

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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A Reopening Update

Thanks to all of you who have filled out our reopening questionnaire. To date we have received 35 responses, and these represent 70 people (adults, youth, and children). If you have not yet responded we invite you to do so by August 1st; a link can be found in our weekly "This Week from First Lutheran" e-news.

Here is how the process has been planned. In early August the data from the questionnaire will be shared with the reopening team who will then meet on August 15. Based upon the results and current (at that time) recommendations from the CDC (taking into account COVID variants), this team will make a proposal to the church council. Then whatever plans are decided upon will be shared with the congregation. In the mean time, I will be praying for God's help in our discernment and I ask for your prayers too.

I do want to share with you that when the reopening team first met, it was suggested that we start by establishing our guiding principles. There are two in particular that have been important in shaping my own views about all of this.

The first is that we would keep in mind the most vulnerable among us. In my mind that is the children who are not yet eligible for a vaccine (and who by virtue of their age cannot access worship in a meaningful way virtually), and those who have most suffered the mental and emotional effects of isolation, particularly those who live alone.

A second guiding principle that has been important for me is that we continue to be welcoming particularly of guests and strangers who might show up unannounced.

I do realize that once decisions are made in mid-to-late August you may end up pleased or displeased, in agreement or in disagreement. With that in mind I invite you to keep in mind the following:

- 1) We will continue to live-stream our 10:30 Sunday service for those who cannot be physically present or are not yet comfortable gathering.
- 2) What we plan for September will likely evolve in the months following. Consider September as "Phase 1" and please do share your opinions.
- 3) We probably will experiment with multiple worship options. If something feels to you overly constrained, it is probably because we are taking into account the physical risks to children. If something feels to you overly "open," it is probably because we are taking into account the mental/emotion needs of those who are very much in need of community.
- 4) There will be no passing of an offering plate and no passing of the peace. We will, however, offer communion; just how we do so still has not yet been decided. If you do choose to worship in person and are not comfortable with how we are offering communion, please feel no compulsion to participate; and if you'd like, I can serve you bread and/or wine after the service.

Again I ask for your prayers: your prayers for an end to this pandemic, and your prayers for God's guidance as we discern how best to move forward.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Nurturing Faith

Worship Update



**Worship
Schedule
for the
Summer**

Sunday Worship: during the month of August we will offer one virtual worship service at 9:30 am via Facebook Live.

Note that Facebook Live services are available at the time of airing or anytime afterwards.

Intern Update

On Sunday, July 25 we will bid farewell to Vicar Wylie Cook. We give thanks to God for Vicar Wylie's faithful service among us. On August 31, our next intern Vicar Samantha DiBiasco will begin her internship and we will formally welcome her during worship on September 5.



**Vacation
Schedule**

Staff Vacation Schedule

Pastor Maehl will be on Vacation July 26 through August 11. On Sunday, August 1 we welcome Hector Lugo as our guest worship leader. Hector is a seminary student who has been working with Santuario Luterano and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lawrence. On August 8, we welcome Pastor Angelika Zollfrank as our guest worship leader. Pastor Zollfrank serves as a chaplain at McLean Hospital in Bedford. Cynthia Niiler will be on vacation August 16-30. In her absence Lindsay Albert will be serving as our musician during worship on August 22 and 29.

Nelson Board Update

We are on track to close on the new apartment at the end of August. Thanks be to God! We still are awaiting final confirmation from the bank for our mortgage. Please continue to keep this exciting venture in your prayers.

Youth Advocacy Day

Thank you to all the post-confirmation youth who joined us for a day of learning about affordable housing on June 27th. We learned about why we engage in justice issues as Lutherans and the different ways we can make a change in our community. We had a conversation with a community organizer from WATCH (Waltham Alliance to Create Housing), Council Member Paz from the Waltham City Council, and Geri Nederhoff from the Nelson Memorial Apartments. We had an attendance of 12 in total, including our speakers and youth. A big thank you to our speakers from the community. It is a gift to see our youth's passion matched with people working to make change happen at various levels in our community. *See page 4 for more information on addressing homelessness and affordable housing.*

Update on VBS

VBS was a success! The post-confirmation youth packaged and delivered 34 kits with craft supplies for elementary-age youth at First Lutheran. A heartfelt thanks to our youth for their help in planning this. Another big thank you to Emily Citrone, Vicar Wylie, and Pastor Maehl for delivering these kits. We had 25 youth (post-confirmation and elementary-aged) attend our VBS celebration in the park! We had fun telling Bible stories, playing games, enjoying food, and of course, playing on the play structure and in the water! A thank you to all who brought various things and helped in various ways.

Walking Together in God's Love

From the Vicar

*Tell me why the stars do shine,
Tell me why the ivy twines,
Tell me why the ocean's blue,
And I will tell you just why I love you.*

I could write so many words, and as I do, the tears stream down my face. I have two things to offer you as words of farewell: deep gratitude and love.

I am in deep gratitude for all of your love, your patience, your grace. I am grateful for your willingness to try new things, help me learn, and mold me into a pastor ready to serve this church.

I am grateful for our elementary-aged youth, who showed me that God is playful and rambunctious. I am grateful for our confirmation and post-confirmation youth who loved and embraced Cosmo and me and helped me not accept easy answers. I give thanks to the parents, who gifted me with and trusted me with the youth. I give thanks to God for our knitters, who knitted my soul back together and knitted each other in a community of mutuality and interdependence on more than one occasion. I give thanks to Pastor Maehl and Cynthia, who invited me to be their colleagues and showed me the power of mutual leadership and collaboration.

As I have loved you all through teaching, preaching, and giving pastoral care, I trust that you have experienced the presence of God. There were times that in my attempt to communicate God's

love for you, I felt myself pausing and realizing that in those moments, it was you who was ministering to me.

From one of my favorite movies, *Moana*, as Moana is about to give up hope, the spirit of her grandmother comes to her and sings:

*The people you love will change you
the things you have learned will guide you
and nothing on Earth can silence
the quiet voice still inside you.*

Your love has changed me, the things you have learned will always guide me, you have affirmed God's Spirit in me. Moreover, I also trust that God's love has changed you, the things you have learned will guide you, and that nothing will silence God's quiet and powerful presence inside each one for you. We were created for such a time as this. This is not goodbye. I trust that we will continue to be in each other's thoughts, prayers, and souls because we are all one, of which Christ is the chief cornerstone. May God be with you till we meet again. Peace be with you.

~Vicar Wylie (they, them)



Doing Justice and Serving Others

“For Such a Time as This” Pray. Fast. Act.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Christians have a long history of assisting people without housing by providing shelter, caring for immediate needs, safeguarding their dignity and advocating for an end to homelessness and poverty. This concern reflects God’s mandate to care for those who live on the margins of society, to show hospitality to strangers and to seek justice for the most vulnerable. We are also called to respond to the scandal of homelessness by creating the public will to address the factors that put people at risk, including the chronic lack of safe, affordable housing.

On a given night, by a conservative estimate, [faith-based groups house more than 150,000 people](#) in emergency shelters and transitional or permanent housing programs. But the growing affordable-housing crisis creates immense challenges for the many churches that are dedicated to helping communities flourish and grow. [Recent reports from the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) indicate that **8.3 million extremely low-income households spent over half of their income on housing and did not receive any federal assistance in 2015**. In fact, [only a quarter of the poorest households eligible receive any assistance](#). These structural challenges can trap people in poverty, leaving too many one paycheck away from eviction or even homelessness.

Shelter and affordable housing are more than simple commodities. A secure home is the foundation for people to build their lives and thrive. As unique stakeholders in the fight to end homelessness, people of faith can advocate for good policies that curb poverty by supporting:

HOMELESSNESS ASSISTANCE GRANTS McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants help fund local and state assistance programs across the country, offering communities the tools they need to provide outreach, shelter, supportive services and more for people experiencing homelessness.

We urge Congress to fully fund McKinney-Vento programs for \$2.456 billion in FY2018.

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP) Energy is a critical resource, and as the seasons turn, many low-income people struggle to keep the heat on in their homes. Programs such as LIHEAP give states the funding to help people with low incomes with the highest energy costs meet their heating and cooling needs.

We urge Congress to fully fund LIHEAP for \$3.39 billion in FY2018.

TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE (TBRA) Rental assistance applied in innovative ways gives low-income people the funds they need to find affordable housing and is more fiscally efficient than emergency shelters. TBRA programs provide assistance to individuals to help them afford market-rate housing units.

We urge Congress to fully fund Tenant-Based Rental Assistance contracts for \$21.365 billion in FY2018.

SENIOR HOUSING As the U.S. population ages, lack of affordable housing for seniors has become a critical issue for many on fixed incomes. Supportive Housing for the Elderly funds sponsors and nonprofits to develop and operate affordable senior housing.

We urge Congress to fully fund Section 202 Housing for the Elderly for \$573 million in FY2018.

RURAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE Rural communities face some of the steepest housing challenges in the nation. Lack of development and renovation over decades has resulted in many hidden costs, from rapid physical deterioration, poor insulation, overcrowding and more.

We urge Congress to maintain all Section 521 Rental Assistance contracts for \$1.405 billion in FY2018.

VETERANS HOUSING Homelessness among veterans has fallen by 47 percent since 2010, but it still remains a serious problem. The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) efficiently helps veterans connect with case-management and clinical services to help them secure housing and safety.

We urge Congress to appropriate HUD-VASH for \$60 million in FY2018.

LEARN MORE ABOUT: [Faith-based organizations and homelessness](#)
[Affordable housing stats in your area](#)

[HUD’s Worst Case Needs report](#)
[Trends in housing affordability](#)



Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



Members of our First Lutheran Community: Sarah Allen; Jen Biter; Wylie Cook; Connie Danielson; Rosy Hebert; June Jahrling; Erika Jerram; Steve Latter; 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*); Elaine Chan (*aunt of Catherine Pinch*); 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*); 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*); 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*); Matthew Stanhope (*partner of Jane Danielson*); Wayne & Carol Sukow (*parents of Cathy Sukow*); Tara Waters (*family of Penny & Marquette Alexander*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

Thanksgiving for Healing: Mary Ann (*friend of Carol Hansen*)

For those who grieve: the family and friends of:

- Lorne Macarthur (*father of Christine Kelleher*) - July 14
- Tom Maxwell (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*) - July 11
- Nancy Russell - July 5

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 to
Michelle Landstrom and Seth Coluzzi
 who will be married on August 14.

Michelle was formerly a member of our church.

August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 am Worship 5:00 pm Santuario	2	3	4	5 10:00 am Knitting Grp <u>PR</u>	6	7
Pastor Maehl Vacation						
8 9:30 am Worship 5:00 pm Santuario	9	10	11	12 10:00 am Knitting Grp <u>PR</u>	13	14
Pastor Maehl Vacation						
15 9:30 am Worship 5:00 pm Santuario	16	17	18	19 10:00 am Knitting Grp <u>PR</u>	20	21
Cynthia Vacation						
22 9:30 am Worship 5:00 pm Santuario	23	24	25	26 10:00 am Knitting Grp <u>PR</u>	27	28
Cynthia Vacation						
29 9:30 am Worship 5:00 pm Santuario	30	31				
Cynthia Vacation						

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: 9:30 am for the summer
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.