

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

March 2022
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Our congregational mission statement reads,

We perceive Christ calling us to:

Walk together in Gods love, nurturing faith, doing justice, serving all.

As I think about reopening after five weeks of all virtual worship, and as I consider the Church's annual call to "keep Lent," I find the actions in this mission statement helpful in organizing my thoughts.

Walk together: For some who are healing from injury, or are burdened by illness, or have compromised immune systems, being physically present with others at church is not currently either wise or a possibility. For others of us, however, it is. We are opening up, and expanding our opportunities to gather. At the center of our faith is our 'incarnational' God, that is the God who in Jesus shows up in the flesh. I invite you to consider making showing up for your church community part of your Lenten practice for 2022.

Nurturing Faith: Along with Sunday worship, we are adding Wednesday evening prayer and adult forums; also we are providing daily devotions. A word about each:

- Each week at our services of evening prayer (beginning on March 9) someone from the congregation will speak. Each speaker is a person who has sought to keep God central in their life (none of us does that perfectly) and has stories of God showing up, often in unexpected ways, with guidance and provision. I invite you listen in-person or virtually. *Hearing the faith stories of others has the power to nurture our faith.*

- I call your attention to the four-part adult forum series *Disagreeing About Things That Matter* (described on page 2). We are part of Christ's body, and Christ has come to bring reconciliation with God and one another. However, we live in a deeply polarized society, (and another presidential election cycle is only two years away). It is important for us practice conversation and learn how to seek common ground. *Engaging in deep conversations has the power to nurture our faith.*

- I have spent the last two months writing daily (weekday) devotions for Lent. In them I take words of Moses from Deuteronomy and lay them side-by-side with words and examples of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. Then, after offering some background, I provide questions for contemplation (*a word about that below). *Contemplating on scripture, as its intersects with the events of our daily life, has the power to nurture our faith.*

* Note, contemplation is not the same as meditation (mediation can be quite helpful, it's simply not the same). Whereas in mediation one seeks to empty the mind, in contemplation one seeks to focus the mind.

Doing Justice, Serving All: On Wednesday evenings we are offering an opportunity to prepare meals to give away to others, and to share food with one another (see pages 2 & 4 for more details). Gathering and serving in this way can help us to encourage one another in our varied Lenten journeys.

At various times and through varied means, God calls us to shift our ways and focus more deeply on God, who is love. Thus, in Lent we are invited to return to love as our ground and guide. I pray that as you discern how you will go about keeping lent this year, you will prayerfully consider these varied opportunities.

Blessed lent, Pastor Maehl

Nurturing Faith

Keeping Lent

March 2- Ash Wednesday Worship 7:30 pm

A bi-lingual (English and Spanish) service will be held jointly with the Santuario congregation. This service will include the optional imposition of ashes and holy communion. You are invited to attend in-person or tune in via Facebook Live.

Lenten Wednesdays: beginning on March 9, we will be gathering each Wednesday to prepare food for others, share food among ourselves, and worship. You are invited to participate in any or all of these activities:

- 5:30—7:00 pm: We will share in preparing a meal for guests of the Waltham Community Day Center. (*more about this on page 4*)
- 6:00—7:00 pm: soup and bread will be served for those who would like to share a meal with others.
- 7:15 We are offering a service of evening prayer that you may attend in-person or watch via Facebook Live. Note that in each service a member of the congregation will be sharing a part of their own faith journey.

Daily Devotions: Pastor Maehl has written a Lenten daily devotional resource. Part 1 (March 2-25) is available now; Part 2 will be available mid-March. These are available on our website's Devotions page:

<https://firstlutheranwaltham.org/devotions-2/>

A printed version is also available at church.

Lenten Offerings: We are lifting up the ELCA World Hunger program for special offerings during Lent. Donations can be made at the website below, or given through First Lutheran. More information about current World Hunger efforts can be found at

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/ELCA-World-Hunger>

Adult Forums

Sundays 9:15 am

Beginning on March 16, we are offering a four-week series "*Disagreeing About Things That Matter*" being led by Stephen Waldon, a member of First Lutheran who is a PhD student at Boston University. Drawing from both psychology and theology, this series will help us think about how and why we disagree with others in moral, political, and religious areas. We will discuss how we can understand others well while also holding our own strong values and beliefs.

Our adult forum schedule is as follows:

March 6: *Keeping Lent* - A conversation led by Pastor Maehl

March 13, 20, 27: *Disagreeing About Things That Matter*

April 3: Sabbatical plans and rationale led by Pastor Maehl and members of the church council.

April 10: Part four of *Disagreeing About Things That Matter*

April 17: Easter Sunday no Adult Forum

Sunday School

We tentatively planning on offering a "one-room school house" form of Sunday school on March 13 and 27. This will be held in Founder's Hall (so that we can be spread out) and we will have activities geared for school aged children (kindergarten through 6th grade).

Congregational Retreat

We were saddened to cancel our annual retreat to Camp Calumet due to the Omicron surge of the pandemic. Note that we have a reservation for February 24-26, 2023. Mark your calendars!

Serving Others



From the Vicar

Last week I had the opportunity to travel back to my seminary in Columbus, Ohio for my week-long intensive course for this spring semester.

This intensive course is a part of my Master of Divinity program at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, which allows me to be on internship for two years here at FLC. It was a joy to be reunited with my classmates, professors, and friends.

Throughout the week, we spent our days in class learning and wrestling with different interpretations for preaching. I love getting to preach and have learned so much about preaching already on internship, so this class was really fun to engage with.

What I continue to be reminded in my coursework and on internship is that the Bible has so many different ways to be interpreted, all depended upon our own lived experiences across time and space. I have a different experience interpreting the Bible as a young, white middle-class, able-bodied, US citizen, cis-gendered woman. My interpretation might look different than yours, than my siblings in the LGBTQIA+ community, than my siblings from different nations, and beyond. Yet, these differences are not meant to divide us; rather they are meant to weave us into the greater tapestry of all that God is. All of our differences in interpretation invite us into a wider understanding of God who is present and working in each of our own lived experiences.

In fact, the more interpretations we share in community and at God's table, the more room we can make for our siblings and neighbors to share in life. This Lenten season, I am journeying with a great sense of curiosity. I have so much to learn from our biblical ancestors' stories, your stories, and our stories that we will get to share at our Wednesday evening services. I look forward to listening and learning in our unfolding stories on the Lenten journey together.

Blessings to you this Lent,
Vicar Samantha

Sabbatical Update

My sabbatical begins after worship on Sunday, May 1 and I return on Monday, August 22. While I am gone Vicar Samantha will be here to provide pastoral care. Also, Pastor Angelika Zollfrank and Pastor Kristian Koehler will be sharing the Sunday morning duties with one of them here to preach and/or preside. Pastor Zollfrank is a chaplain at McClean Hospital and Pastor Koehler is a PhD student studying at Boston University.

Sabbaticals are a time for rest and renewal, and are particularly important in sustaining a long pastorate. For more information about why sabbaticals are important for pastors *and* congregations, and for more details about my plans, you are invited to the adult forum scheduled for April 3.

Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude for those who have made financial gifts toward this. That I have this time to step away, renew and recreate, is a great blessing. Thank you!

- Pastor Maehl

Thursday Knitters

We continue to meet most Thursdays (weather permitting) from 10 am until noon. Most of us do not knit, but find this a good time for conversation and fellowship. We welcome people of all ages. If you find yourself free on a Thursday morning, consider joining us. We'll have the coffee and tea on.

Thanks for Sharing

Thanks to all who donated coats, hats, scarves, gloves, and socks over the past two months. We were able to deliver multiple car loads to Healthy Waltham who expressed thanks for our contributions. Our winter-wear drive is now over. We do, however, still welcome donations of non-perishable food that can be shared with neighbors through our outdoor food box.

Serving Others

Upcoming events for the Youth

March 6 - Pizza with friends: Join us after the 10:30am service in Founders Hall for some post-worship lunch, games, and conversations.

March 20 - Hiking Prospect Hill: Happy First Day of Spring! After the 10:30am service, we will assemble bagged lunches and hit the trail up to Prospect Hill. We will eat lunch at the Boston skyline overlook and share in a 'Capturing God' photo activity. *Confirmation students*, instead of gathering during the learning hour, this will be our time together this week.

March 30 - Youth cooking and leading: Each Wednesday in Lent the Justice and Service team is leading in a meal preparation to be shared with the Waltham Community Day Center. On the 30th, the youth will be in charge and will lead us in preparing a meal! Soup for all volunteers will be provided.

April 3 - Easter Vigil skit practice: Join us after the 10:30am service to help plan our skits for the Easter Vigil service on April 16th!

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email Emily Citrone or Vicar Samantha.

National Youth Gathering 2022 Update

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the ELCA National Youth Gathering has been cancelled. However, thanks to the creative leadership of Vicar Samantha and Jennifer Lambert, we have pivoted our plans and have designed a robust youth trip to Minnesota of our own. Over the week of July 25-31, the plans include:

- Engaging in cultural immersion by visiting a few museums and restaurants for Hmong and Somali-immigrants
- Engaging in conversation about racial injustice by meeting with members of a local Lutheran Church and visiting George Floyd Square
- Volunteering at with a local service organization in the city
- Building community with one another and God

We are thankful that we can still offer our youth this experience! Note we welcome financial support with gifts to the 'Youth Fund.' *May God bless this endeavor.*

Justice and Service Update

We will be preparing meals for the Community Day Center on Wednesdays starting March 9. Food preparation will run from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Note, we are looking for volunteers to serve as meal coordinators. Meal coordinators will be responsible for selecting the menu and buying any necessary groceries and supplies. You will be reimbursed for all purchased items. Meals should serve at least 15 people. If you are willing to serve as a meal coordinator for one Wednesday night (alone or with a partner) please use this link to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d48abad2ca3f58-lent>

We understand that everyone has different schedules, so if you can only make it part of the time, that's okay! Come when you can. If you have any questions, please reach out to Emily Citrone or Signe Johns. Thank you for your support and we hope you will join us!

- Emily and Signe

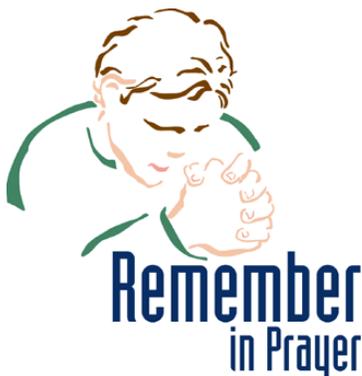
Property Update

The basement renovation project is complete! In February, new wall board was installed, rooms were repainted, and new floors were laid down; all in the Sunday school classrooms. Our thanks to Alan Sieving, LuAnn Kimker, Norman Adams, and Brad Nederhoff for taking the lead on this large undertaking.

Now we are moving our attention upstairs. We are soliciting bids to replace the flat roof over the offices. Also, the air conditioning unit needs to be removed (and hopefully replaced). Once that is done, we will tackle mold remediation in the offices. Our thanks to all who support our efforts through gifts to the Capital Improvement Funds; our property team is grateful.

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



Members of our First Lutheran Community: Sarah Allen; Jen Biter; Joan Clemens; John Elander; Rosy Hebert; Eddie Hughes; June Jahrling; Erika Jerram; Steve Latter; Kathryn McCowan; Don & Britta McNemar; Kerry Meaney; Cynthia Niiler, Joan and Jüri Niiler, Sandra Schwab; Leslie Waters.

Friends and Family: Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Lauriana Arevalo & Eustaquio Dubon (parents of August Arevalo); Elaine Chan (aunt of Catherine Pinch); Emily Clemens (*niece of Joan Clemens*); Lavara Clemens (*mother of Joan Clemens*); Pam & Ken Cochran (COTW partner; Leslie Crowe (*friend of Connie and Jeanette Fagone*); Handel Dixon; Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Chuck Flinner (*father of Kat Flinner*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Joyce; Ellen and Duke Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's parents*); Sylvia and Chris Lee-Thompson (friend of Susan Pintus); Peter Melanson (*brother-in-law of Matt and Erika Jerram*); Jason Mihalko (*friend of Matt Jerram*); Pappas family (friends of Jennifer Lambert); Cathy Platfoot (cousin of LuAnn Kimker); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Susan Raymond ;(*sister-in-law to Jen & Bill Biter*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Margie and Roger Schroeder (*Curt Schroeder's parents*); 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 leader: Rafaela Radcke. 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.



Congratulation to (Pastor) Wylie Cook

Congratulations to **Wylie Cook** (our former intern) who as been called to serve as co-pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver, Colorado. Wylie will be ordained at All Saints Lutheran Church in Wales, Wisconsin (the congregation of their upbringing) on Saturday, March 26. We pray God's blessing for a long and fruitful ministry.

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
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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:
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

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Walk together in God's love: nurturing faith, doing justice, serving all.