

# 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

February 2023  
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Every now and then something weird happens to my computer or cell phone. After a few minutes of frustration mixed with worry that the darn thing is broken, it finally dawns on me that I should simply try a hard reset (powering down and then powering up again). Lo and behold it most always works.

For me, the season of Lent always comes as a welcome opportunity for a soft reset of sorts. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday when we gather for worship and hear Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount calling us to return to God with prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor; all of which can sound legalistic. But what if it is not?

What if Jesus really did have good insight into the human condition, and after 2,000 years his words can still deeply resonate.?

What if part of our struggles are rooted in having drifted from prayer; in having wandered down certain dangerous paths or developed deadening habits; and/or in having lost sight of our interconnectivity with all the human family (so many of whom are suffering).

Thus with no legalism (for there is nothing you have to do) I offer here a few invitations for the soft reset that might come in keeping a holy Lent.

First, on the five Wednesday nights of March we will be attending to prayer via zoom (*see page 2*). We are offering this virtually to make it easier to participate. Why not tune in? And if you do, consider finding a quiet place in your home where you might light a candle (a symbol of the sacred), avoid distractions, and engage as fully as you are able.

Second, Lent begins on February 22 (*see below*). That gives us a few weeks to take a personal inventory and prayerfully discern what we might strive to 'Give up for Lent.' Maybe that's a food item, but consider other options, particularly things you have a sense might not be good for your inner being. Only you can know what that is for you. Maybe it's hours on YouTube or social media, alcohol too often, shopping incessantly, going over and over a worn script of past hurts in your mind. Maybe there is something else you sense a call to cease for a season.

Third, consider growing in the ways in which you share with the poor. The ELCA World Hunger Program is doing vitally important work and we will be collecting offerings to share with them, or maybe there is another organization that appeals to you. Why not for the 40 days of Lent, work on the muscle groups of generosity and solidarity for the sake of others and your own soul?

I wish you a blessed Lent, Pastor Maehl

## Beginning Lent

### February 22 - Ash Wednesday, 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.

### February 23 - "Ash Thursday," 11:30 am

We will offer a service with the optional imposition of ashes. This is offered for those who come either for the Thursday knitting group and/or Senior Classics, and for anyone else who might find this service meaningful.

## Nurturing Faith

### Spring Adult Forums

Jan-May, 2023

We are continuing to explore principal parts of the Christian faith while also engaging stories of scripture. Note these forums are offered both in person and via zoom (*the zoom link is shared in our weekly e-news*). Join us!

The February schedule is as follows:

Feb. 5 - Topic: Exodus and lessons of the manna in the wilderness.

Feb. 12 - Story: Mark 5:21-43 "Healing of the woman and the girl"

Feb 19 - Topic: Judges and Kings; power, politics, and systems

Feb 26: Congregational retreat to Camp Calumet, no adult Forum

### Keeping Lent

**Lenten Wednesdays:** Each Wednesday in March, beginning March 1, we will be gathering via zoom only (no in-person). We will be discussing/learning various ways of prayer, and then praying together. A zoom link will be shared in the weekly e-news.

**Devotional Books:** We will have copies of a Lenten devotional book entitled, *"Water and Spirit: Devotions for Lent."* Please take one when you are in church; or contact the church office if you cannot get to Waltham and would like one mailed.

**World Hunger:** Due to the war in Ukraine and other factors the world is facing hunger on a staggering scale. We are urging donations to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal during the 40 days of Lent. Gifts can be made to First Lutheran and marked, "World Hunger."

### Lenten Prayer Partners

We are inviting **anyone** interested to participate in our Lenten Prayer Partner Program (this includes children and adults, members and friends, those who are able to attend worship and those who are not).

Here's how it works. If you wish to participate, you will be given the name of one other person, your "prayer partner". You will keep this name secret throughout Lent and will commit to the following:

- 1) Pray for this person every day during Lent.
- 2) Send this person a note of encouragement at least once during Lent, more often if you choose, reminding them you are praying for them. Since your identity is to remain secret, notes may simply be signed, *"Your prayer partner."*
- 3) Reveal your identity to your prayer partner on Easter. This may be done in person, if you plan to worship with us on Easter, or it may be done in the form of a note signed by you, but may not be opened until Easter (*or via some other means of your own choosing*).

At the same time, someone else who has received your name will be praying for you. If you wish to participate, please sign-up [here](#), in the Pearson Room at church, or by calling the church office, by Sunday, **February 19**.

### Resisting Racism

Watching and discussing "The 1619 Project"

The Justice and Service Team invites any who are interested and able to join in watching and discussing a new six-part series called "The 1619 Project." being aired on Hulu. We will be watching/discussing on six Sunday nights: March 5, 19; April 2, 16, 30; and May 14; tentatively scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm. For those who have Hulu and would like to watch independently, you are invited to join in for the conversation part. A zoom link will be shared via our weekly e-news as the date gets closer.

*Note: **The 1619 Project** aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative.*

## Walking Together in God's Love



*From the  
Vicar*

For my column I offer two updates, the first regarding RIC. At our Annual Meeting, the congregational vote to become a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation passed. We join hundreds of other congregations across the ELCA who publicly proclaim the welcome, inclusion, and celebration for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, and are working for racial equity and are committed to anti-racist work. Now that the vote has passed, our congregation will be added to Reconciling Works database of affirming ELCA churches, and our welcome statement will be shared.

What's next? In the next 1-2 months, a team will be formed to address how we live into our new welcome statement and how we better make public our welcome. If you are interested in being part of this team please contact me or Pastor Maehl.

Next, an update on youth activities. In January some of our youth went bowling on a Saturday afternoon. When we arrived, we saw that the bowling alley only had candlepin bowling, a New England favorite. However, none of us had done that before. We didn't know how many times you were supposed to bowl, how many pins there were, how the scoring was kept, or anything. Together, and thanks to our dear friend Google, we were able to figure out how the rules – and as it turns out, we were all pretty good at it!

I was reminded of how powerful it is to try something new with a group of people. It can be weird and vulnerable to try new things; but when we do so together and learn from one another, I get the sense that this is what Jesus' call to "Come and See," just might look and feel like.

What's next for youth? The congregational retreat to Calumet in February. Then on March 5 we will gather for pizza and skit practice in preparation for telling the Gospel in worship on March 12. All youth are welcome to participate.

- Vicar Samantha



### Congregational Retreat Camp Calumet February 24-26

We currently have 45 people signed up for our annual congregational retreat to Camp Calumet in Freedom, NH. We are delighted to report that

Samantha Thomasson Bless, the wife of our former intern, Pastor Athena Thomasson Bless will be coming from North Carolina and will be leading the youth programming. Pastor Angelika Zollfrank and Catherine Pinch will be leading worship on Sunday, February 26. **Please note that there is one service at 10:30 am on this day.**



### Vacation Bible School July 10-14, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm Save the Date

Our annual wee of VBS is scheduled for July 10-14 for children ages kindergarten and older. Save the date if interested and please consider inviting others.

### Waltham Family School Fiesta March 16

The annual Fiesta fundraiser for the Waltham Family School (WFS) is being held on Thursday March 16 from 6:00 - 8:30 pm at Chapel Hill—Chauncy Hall School in Waltham. The WFS is one of our partner organizations and we have had a group attend in past years. We are hoping to sponsor a table with 6-10 people from First Lutheran participating. Tickets are \$75 per person. Please contact Pastor Maehl if you are interested in being part of the FLC group.

## Doing Justice, Serving All

### Annual Meeting Update

Our annual meeting was held on Sunday, January 29, highlights include:

**Budget:** We voted a budget of \$351,324; a 6.1% increase over last year. This budget includes continuing our practice of tithing our income to the wider church (10%) and giving another 1% for local benevolence. We also increased funds for utilities provided a 6% raise to staff.

**Welcome Statement:** We voted to adopt the welcome statement (*printed in last month's messenger*) and to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

**Intern:** We were please to report that we plan on hosting an intern for the 2023-2024 academic year. The cost of an intern is expected to be roughly \$41,000. We were able to do this because of pledges to the Intern Fund of \$33,176 from individuals, \$5,000 from the Nelson Board, and another \$3,000 was voted to be directed to the Intern Fund from a 2022 year end surplus (another \$9,337 from this surplus was directed to the Capital Improvement Fund).

#### 2022 Accomplishments include:

- Engaging in the Reconciling in Christ process
- Restructuring our Sunday school program into a co-op model of shared teaching.
- Maintaining strong community and programs in a sabbatical year; with gratitude to Vicar Samantha and Cynthia for their leadership.

#### 2023 Goals Include:

- Forming a team to expand our public witness and help us live into our new welcome statement.
- Work together with two other congregations to resettle a refugee family.
- Focus more intently on being a hybrid community, with more opportunities to share in community in virtual ways.

**Elections:** We elected Pat Clem, and reelected Sammy Kalisa and Julie Weeden to the church council. We reelected Steve Hoff, Janice Ostrander, Dianne Poulos, and Paul Weeden to the Board of the Nelson Memorial Apartments. We also offered thanks to Curt Schroeder who was completing his term on church council. New officers of the church council include: LuAnn Kimker (President), Sammy Kalisa (vice-president), Susan Pintus (treasurer), and Julie Weeden (secretary).

**Special Thanks:** We offered special thanks to Ann Sjodin for having served as president of the congregation during the past three years, all of which were impacted by COVID. We also offered special thanks to Carol Hansen who provided much of the food for the lunch shared by those who were physically present.

**Benevolence:** Also at our annual meeting we shared some of the ways we have given beyond our own congregation:

- \$32,291 given to the New England Synod to support the mission of the wider church (note 51% of all synod contributions are forwarded to the National Church for such things as supporting missionaries, building churches, education, advocacy, etc.)
- Roughly \$41,315 given to support the hosting of Vicar Samantha DiBiaso our seminary intern.
- Over \$20,000 in Pastor's Discretionary funds, plus \$3,222 from our annual budget designated for local benevolence was shared with other organizations and individuals beyond our congregation's walls. Organizations include: Chaplains on the Way, The Waltham Family School, The Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, Lutheran Campus Ministry in the Fenway, Healthy Waltham, Waltham Fields Community Farm, Waltham Mutual Aid, The Community Day Center, The Waltham Farmer's Market (matching SNAP benefits), Lutheran World Hunger, The Massachusetts Council of Churches, Santuario Luterano, and Camp Calumet. Additionally, individuals were helped with food, rent, and medical expenses.

## 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, Alexa Turner.

**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 DiBiaso*); 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: Richard Ham (brother of Cindy Gelinaz)

**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.*



Out thanks to **Carol Hansen** who hosted a wonderful luncheon for the Thursday Knitters, Seniors, and others. There were over 30 people in attendance. We enjoyed a wonderful meal of entrees from the Chateau Restaurant, all provided by Carol.

# First Lutheran Ministry Schedule

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

## February

|                         | February 5<br>Epiphany 5         | February 12<br>Epiphany 6  | February 19<br>Transfiguration | February 22<br>Ash Wednesday<br>7:30 pm | February 26<br>Lent 1             |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>8:15 Lector</b>      | Julie Weeden                     | Kevin Dickert              | Tom Neal                       | N/A                                     | N/A                               |
| <b>10:30 Asst. Min.</b> | Sammy Kalisa                     | <i>Emily Codner</i>        | Inpakala Pandian               |   | Emily Codner                      |
| <b>10:30 Lector</b>     | <i>Brad Nederhoff</i>            | Holly Diaz                 | Cathy Sukow                    |   | Vicki DeVault                     |
| <b>10:30 Usher</b>      | Sarah & Milena<br>Rauhut         | Pat Clem<br>Norm Adams     | Holly & Ezra Diaz              |   | Heather, Deidre, &<br>Brett Fahey |
| <b>10:30 A/V</b>        | Prakash Pandian                  | <i>Steve Hoff</i>          | Eegan Pandian                  | Ted Sjodin                              | <i>Curt Schroeder</i>             |
| <b>Altar Care</b>       | Doris Speer                      | Peter & Catherine<br>Pinch | LuAnn Kimker                   | Geri Nederhoff                          | Penny & Marquette<br>Alexander    |
| <b>Counters</b>         | <i>Meg Maehl</i><br>Alan Sieving |                            | Bill Meaney<br>Norman Adams    |   |                                   |

## March

|                         | March 5<br>Lent 2                           | March 12<br>Lent 3         | March 19<br>Lent 4             | March 26<br>Lent 5               |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>8:15 Lector</b>      | Julie Weeden                                | Kevin Dickert              | Tom Neal                       | ????                             |
| <b>10:30 Asst. Min.</b> | Rachel Nederhoff                            | Geri Nederhoff             | LuAnn Kimker                   | Sammy Kalisa                     |
| <b>10:30 Lector</b>     | Pat Clem                                    | Emily Codner               | Jennifer Lambert               | Brad Nederhoff                   |
| <b>10:30 Usher</b>      | Sarah & Milena<br>Rauhut                    | Emily & Penelope<br>Codner | Pat Clem<br>Norm Adams         | Holly & Ezra Diaz                |
| <b>10:30 A/V</b>        | Emily Citrone                               | Prakash Pandian            | Curt Schroeder                 | Ted Sjodin                       |
| <b>Altar Care</b>       | Ann Sjodin                                  | Doris Speer                | Peter & Catherine<br>Pinch     | Penny & Mar-<br>quette Alexander |
| <b>Counters</b>         | <i>Jennifer Lambert</i><br>Mary Ellen Adams |                            | Ted Sjodin<br>Jennifer Lambert |                                  |

## April

|                         | April 2<br>Palm/Passion         | April 6<br>Maundy Thurs<br>7:30 pm | April 7<br>Good Friday<br>7:30 pm | April 9<br>Easter Day    | April 16<br>Easter 2       | April 23<br>Easter 3           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>8:15 Lector</b>      | Julie Weeden                    | N/A                                | N/A                               | Kevin Dickert            | Tom Neal                   | ????                           |
| <b>10:30 Asst. Min.</b> | Ann Sjodin                      | Inpakala Pandian                   | Rachel Nederhoff                  | Emily Codner             | Geri Nederhoff             | LuAnn Kimker                   |
| <b>10:30 Lector</b>     | Anthony Rivera                  | Cathy Sukow                        | Holly Diaz                        | Pat Clem                 | Emily Codner               | Vicki DeVault                  |
| <b>10:30 Usher</b>      | Heather, Deidre,<br>Brett Fahey |                                    |                                   | Sarah & Milena<br>Rauhut | Emily & Penelope<br>Codner | Pat Clem<br>Norm Adams         |
| <b>10:30 A/V</b>        | Eegan Pandian                   | Steve Hoff                         | Emily Citrone                     | Prakash Pandian          | Curt Schroeder             | Ted Sjodin                     |
| <b>Altar Care</b>       | LuAnn Kimker                    | Geri Nederhoff                     |                                   | Ann Sjodin               | Doris Speer                | Peter & Catherine<br>Pinch     |
| <b>Counters</b>         | Alan Sieving<br>Bill Meaney     |                                    |                                   | Norm Adams<br>Meg Maehl  |                            | Mary Ellen Adams<br>Ted Sjodin |

### 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 Samantha DiBiaso, Intern  
sdibiaso@capital.edu

**Council:** President: LuAnn Kimker  
Vice-President: Sammy Kalisa  
Secretary: Julie Weeden  
Treasurer: Susan Pintus  
Pat Clem  
Holly Diaz  
Sammy Kalisa  
Jennifer Lambert  
Beth Melillo  
Ann Sjodin

**Worship:**

Sundays:  
8:15 am in person  
10:30 am in person and Facebook Live

**Visit us on the Web at:**  
[www.firstlutheranwaltham.org](http://www.firstlutheranwaltham.org)  
and on Facebook at  
[First Lutheran Church - Waltham, MA](https://www.facebook.com/FirstLutheranChurchWalthamMA)

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**Our Mission:** We discern that Jesus Christ is calling us to:

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

**First Lutheran's RIC Welcome Statement:**

*Walking together in God's love, we rejoice in the diversity of God's wonderfully made children. We celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and non-binary 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 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.*