wednesdays—*See Column on right.*

Lenten Daily Prayer—On weekdays in Lent,

Monday through Friday, beginning on February 18, Vicar Wylie will be leading a brief morning devotions and prayer. This will be offered at 9:00 am via Facebook Live. Note, given that this is being offered via FB Live, you can join in at 9 am or center yourself in these prayerful devotions later in the day.

Devotional Resources—For those seeking to ground their Lenten journey with daily devotions, watch your “This Week” email for a PDF of a Lenten Devotional or you can receive it daily by email by subscribing to the free resource **God Pause** offered by Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Go to luthersem.edu/godpause/lenten-devotional.

Keeping Lent with Children—here are some ideas:

- Get a copy of the [Spark Story Bible](#) (Patti Thisted Arthur). On certain nights of the week (*or each night*) read one story with dinner and discuss the brief reflection question provided. Don't worry about reading stories in order, perhaps let the children pick. Check out [Biblo.com](#) for inexpensive used versions.
- Sign up to donate food (top of page 4) and then shop with your children for the items.
- Pick one unessential that your children often see you purchasing and stop purchasing that during Lent. Have your child help you calculate the money you are saving and then have them help you choose how to give that money away.

Attention to Daily Bread

Lenten Wednesdays

Starting Feb 24

7:00 pm: Evening Prayer

7:30 pm: Guest Speaker & Conversation

On five Lenten Wednesdays, we will engage in evening prayer via Facebook Live, followed by roughly 30 minutes with a guest speaker and conversation via Zoom. This is being coordinated by the Justice and Service team, with most all of the guest speakers coming from our congregation.

The themes are as follows:

Feb 24: We Share Daily Bread

Guest speakers will discuss how we are sharing food through our congregational support of Waltham Mutual Aid and Chaplains on the Way.

Mar 3: We Purchase Daily Bread

Guest speakers will discuss personal experience with purchasing food through farmer's markets, farm shares, and other local means.

Mar 10: We Choose Daily Bread

Guest speakers will discuss their relationship with food living as vegetarians.

Mar 17: Means of Daily Bread

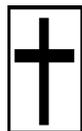
Guest speakers will discuss creating their own home business; engaging the economy in an alternate way.

Mar 24: Daily Bread for All

A guest speaker will discuss feeding programs in the local Waltham community.

We invite you to join in on either or both parts of our Wednesday gatherings. A zoom link for the second part will be provided in the “This Week from First Lutheran” e-news.

Walking Together in God's Love



*From the
Vicar*

Lenten Daily Prayer

When I was a kid, I did not like to pray or read devotions. There was just something about them that I couldn't seem to get into. It seemed forced, not at all authentic. I would much rather sing a couple of hymns than read from a devotional book or try to form the "right" words to pray.

As we all know, Lent is coming. And yes, lucky for me, we are entering a time of prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. Yes, Vicar Wylie, prayer is a discipline of Lent. So I guess I have to do it, right? Or, can I phrase the question a different way: so I guess a *get* to do it, right? I think I might be more likely to take up this discipline if I do so with an attitude of humility and opportunity. Lent offers us the opportunity to try to spend some more time with God. We have the opportunity to form a new habit.

On Monday through Friday during Lent, I invite you to join me for morning devotions and prayer at 9 am via Facebook Live **beginning on February 18th**. We will sing a verse of a hymn, I will read a passage from Scripture, we will pray, and then we will sing another verse of a hymn. It will take no more than a few minutes. This is an opportunity for me to be more intentional with prayer during this season of Lent. This is also an opportunity to pray in community and with accountability. And some days we will forget, and other days we will not. At least we are trying.

- Vicar Wylie

Annual Meeting Update

Our annual meeting was held via Zoom on Sunday, January 31, and had over 50 people in attendance. (How wonderful to see so many faces!) Highlights include:

Budget: A proposed budget of \$307,793 was amended to include a \$253 raise for the sexton (5%) and a 1% raise for Cynthia Niiler and Pastor Maehl; provided that the combined impact on the budget was not over \$2,000. This has since been confirmed by the finance team.

Intern: We voted to host an intern for the 2021-2022 academic year. The cost of an intern is expected to be roughly \$41,000. We were able to do this because of gifts and pledges to the Intern Fund of \$30,612 from individuals and \$11,000 from the Nelson Board.

Transitions: We noted significant transitions in leadership within the congregation including:

- We thanked **Norman Adams** for his 25 years faithful and devoted service as chair of the property committee and welcomed **Steve Hoff, Alan Sieving, and Ted Sjodin** who are serving as new co-chairs.
- We thanked **Scott Niemann** for his 10 years of diligent effort serving as treasurer, and welcomed **Susan Pintus** as new treasurer.
- We thanked **Jen Lambert** and **Susan Pintus** who have stepped down as co-chairs of the Justice and Service Team and welcomed **Emily Citrone** and **Signe Johns** as new co-chairs.
- We thanked **Janice Ostrander** and **Susan Pintus** for their faithful service as members of the church council and voted **Jennifer Lambert** and **Beth Melillo** as new council members. We also voted **Steve Mischke** and **Cathy Sukow** to serve as new members of the Nelson Board.

Officers of the congregation are: Ann Sjodin (president), LuAnn Kimker (vice-president) Julie Weeden (secretary), and Susan Pintus (treasurer).

Doing Justice and Serving Others

40 Days of Lent Feeding 40 Families

The Justice and Service Team invite your support of our plan to provide meals to 40 families over the 40 days of Lent. You are welcome to support in one or more of the following ways:

- 1) **Provide Food.** We have an online signup for providing food: rice, beans, sugar, etc. We invite you to signup and commit to bringing 10 units of a particular item. And **please deliver to the church by Ash Wednesday, February 17.** To signup see: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-alCwjtBjSUtbM6t4Hjs9oz2RshXLQD_8ndlKsFd8RY/edit#gid=0
- 2) **Provide a financial donation** of any amount to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Instead of including meat and other perishables, we are planning to include two \$25 gift cards in each meal delivery; one gift card each from two local markets: the new Cowboy Supermarket on Main St. in Waltham and Dispensa Familiar on Elm St. in Waltham. All gifts to the Pastor's Discretionary between now and Easter, unless otherwise indicated, will be used for this and/or other feeding programs.
- 3) **Help deliver food** - Our primary delivery time will be Sunday mornings between 9:00 and 10:30 am. If you would like to help with delivery please contact Pastor Maehl tmaehl@rcn.com.

We thank God for daily bread, and respond to God's call to share daily bread with others.

Diaper Depot

We continue to contribute to the Waltham Diaper Depot. In February, we are planning on purchasing, repackaging, and donating 3200 size 5 diapers using money previously donated to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

Donation Thanks

In December we contributed \$540 in local benevolence funds to Temple Beth Israel's Warming Center Program. During the winter months, Temple Beth Israel is generously opening their facility on Sunday afternoons, providing a warm and comfortable space for unhoused persons in our community. Recently we received the following note from Rabbi David Finkelstein,

Dear People of First Lutheran, I was so touched by the generous contribution First Lutheran made to the Warming Center Program of Temple Beth Israel. Thank you for joining us in this effort to embrace the unhoused in Waltham with care and comfort. It means a lot to me personally to have First Lutheran's support. Wishing you all good health and awareness of God's nearness and love.

Rabbi David Finkelstein.

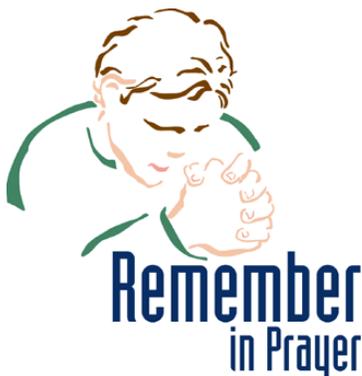
Local Benevolence

At our annual meeting we reported that Over \$23,000 in Pastor's Discretionary funds, plus \$2,951 from our annual budget designated for local benevolence was shared with other organizations and individuals beyond our congregation's walls. Organizations include: Chaplains on the Way, The Waltham Family School, The Waltham Partnership for Youth, The Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, Lutheran Campus Ministry in the Fenway, Healthy Waltham, The Waltham Diaper Depot, Waltham Mutual Aid, The Community Day Center, and Camp Calumet. Additionally, individuals were helped with food, rent, moving, and medical expenses.

We give thanks for the many organizations in our community that are caring for others, and we give thanks that we are able to share with others.

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*); Cleo Carsten (*relative of the Biters*); 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*); Sheila Landsman (*knitting group friend*); Sylvia and Chris Lee-Thompson (*friend of Susan Pintus*); Myles Martins and parents (*infant nephew of Cat Niemann*); Mary Ann (*friend of Carol Hansen*); 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 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*); Wayne & Carol Sukow (*parents of Cathy Sukow*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

For those who grieve: the family and friends of Ruth Lovequist.

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.

Walking Together in God's Love

First Lutheran Committees and Boards

Church Council: Ann Sjodin, president; LuAnn Kimker, vice-president; Julie Weeden, secretary; Susan Pintus, treasurer.

Nelson Board*: Geri Nederhoff, president; Janice Ostrander, treasurer

Justice and Service Team: Emily Citrone and Signe Johns, co-chairs

Faith Formation Team: Lori Hrdlicka, chair

Property Committee: Steve Hoff, Alan Sieving, Ted Sjodin, co-chairs

Intern Committee: Jennifer Lambert, chair

* The Nelson Memorial Apartments, Inc. is a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation made up of First Lutheran members. The board oversees five units of affordable housing, caring for tenants, and seeks to care for seniors in our community.

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: Julie Weeden
Treasurer: Susan Pintus

Holly Diaz
Sammy Kalisa
Jennifer Lambert
Beth Mellilo
Curt Schroeder

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.