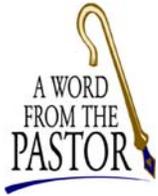


# The Messenger

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

December 2022  
781-893-6563  
tmaehl@rcn.com



## *What is the Gospel?*

According to Kurt Kusserow, in his book *What is the Gospel?* - the Gospel is the story of Jesus. It is not the story about Jesus, but the story of Jesus that began before the worlds were created ("In the beginning was the Word," John 1:1), is centered on the death and resurrection of Jesus, and continues with us. As part of the Christian community we become part of the ongoing, evolving story.

This is a story of grace, about how God comes down to us, over and over, instead of waiting for us to get our acts together. This is a story peace, about how through the forgiveness of sins we get companionship with God on our often difficult journeys; and God helps us make a way through. This is also the story of how, through being entwined with others in community, God's gifts of faith, hope, and love are planted and nurtured in us.

In the beginning of the letter to the Colossians, these gifts of grace, peace, faith, hope, and love are described in this way:

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae. Grace to you and peace from God our Father.*

*In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. (Colossians 1:1-6)*

The season of Advent begins on November 27, I encourage you make worship and prayer part of your rhythms so that God's gifts may continue to be more deeply planted in nurtured in you.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl



## **Christmas Eve, December 24**

**6:40 pm Pre-service music**

**7:00 pm Worship**

Join us on Christmas Eve for our traditional worship with special music, candle lighting, carols, Holy Communion, and the proclamation of the Christmas Gospel. Pre-service music will begin at 6:40 and there will be light refreshments following. Consider inviting friends who may not have a worship home, and consider bringing a refreshment to share.

## **Christmas Morning, December 25**

**10:30 am**

Join us for a service of lessons and carols with Holy Communion.

## **Sunday, January 1**

**10:30 am One Service**

**Bilingual with Santuario**

We will have one bilingual service at 10:30 pm. Seminarian Rafaela Radke will be preaching and Pastor Maehl will preside. Come help us begin the new year with collaboration among our two congregations.

## Nurturing Faith



### Advent Wednesdays

Nov. 30; Dec. 7, 14, 21  
7:00 pm

On the **Wednesdays in Advent** we will have a contemplative evening prayer service beginning at 7:00 pm, followed by refreshments.

Amidst the increased pace and demands of the season, considering carving out this time to attend to the waiting, prayer, repentance, and hopefulness to which the season calls us ... and at the same time mysteriously offers.

### Adult Forums Sundays 9:15am

- Nov. 20 – A conversation about the draft of our RIC welcome statement
- Nov. 27 – Bible Study: Peter, swords, and ears in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Dec. 4 – Breakfast with Santuario (*see right*)
- Dec. 11 – Christmas Sale (*see right*)
- Dec. 18 – Coffee and Cookies and conversation around our Christmas traditions
- Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 - No Adult Forum

### Advent Devotional

An Advent devotional book is available at the church. For those who would prefer an on-line resource, consider the following:

<https://www.luthersem.edu/advent/>

If you are sensing the need for a more structured prayer time, consider trying daily devotions during Advent.

### Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, November 20  
After 10:30 service

Join us in decorating for the season of Advent in preparation of our Christmas celebrations.

### Advent Breakfast

Sunday, December 4  
9:15 am

Join us for a breakfast being hosted by Santuario Lutherano. Enjoy a yummy breakfast, conversation, and activities shared by young and old alike - from both congregations.



### Sale

Sunday, December 11

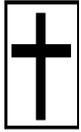
On December 11th we will be holding a Christmas sale where donated gift items and baked goods, will be offered for sale; with proceeds going toward our Camp Calumet Scholarship Fund. We invite the contribution of handmade items, baked goods, and other giftable items. Items may be donated between now and Thursday, December 8. On the day of the sale, items may be purchased beginning at 9:15 am (after the early service).

### Christmas Cookies and Conversation

Sunday, December 18  
9:15 am

Over refreshments we will have an information conversation about Christmas traditions. If you have a nativity set that you are willing to display, please bring it on this day.

## Doing Justice, Serving All



### *From the Vicar*

Over the last few weeks, I have had the opportunity to step out of the church walls and into the greater community of Waltham. Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, Healthy Waltham distributes food through their walk-up food pantry for almost 600 families at Government Center. When I first volunteered at their pantry distribution, I was blown away by the production of unloading food from delivery trucks, sorting and bagging food, distributing the food, and cleaning everything up, rain, snow, or shine for *hundreds* of families.

To me, the work that Healthy Waltham is doing is what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus; a place where people are welcome, seen, and fed. If you are interested in learning more about Healthy Waltham, you can visit their website at [www.healthywaltham.org](http://www.healthywaltham.org). And if you are interested in volunteering with me on a Thursday, please email me at [sdibiaso@capital.edu](mailto:sdibiaso@capital.edu) and let me know!

Also, here's an update on what has been happening with our youth:

- In October we had our Youth Overnight with eight youth in attendance along with Rachel Nederhoff and Anthony Rivera chaperoning. We had a blast getting to know each other better, reflecting on the ways God creates us in God's image, and ending the evening with an awesome game of Sardines. See picture below.
- In November the youth got together for a service event to help with yard clean up. We worked hard raking leaves, we shared stories, and had a celebratory pizza lunch afterwards. It was a joy to be together!

On Dec. 11 we will host a Youth Christmas Party. All youth sixth grade and above are welcome.

## Reconciling in Christ Update

We continue to engage the formal process of becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. Thank you for all of you who continue to pray for and support the process in conversation throughout our adult forums this fall. Over the last few weeks, members of the Justice and Service team and others met to craft a welcome statement. There was a deep sense of call to ground the welcome statement in First Lutheran's mission statement: *"We perceive Christ calling us to: Walk together in God's love; nurturing faith, doing justice, serving all."*

Here is the draft of our welcome statement:

*Walking together in God's love, we rejoice in the diversity of God's wonderfully made children. We celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and all members of our human family regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, physical and mental ability, faith history, economic status, education, family configuration, or immigration status. We renounce the sin of racism and all other forms of discrimination. We welcome all to join us in worship, leadership, participation in rites and sacraments of the church, and fellowship on our journey of nurturing faith, doing justice, and serving all.*

We look forward to hearing your feedback on the statement with hopes that it will continue to ground us in God's expansive love for all people. Join us at the Adult Forum on 11/20 for conversation around our statement of welcome and inclusion.

## Toy Drive

We are partnering with Santuario to collect Christmas toys for children. There is a Christmas tree with gift tags in the Pearson Room. Each tag indicates the age and gender of a child. To participate: take a tag, purchase a gift, and **bring it to church, unwrapped, by Dec. 6.**

## Doing Justice, Serving All

### Property Update

The flat roof over the offices has been replaced and a new air conditioning unit has been installed. We now have air conditioning in the Pearson Room! The next step is to secure bids for renovations to the offices where the ceilings and walls have been damaged by mold. We are hopeful that this work will be accomplished soon. Note that the cost of the roof and air-conditioning project was \$50,700 (and there was significant electrical work). No we have roughly \$12,000 left in our Capital Improvement Fund that we estimate will be used for the next phase of the renovation. We welcome gifts to the Capital Improvement Fund in order that we may continue to faithfully care for the building. Our thanks to Alan Sieving for providing tremendous oversight.

### Our Thanks to ...

Geri Nederhoff who is covering secretarial duties while Cynthia Niiler is recovering from surgery; and to Sandy Hebert and Catherine Pinch for covering Sunday morning musician responsibilities. Such a blessing!

All who came to help with our church clean up day on October 29. We had 35 participants from First Lutheran and Santuario and got lots of work done. Thanks to Steve Hoff, Norman and Mary Ellen Adams, and Ted Sjodin for helping to organize the day.

The youth who helped rake leaves at the homes of two members of the congregation (including at the parsonage). We are grateful to Lukas and Mia Binggeli, Jake and Vicki Villalta, and Ethan Waldron for their hard work.

All who contributed to the Thanksgiving food collection in collaboration with Santuario. One-hundred food baskets were given to neighbors in need.

### Stewardship Update

To date we have received 42 pledges totaling \$284,610. Last year, by year end we had received 46 pledges totaling \$298,886. We do invite those who do have not yet pledged to consider doing so. Also we are grateful to report that we have received pledges to the Intern Fund totaling \$33,176. The finance committee will soon be at work preparing a draft budget for 2023 that will be reviewed by the church council in December then presented at the congregational meeting scheduled for January 29, 2023.

Thanks to all who support this ministry of First Lutheran with time, talent, and treasure; and thanks be to God who continues to provide through the faithfulness, the generosity, and the love of so many in this this community.



### Chaplains on the Way Gift Cards

Once again we are collecting \$5 or \$10 gift cards to Dunkin' Donuts or McDonalds, as well as \$8-\$12 Charlie Cards (for transportation). These will be given to persons in need in our community through the ministry of Chaplains on the Way. Gift cards may be mailed or dropped off in the church office.

### Refugee Resettlement Update

We are partnering with St. Paul Lutheran Church in Arlington and the Lutheran Church of the Newtons to form a Neighborhood Support Team in order to resettle a refugee family in partnership with Ascentria Care Alliance. Currently there are 12 from First Lutheran who are participating in training and offering to help with the effort. Please pray for the team.

# First Lutheran Ministry Schedule

If you are unable to serve when scheduled please *find a replacement* and contact the office.

## December

	December 4 Advent 2	December 11 Advent 3	December 18 Advent 4	December 24 Christmas Eve 7:00 pm	December 25 Christmas Day
<b>8:15 Lector</b>	Julie Weeden	Kevin Dickert	Tom Neal	N/A	N/A
<b>10:30 Asst. Min.</b>	Geri Nederhoff	LuAnn Kimker	Sammy Kalisa	Ann Sjodin	
<b>10:30 Lector</b>	Brad Nederhoff	Anthony Rivera	Cathy Sukow	Holly Diaz	
<b>10:30 Usher</b>	Sarah & Milena Rauhut	Holly & Ezra Diaz	Emily, Penelope, & Vivienne Codner	Heather, Deidre, & Brett Fahey	
<b>10:30 A/V</b>	Ted Sjodin	Eegan Pandian	Emily Citrone	Steve Hoff	Prakash Pandian
<b>Altar Care</b>	Marquette & Penny Alexander	LuAnn Kimker	Geri Nederhoff	Ann Sjodin	Doris Speer
<b>Counters</b>	Ted Sjodin Meg Maehl		Jennifer Lambert Alan Sieving		Mary Ellen & Norm Adams

## January

	January 1 Name of Jesus	January 8 Baptism of Our Lord	January 15 Epiphany 2	January 22 Epiphany 3	January 29 Epiphany 4
<b>8:15 Lector</b>	N/A	Julie Weeden	Kevin Dickert	Tom Neal	???
<b>10:30 Asst. Min.</b>	Inpakala Pandian	Emily Codner	Rachel Nederhoff	Geri Nederhoff	LuAnn Kimker
<b>10:30 Lector</b>	Pat Clem	Vicki DeVault	Emily Codner	Jennifer Lambert	Brad Nederhoff
<b>10:30 Usher</b>	Sarah & Milena Rauhut	Pat Clem Norman Adams	Holly & Ezra Diaz	Emily, Penelope, & Vivienne Codner	Heather, Deidre, & Brett Fahey
<b>10:30 A/V</b>	Curt Schroeder	Ted Sjodin	Eegan Pandian	Steve Hoff	Emily Citrone
<b>Altar Care</b>	Catherine & Peter Pinch	Penny & Marquette Alexander	LuAnn Kimker	Geri Nederhoff	Ann Sjodin
<b>Counters</b>		Bill Meaney Meg Maehl		Mary Ellen Adams Ted Sjodin	

### Food Truck

Collaborating with Integral Steps, we enjoyed a concert and food truck on Reformation Sunday, October 30. This brought together people from First Lutheran, Santuario Lutherano, Integral Steps Music Program, Nelson Apartment tenants, and a few families from Infancy to Independence. All of us neighbors. Our hope is that this might evolve into an annual event. Thanks to Vicar Samantha for coordinating the food truck.



## Walking Together in God's Love

### Prayer Concerns



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

**Friends and Family:** Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Lauriana Arevalo & Eustaquio Dubon (parents of August Arevalo); Kate Benbenek (*friend of Inpakala Pandian*); Elaine Chan (*aunt of Catherine Pinch*); Emily Clemens (*niece of Joan Clemens*); Lavara Clemens (*mother of Joan Clemens*); Pam &

Ken Cochran (*COTW partner*); Steve Codner (*father-in-law of Emily Codner*); Leslie Crowe (*friend of Connie and Jeanette Fagone*); Emily Dallman (*friend of Dianne Poulos*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Chuck Flinner (*father of Kat Flinner*); Betty Kaufman (*great-aunt of LuAnn Kimker*); Ellen and Duke Katterheinrich (*LuAnn Kimker's parents*); Sylvia and Chris Lee-Thompson (*friend of Susan Pintus*); Marybeth; Peter Melanson (*brother-in-law of Matt and Erika Jerram*); Skip Moyer (*grandfather of Samantha DiBiasco*); 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 & Leslie Waters*); Margie and Roger Schroeder (*Curt Schroeder's parents*); Ann and Doug Sewich (*sister and brother-in-law of Meg Maehl*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Wayne Sukow (*father of Cathy Sukow*); Tara Waters (*family of Penny & Marquette Alexander*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

**For those who grieve:** the family and friends of: Sandra Schwab; and of Kelcy Tekell (*friend of Holly Diaz who died tragically in a car accident*).

**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. And for our efforts to resettle a refugee family.

*If you would like to add/remove a name to/from the prayer list, please inform the church office.*

### Coffee Hour Hosts Needed



Central to our Sunday hospitality is our coffee fellowship following worship. We are in need of hosts to make coffee and bring goodies for after our 10:30 am service. Hosting entails bringing simple food to share (baked goods and/or fruit), setting up, making and serving the coffee, and cleaning up. (The coffee itself is provided by the church). More detailed instructions are available in the church office and the sign-up sheet is in the Pearson Room or online at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080b44a8ac2ca64-coffee>

*Your help would be appreciated.*

### **Fall Retreat Update**

Over the weekend of Nov. 11-13, a group of 20 participated in our annual Fall Retreat at the Blue Gentian Lodge in Londonderry, Vermont. During our time together we worshiped, prayed, and reflected on how in baptism God blesses and calls us. We also enjoyed great food, games, and one another's company. In our closing worship we rejoiced in the baptism of Linden James Coluzzi, the 4 month old son of Michelle (Landstrom) and Seth Colluzzi.



### **Calumet Winter Retreat**

February 24-26

Our annual winter retreat to Camp Calumet is scheduled for Feb. 24-26. Everyone is welcome to this retreat, children and adults. As with the Fall Retreat, we will be asking participants to take an at-home COVID test before traveling; then masks will be optional during the retreat. Mark your calendars and watch for more details about signing up coming in January.