



First Out Loud: Our Faith in Action

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

Matthew 5:16

First Lutheran Church
February 1, 2021
Newsletter Edition 2

Pastor's Message: Faith in Action Ahead

As your Interim Pastor, I continue to be impressed by the involvement of so many members in the life of our congregation—so many people giving of their time, talents, and resources to serve the Lord in this special place. I encourage all our members to put their faith into action in the months ahead. Important ways to contribute include:

- Joining one of the Small Group discussions or sending in written responses to contribute feedback and ideas for strengthening First Lutheran and its future.
- Volunteering for one of our variety of committees where your talents and experiences can help greatly.
- Encouraging neighbors, friends, and acquaintances in the area to connect with our worship services and inviting them to become part of the First Lutheran family.
- Informing young families about the new opportunities available for youth at First Lutheran.
- Practicing safety protocols in relation to Covid-19, getting vaccinated when possible, remaining patient concerning the reopening of the church facility, and looking forward to the time we can again worship at the church.
- Joining in support of initiatives by several of our committees to be helpful to people in need in our community.

Pastor Bill

Council President's Message:

At its January meeting, the Church Council elected the following officers: Bill Kautt – President; Garrett Paul – Vice-President; Cindy Nadeau – Secretary; and Harry Hunt—Treasurer. The Council also approved the selection of Gordon Long to a three-year term on the cemetery committee.

Also, the Council would like to encourage all members of the congregation to participate in the small group discussion process designed for members to share ideas, feedback, and visions for the future of First Lutheran Church. Please call Craig at the church office to sign up for one of these Zoom meetings or send your written response to the five questions to the church office. This is an excellent opportunity for you to let your Church Council know what is important to you concerning the church.

Bill Kautt, Council President

From the Health Advisory Committee:

We strongly recommend that all eligible persons get a COVID vaccine when it becomes available.

What is an mRNA vaccine and how does it work?

Most vaccines (or immunizations) work by injecting a weakened form of a disease bacteria or virus into your body. This is usually done with a shot in the arm. Your body detects this and makes antibodies to fight them. Those protective antibodies then stay in your body for a long time. In many cases, they stay for the rest of your life like in measles vaccine.

A messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine is a different kind of vaccine. It works by giving your cells instructions that tell them to make a special protein called a “spike protein.” Your body’s immune cells respond to this spike protein just like they would to a weakened disease germ from a regular vaccine. They make antibodies to fight it. The spike protein instructions in the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine help your body make antibodies that prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from entering your cells and causing disease. This keeps you from getting sick.

The instructions from the mRNA vaccine don’t interact with your DNA in any way. In fact, once the “instructions” for the antibodies are copied, your body quickly breaks down the mRNA and removes it from your system. mRNA from the vaccine cannot enter the nucleus of a cell where the DNA is stored and therefore these vaccines cannot alter your DNA.

Can an mRNA vaccine cause COVID-19?

No. The mRNA vaccine doesn’t actually contain the virus that causes COVID-19 and can’t cause disease.

Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Clinical trials for both of the current vaccines showed that they were about 95% effective at preventing COVID-19. By getting vaccinated, you are reducing your risk of disease, hospitalization, severe complications, and even death. You are also helping prevent the health care system from being even more overwhelmed.

How much does it cost to get the vaccine?

The federal government is providing the COVID-19 vaccine to the American public free of charge. This includes people who have insurance, including Medicare, Medicare Advantage, group or individual health insurance plans, and high-deductible health plans. It also includes people who don’t have health insurance.

How many doses are needed?

Both vaccines that are in place now require 2 doses or shots that are scheduled 3-4 weeks apart, depending on which vaccine you receive. Even though the vaccines are similar, you should get the same vaccine both times.

Other vaccines are in the pipeline and could be approved shortly. Some of these do not need two doses and they are different than mRNA vaccines.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

The mRNA vaccine can cause mild symptoms in some people. This happens because the spike protein instructions tell the immune cells to make antibodies. The most common reactions to the vaccine are pain at the injection site, fever, fatigue, headache, and muscle aches. About 50% of people will have some sort of side effect. It seems that younger people may have more side effects than older people. For some the second shot caused more of these reactions. These side effects can occur with many other vaccines, including the flu shot. They are a sign that the body is responding the way it should to a vaccine. They are NOT a sign that something is wrong in almost all cases. If symptoms persist beyond 24-hours then contact your healthcare professional.

There have been a small number of people who had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine, but this is extremely rare, and again most people will not have any issues. You will be asked about any history of reactions to vaccines or other injections just to be safe.

Do I still need to wear a mask and physically distance if I get the vaccine?

Yes! The vaccine protects you from getting sick by keeping the COVID virus from entering your cells and causing COVID-19.

Everyone will still need to wear a mask and practice physical distancing until enough people have been vaccinated and developed immunity. This may not be until mid to late 2021. Even then, more data will be needed to see how long immunity lasts. It is possible that more rounds of COVID-19 vaccination may be needed.

Should I get the vaccine if I've already had COVID-19?

Yes, as long as you are not currently sick. We know that natural immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 decreases over time. There's not enough information from the COVID-19 vaccine studies to show how immunity from the vaccine compares to natural immunity. It's likely the vaccine will boost your immunity and keep you protected longer.

How do I report side effects after getting the vaccine?

The CDC will also be using a new smartphone-based tool called v-safe to send text messages to encourage people to report any side effects. Information on v-safe will be given to everyone who gets the COVID-19 vaccine. You may also get a card that tells you which vaccine and dose you were given and provides other information about the vaccine. You must opt in to get v-safe text messages on your smartphone.

Additional information that is reputable and accurate; Look to www.cdc.gov and www.mn.gov/covid19/

From the Cantor: Worship Out Loud!

Our Second Pandemic Lent

If you can believe it, we soon enter the season of Lent. Last year, we experienced the first two Sundays of Lent together in person, and then we were advised to move to a virtual platform to keep everyone safe from the unknown dangers of a new and very contagious virus. March 8, 2020 was the last time we worshipped in person together. In many ways, it seems like a lifetime ago.

I attended a very fascinating conference geared toward preachers and worship planners at the beginning of January. The Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis (Luther Seminary) led a seminar detailing a Lenten series called *We Wish to See Jesus*. Following the lectionary gospel readings, she took us on a Lenten journey through the lens of our pandemic separation and how we can continue to be active in our faith. She asked some very good questions:

- Can God reach us in this pandemic?
- Is our discipleship still seen by God even though we can no longer practice faith in the ways we are accustomed to?
- What is church?
- What is worship?

Through our worship during Lent, Pastor Bill will lead us through this series on Sundays and Wednesdays. You are invited to a time of deep reflection and discernment as we explore these questions, overcome barriers, and look for Jesus in new ways. We will follow a simple liturgy and order of worship as we are invited to learn and grow in our faith. We wish to see Jesus.

Ash Wednesday - Live Zoom Worship

As promised, the Worship and Arts Committee and the Health Advisory Team have continued to be in conversation about finding creative ways to worship together in pandemic times.

- On Ash Wednesday, February 17, the congregation is invited to a *Live Zoom Worship* at 7:00 p.m.
- Much like the annual meeting, you will be able to see each other, hear a live sermon, readings, and prayers, and enter the season of Lent in this special way.
- You are invited to create your own way of receiving ashes, either literally or in spirit. Make your own ashes by burning some paper and mix with a bit of oil, cross yourselves and/or your family members with a charcoal pencil, oil, water, etc. Be creative! Remember that it is a human-made spiritual practice and not an obligation.
- Maundy Thursday, April 1, will be done in this same format, also at 7:00 p.m.
- These services will be recorded and posted to Facebook and our website as usual so that those who wish may view them at any time.

Communion Kits

Holy Week will look similar to last year as we continue to worship from our homes. However, a special initiative is taking place to bring communion to each of you in the form of a Communion Kit.

- Each kit will have a hand-made communion cup, made by Joel Moline or Kim Bovee
- Kits will have a mini loaf of bread (enough for your family to celebrate both Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday) and a grape juice box. Gluten free bread will be an option.
- These will come wrapped in fabric scraps from our quilters rather than plastic
- You may pick up your kit on Saturday, March 27th from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the church. You will also receive a Palm Branch in preparation for Palm Sunday.
- Our youth will safely deliver the kits the afternoon of March 27th to anyone who would like them delivered instead.
- Sign up **by Friday, February 26** to receive a kit by calling Craig at the church or by filling out a Google Form here: <https://tinyurl.com/y55nzav8> (We need to know how many cups and loaves to make, so you must sign up!)

In-Person Worship This Spring

FLC is in the process of creating a plan for in-person worship - both indoor and outdoor - tentatively beginning in late April and early May. Details will follow in a future newsletter, so be on the lookout for this important information!

Emily Bruflat, Cantor

Youth Faith - Out Loud with Calleigh:

Even amidst a global pandemic, our youth have been busy acting out their faith and serving their community. Here are a few of the important projects from last month, January:

High School Youth Book Club Started!

Every three weeks our HS Youth gather together to tackle issues regarding social justice through the lens of Lenny Duncan's book *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the United States*. Interested in joining? It's not too late! Email Calleigh at cc.flcstp@gmail.com for more information!

Snow Day at First Lutheran!

Our youth masked up and gathered at the church for some fun in the snow! All youth, young and old, were invited to participate in snowperson making and games outdoors!

Friday Forum - January

Hosted by the Social Justice Committee, youth were invited to attend a virtual discussion on embracing diversity in our church and community.

Here's what's going on in February:

Bob Ross in a Box - Virtual Painting Challenge Night!

Sign up via Google Forms or email Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com) to join in on the fun! Deadline to sign up is February 7th! All materials for the event will be dropped off (contact free) at participants' homes prior to the event, which will be held via Zoom at 6PM on February 20th. The box will contain a canvas, paint, brushes, popcorn/treats, hot cocoa, and challenge directions. We will stream a Bob Ross painting video and create our masterpieces together! There will be prizes for best paintings!

Sign up to receive your Lent-in-a-Bag!

Similar to the Blessing and Holiday Bags from last year, we are creating and delivering Lent Bags for all of our youth! Sign up via Google Forms or email Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com) to receive yours! All bags will include family devotionals, pretzel prayers, family conversation cards, a lent calendar, and a postcard you can send to invite a friend to our Easter church services!

Sledding at South Elementary!

Grab your sled and join us in an afternoon of sledding at South Elementary on February 28th! Sign up via Google Forms or email Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com) to participate in the fun! All ages welcome!

Souper Bowl Sunday - Food Shelf Donations

Tune into our Facebook or weekly FLC Heartbeat emails for more information on this event!

Calleigh Carlson, Youth Ministry

Sunday Mornings! Don't forget to join us for our fellowship hour via Zoom. We begin each Sunday morning at 11:00 AM on Zoom. If you want to attend, click on the link [Zoom Coffee Hour](#) or email flcstpoffice@gmail.com for the information. We look forward to seeing you all there!

First Lutheran On-line Directory; For those that have not yet signed up for our online directory, please take the time to register, enter your information and load a photo. Register at <https://flcstp.ctrn.co/directory/index.php>

*"For just as the body without the spirit is dead,
so faith without works is also dead."*



Newsletter

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



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