



*"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works."
Matthew 5:16*

**First Lutheran Church
August 2021
Newsletter Edition 8**

Pastor's Message

As your interim pastor this is likely the last message that I will prepare and offer for our monthly newsletter. The current plan is to have the new pastor on board by early September, and she or he should be given the opportunity for an introductory pastor's message for that month.

Thus, at this time, the most important words I wish to convey to you are - Thank You! Thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of First Lutheran Church since last fall. Serving as interim pastor in one's hometown is an unusual opportunity. Both Margie and I have deemed it a real privilege and pleasure to reconnect in special ways with many people and to get to know so many new folks during this time of service.

We have as a congregation come through an unusual and challenging time because of the Covid pandemic and recent societal upheavals. Yet, we have been guided by the power of faith and the lessons of the Gospel to meet those challenges, to adapt to new circumstances, and to serve out our mission. It has been a pleasure to work with Emily and lots of volunteers to present a variety of worship experiences via online and local TV, and more recently via in person worship on both Sunday mornings and Monday evenings. We will continue with all these options to serve our members and guests through the end of August.

My time with you at First Lutheran Church has been filled with meaningful and rewarding experiences, including teaching confirmation class, working closely with dedicated and helpful staff members (Emily, Karen, Dave, Craig, Calleigh, and now Angela), serving alongside our many volunteers who help carry out the church's mission through Church council, committees, and special events. I have sought to reach out to as many members as possible, to reconnect people with the church, to honor Jesus' plea for a sense of oneness among God's people, and to offer pastoral care as needed and desired.

We have together endeavored to let the people of the St. Peter community know more about First Lutheran Church, its programs of service, and its worship opportunities. We have done so through more active news stories, increased advertising in newspapers and via electronic means, and by youth and adult volunteers spreading the word through our special First Lutheran entry in the 4th of July parade.

Indeed, First Lutheran Church has so much to offer to carry God's message of faith, hope, and love into the hearts and minds of people. May God bless the entire congregation, working with your new pastor, to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of many, many people in the years ahead.

Pastor Bill

Congregation Council President's Message

At its July meeting, the Church Council received reports from the Technology Task Force, the Call Committee, and a report on the restarting of the Kwik Trip Card program. Pastor Bill reported on some of the "behind the scenes" work of the pastor and the 4th of July parade. The Council approved the appointment of Rachel Szybnski to replace Bethany Valentini on the Council for the rest of this year. A draft report concerning Council members' duties and responsibilities was passed out to members for their input at the August meeting. In other action, the Council approved the placing of a "Little Free Library" on the grounds of First Lutheran. The planned placement will be outside the playground area on Traverse road by the current First Lutheran Church sign. The Council thanks Carol Solberg for her donation of the funds to purchase the kit from the Little Free Library nonprofit organization. The Council also approved the funds to replace a switch in the air conditioning in the Nave. Finally, the Council was unable to amend the by-laws changing the name of the Outreach/In-reach Committee because two-thirds of the voting members were not present at the meeting

Bill Kautt, Council President

Worship Out Loud!

Singing Welcome?

I recently attended a conference called **Singing Welcome?** led by the Hymn Society. This group is made up of members all over the world, so talking about a truly globally welcoming church through the lens of music made for some great conversation and perspective.

One of my favorite sessions was led by the Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer, a theologian and professor at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Her plenary was entitled "*As the Spirit Gives Us Utterance: Singing with Pentecost(al) Humility.*" Referencing the Pentecost story from Acts 2, the seminar referred to the many languages of the church and its music. Here are some highlights:

1. To be Pentecostal as a key component of a welcoming community is to offer the message of Christ in all languages of home, heart, and cultural identity. Christian churches should make hymnody from all corners of the world a regular part of worship since our church is a global church.
2. To be Pentecostal is to confess before God and one another that we [North American Christians] are not the center of the Church. Most Christians are not white Americans, and one point that particularly stood out to me was that decentering relieves us of the fallacy that the future of the church depends on us. All Christian entities around the world are branches and should be focused on Christ the vine to center our message of welcome and acceptance.
3. To be Pentecostal means to attend to stories, ours and others, rather than imposing the stories that we anticipate. In other words, we are encouraged not to assume we know someone's story without asking them.
4. To be Pentecostal means to be resisting the inertia of only singing the songs we know how to sing. She did not advocate for - nor would I - removing any familiar and beloved hymns from our repertoire. Rather, Dr. Aymer provided us with a challenge: of all the hymns, liturgy, and special music on a given Sunday, half should come from a culture that is not our own. She asked: "How would that change who we are and how we hear the gospel?"

She had a great story to support this, mentioning that cultures around the world - no matter their language - know how to sing "Amazing Grace." Can members of our congregations claim the same about other countries?

What does this mean for First Lutheran? For starters, in September I hope to reinstate the "bulletin notes" which will explain why each musical piece was chosen for each particular Sunday, and I will call attention to the origin of the music and text as often as possible. You may notice more of a mix of our congregational "favorites" and music from other parts of the world. Can you sing or speak in another language? Reach out to me to discuss some ideas! Above all, I encourage all of us to consider what it means to sing welcome to everyone who walks through our doors!

Emily Bruflat, Director of Worship & Music

Youth & Family - Out Loud!

- **Registration for all Youth Education is now open!**
It's time for another year of learning about God, each other, and ourselves in Sunday School and Confirmation classes! This year we will be back in the classroom learning with each other! Please reach out to Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com or 507-779-6866) to receive documents to register!
- **FLC's Got Talent: Sunday, August 15th at 7pm**
Do you have a talent you'd like to display? Please reach out to Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com or 507-779-6866) if you want to participate.
- **Service Project Opportunities:**
 - Tree Watering Volunteers Needed:*
FLC's Confirmation students planted nearly 100 trees along Church Street at the beginning of May (the east side of FLC's lot). We are looking for families to help us with tree watering this summer/fall! Interested? Contact Calleigh at cc.flcstp@gmail.com.
 - Prayer Buddies Plus Program:*
Prayer Partners Plus (formerly Prayer Buddies) is a one on one pairing of church members for the purposes of praying for each other accompanied by calls and/or visiting. Interested in participating? Reach out to Calleigh.
 - Hikmah Tutoring Program:*
This program is for Somali school children that is offered during the school year and in the summer. This summer the program needs volunteers Monday-Thursday from 2:00-4:30pm at the Islamic Center of St. Peter. Please contact Mohamed Abdulkadir (hikmahngo@gmail.com) for more information.

Calleigh Carlson, Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Outreach/In-Reach Committee Update

Prayer Ministries set to begin with training in August

The committee is reviving the prayer chain program and refreshing the current Prayer Buddies program. We invite any interested members to give this consideration. The prayer chain begins with a request for prayers from an individual to the church office or pastor. The prayer chain coordinator will notify a team of volunteers about prayer requests from the congregation. Amy Pehrson has agreed to be our Prayer Chain coordinator. Those who have volunteered to pray are notified by email, text or a phone call depending on the preferred form of communication.

Prayer Partners Plus (formerly Prayer Buddies) is a one on one pairing of church members for the purposes of praying for each other accompanied by calls and/or visitation on a regular basis. Monthly visits or phone calls are recommended but can be determined by the prayer partners. Volunteers for both prayer programs are invited to attend a training session on Monday, August 16th in the dining room at church from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. If you feel called to participate in either of these ministries, we invite you to join us for the training session and consider staying for the Monday night worship service.

Whether you are new to one of these programs or have been involved in the prayer buddies program, we ask that you attend this training session for the latest information. We will provide a light supper at the training session so please RSVP to the church office by Friday, August 13th so we know how much food to order. If you have any questions regarding these opportunities, please call Betsy Paul (507-720-5006), Shirb Sylvester (507-317-2883) or Mary Spear (507-317-1817).

Mary Spear, Outreach/In-reach Chair

Staff Support Committee Update

The Staff Support Committee has been meeting regularly on the second Tuesday of every month via Zoom. To date, the Committee has accomplished the following:

- Reviewed and revised existing staff job descriptions this was after requesting input from each staff member.
- Created employment agreements for all staff members as well as individual personnel files
- Reviewed and revised the existing staff member handbook for purposes of clarity, to comply with current statutes, to be consistent with other FLC documents, and to put in place a workable discipline/discharge/appeals procedure.
- Assisted in advertising, interviewing candidates, and recommending the hiring of the new FLC Office Coordinator.

Before the end of the year, the Committee intends to review, revise (if necessary), and compile all FLC policies into a usable policy manual, and the Committee intends to meet with each staff member to discuss job satisfaction, needs, and suggestions.

John Sylvester, Staff Support Chair

August Worship Services Highlights

August 15 outdoor service with a pet blessing - bring your leashed friends!

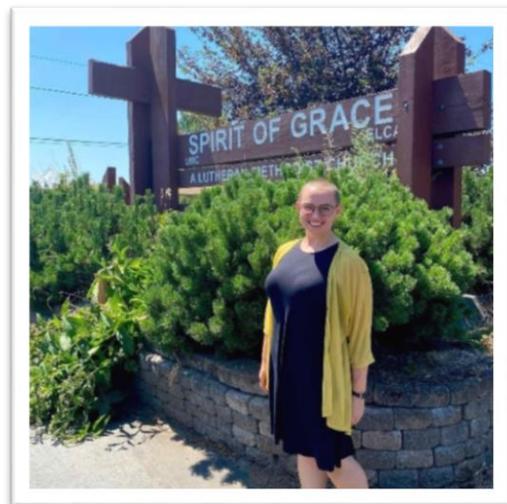
August 22 and 23 worship with communion

Monday Evening worship continues each week at 7:00 p.m. through August

Ordination News

In October of 2020, former FLC intern Miranda Bermes-Goller (née Joebgen) was approved for ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament in the ELCA. In January of 2021, she was assigned to the Oregon synod and began the process of searching for a call. On July 18th, 2021, a small congregation called Spirit of Grace in Hood River, OR voted to call her as their pastor!

Spirit of Grace is a unique congregation. They are a Methodist-Lutheran cooperative church which means that members of this congregation are both Lutheran (ELCA) and Methodist (UMC). This congregation grew out of two separate churches who sought to form an official relationship together, eventually giving life to a new faith community called Spirit of Grace.



Miranda and her wife, Jenni, will be moving to Hood River at the beginning of August, and Miranda's ordination is scheduled for August 21st. The ordination and installation service will be held in Hood River and there will be a virtual option to attend as well.

Miranda wishes to once again extend her deepest gratitude to everyone at First Lutheran Church who supported her throughout this journey. She says that her time at FLC was instrumental in shaping her into the kind of pastor that she is about to become, and she will forever be grateful for her time with this community. If you would like to reach out to Miranda to extend congratulations or ask any questions, her email address is mbermesgoller@gmail.com.

The Building Fund...from Stem to Stern

The Building Renovation Fund

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Activity 2009 to 2020			
Chapel Fund - Transfer in	\$50,843	\$40,327	
Receipts / Donations	\$2,417,108		
Lloyd Elton Bequest	\$20,000		
Construction Costs Paid		\$711,102	
Interest Expense during Construction		\$64,560	
Interest Expense on Mortgage		\$695,228	
Principal paid on Mortgage		\$885,022	
Total from 2009 to 2020 Balance 12-31-20	<u>\$2,487,951</u>	<u>\$2,396,239</u>	\$91,712
Activity in 2021			
Receipts / Donations	\$42,162		
Interest Expense - Mortgage		\$29,739	
Principal paid on Mortgage		\$40,814	
Construction/Refinance Costs Paid		\$0	
Total for 2021 / Balance 7/15/2021	<u>\$42,162</u>	<u>\$70,553</u>	<u>\$63,321</u>

Mortgage Summary

(Monthly Payment is \$10,079)

Original Mortgage on 3-12-12		\$2,180,215
Principal Paid 2012 / Balance 12-31-12	\$73,505	\$2,106,710
Principal Paid 2013 / Balance 12-31-13	\$155,037	\$1,951,673
Principal Paid 2014/Balance 12-31-14	\$86,482	\$1,865,191
Principal Paid 2015/Balance 12-31-15	\$108,048	\$1,757,143
Principal Paid 2016/Balance 12/31/16	\$86,956	\$1,670,187
Principal Paid 2017/Balance 12/31/17	\$63,792	\$1,606,395
Principal Paid 2018/Balance 12/31/18	\$162,586	\$1,443,809
Principal Paid 2019/Balance 12/31/19	\$80,821	\$1,362,988
Principal Paid 2020/Balance 12/31/20	\$67,795	\$1,295,193
Principal Paid 2021/Balance 7/15/21	\$40,814	\$1,254,380

Building Improvements Summary

Costs Paid by Chapel Fund	\$40,327
Costs Paid 2009 to 2020	\$737,044
Interest Expense during Construction	\$38,618
Costs Paid by the Mortgage	\$2,180,215
Costs Paid in 2021	\$0
Total Building Improvements Cost 7/15/21	<u>\$2,996,204</u>

(Additional principal payments to date--\$380,943)