

The Messenger

A newsletter of the people of First Lutheran Church, Waltham

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham
The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
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June/July 2021
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*We are not all in the same boat,
but we are all caught in the same
storm.*

Perhaps you have read this or something similar on social media or somewhere else. It names an important truth about our current reality; namely, we have all been impacted by the pandemic, but not all in the same ways. We have had varying levels of isolation, and faced a range of challenges in working in-person, remotely, or not at all. We have all had harder and easier weeks, but not necessarily at the same time.

In a way, there is an aspect of this reality that is true in all seasons of life, whether living in the midst of a pandemic or not. Consider, for instance, our spiritual journeys. We each may have vibrant seasons and dry seasons, but not necessarily at the same time. There are times when we are resonating with others through deep conversation, Bible studies, book studies, or the words of engaging authors; and then there are times when we sense we are not. Still in ways, woven into community, we are there for one another. Still in ways, God is there for us, whether felt or not.

Now in this moment, we may sense that we are on the verge of moving out of the pandemic. We are not quite out of the storm yet, though with the ever increasing number of vaccinated persons (and the increasing traffic levels) we can feel it abating. We understand that we will soon be living into the reality of whatever the “new normal” of a post-pandemic world looks like. I invite you to consider what that might mean for you on your spiritual journey.

Will you attend worship regularly? In person or remote? Note that whenever we do officially reopen (to be determined by the reopening team), our plan is to continue to stream worship services via Facebook Live.

Along with worship, what about other ancient and enduring Christian practices? Like prayer? Or the sacred art of saying “No,” (otherwise known as sabbath keeping)?

If you sense it is time in your spiritual journey to more deeply explore these and/or other traditional Christian practices I highly recommend the following book:

**Soul Feast, An Invitation
to the Christian Spiritual Life,**
by Marjorie J. Thompson

This is a beautifully written book, a spiritual classic, filled with traditional Christian practices and wisdom. If you do purchase a copy, perhaps for summer reading, do get the newly revised edition (2014). Also, although it is not difficult to read, I have found that like good food, it is best savored, read at a slow place. I recently read it in small bites, during early morning hours over many weeks. If you do read it, I would be delighted to have conversation with you about it; simply email me.

Why this? Why now? Because as the storm of the pandemic abates and we move into a “World of Reopening,” there may be increased demands, unexpected challenges, and spiritual dangers. To be re-grounded in God, reformed into the image of Christ, and re-inspired by the Holy Spirit is the soul’s best way forward.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Nurturing Faith

Worship Update

Saturdays: We will continue to offer worship in the parking lot at 4:30 pm on Saturdays through July 24. Note that, in line with CDC recommendations, **masks are now optional**. We do ask that you continue to be courteous to others around you who choose to continue to wear a face mask and remain socially distant.

Sundays: Summer worship time changes to **9:30 am on July 4**. We continue with Sunday virtual worship at:

- 10:30 am through June 27
- 9:30 am beginning on July 4

Note that Facebook Live services are available at the time of airing or anytime after. So although we will begin worship at 9:30 beginning July 4, you will still be able to watch at 10:30 or any time after.

Wednesdays: Given staff vacation schedules, we have taken a break from Wednesday evening prayer for the summer. We hope to resume in September.

Reopening Decisions: The church council has formed a "Reopening Team" who will begin meeting in June to make decisions about reopening. Team members include: Jennifer Lambert, Pastor Maehl, Beth Melillo, Cynthia Niiler, Catherine Pinch, Ann Sjodin, and Julie Weeden.

Capital Campaign Beginnings

For roughly two years, the church council has been considering the timing for a Capital Campaign that would address the following major items:

- Necessary repairs to the church tower (Cost estimate \$150,000 to \$200,000)
- Renovation of the Pearson Room
- Update to sanctuary carpets/flooring.

The council believes it is now time to explore the possibility of a campaign with the rest of the congregation.

In May, the council had a very fruitful conversation with Pastor Renee Liabraaten from Renaissance Consulting. Some of you may remember that she led a successful capital campaign for us in 2010. Thanks to an anonymous gift, we have contracted with Pastor Renee to lead a preparatory phase to a Capital Campaign that is centered on crafting, communicating, and clarifying a vision.

This phase will begin in September. At that time we expect to be prepared to share:

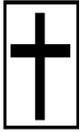
- A preliminary vision for a renovated Pearson Room developed by architect Brad Nederhoff.
- Details of tower repairs
- A preliminary vision for updates to the sanctuary flooring prepared by the Interior Care Team.

Pastor Liabraaten will be present for several days in September and will be conducting approximately 30 interviews with households in the congregation along with 2-3 focus groups. The purpose of these interviews and focus groups will be to share the vision, garner feedback in order to clarify the vision, and determine whether or not there is broad support in the congregation. If it is clear that we are prepared to move forward with a capital campaign, then we will do so.

I ask that you keep our congregation in your prayers; and I offer my thanks to the anonymous donor who has financed this preparatory phase of the process.

- Pastor Maehl

Walking Together in God's Love



From the Vicar

One of my favorite portions of scripture is the wedding at Cana in John's Gospel. After John's cosmic explanation of Jesus, God incarnate,

John then has us meet John the Baptist, and Jesus begins to call his disciples. It seems a little out of place that Jesus' ministry after this triumphant introduction begins with a party, a big party, with wine, good wine. When the wine has run out, he calls the wedding servants to fill up large water vessels, and when they are brought to the wedding host, he finds abundant and fine wine. Jesus' first miracle to make good wine and keep the party going.

Church, we have been through a lot. We have lived in loneliness, in despair, in anxiousness, in fear for more than a year due to this pandemic. It has been long and hard. At the same time, over the past several weeks, I have been able to experience moments of community that resonated with the wedding at Cana. After more than a year, this past Saturday, we gathered as a community for worship and fellowship as we enjoyed food and drink and nothing less than the presence of God. During a week of above-average heat, I was able to visit some seniors. The least I could do was bring ice cream on a hot day! I can not forget mentioning gathering with our confirmation youth and their families to celebrate public affirmation of their baptisms! Thank God for getting this pandemic under control and being able to see these members of our community!

It has been a joy to share in these times as a community where God has been present even in our scatteredness and distance. As God has promised, God has and will continue to bring us back into the beloved community to care for one another, to enjoy fellowship and fun, to be in deep and abiding relationships. I give thanks to God for this community, a community that gifts this world radical hospitality, mutual care, and holding space for all people to simply be.

~ Vicar Wylie (they, them)

Intern Update

Vicar Wylie's last weekend with us will be July 24-25. Vicar Wylie will be preaching at both the Saturday afternoon (parking lot) and Sunday morning (virtual) worship services. Hopefully the weather will cooperate on Saturday so that we can share food and celebrate their ministry among us after worship.

Nelson Board Update

As reported in our May newsletter, the Nelson Board is in the process of purchasing an apartment building that abuts the church on Eddy Street. Thankfully, the process continues to move forward. We now have full approval for \$420,000 in Community Preservation funds, (voted on by the Waltham City Council on May 10). The next steps (being actively worked on) are to secure a \$500,000 mortgage and to work with the Waltham legal department to draft language that would indicate that the four units in the apartment building will be kept affordable in perpetuity. Please continue to keep this process in your prayers.

Blessing Box



Our thanks to Penny Alexander for beautifully repainting our outside food storage bin; and our thanks to Leslie Waters for checking on it weekly. Note that neighbors of the church are joining us in making contributions of food; while other neighbors are enjoying the blessings.

Doing Justice and Serving Others



Youth and Advocacy

Dear newly confirmed and current post-confirmation youth alike,

On Sunday, June 27th, I will be hosting a youth event where we will learn about affordable housing and how we can address this matter of justice as people of faith. We will grow in our awareness of the need for affordable housing, take bold next step as individuals and a community, see how faith relates to matters of justice. We will also learn about the different levels on which change occurs (interpersonal relationships, public policy, community organizing).

We will begin at 11:45 am (after a short break after church) and run until 3 pm. Lunch will be provided. **Because we are inviting speakers from the Waltham community to come and speak with us, we need a firm commitment by June 15th.** Please email Vicar Wylie (wcook@ses.plts.edu) if you plan on attending and indicate if you have any dietary restrictions.

I look forward to seeing you all there,

Vicar Wylie



Several of our First Lutheran children and Youth will be attending two weeks of summer camp at Camp Calumet. Note that due to the pandemic all campers go for two weeks this summer instead of one. Thanks to all who have made donations to the Calumet Scholarship Fund, it is greatly appreciated.



VBS Summer 2021

Take-home - July 5-9

In Person
Closing Celebration
Sat., July 10

We are beyond excited to be able to offer a VBS program this summer! This summer's theme is "Knights of North Castle." The post-confirmation youth have been busy at work preparing this take-home VBS program for our elementary-aged youth.

The take-home portion of the program will run Monday, July 5th, through Friday, July 9th. Each day, there will be a YouTube video to learn the music and actions, hear Bible stories, and with instructions to complete age-appropriate crafts.

We invite you to participate at your own pace. We will explore how we can put on God's power by armoring up with truth, justice, peace, faith, and salvation.

Then to end our week, on Saturday, July 10, we will have an in-person closing celebration at Nipper Maher Park (65 Dartmouth St, Waltham), full of fun activities, food, and music. The precise time for that will be communicated soon.

We look forward to armoring up together as we learn more about God! So that we can know how many take home kits to prepare, please register at

<https://forms.gle/1ALFchQkW2HiF1tm6>

- Vicar Wylie

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



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

Friends and Family: Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Heather Budd (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); 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*); 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*); Chris Lochran (*friend of Connie and Jeanette Fagone*); 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*); Peter Melanson (*brother-in-law of Matt and Erika Jerram*); 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*); Ann Sewich (*sister of Meg Maehl*); 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: Tod Moore (*nephew of Penny Waters*)

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.

Congratulations Graduates!



Emma Pinch is graduating from Newton North High School in June. Emma will be attending American University in Washington, DC this fall.

Richard Pinch is graduating from Newton North High School in June. Richard will be attending Northeastern University in Boston this fall.

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
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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 / 9:30 am as of 7/4
Wednesdays: 7:00 pm Evening Prayer
both 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.