
JULY 2023

THE MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of First Lutheran Church, ELCA

Growing in God's grace, reflecting Christ's love, and living in the Spirit.



GO AND...

LISTEN

WRITTEN BY NEBRASKA SYNOD STAFF

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How do we listen with our full selves? In reality, all of our senses are used when we listen – with our ears, our eyes, our mouths, and our bodies. As disciples, we listen to ourselves, our neighbors, and God. When we listen, we find new perspectives, shared history, and common ground.

Questions to Consider:

- What is something you learned from listening to your heart?
- What is something you learned from listening to a stranger?
- In a year of GOING, how will you listen to those around you?

Prayer: Listening God, help me stay open to the surprises you provide while on the road this summer. Amen.

Suggested Song: Listen, God is Calling (ELW 513)

Ready for more listening resources? Check out:

<https://nebraskasynod.org/go-and/listen-2/>

RESOURCES

ELCA: WWW.ELCA.ORG
800-638-3522

NEBRASKA SYNOD: WWW.NEBRASKASYNOD.ORG
402-896-5311

NEBRASKA LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY:
WWW.NELCM.COM (308) 234-1828

NEBRASKA LUTHERAN OUTDOOR MINISTRIES:
WWW.NLOM.ORG 402-944-2544

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF: WWW.LWR.ORG
800-597-5972

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE: WWW.ELCA.ORG/OUR-WORK/RELIEF-AND-DEVELOPMENT/LUTHERAN-DISASTER-RESPONSE
800-638-3522



PRAYER VENTURES FOR JULY CAN BE FOUND:
[HTTPS://WWW.ELCA.ORG/RESOURCES/PRAYER-VENTURES](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.

WITHIN OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY



VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

**The Retiring Members
of the Personnel Team:**

**Jamie Banzhaf, PJ Bartels,
Michelle Harter, and Lisa Parish**

The personnel team evaluates staffing needs, recommends and interprets personnel policies, considers pastoral, staff, and congregational needs as well as screening job applicants for lay positions. Jamie, PJ, Michelle, and Lisa served their terms with great dedication. Some served multiple terms. We are grateful for their service.

Prayers of Peace and Comfort for...

Jera and Rob Hinkle on the death of their niece, Talia Krumbach.

Dave and Angela Wright and family on the death of Angela's uncle, Terry Buschelman.

The family and friends of Lois Johnson.

The family and friends of Paul Norblade.

Dana and Beth Ernst on the death of Dana's brother, Dan Ernst.

Larry and Debbie Steinbrecher on the death of Larry's half-brother, Ronald Hoffman.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Training begins this fall.
Watch for more details!

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Thank you to First Lutheran members who provided the meal to Habitat on June 17 and to Pastor Rick for the morning devotion. We continue to look for organizations or businesses that would volunteer to provide a Saturday lunch in the second half of the building season.

As this update is written in mid-June, progress continues for the three houses of 2023. Houses #95 and #96 are enclosed so there is a workspace even in rainy weather. House #95 is focused on insulation, drywall, and painting. Once the electrical work is completed in House #96 there will be insulation, drywall, and painting to do. Did you know that each house has a “safe room” where a family can shelter during heavy storms? The closet in one bedroom is reinforced to protect residents. By July the footings for House #97 will be dug and the slab poured.

While the families are working on their physical houses, they are also working to strengthen their financial house. Each family is studying the Fannie Mae program while they track their spending and build budgets. The families meet two or three times to share their questions and discuss their progress.



MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF KITS



Today and every day, Lutheran World Relief Quilts and Kits of Care are a reminder to families that even in the midst of crisis, they are not alone.

Please help us collect items for Lutheran World Relief Kits! First Lutheran Church takes pride in donating and assembling School Kits, Baby Care Kits, Personal Care Kits, Mission Quilts, Fabric Kits. Pens and pencils, a toothbrush, a quilt...ordinary items we take for granted become treasures in the hands of their recipients. Please give new items only, except where otherwise noted. Please do not donate items with any religious or patriotic symbols. Thank you for your partnership in putting them together.

For a complete list of items needed, visit <http://lwr.org/getinvolved/kits>. Any questions please call Theress Bricker 308-233-2469.

There will be a donation box at First Lutheran Church in the coffee area.

ROYAL FAMILY KIDS CAMP

Mission Outreach Team has chosen Royal Family Kids Camp as the special summer project for 2023. RFK is a Christian led organization that provides a week-long summer camp for children ages 7-11 who are involved with the child welfare system. This year's Kearney area camp is July 24-28, 2023. They also serve children in Kearney through a monthly mentoring club during the school year.

RFKC is a network of camps, children's clubs, and child mentoring for abused, abandoned and neglected children in the foster care, system. Their motto is "Every child deserves dignity", and the goal is for every child in the community to experience unconditional love, hope, and safety. Royal Family KIDS Kearney's mission is to create life-changing moments for children who have experienced relational trauma. They are motivated by the example Christ set to share a common goal, of caring for those Jesus referred to as, "the least of these."

Summer project collection boxes will be available on the Welcome Stations in the narthex.

Kearney, Nebraska

MISSIONARY UPDATE

Hello!

My name is Shelby Riedman. I enjoy nature, finding new ways to be creative, and spreading kindness whenever possible. I have always been excited to help spread God's love through acts of service and by meeting new people. I am currently in a year of service with the Young Adults in Global Mission program through the ELCA. Bethany Christian Trust, through Time for God, have been my host organizations this year. My placement has been in a hostel for people experiencing homelessness in Scotland.

I get to interact with up to 24 residents and different staff on any given day. With these interactions I have been able to strengthen my faith and grow in myself. I would greatly appreciate anyone who is willing to pray for me as I move through my last few months of service and transition back to being Stateside. I also run a blog that sends out bi-monthly newsletters and is my primary way of updating what's been going on.

<https://shelbyriedman.wixsite.com/stwig>





JULY'S S.A.F.E. CENTER DONATION: DENTAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS

IDEAS: TOOTHBRUSHES, TOOTHPASTE, DENTAL FLOSS, MOUTH WASH

The S.A.F.E. Center is the Spouse/Sexual abuse family education center. the S.A.F.E. Center's mission is to provide free and confidential services for those affected by dating violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and stalking while bringing awareness and prevention efforts to all individuals across South Central Nebraska.

Counties we serve: Buffalo, Franklin, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps

**PLEASE PLACE ITEMS ON THE "SHARING SHELF" IN
THE NARTHEX. THANK YOU!**



HOURS: MONDAY-THURSDAY 9AM-5PM
ADDRESS: 620 E. 25TH STREET SUITE 14
KEARNEY, NE 68847
308-237-2599/CRISIS LINE: 877-237-2513

A COUNCIL UPDATE

Budget Revisions, Supporting, NLOM, and Capital Campaign Next Steps

Greetings First Lutheran Congregation,

At our June council meeting we reviewed an updated budget plan. As we discussed at the congregational budget forum, we revealed that the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adult ministry position will likely be structured differently than it was during Pastor Elisabeth's call. It will not be a split call with Campus Lutheran. Therefore, we will not be receiving reimbursement from the grant or from synod to help offset the salary. With that known, we adjusted our projected revenue accordingly.

Our planned expenses are only \$11,500 higher than the previous year, which is an increase of 1.4%. We know we'll have salary savings while we go through the call process to fill the open Associate Pastor position so the expenses at the end of this fiscal year should be even lower than our plan shows. As always, we'll keep a close eye on expenses compared to giving/revenue in the early months to make sure we're on track.

The council also approved an Endowment request for \$3,000 supporting Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. First Lutheran has participated in camp for many years. Our 7th graders just finished a week at Camp Carol Joy Holling in June and we heard it was another wonderful experience. We are grateful to have opportunities to support NLOM.

Additionally, the council had extensive conversation about the Capital Campaign. Specifically, what are the next steps? We will be forming a building committee soon to explore next steps, get final plans drawn, approach contractors about bids, etc. We have over \$1.2 Million collected in intent cards. This is wonderful to see and we're grateful for the generous contributions from the congregation. However, there's still a way to go to hit our goal of over \$2 Million. We'll keep the congregation informed of plans moving forward and efforts to help us reach our goal.

Finally, we celebrated the outgoing council representatives. We are grateful for the work that Mark Kottmeyer, Rachel Leach, and Mike Rafferty did during their years serving the church. They navigated the difficulty of COVID-19 and helped our church through many tough, important decisions. Similarly, we celebrated the work of Pastor Elisabeth. We are blessed to have had her serve our church and community. We wish her well in her next call.

We pray that summer is treating everyone well. The work of the church remains busy during these months with planning for VBS, answering the needs of our church members, and preparing for fall activities. Thank you all for your continued prayers.

In peace,

Kyle Means

Council President

WORSHIP THEMES

July 2, 2023

TIME AFTER PENTECOST

JEREMIAH 28:5-9; PSALM 89:1-4, 15-18;
ROMANS 6:12-23; MATTHEW 10:40-42

The welcome of baptism is for all God's children. This baptismal gift sets us free from the power of sin and death. In today's gospel, Christ promises that the disciple who gives a cup of cold water to the little ones serves Christ himself. From worship we are sent on our baptismal missions: to serve the little ones of this world and to be a sign of God's merciful welcome.

July 9, 2023

TIME AFTER PENTECOST

ZECHARIAH 9:9-12; PSALM 145:8-14; ROMANS 7:15-25a; MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own self desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary". Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

July 16, 2023

TIME AFTER PENTECOST

ISAIAH 55:10-13; PSALM 65:[1-8] 9-13;
ROMANS 8:1-11; MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seeds indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

July 23, 2023

TIME AFTER PENTECOST

ISAIAH 44:6-8; PSALM 86:11-17; ROMANS 8:12-25; MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43

It is an age-old question: Why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day when all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit and justice and mercy.

July 30, 2023

TIME AFTER PENTECOST

1 KINGS 3:5-12; PSALM 119:129-136;
ROMANS 8:26-39; MATTHEW 13:31-33, 44-52

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!



IT'S ALMOST TIME!

Vacation Bible School 2023

Join Us as We **Answer God's Call** Together

JULY 17 – 20 & 23RD

WEEKDAYS 5:15PM - 5:50PM:

VBS CHECK-IN & FREE-WILL DONATION MEAL

WEEKDAYS 6:00PM - 8:00PM:

VBS PROGRAMMING

SUNDAY, JULY 23:

10:30AM WORSHIP SERVICE

5TH LESSON, PERFORM SONGS, PARTY AFTERWARD

REGISTER BY
JULY 2 TO ORDER
A T-SHIRT!



TO REGISTER:



OR GO TO
firstlutheranbearney.org

VOLUNTEER:



OR GO TO
firstlutheranbearney.org



In the depths of a colorful underground cave, is the beating heart of the hero community: the **Hero Hotline Headquarters!** Join us this July for First Lutheran Church's 2023 VBS, where ordinary mortals will become **Heroes** and discover that everyone's gifts are valued and every hero has a role to play. We won't focus on grown-up, comic book versions of superheroes at our VBS -- instead we will focus on how **we can be heroic in our everyday lives**, striving for the things that bring peace and build each other up! Our VBS Heroes will experience a fun, welcoming, high-energy VBS through bible lessons, music, storytelling, games, arts and crafts, science, and snacks.



NOTES FROM OUR PRESCHOOL

A MINISTRY OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Happy July to All!

The month of June has been doing some cleaning and organizing in the classroom. We look forward to our new classes in August! Our first letter and supply list will go out towards the end of the second week in July. We will have our Orientation Night on Thursday, August 17th, 2023. The Monday/Wednesday class in the 3- & 4-year-old room and the Pre-K class will be at 5:30pm. Then the Tuesday/Thursday 3- & 4-year-old class will be at 7pm. We are excited to meet these new faces, show them around our classrooms and talk about so many amazing things we do here at First Lutheran Church Preschool.

Pre- K is full with a waiting list, but we do have a couple openings in both of the 3- & 4-year-old classes. One class is on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:15 – 11:45am. The other class is the same hours and on Tuesdays and Thursdays!

Mrs. Lora and Mrs. Mindy do a fabulous job nurturing your child in many ways. They have bible lessons each day and chapel with our pastors once a week. They teach skills of getting along and sharing each day. The teachers are making it fun when strengthening their fine motor skills as well as gross motor skills. They build their vocabulary by reading to them a lot! They do the cutest art projects to build on those fine motor skills and encourage creativity. Those teachers also do wonderful science experiments that are very hands-on. They get their hands dirty and love every minute of it. Except for the ones that like to have their hands clean all the time, but they learn that getting messy can be fun!

Those teachers truly care about your child and we have lots of parents who would love to tell you about all the awesome things we do here. If you would like some phone numbers of parents to talk to please email me at amandalewis@firstlutherankearney.org or text me at 308-240-0872.

God's blessings,
Mrs. Amanda

WOMEN of the ELCA

In a recent Daily Grace devotion, it talked about the most important word in the Bible is WITH. It reminded us that God is WITH us. God sticks WITH us. Delights in us, plays WITH us, suffers and abides WITH us. In trouble and doubt, when everything goes perfectly and when everything falls apart: God is WITH us.

It is that time of year, when we collect items for the Lutheran World Relief kits. Women of the ELCA and First Lutheran Church have been wonderful supporters of Lutheran World Relief Kits. LWR Kits are specifically designed to help people cope with poverty, disaster, conflict and more. If you like going to garage sales, look for and purchase the following items for the Infant Care kits. Items needed are lightweight t-shirts, receiving blankets, socks, sleepers, from infant to 24 months. NO onesies or sleepers with feet. School items will soon be on sale for the School kits. Items needed are #2 pencils unsharpened with erasers, ballpoint pens, 16 or 24 crayons, 70 sheet notebooks, blunt scissors. Drawstring backpacks or canvas material to make backpacks is also needed. Personal Care Kits also need light to medium weight dark color bath towels. Combs and nail clippers are also needed. There are collection boxes in the coffee area by the pop machine.

There is a Saved to Serve event on Friday, August 4, 6pm, to Sunday, August 6, 1pm at Mosaic at Bethpage Village in Axtell. On Saturday, there will be a carnival for the individuals living at the Village. They will also be sprucing up some landscaping, do some cleaning and prepare greeting cards to make holidays special. There is a tangible offering of fun socks from age 9 to 90, regular size bath towels, and Beanie Babies. Registration forms are available on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board by the office and are due July 14.

**ALL LADIES OF THE CHURCH ARE
INVITED TO ATTEND...**

FLIP FLOP FUN SALAD NIGHT

MONDAY, JULY 10TH

6:00 PM IN CENTENNIAL HALL

**PLEASE BRING A SALAD TO SHARE.
DRESS IS CASUAL. FREEWILL
OFFERING. WE WILL ALSO BE
COLLECTING OUR ITEMS FOR
MOAIC WHICH ARE MENTIONED
ABOVE.**

DEBORAH CIRCLE

7:00 PM –3RD MONDAY

CHAIR: DEB SCHAUER

308-233-2669

GLORIA CIRCLE

12:00PM–3RD THURSDAY

CHAIR: JUDY WORKMAN

308-237-2781

NAOMI CIRCLE

7:00PM–4TH THURSDAY

(3RD THURS. IN NOV.)

CHAIR: JUDY NIEMANN

308-234-4332

MAY FINANCE REPORT

MINISTRY BUDGET:	MAY 2023	YTD '22-'23'	YTD '21-'22
BUDGET SUPPORTING REVENUE	\$ 97,695	\$ 731,425	\$ 734,371
BUDGET RELATED EXPENDITURES	\$ (61,306)	\$ (748,481)	\$ (734,371)

TOTAL 2022-2023 MINISTRY BUDGET: \$757,672

FACILITIES BUDGET:	MAY 2023	YTD '22-'23	YTD '21-'22
REVENUE	\$ 5,075	\$ 83,549	\$ 77,575
EXPENDITURES	\$ (42,412)	\$ (83,549)	\$ (77,575)

TOTAL 2022-2023 FACILITIES BUDGET: \$34,100



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

VANCO Faith: which allows people to make financial contributions to the church electronically in the following ways:

Online (just go to the First Lutheran website under the “Resources” tab), and

Mobile App (download the Vanco Mobile app on the iPhone or Android, create a profile and search for “First Lutheran”).

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!

Church Office

office@firstlutheranearney.org

Pastor Rick Carlson

Co-Pastor

rcarlson@firstlutheranearney.org

Pastor Michelle Holley Carlson

Co-Pastor

mcarlson@firstlutheranearney.org

Kandy Bacon

Administrative Assistant

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Bookkeeper

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Natalie Radcliffe

Music Coordinator

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Amanda Lewis

Lead Teacher for the Preschool

amandalewis@firstlutheranearney.org

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

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Kelly Russman

Vice President

Shirley Smalley

Treasurer

Lee Fritson

Secretary

PJ Bartels

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Judy Henning

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DEB SCHAUER

(308) 233-2669

SECRETARY:

BEV VACHA

(308)-468-6239

TREASURER:

JO SMALLCOMB

(308)-234-3053

July Dates to Remember

1st/3rd Weekends – Laying on of Hands for Healing during Worship Services

Sat./Sun. July 1, 2 Worship @ 6pm, 8:45am, 10:30am
Worship at Brookestone Gardens at 2:00pm

Mon./Tues. July 3, 4 Fourth of July Holiday – Church Office Closed

Sat./Sun., July 8, 9 Worship @ 6pm, 8:45am, 10:30am

Sat/Sun., July 15, 16 – Worship @ 6pm, 8:45am, 10:30am

Mon-Thurs July 17-20 – Vacation Bible School
Meal at 5:15
VBS – all church rooms 6 – 8 pm

Sat./Sun. July 22, 23 Worship @ 6pm, 8:45am,
10:30 am – VBS Service Takeover

Sat./Sun. July 29, 30 Worship @ 6pm, 8:45am, 10:30am



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
3315 G AVENUE
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847-3699

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3315 G AVENUE - KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847



THE CHURCH CALENDAR, WEEKLY BULLETINS, PRAYER LISTS, AND LIVE WEBSTREAM
BROADCASTS ON SUNDAY MORNINGS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE:

[HTTPS://FIRSTLUTHERANKEARNEY.ORG/](https://firstlutherankearney.org/)

FIND US ON FACEBOOK: "FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH-KEARNEY"

SIGN UP FOR WEEKLY EMAIL UPDATES: OFFICE@FIRSTLUTHERANKEARNEY.ORG

LIVE RADIO BROADCAST SUNDAYS AT 8:45AM: KXPB 1460AM

PHONE: 308-237-5544 WEB: WWW.FIRSTLUTHERANKEARNEY.ORG

OFFICE HOURS: 8:30AM – 4PM MONDAY – FRIDAY