

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH + SAINT PETER

# FIRST OUT LOUD!

NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 2022



## Pastor Chris Culuris

Siblings in Christ,

Growing up, Lent was always a somber and serious time in my life. We gave things up. We spent less time watching the TV and more time spent in prayer and going to church for worship. We avoided indulging in certain pleasures. I remember fasting from chocolate. The money we saved from giving things up we donated to charity. We closely examined our lives, asking God to pardon us for our sins and the ways we had failed him and our neighbors. It was not a fun time. Lent was serious. Lent was somber. Lent felt more like we were beating ourselves up, than growing closer to the Lord. Lent felt more like we were trying to fix ourselves, rather than allowing God's love to fill us up to overflowing.



As you will see in Emily's remarks, this year we are inviting you to a different kind of Lent. This year we are using the wonderful resources from "A Sanctified Art" entitled Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent. Unlike in my youth, I am excited for Lent this year! The wonderful resources we have access to are inspiring and uplifting! Please use the devotional that we have made accessible for you to bless and inspire each day of your Lenten journey. Come to worship on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings and hear messages about how you are precious in God's sight and how God pours his love and abundant grace into our lives. This is going to be a different kind of Lent- and I could not be more excited!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*-Pastor Christopher Culuris*

## Council President Message: *Council Retreat Recap*

The Council held its retreat on 18 January. The Council decided on its priorities for this year:

- Review of the Mission of the congregation and of the Mission Statement.
- Beginning the process for strategic planning. Both tasks are overdue.
- Finance
- Enhancing revenue streams (Family Fresh receipts, Kwik Trip cards, and Shop with Scrip).
- Planning for the next three-year pledges for retiring the mortgage.
- We also took time to review the list of "Council Members' Duties and Responsibilities, the Church Constitution, including possible amendments.
- Jim Stenson gave a presentation of the first four articles of the Augsburg Confession as a review of the basics of our common faith.

We very much appreciate your continued support, and you should feel free to contact any council member with your suggestions, compliments, or concerns.

*-Dr. Garrett Paul, Council President*

## A Note from the Cantor: *The Fullness & Expansiveness of Lent*

I am particularly drawn to this moment in the Ash Wednesday liturgy: *"Lent can sometimes get a negative reputation. It is viewed as the season in our faith when we give things up, we prepare for the worst. However, I cannot help but imagine that God wants more for us than just six weeks of discipline or six weeks without chocolate. I cannot help but imagine that God wants a life for us so expansive that faith, joy, and hope flow over the edges."*

You are invited on a very special and expansive Lenten journey this year. Perhaps we should consider what more we have to offer rather than something we should take away or give up. My hope is that we are all left feeling "full to the brim" as we worship, study, and prepare for Holy Week to come and to use this fullness to give back to those around us in response to God's grace and love. There are lots of opportunities for worship and devotion as we enter this holy season.



*i* From A Sanctified Art, LLC + <https://sanctifiedart.org/>

Note: there will not be a link to the devotional on our website due to copyright restrictions, so you are encouraged to use the Google Drive version on your computer or tablet.

### **Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent**

Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 2, you are invited into this Lenten series created by A Sanctified Art. Each Sunday will have a particular theme rooted in the Revised Common Lectionary, and the following Wednesday will revisit and expand on this theme at a 7:00 p.m. midweek service. All Lenten services will be offered both in person and live streamed.

### **Devotional Booklet**

If you are signed up for the Heartbeat, you should have received the Lenten devotional booklet that accompanies "Full to the Brim." Filled with beautiful artwork, it is recommended that you use the electronic version in color. Printed copies (in black and white) will be available to those who signed up to receive one on Sunday, Feb 27 and Wednesday, March 2.

## Midland University Choir

We welcome the Midland University Choir under the direction of Joel Johnston to worship with us on March 6! They will lead us into the Lenten season with beautiful choral works throughout our worship, and they will be following our masking policy as recommended by the Health Advisory Team. Thank you to all who donated lunches for the choir.

## Good Friday Recital - Save the Date

On Good Friday, Emily will present a recital dedicated to the works of Susan Palo Cherwien. This noon recital on April 15 will take the listener on a sacred journey through Lent and Holy Week and will use Cherwien's rich texts to guide the way. Free Will donations will be collected in support of organ tuning and repairs.



iiFrom <https://www.midlandu.edu/midland-choir-performs-at-nmea-convention/>

*-Emily Bruflat, Director of Music*

## Youth & Family Faith OUT LOUD! *Summer Help will be Needed*

As many of you know, last spring I was hired as the Operations and Marketing Coordinator for Tennis and Life Camps at Gustavus. When Gustavus hired me, they did so with the understanding that I wished to complete my commitment to First Lutheran (at that point, my contract at First Lutheran was only through the end of 2021). From that time on, I was working both at First Lutheran and Gustavus. This past November the Staff Support Committee asked me to continue with First Lutheran in whatever capacity made sense for my schedule at Tennis and Life Camps.

After collaborating with our Staff Support Committee and Council on shaping a schedule that will work for me to continue both roles successfully, we have revised my First Lutheran contract to a 9-month contract (September-May). This will work best with my responsibilities at Tennis and Life Camps, as our busiest time of the year is the 10 weeks of camps in the summer. During the school year, Tennis and Life Camps is much slower, which is when First Lutheran is its busiest! Both roles, luckily, complement each other well!

As you also may know, the proposed budget for 2022 passed at the Annual Congregational meeting on 1/30/22, making my nine-month (or 3/4 time) position officially accepted by the congregation. With that, I have begun the process of planning for my absence this summer. This is where I need your help...

First Lutheran needs to maintain a strong presence in the lives of our youth during the summer months when I will not be present or available. I am very hopeful that this will be possible with your help!

I am looking for committed volunteers to assist and run our Shetek Bible Day Camp and our Mission Weekends co-hosted with Trinity Lutheran. I fear that if we do not find volunteers to help lead these opportunities, there is a chance none of the above will happen. If you are interested in leading or co-leading any of our summer opportunities, please let me know ASAP!!

With your help, we can continue to build momentum and excitement within our youth programs. I am beyond grateful to have the opportunity to continue to serve First Lutheran's youth and families for a long time to come.

*-Calleigh Carlson, Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

## **Social Justice Committee:** *The March Food Drive*

Once again, Minnesota Food Share has reminded us that the annual March Campaign is upon us. All throughout the state of Minnesota, churches, businesses, and individuals contribute to their local food shelves. During the month of March all food items and money donated are matched with an allotment which essentially doubles the donation. In past years, First Lutheran has contributed generously to this cause which directly benefits the St. Peter Area Food Shelf (SPAF).

The Food Shelf welcomes most kinds of shelf-stable food items as well as common household products. (A list of preferred items is available at the church) Equally valued are gifts of money. Currently, there is a statewide effort to improve the nutritional value of food shelf offerings by including more fresh fruits and vegetables. A large amount of donated money goes toward providing fresh food items, which help enhance people's health, but some money is used to provide refrigerated storage for those fresh foods.

The dates for this year's campaign are from Sunday, February 27, 2022, until Sunday, April 10. On Sunday March 20, we will have our annual "Pack the Pews" event when we try to fill the back pews of the church with donations. The pews will be clearly marked so it will be hard to miss where the donations are to be placed. If you prefer to give a monetary donation, place a clearly marked check in the offering plate. You can be a part of Pack the Pews by remembering this date and bring your offerings to the church for collection. However, all contributions made on any Sunday during the drive will be accepted and counted toward the 2022 allotment.

Throughout the year, members of First Lutheran participate in assisting the St. Peter Area Food Shelf with its goal of providing food for those who are food insecure in our community. Thank you for your continued generosity in caring for your neighbors.

***-Jan Jensen***

## **Stewardship Committee:** *Give Time, (not give up), this Lenten season!*

"What did you give up for Lent?" How many times have you heard that question? Many of us "give up" something for Lent. So, at times, Lent can seem like a do-over for our failed New Year resolutions.

Here is a thought for this upcoming Lenten season: Instead of giving something up, how about focusing on giving? Yes, financial gifts are always welcome, especially this year as we are in a budget deficit. But, as we speed ahead towards Easter, there are many other ways to give as well during this busy time of year at FLC. Take any Sunday morning for example, we need ushers, lectors, musicians, and greeters, just to name a few, to assist with our 10 AM services. We have all been blessed with so many things. It is time now to give, not give up!

***-Brett Peterson***

## **Worship and Arts Committee:** *Lent*

Welcome, Heidi Engman! She is our new GAC Music Scholar. She started her time with us on February 13.

Wednesday, March 2 is Ash Wednesday. This will kick off our Lenten midweek series. We will provide worship both in person and live streamed at 7:00 p.m. for these services.

We wanted to remind you about the live stream option on Sundays. If you're unable to attend worship in person, please do so via Facebook! Recently, our seventh, eighth and ninth graders have begun training to help with this. It's so wonderful to have so many youths who will be able to lend a helping hand with this important part of worship at First Lutheran!

Over the course of this year, we would like to have each of our three pianos tuned so that they can continue to sound and function at the capacity in which we need them. The cost of these six tunings will run between \$1200-\$1400. Unfortunately, the music budget will not completely cover the cost of all of the vital repairs to these instruments (let's not forget about the repairs needed on the organ!). We welcome any monetary contributions you might be willing to offer to help with these costs.

Reminder: The Midland University Choir from Fremont, Nebraska will be making a stop at First Lutheran Church! They will join us for worship on March 6 and sing many portions of the service to lead us into the Lenten season. You will have the option of hearing them live or through the live stream.

-Michelle Doose, Chair & Council VP

## **The National Lutheran Choir: *The Earth Sings Beauty***

Join the NLC on May 1 for The Earth Sings Beauty to hear the World Premiere of Lament of the Earth by composer Steve Heitzeg and poet Susan Palo Cherwien. The concert will take place at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi, broadcasted by Minnesota Public Radio, and live streamed at NLCA.com.

## **Every Member Reads: *First Forum Recap from the Green Committee***

Thanks to all who participated in our forums on Feb. 13th and 20th when we discussed the book, *Nature's Best Hope, A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard*, by Douglas Tallamy. Some interesting discussion ensued. Tallamy advocates a grassroots approach to conservation. He outlines ways homeowners can easily, effectively, and practically incorporate native plants into their yards to create conservation corridors that connect essential wildlife habitats. Current parks and preserves are not enough; they are not large enough and are not connected. Species continue to decline at an alarming rate. Life on earth (for all species, including people) depends on the quality of earth's ecosystems. "By acting now, you can help preserve our precious wildlife – and the planet – for future generations." (*Nature's Best Hope*)

For those who are interested, the book is available both in the church library (three copies) and the St. Peter Library (One copy). An excellent YouTube video of Tallamy discussing *Nature's Best Hope* can be found if you Google: A Presentation by Doug Tallamy – *Nature's Best Hope*, YouTube.

## **Congregation and Community Ministry Committee (CCM): *Fulfilling the Charge!***

The FLC Constitution reads: The Congregation and Community Ministry Committee is responsible for showing God's love for all people by reaching out to the members of the congregation and the greater Saint Peter community and the world. The committee provides for the spiritual and social needs of FLC members with prayer, visitation, and other lay ministry activities. Evangelism and marketing are integral components of this committee's work as FLC strives to fulfill its mission as a congregation of service and hospitality for all of God's people."

To fulfill our charge and our work, the CCM committee is comprised of seven different teams in the areas of Marketing, Mission Quilters, Holiday flowers/visitation, Sunday Drivers, Welcoming and New Members, and a Prayer Team comprised of lay visitation, the prayer chain, and lay communion servers. We invite anyone with an interest in or a calling to any of these areas to please consider offering a small

amount of your time or talents to just one of these teams and enhance the life of our congregation and community.

We are currently reinvigorating two of our FLC traditions. The first one is providing “Sunday Drivers” to help members and community members attend any worship services or special activities at FLC. If you need transportation or are willing to provide transportation to FLC, please notify the church office. Now that Covid is trending downward and the number of our services is increasing due to Lent and Holy Week, we feel this is a good time to reach out to one another whether it is needing transportation or providing transportation. Either way, we would like to hear from you!

The second tradition is our collection of used postage stamps to benefit a specific charitable organization or mission. Many of the organizations we have supported in the past are no longer participating in this program. Our committee has chosen to continue this program; our donations of used stamps will now be sent to “Stamps for the Wounded” to support programming for disabled veterans. Watch for more details on the Stamps for the Wounded Program. In the meantime, save your used stamps with at least a ¼ inch border around them and/or place them in the box behind the ushers’ stand in the narthex. If you would like more information or have any questions about our Committee or activities, please do not hesitate to call or email me!

-**Betsy Paul, Chair** 507-720-5006 or [bpaul@gac.edu](mailto:bpaul@gac.edu)

## Missionary News: *Meet Phillip & Lou Knutson!*

### ELCA MISSIONARY PROFILE



#### The Rev. Dr. Phillip J. and Lou Knutson

Regional  
Representative,  
Southern Africa

**Phil** works with companion churches, companion synods and mission personnel throughout southern Africa, including in the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Angola and Mozambique. He is also a resource person for ELCA-supported Christian education projects in southern Africa. **Lou** is a high school physics and chemistry teacher.

#### SPONSORS MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW

**Philip** was born in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, to missionary parents (The Rev. Jim and Arlene Knutson).

#### CONTACT

[Phillip.Knutson@elca.org](mailto:Phillip.Knutson@elca.org)

#### EDUCATION

##### Philip:

B.A. African Studies, French  
M.Div.  
M.Th.

D.Th. Missiology

##### Lou:

B.S. Home Economics, Education

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.  
Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
Chicago, Ill.  
University of the Western Cape  
Cape Town, South Africa

University of Stellenbosch  
Stellenbosch, South Africa

#### HOBBIES

##### Philip:

Running, cycling, windsurfing, hiking, reading

##### Lou:

Reading, hiking, movies

#### CALENDAR

Philip's Birthday

May 10

Ordination Date

Oct. 10

Lou's Birthday

July 1

Wedding Anniversary

Jan. 4

#### CONNECT

*Companion synods:* Southwestern Washington (1C), Northwestern Minnesota (3D), Southwestern Minnesota (3F), Metropolitan Chicago (5A), Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H), East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I), Northeastern Ohio (6E), New Jersey (7A), Upper New York (7D), Caribbean (9F)  
*Home synod:* Minneapolis Area (3G)

UP NEXT: FIRST FORUM SUNDAY : APRIL 24

1/31/22 CHURCH FINANCIALS

HOSTED BY LIFE-LONG LEARNING:

BILL NELSEN AND DARRELL JODOCK WILL LEAD A DISCUSSION ON THEIR RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK: “EMBRACING DIVERSITY: FAITH, VOCATION, AND THE PROMISE OF AMERICA” DISCUSSION WILL BE AT 9:15 COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY.

INCOME: \$68,803  
EXPENSE: \$33,501  
**\$35,301**

## The Building Fund...from Stem to Stern

### The Building Renovation Fund

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Activity 2009 to 2021			
Chapel Fund - Transfer in	\$50,843	\$40,327	
Receipts / Donations	\$2,515,337		
Lloyd Elton Bequest	\$20,000		
Construction Costs Paid		\$711,102	
Interest Expense during Construction		\$64,560	
Interest Expense on Mortgage		\$745,625	
Principal paid on Mortgage		\$955,573	
Total from 2009 to 2020 Balance 12-31-21	<u>\$2,586,180</u>	<u>\$2,517,187</u>	\$68,993
Activity in 2022			
Receipts / Donations	\$21,555		
Interest Expense - Mortgage		\$8,124	
Principal paid on Mortgage		\$12,034	
Construction/Refinance Costs Paid		\$0	
Total for 2022 / Balance 2/8/2022	<u>\$21,555</u>	<u>\$20,158</u>	<u>\$70,390</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 12/31/21	\$70,551	\$1,224,642
Principal Paid 2022/Balance 2/8/22	\$12,034	\$1,212,608

### Building Improvements Summary

Costs Paid by Chapel Fund	\$40,327
Costs Paid 2009 to 2021	\$737,044
Interest Expense during Construction	\$38,618
Costs Paid by the Mortgage	\$2,180,215
Costs Paid in 2022	\$0
<b>Total Building Improvements Cost 2/8/2022</b>	<u><b>\$2,996,204</b></u>

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

