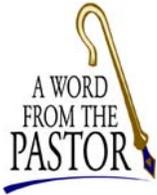


The Messenger

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

September 2021
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In our life together as congregation, I see this as being a season of miracles, even as we all have faced great challenges living in a time of pandemic. Two miracles in particular come to mind:

The first is the Nelson Board's new apartment. It was on March 2, 2021 that the former owner called and left a message on my voicemail indicating that he wanted to sell. The closing for the building was on August 31, Truthfully, I don't think we would have been in a position to act on this 5 years ago, or even 3. It was just the right time; God's time! Thanks be to God for using our congregation to create more affordable housing in Waltham.

A second miracle is the arrival of our new intern Vicar Samantha DiBiaso. In early Spring, I went through the standard interview process, but was informed that there was no intern for us this year. In a typical year this would cause me great stress, but for whatever reason a calm came over me. I said in prayer, "God if you want us to have an intern we'll have one, if not so be it; it's your church after all." A week later I was contacted out of the blue by a representative of Trinity Seminary; we had never had an association with them before. Trinity seminary, I learned, places interns for not one, but two years which means that this next intern will be with us before, during, and after my 2022 mid-year sabbatical. I truly sense the hand of God in this too.

Now after 18 months apart we are anticipating in person gatherings. Still, however, much is unknown and unplanned for the coming months in our life together. We're not sure what challenges we will face; however I am trusting that God will continue to guide us, provide for us, and surprise us; in God's own time. It is after all God's church. May we be we open and responsive to where God calls and leads.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl



Pizza in the Park

Following 10:30 worship on:

Sunday, September 26

**Cedarwood Playground
25 Intervale Road, Waltham**

We will provide pizza and individual cans of seltzer and juice boxes. (*Pizza will be served by someone masked and gloved*). Come and enjoy food and fellowship. Feel free to bring lawn chairs; and for those who like to run, soccer balls, footballs, etc.

September Worship Schedule

Sunday, September 5

9:30 am Virtual Sunday worship
via Facebook Live
Installation of Vicar Samantha DiBiaso

Saturday, September 11

7:00 pm Virtual Service of Lament
and Thanksgiving via Facebook Live

Sunday, September 12, 19, 26

8:15 and 10:30 am in person
10:30 am also streamed on Facebook

Nurturing Faith

Reopening Plans Starting September 12

The following are tentative plans; things may stay the same or change in the weeks following depending upon what is happening in the wider world and depending upon what we are learning as we begin regathering in person. We ask everyone to be as kind to one another and as patient as possible.

We will continue to live-stream the 10:30 service (9:30 through September 5); thus for anyone uncomfortable meeting in person, virtual worship will still be available.

10:30 am Sunday service:

- We plan on offering this service in person beginning September 12
- There WILL BE singing by the congregation at this service.
- Congregants will be asked to mask. Worship leaders will be unmasked while leading worship.
- Every other pew will be roped off. This will allow 13 pews downstairs and 4 in the balcony.
- Worshippers will be able to mark their own spacing, if they choose, with a laminated piece of paper with a line down the middle; these will be provided. *Example, you may choose to sit at the far-left end of a pew, you may then lay a marker 5 ft to the right (or 2 ft, or 6 ft). Those coming to the pew next will know to sit anywhere (within their own comfort level) beyond the marker.*
- Those who choose to sit closer to one another, effectively “bubbling” together may do so.
- We will set up Founder’s Hall to project the Facebook Live Stream on the big screen. This way there will be overflow seating available. *Note, we are aware that the music portion of the service might be a bit challenging in Founder’s Hall as there is a Facebook lag and one still can hear the organ playing upstairs.*
- We will not use hymnals. All parts of the service will be printed in a bulletin.
- There will be no offering collected (an offering plate will be in the rear of the sanctuary); also no passing of the peace.
- We will offer communion.

8:15 am Sunday service:

- Also beginning on September 12
- All the same protocols as the 10:30 am service will be in place with these exceptions: a) for now, there will be NO singing by the congregation, and b) this service will not be projected in Founder’s Hall.

For communion at both 8:15 and 10:30:

- We will continue to commune at the altar rail.
- Worship leaders will wear masks for this part of the service.
- We will leave the center gate open.
- We will invite individuals or family units to commune by themselves on one or the other side of the gate. (Please maintain social distancing as we cue-up for communion)
- BREAD: We ask that people come to the rail with masks on. The pastor or Vicar will then place bread in your hand and move away. At that point you may unmask and consume the bread.
- WINE/JUICE: For those who choose to partake, we will have a small table behind the altar rail with a tray of glasses and empty basket upon it. We will fill every-other space in the tray. Those who commune will reach for their own glass. An assistant minister will say the words, “The blood of Christ shed for you” from 6 or more feet away. The communicant can drink and then place the empty glass in the basket. They then re-mask and depart.

Fellowship afterwards:

- Fellowship may happen inside or out depending upon the weather.
- We will provide coffee and juice boxes for after worship.
- We will provide both reusable mugs and disposable cups for coffee, with individual sugar packets and small creamer containers.
- We ask that people remain masked while indoors

Nurturing Faith

Sunday Learning Hour

Confirmation: A new two-year confirmation program begins on September 12. The confirmation class will be meeting in person on Sundays at 9:00 am. Any youth who are in 7th grade and older are welcome to participate.

Post Confirmation: Post confirmation youth are invited to meet in-person on Sundays at 9:15 am, as they have been throughout the pandemic.

Adult Forums: We are planning on offering adult forums on Sunday mornings beginning in October. Watch for more information.

Sunday School: Members of the Faith Formation Team will meet in September to begin discussing the possibility of learning opportunities for children in the year ahead.

Timing of Learning Hour: We ask for your patience as we engage in reopening and begin learning from our experiences. You may notice that confirmation is scheduled to begin at 9:00 and post-confirmation at 9:15 am. This is for two reasons. The first is that over the Fall, Pastor Maehl will be the primary leader of confirmation and he needs to be part of a team that gathers at 10:00 to prepare for the streaming of worship. The second is that an earlier start time may be of help to confirmation families with younger unvaccinated children who wish to participate in the 8:15 service. Times may change as we learn from our experiences.

Reopening Team Thanks

Thanks to Jennifer Lambert, Pastor Maehl, Beth Melillo, Cynthia Niiler, Catherine Pinch, Ann Sjodin, and Julie Weeden for serving on the reopening team. The team met several times in person and communicated via email over three months. They sought to craft a plan that would take into consideration the most vulnerable; in particular unvaccinated children and those experiencing isolation.

Service of Lament and Thanksgiving

Saturday, September 11

7:00 pm via Facebook Live

On the eve of our first indoor, in-person worship services in 18 months, we will be streaming a service of lament and thanksgiving. Even as we prepare for the joy of regathering in person (for those who are able and choose to do so), we will take this opportunity to lay before God the struggles and significant losses of the past year and one-half, and we will offer prayers of thanksgiving for God's presence and support. Tune in if you are able.

Wednesday Evening Prayer

followed by Conversation

Beginning September 29 - 7:00 pm

Going deeper is part of the Christian journey. Over October and November, we will be partnering with three nearby Lutheran congregations for Evening Prayer followed by conversation focused on traditional ways of deepening spirituality.

These conversations will draw from the book **Soul Feast**, by Marjorie Thompson (the 2014 or 2015 version of this classic). Each chapter of the book focuses on one traditional means of deepening the spiritual life: sacred reading, prayer, corporate worship, keeping sabbath, hospitality, and more. The book can be purchased online or ordered through a local bookstore.

The pastors and interns of the participating congregations will take turn hosting the service of evening prayer, each in their own style. The services will be accessed via zoom, and a zoom link will be included in our weekly *This Week from First Lutheran* beforehand. You are welcome to tune in for the worship part alone, or stay on for conversation with others from participating congregations. Conversation may alternate between large group and smaller zoom breakout rooms. Also, you are welcome to participate whether or not you read the chapter of **Soul Feast** relevant for any particular week. We hope you will consider joining in.

Doing Justice and Serving Others

Nelson Apartments Update

We are delighted to announce that on Tuesday, August 31, the Nelson Memorial Apartments, Inc. purchased the four-unit apartment building abutting the church property on Eddy Street. Current leases will be honored; however, over the next year these apartments will be converted from market rate to affordable.

We give thanks to God for laying this astounding opportunity before us. So too, our thanks to Geri Nederhoff (Nelson Board president), Janice Osterlander (Nelson Board treasurer), and Kathryn McCowan (our realtor) for their extraordinary efforts. We also give thanks for the Waltham Community Preservation Commission who awarded us \$420,000 in Community Preservation Funds, and for the support of the Waltham City Counselors and Mayor Jeanette McCarthy. Thanks to for all the members of the Nelson Board for their behind the scenes support, and for all who have kept this in their prayers. May God continue to guide and bless the affordable housing ministry of this congregation!

Questionnaire Results

In July, a questionnaire was sent to those on our First Lutheran email list. Our thanks to all who submitted answers as it was very helpful in crafting our reopening plans. The following are some pieces of information :

- there were 47 responses representing 102 people (adults and children).
- Of the 44 willing to share vaccination status, there were 0 unvaccinated adults or youth reported.
- For the 10:30 service 55% expected to participate 3-4 times a month, with another 34% estimating 1-2 times per month.
- For the 8:15 service 33% expected to participate regularly.
- There was strong support for an outing in a park (now scheduled for 9/26) and other social and service events.



Integral Steps

A new music program called Integral Steps will be using rooms in our church basement two days each week.

Integral steps is a non-profit organization offering integrative learning involving music and movement. Currently, there will be group classes for ages 3-5 and 5-7 on Mondays and Fridays. Also, as this is a non-profit, scholarships are available. If you know of anyone who might benefit from this program direct them to the link below. <https://www.integralsteps.org/newengland.html#Waltham>

Fall Retreat

November 12-14

Blue Gentian Lodge, Londonderry, VT



We are planning for an adult retreat the weekend of November 12-14. We will begin after travel and dinner on Friday and conclude before lunch on Sunday. This weekend is open to all those who are beyond high school age and will include time for fellowship, reflection, games, and the continued nurturing of community with God and one another. Pastor Maehl will lead the retreat and will draw upon his experiences having recently completed an 18 month program called "The Soul of Leadership" offered through the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation (an organization that focuses on contemplative living and leadership).

The full cost is \$165 per person; however, we invite college/graduate students, and others with financial uncertainty to contribute less (*Speak with Pastor Maehl for more clarity*). The Cost includes 2 nights lodging and 4 meals. You may sign up using the following link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B44A8AF2CA75-fall>

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



We ask prayers for Eddie Hughes, a 17 year old member of this congregation who was hit by a train on August 18. Eddie lost part of his right leg and will be undergoing extensive rehabilitation. We thank God that he is alive and his prognosis is good. Please keep him, his parents Tracy and Ed, and his sister Shealy in your prayers. Notes can be sent to their home 19 Drexel Drive, North Chelmsford, MA 01863.

Members of our First Lutheran Community: Sarah Allen; Jen Biter; Connie Danielson; Rosy Hebert; Eddie Hughes; 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*); Bob Hofgren (*brother of Janice Ostrander*); 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*); Gary Swartzenberg (*friend of Janice and Dennis Ostrander*); 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*).

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.



Welcome Vicar Samantha!

On Sunday, September 5 we will officially welcome Vicar Samantha DiBiasco who began her internship this week. She hails from Virginia and is coming to us from Trinity Seminary in Ohio. We ask for your prayers for over the coming two years as she serves and learns among us.

May God bless her, and may God bless us through her, in the months to come.

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
firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

Vicar Samantha DiBiaso, Intern
sdibiaso@capital.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 on 9/5 via *Facebook Live*
Beginning 9/12
8:15 am in person
10:30 am in person and 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.