

THE MESSENGER

The monthly newsletter of First Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear Members of the Body of Christ at First Lutheran,

Throughout the Gospel of Mark there is a theme of “Already...but not yet.” Jesus Christ is God’s Son who was here in the flesh, walking the earth. But there is also a “but not yet...” in that God’s Son, Jesus, has not come back to raise the living and the dead. The end times are still in the future, the time of which is not known to us.

We feel like this describes our COVID reality right now. Already we are getting vaccinated. Already we are tired of extra regulations and rules. Already we want to discard our masks and go back to “normal.”

Unfortunately, there is a “but not yet...” Even though there are vaccines. Even though the masks and social distancing are doing their jobs of keeping our numbers low. We are not there yet. We are not at a place where we can let down our guard. We are not yet at a place where it is safe to drop all of our protections. Different strains of the virus have been found in multiple places in the United States. There is still a lot more to be learned.

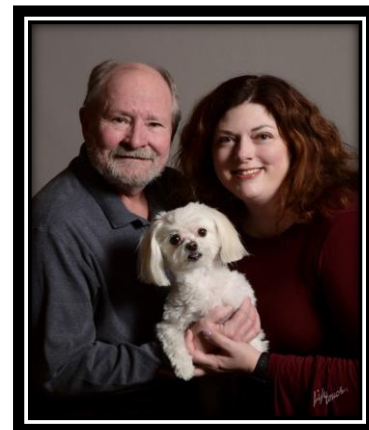
We at First Lutheran are taking the approach of “Already...but not yet.” We have continued to bring more of the liturgy back to our worship. Sunday School is back in session. FLY is meeting in person. Confirmation is back and in person with the goal of having Affirmation of Baptism on Sunday, May 2nd. First Communion classes have begun in person with the goal of class participants receiving their First Communion at one of the services on Maundy Thursday. On Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday we will be having continuous Holy Communion.

We are constantly listening to science and watching the world around us for clues on how much is too much. Consequently, we are retaining social distancing in and out of worship. We will be continuing to wear masks while in the building and in the sanctuary. We encourage liberal use of hand sanitizer and hand washing. We will continue to spray with disinfectant after worship services and meetings.

We appreciate your patience. We know that this continues to be challenging. It holds many challenges for us as well. But we want to be a whole body of Christ in the future with everyone present and accounted for.

In Peace,
Pastor Michelle and Pastor Rick

A Message from the Co-Lead Pastors



COVID-19 UPDATE

- 1. Worship services are currently in-person at 8:45am and 11:00am on Sunday mornings. Masks are required.** Please join us on Facebook, FLC website, or ROKU to worship with us at either service or on the radio for the 8:45am service. Remember all services will also be archived for later viewing. *We are hoping to start up the Saturday night service in the Fall.*
- 2. The church is open for normal business hours Monday – Friday from 8:30am to 4pm.**
- 3. Groups are now able to meet in person if they choose. Masks are required. No food or beverages, please. ZOOM still remains an option to accommodate those who do not wish to meet in person yet.**

The Council will meet again at our normally scheduled time of Tuesday, March 9th at 6:30pm. We very much appreciate your understanding during this extremely difficult time. We continue to pray for all of you!

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Prayer Ventures for March can be found:
<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Prayer-Ventures>

These petitions are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA, as well as for the needs and circumstances of our neighbors, communities and world.



<http://www.elca.org>
 800-638-3522



<http://www.nebraskasynod.org>
 402-896-5311



<http://www.lwr.org>
 800-597-5972



<http://www.nelcm.com/>
 (308) 234-1828



<http://www.nlom.org>
 402-944-2544

A MESSAGE FROM THE SYNOD

From Bishop Maas of the Nebraska Synod: This [article] aligns wholly with my experience of speaking with ministry leaders, for months now. I admire the way so many are carrying on in spite of their fatigue. The one thing the author didn't comment on is how members can be supportive in the midst of conflict. If you're the person who's upset with your Pastor/Deacon/PMA (or with your congregation), ask yourself first what's really at the root of your complaint, and then make a point of speaking directly to her/him, or to congregational leaders. If someone else is upset, offer to listen to them (not necessarily to agree with them) and to be part of a conversation with the source of their dissatisfaction. In either case, try to listen at least as much as you speak. Disagreements are normal, even healthy. Open conflicts drain energy and afflict the Body of Christ. We're all tired of pandemic (and so much else). Let's practice a little patience and a lot of grace--with others and with ourselves; and with our ministry leaders in particular. They carry a load most will never see.

Your Pastor Is Exhausted

An Open Letter to Congregational Leaders

This past Sunday, the gospel reading from the first chapter of Mark reminded us that Jesus went to a deserted place to pray. But it seems he hardly got there before Simon and his companions tapped him on the shoulder to say "Everyone is looking for you!" And so, Jesus, because he was called to do this preaching and healing work, said let's go. There's work to be done...

I wonder if he was exhausted.

I don't know if Jesus was exhausted, but I do know this: your pastor is exhausted. We're entering the second Lenten season in a pandemic and it's taking its toll. I sit with pastors every day and hear emotion-laden stories of burnout. I know you understand this, because you're exhausted and burned out too. Having said that, people in the helping professions are naturally more prone to burnout, and so much more so in this time of pandemic.

Congregations and the individuals in them are on edge. That means increased conflict and criticism. Some conflict is between members of the congregation, some directed at the pastor. Regardless, the pastor must attend to it. Conflict (and criticism) about how to worship safely in pandemic times, when to resume gathering, and under what protocols. Conflict from the unrest in our country that seeps into churches that haven't learned how to engage in healthy conflict and compassionate discussion.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SYNOD

Pastors' workloads are increasing. Nothing has been removed from their plates (contrary to the mistaken belief of some). The number of funerals is on the rise, and pastors can't sit with sick ones and loved ones in the way in which they are accustomed. There are more pastoral care concerns than ever. Pastors have had to figure out how to teach in new and complex ways that can still transform the lives of those in their midst. Pastors, especially solo pastors, have had to learn all kinds of new technology, and then pray every week that it works – all the while thinking, "I didn't sign up for this." People and communities are struggling financially, and pastors are organizing new ministries (or volunteering themselves) to try to help.

Membership is down and financial issues are up. Your pastor is losing sleep over it, and often the burden for this issue is placed squarely on the pastor's shoulders, when instead, membership and finances should be seen as work of the congregation alongside the pastor.

One pastor described their stress like a heavy blanket weighing them down from under which they can't emerge. Another said there's nowhere to turn for relief. Another counted the days since they had a day off and the number was WAY. TOO. HIGH. With so many people feeling the stress of life, pastors take it on the chin and try to "buck up," saying "I'm not trying to be a martyr, I'm just trying to get through." If they take a much-needed mental health day, it just means the next days will be longer and more stressful.

Many will choose to leave ministry when this is over. That's just a fact.

A May 2020 Barna survey shared some worrying trends. With this data almost a year old, I can only imagine these numbers would look quite different, and more distressing, today:

- 31% struggling with their emotional well-being
- 26% struggling with relational well-being
- 51% are tired
- 41% are exhausted or sad
- 39% feel panicked
- 68% felt overwhelmed in the last 4 weeks
- 52% felt lonely in the same period

None of this is to say you shouldn't lean on your pastor. You should. That's why they are in ministry. Reach out, have conversation. Let them know how you are. Pastors are mourning the lack of human connection just like you are, and even if it has to happen via zoom, it's one of the most important aspects of their ministry, and if it were all they had to do, they'd thrive.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SYNOD

What Can You Do?

Please know that your pastor doesn't want you to take care of them. That would be inappropriate. But there are things you can do to lessen the exhaustion and burn out, and in that way, be part of their well-being team.

1. First and foremost, pray for them. Pray for their health, resilience, and safety.
2. Work with them to determine what can be taken off their plate. And even more than that, what can be taken off the collective plate in the congregation. It may just be time to slow way down, stop even, and rest as a collective body.
3. Relatedly, take time to have conversation as a leadership body about what is essential in your church, what is expendable (temporarily or permanently), in order to make room for what's emerging (post-pandemic). Then take action on those expendable things – honor them for the ministry they provided, and then say goodbye to them, freeing up precious time and energy.
4. Send a hand-written note of encouragement, or tell your pastor how their sermon or their presence positively impacted you. That simple gesture makes a world of difference.
5. Be open to sharing worship with a neighboring congregation periodically, so that your pastor can take a vacation. Create a list of pastors who are available to step in during times of emergency or vacation. (And while your pastor is away, help them rejuvenate by not texting or calling them.)
6. If you don't have a sabbatical plan for your congregation, begin the work to create one now. Sabbaticals are beneficial for both pastor and congregation, giving both time for rest, renewal, and re-examining ministry. (Congregations burn out as much as pastors do.)
7. Offer to set aside church funds to pay for a therapist or spiritual director (or both) for your pastor.

Maybe the last thing is simply to let your pastor know that you're praying for them. Knowing that they are being held in that way may be a balm for their weary souls.

Finally, take care of yourselves too. The world needs your healthy leadership, just like you need your pastor's healthy leadership.

Take care. Be well.

Mary Kay DuChene
LeaderWise

WORSHIP NEWS – LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Perfect Love Casts Out Fear: Evening Prayer for Lent

Join us @ 6:30pm on Wednesday nights during Lent as we explore what the Bible has to say about fear and God's everlasting love.

As with all of our services in the time of COVID, masks and social distancing are required.



For your daily Lenten Journey

Join us as we explore Lenten Micro Practices. You can pick up a paper booklet in the narthex, find it on our website to download and print, or follow it on Facebook and Instagram.



Maundy Thursday, April 1st

Absolution and Holy Communion

5:30pm and 7:00pm

First Communion at both services

Good Friday, April 2nd

6:30pm

Easter Day, April 4th

“Son”rise Service Under the Sunrise at
7:00am in the North Parking Lot

8:45am and 11:00am in the Sanctuary,
Online (Radio for 8:45am)



Caring & Sharing Group



Sharing is Caring

- Can you help make a phone call?
- Can you help make a meal?
- Can you help deliver a meal?

We are needing Volunteers to help others in need. When a member has a baby; gets out of the hospital, lost a loved one, and other major life changes.

For more information contact Pat Anderson at (308) 234-4462 or gpmmanderson@hotmail.com or Lotys Suhr at (308) 627-7278 or lsuhr@charter.net

HELPING OTHERS – SAFE CENTER

We will be collecting items for the Safe Center through the month of March in the grocery cart found in the narthex.

Items typically needed:

- Sets of dishes, glasses, silverware, pots & pans
 - Towels & washcloths
 - Shampoo, conditioner, deodorant
 - Laundry soap
 - Feminine hygiene products
 - Paper towels, toilet paper, napkins
 - Diapers especially size 4-6
 - Haircut gift certificates, stamps, phone cards
 - R.Y.D.E. vouchers and gas cards
 - New or gently used mattresses
- A client may have a specific need that you can purchase by logging onto your Amazon Account and shipping it to the Safe Center directly. View the Amazon Smile List to begin this process.

Items can be donated during regular business hours at the below office location. We accept clothing donations of gently used and in season items. Please call ahead before bringing furniture or large items as storage is limited.

Tax receipts are provided for all donations.

If you would prefer to do a tax-deductible financial donation this can be mailed, dropped off in their office, or donated online.

The Safe Center is located at 620 E 25th Street Suite #14, Kearney, NE 68847

The office hours are from Monday – Friday from 9 am to 5 pm

Contact them directly for any questions or drop offs at (308) 237-2599 or safecenter@safecenter.org



HELPING OTHERS – JUBILEE CENTER

Once again **THANK YOU** to everyone at First Lutheran Church who has supported the Kearney Jubilee Center in some way during the past year. The organization moved to new quarters at 1920 Central Ave in June and there were helping hands to sort and load and clean and set up. No more steep stairs or crowded spaces. There have been people all year to sort items and keep the Thrift Store looking appealing. Others of you have contributed clothing, puzzles, books, cooking pieces, sewing and craft materials and seasonal items. We have even managed to display and sell several pieces of furniture. And then there were those of you who made financial contributions monthly, or through *Give Where You Live* or by your occasional gifts. We as a congregation also have a Memorandum of Understanding as one of the core supporters of this mission and a quarterly contribution is made for that along with individual donations of food. Once again **THANK YOU** to each one of you who has made Kearney a more loving community with its support to those who are suffering financially.

**THANK YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
DONATIONS TO THE JUBILEE
CENTER! WE APPRECIATE ALL
OF YOUR SUPPORT!**

OFFICE UPDATES



FLC STAFF E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Church Office

office@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Pastor Rick Carlson

Co-Lead Pastor

rcarlson@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Pastor Michelle Carlson

Co-Lead Pastor

mcarlson@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Pastor Elisabeth Himmelman

Assoc. Pastor for Youth & Young Adults

ehimmelman@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Kandy Bacon

Administrative Assistant

kbacon@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Marti Brockmeier

Bookkeeper

martibroockmeier@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Natalie Radcliffe

Worship Music Coordinator

natalieradcliffe@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Adam Eilers

Maintenance Coordinator

aeilers@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Judy O'Donnell

Preschool Director

judyodonnell@firstlutheran Kearney.org

JANUARY FINANCE REPORT

Ministry Budget:	JAN 2021	YTD '20-'21'	YTD '19-'20
Budget Supporting Revenue	\$ 79,633	\$ 425,875	\$ 437,627
Payroll Protection Funds		\$ 28,108	
Budget Related Expenditures	\$ (54,657)	\$ (452,239)	\$ (439,449)

Total 2020-2021 Ministry Budget: \$798,474.97

Facilities Budget:	JAN 2021	YTD '20-'21'	YTD '19-'20
Revenue	\$ 5,815	\$ 55,100	\$ 58,404
Expenditures	\$ (805)	\$ (19,341)	\$ (21,870)

Total 2020-2021 Facilities Budget: \$30,000

Giving Options

In addition to traditional giving options for your convenience First Lutheran offers online giving!

GIVE PLUS: which allows people to make financial contributions to the church electronically in the following ways:

1. Online (just go to the First Lutheran website under the "Resources" tab),
2. Mobile App (download the Give Plus app on the iPhone or Android, create a profile and search for "First Lutheran"), or
3. Text (just text the donation amount to 308-470-5058 and you will be prompted with further instructions).

If you have any questions or would like assistance in using any of the above electronic giving options or would like to receive offering envelopes, please contact Marti in the church office.

Thank you so much for your faithful generosity to First Lutheran Church's ministry!

Please keep the office updated if you are in the hospital or would like to be on the prayer list. Thank you!

Easter Lilies and Tulips are now available to order. Lilies are \$14.95 and tulips are \$15.95. Please fill out a form and mail or bring the form and payment to the office. The deadline is Monday, March 22, 2021, by 8:00 am.

COUNCIL UPDATE

Greetings First Lutheran Members,

We have entered the season of Lent...the time of self-reflection and examination. The time to remember Christ's sacrifice for us so that we may walk in the newness of life. The time for spiritual renewal through prayer and greater compassion for others.

Over the next 40 days, First Lutheran Church is providing daily practices so members, and non-members alike, can share in the spirit of our mission...Receiving God's Grace, Sharing God's Love, Uniting in Christ. Please follow along on the website or on Facebook. These practices will hopefully help each of us either rediscover, or open ourselves more deeply to, the power of the resurrection and to new life in Christ. Lenten offerings will be given to the ELCA Good Gifts project, so please continue your giving during this time.

Most recently, our congregation approved the installation of a new fire system throughout the church. Thank you. Your support and vision for the future is much appreciated. The Church Council continued to look to the future by approving several Stevenson Grant requests during our February Council Meeting. All approved requests will better serve our community and congregation. We also approved the Endowment Team's request to continue supporting Connie Stover and the "Seeking the Spirit Within" program with a \$5,000 grant.

As you have also noticed, we have taken steps to move our worship services forward by not requiring pre-registration and by speaking the Lord's Prayer. Even though we are taking these steps forward, we do not want to take any steps back. Therefore, the Council will continue to discuss worship services on a monthly basis and will make decisions that are in the best interest of the congregation as a whole. Your Council is here to listen. Please contact one of us with your questions and/or concerns.

Finally, please keep our pastors in your prayers. Their workload continues to grow, they are tired, and believe it or not, they are getting burnt out. They are not able to visit those in need nor are they able to serve us in the way we want to be served. Pastors are people too. Give some grace.

Blessings to you all,
Your Church Council



CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Kim Troudt
President

Dave Zimmer
Vice President

Lee Fritson
Treasurer

Judy Henning
Secretary

Rachel Leach

Miranda
Obermeier

Kelly
Russman

Michael
Rafferty

Mark Kottmeyer

Have questions?

Contact information for our Congregational Council Representatives is available in the narthex or the church office.

WORSHIP THEMES

MARCH 7

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

EXODUS 20:1-17; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25;
JOHN 2:13-22

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.

MARCH 14

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

NUMBERS 21:4-9; PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22,
EPHESIANS 2:1-10; JOHN 3:14-21

The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.

MARCH 21

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

JEREMIAH 31:31-34; PSALM 51:1-12;
HEBREWS 5:5-10; JOHN 12:20-33

God promises Jeremiah that a "new covenant" will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God's heart through Christ and draws God's love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God's love with all the world.

MARCH 28

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION PALM SUNDAY

ISAIAH 50:4-9A; PSALM 31:916;
PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11; MARK 14:1- - 15:47

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts; Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability; agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken. Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work.



"LIKE" us on
Facebook:
**First Lutheran
Church –
Kearney**



Sign up for
weekly E-mail
updates: Send
request to:

office@firstlutherankearney.org



LIVE Radio
Broadcast:
**Sundays 8:45 AM
– KXPN 1460 AM**



LIVE
Webstream
Broadcast:
**Sundays 8:45
AM & 11:00 AM
www.firstlutherankearney.org**



PRAY

PRAYER WARRIORS

This is an email prayer group. *It is not a prayer chain, so you do not need to send this on to anyone.* When you sign up, you will periodically be sent a prayer via email. After you receive the prayer all you need to do is read/pray the prayer at your convenience. It is that simple. We hope you enjoy this convenient way to use the power of prayer.

To become a "Prayer Warrior" simply email your name and email address to Theress Bricker at tmbricker4@gmail.com and ask that you be added to the "Prayer Warrior" group.

If you have any questions or have a prayer request please contact: Sister Ruth Ellen at (308) 455-1432, Margene Dahlstedt (308) 627-6337 or Theress Bricker at (308) 233-2469.

JOIN A PRAYER CHAIN

Help pray for brothers and sisters in Christ or share requests for prayer. Paul reminds us "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God". (Phil 4:6).

Telephone prayer chain members are led by Jeanette Andersen (308-237-3634), Marlene Kotrc (308-234-3293).

If you would like to participate in email prayer requests, pass your request along to the church office or Theress Bricker (tmbricker4@gmail.com).

Requests will be emailed to you for your prayer time.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry meets every Wednesday in the coffee area from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. during the school year. Please join us for knitting, crocheting, conversation, and prayer. If you have any questions, or if you know of someone who might be able to use a Prayer Shawl as a tangible reminder of God's love and grace during hard times and good times, please call Theress Bricker (308) 233-2469. **Will not meet in March.**

Prayers of peace and comfort for...

The family and friends of Dave Marron.

The family and friends of Mary Hettler.

The family and friends of Karen Verraneault.

The family and friends of Kristi Krohn on the death of Kristi's father, Richard Myers.

The family and friends of Dave and Julie Agard on the death of Dave's father, Kenneth Agard.

The family and friends of Jacob and Pastor Elisabeth Himmelman on the death of Pastor Elisabeth's cousin, Karen McHugh.

The family and friends of Paula Peterson on the death of Ward Peterson.

The family and friends of Monie Karschner and Becky Bredenkamp and family on the death of their brother, Ward Peterson.



Did you know that First Lutheran Church does Baptisms? If you have a new baby, adopt a child, or have never been baptized and you are interested in becoming baptized please contact the office for more information.



Are you interested in donating flowers to someone for a special birthday, anniversary, or just because? Contact the office and we can help you sign up for our flower chart. These are the flowers that appear on the altar every Sunday and can be picked up and taken home for that special someone to enjoy.



Did you know that First Lutheran Church has a Rose Garden – Memorial Garden, a Memorial Stone area and a Columbarium? Inquire with the office for more details if you are interested in more information on any of these items.



Congratulations to our March Volunteers of the Month: The Property & Management Team

The members of this team are Jerry Stithem (chair), Dave Behle, Patsy Bruner, Gordon Fehringer, Bert Hinrichs, Ryan Pickel, Delbert Sindt, Terry Volker, Pastor Rick Carlson, Kelly Russman, and Adam Eilers.

The primary responsibilities of this team are the care and maintenance of the physical properties belonging to this congregation are an important part of good stewardship. This team has responsibility for: maintaining, protecting, and improving all real and personal property of this congregation; seeing to proper insurance and safety programs; developing and overseeing long range plans for property, both real and personal, including the acquisition and usage thereof; overseeing yard care, snow removal, and church cleaning; and maintaining a current inventory of the congregational personal property.

Lately this group has been busy with the fire alarm system, making sure our church building is clean and safe during COVID, updating the rental property, working with Witness and Members on a Culligan Water System to prolong the life of our coffee machines, working with Care and Growth on obtaining and installing an ice machine in the North kitchen.

We thank them for taking the time and energy to keep our property top notch!

WOMEN of the ELCA

March Blessings Everyone,

The month of March brings us to the Lenten season a time of giving, fasting and most of all prayer. The sacrifice Jesus gave on the cross for our sins is the reminder of why Lent practices are important. What a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and grief to bear comes to mind.

The Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Association (W.E.L.C.A.) First Lutheran Church Board Zoom meeting will be on March 1, 2021. We do have space at the Library for those who do not have computer access – contact Judy Workman for reservation.

The month of March features Chairman Judy Nieman's article on the Naomi Circle W.E.L.C.A. mission goals and projects supported. The Naomi Circle concentrates on three service areas.

1. Baptism pictures. Pictures are taken of the individual with their family on the day of the baptism. The pictures are then posted on a display board in the narthex. After two years the pictures are put in a scrapbook. If the individual is confirmed at First Lutheran, a congratulations card containing the baptism photo is sent to the individual.
2. Financial support is given to obtain some of the materials used to make the quilt for the annual Camp Carol Joy Holling quilt auction.
3. Since the circle has many former teachers in the group, the emphasis is on collecting items for the Lutheran World Relief school kits.

The circle has been meeting monthly on Zoom since last March except in August and September when meetings were held in Harmon park.

Here is an old Irish saying with March being an Irish holiday:
**May your neighbors respect you, Trouble neglect you,
The angels protect you, And heaven accept you.**

Upcoming Events for 2021

NEBRASKA Synodical Women's Organization activities from the NEBRASKA Synodical Women's Organization ALL S.W.O. ACTIVITIES are being rescheduled at this time to mostly Zoom meetings!

April 30 & May 1 & 2, 2021 - The next Saved to Serve will be at Camp Carol Joy Holling (Pending COVID). Nebraska S.W.O. will collect your Mosaic Activity/Sensory/Fidget Mat Special Project as part of the program. The event emphasis is Mosaic and the lodging will be at the camp Carol Joy Holling.

Save To Serve Lynch, NE -Niobrara Valley House of Renewal was POSTPONED to AUGUST 6-8, 2021



Ladies who are interested in joining a monthly Bible study are invited to attend a women's circle. Circles can be joined at any time during the year.

Co-Chairs:

**Lil Larson (308)-224-6207
Judy Workman (308)-237-2781**

Secretary:

Bev Vacha (308)-468-6239

Treasurer:

Jo Smallcomb (308)-234-3053



ABIGAIL CIRCLE (SEPT.-MAY)

9:00 am—3rd Monday
Co-Chairs: Joan Swanson
(308-234-2835) and Evy Kuecker
(308-237-5651)

DEBORAH CIRCLE

7:00 pm—3rd Monday
Co-Chairs: Deb Schauer (308-233-2669) and Ellen Epp (308-234-5696)

GLORIA CIRCLE

12:00pm—3rd Thursday
Chair: Karen Foster (308-234-2157)

NAOMI CIRCLE

7:30pm—4th Thursday (3rd Thurs. in Nov.)
Chair: Judy Niemann
(308)-234-4332

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Dear First Lutheran,

I sent a letter to FLY youth, families, and volunteers last month and I wanted to share with you, since we are all navigating a new relationship together in particularly strange times. It offers a glimpse into who I am and who God has called me to be as your pastor, particularly as I relate to and lead youth and young adults:

Church is a place of community, of faith formation, of questioning, and of relationship. You can ask me anything and I will do my best to answer from the perspective of Scripture, Lutheran theological teachings, and my own lived experience. Joyfully, I reaffirmed my promise to do this when I was ordained.

What you see is what you get with me. God's call to serve the church is rooted in the call to all of us to love one another by serving our neighbors. That is why I wear two masks when we gather in small spaces together. What I have discovered is this: it's really hard to love as Jesus tells us to love. I'm not here to inform your political opinions or tell you what to believe. I am here to encourage, guide, ask, and seek God alongside you. We are all in this together, responding in faith and love to God's universal call to love and care for creation.

One of these days, when Covid-19 realities shift for the better, I look forward to sharing a meal together. Something holy happens when we break bread together. We see this in the feeding of the 5000, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and at the Last Supper. I miss bumping elbows and breaking bread together, and I long for the days of eating and talking and washing dishes together which are vital to our community's health and wellbeing.

For youth, our conversations will be confidential unless there is a concern for which I need to discuss with your parent(s), in which case I will tell you directly that will happen. I will always encourage you to talk to your parent(s) about whatever concerns you raise with me; and I am available to have what I call "kitchen table conversations" if you request my presence to talk through something hard at home.

For parents and adult leaders, our conversations will be confidential anytime you want to talk about youth ministry, about your child or a student, or have any other pastoral care needs, my door is open to you – my office door, my email, cell phone, or the coffee shop door. Our conversations are confidential unless there is a need to bring in others. I do share openly with Pastor Michelle and Pastor Rick.

I ask that if you have ideas, concerns, or questions, you come to me directly. I will listen. I will consider, contemplate, respond, and listen more. We don't have to agree, and we likely won't on all things. We do have to agree, however, that our responsibility as adults who care deeply for teenagers is this: ***Our job is to always point to the love, grace, mercy, and justice of our Savior, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen.***

Anonymous feedback will not be given a response as this indirect communication works against love and damages our community rather strengthening it and demonstrating to our community here in Kearney what loving each other looks like even when we disagree. Have you ever noticed how Jesus spoke directly to his disciples? They were in it together! So are we. What great news!

In hope,
Pastor Elisabeth

Ways to reach Pastor Elisabeth – Office phone
(308) 237-5544
Email address – ehimmelman@firstlutherankearney.org
Set up a meeting time in the office or on her cell phone
or at a public meeting place.





CAMPUS
LUTHERAN

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

JOIN US FOR HOLY SPACE AND
HOLY COMMUNION

WEDNESDAYS @ 8:15PM
PONDEROSA A, NSU

all are welcome

a ministry of



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

NOTES FROM THE PRESCHOOL: A MINISTRY OF FLC

Hello from Pre-K!

As I write this, I am looking out my living room window as more snow falls and bitter wind chills are predicted, and I am thinking that the groundhog might just be right; we celebrated Groundhog Day by making our own little groundhog and learning about shadows.

The following week we learned all about the Post Office and how it works. A Post Office center was set up so the children could pretend to work in one or be a customer sending something.

We usually take field trips but due to the virus we are not able to. In February we usually go to Paint Paradise so this year we brought Paint Paradise to the children. As part of our Valentine's Day party, we painted cute animals along with giving out Valentines and enjoying treats. We had a wonderful time!

Other themes we talked about was President's Day and the last week of the month was Dental Health week. For a short month we had many things that we learned about.

Before I close this month's newsletter, I want to announce that I will be retiring after this school year. I have taught and been Director at First Lutheran Preschool for 13 years. I have been so blessed with the wonderful families that I have met over the years. The congregation has always been so supportive with their generosity and donations to our preschool. I have taught many children, have made many wonderful memories that I will cherish. I have worked with such wonderful teachers, Ms. Sonya, Ms. Amanda and Ms. Lora that have also become friends. As I close one chapter and open a new one, I am excited for what the future holds. I look forward to spending more time with our grandchildren, more camping, bicycling and just enjoying all that God has blessed me with.

Mrs. Judy & Ms. Sonya

Hello First Lutheran Congregation!

We have been busy! We have learned about Groundhog's Day, shadows, sea creatures and the list could go on and on.

We had Muffins with MOM's, and they had a blast making mud pies! The kids were so excited! We also played with a giant parachute!

This week of Valentine's Week we are talking about how God's loves us so much. God has given us eyes, ears, mouths, skin and a family that loves us too. Our heavenly father has this big, beautiful Earth that we need to go out and enjoy. We made graphs from opening a box of valentine hearts, made patterns with hearts, sorted by color with hearts, shape BINGO at our Valentine Party and just enjoyed reading their Valentine's to them. They did a great job thanking their friends for taking the time to make them a personal valentine.

Next week, we have transportation week. It is one of my favorite weeks! We have fun with a hot wheels set, learn about traffic lights and many forms of transportation. We even get to play with 2 different types of paper airplanes that Mrs. Lora made from scratch!

Then the letter P week, we will learn all about poisons. We also get to learn about taking care of our teeth!

Then comes G is for Grandparents. We are excited to have them come and do some fun things with us. They will make GAK, learn about Germs and what is a Gas, a solid and liquid. We have Gifts for the Grandparents! It is going to be Great!

Many March Blessings to you and your families!
Mrs. Amanda & Mrs. Lora



MARCH (and a couple April) CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Easter Lilies and Tulips

Lily -- \$14.95

Tulip -- \$15.95

Orders Due by March 22nd 8am



**Midweek Lent Services
Wednesdays @ 6:30pm**

**Maundy Thursday, April 1st
with First Communion
5:30pm and 7:00pm**

**Good Friday, April 2nd
6:30pm**

**Easter Day, April 4th
“Son”rise Service Under the Sunrise
at 7:00am in the North Parking Lot
8:45am and 11:00am in the Sanctuary,
Online and Radio for 8:45am**



**Vote for First Lutheran Church Preschool
“Best in Kearney 2021”**

**Best of Kearney Voting begins
March 1 – March 16, 2021
Best of Kearney Winners announced
April 17, 2021**



**FLC Preschool Fundraiser
RUNZA North
Monday, April 26th
5pm-8pm**



**Wednesdays for Faith
Topics
March 3, 10, 17, 24
@7pm**

**Sundays for Bible Study
March 7, 14, 21, 28
@9:55am**

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RECEIVING
GOD'S GRACE

SHARING
GOD'S LOVE

UNITING
IN CHRIST



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

3315 G Avenue - Kearney, Nebraska 68847

MARCH 2021

Current calendar can be found on our website:

<https://firstlutherankearney.org/calendar/>

PHONE: 308-237-5544 WEB: www.firstlutherankearney.org
Office Hours: 8:30 – 4pm Monday – Friday