



Pastor Bill's Message: *Practices of a Fruitful Congregation*

Several years ago I read a thoughtful book written by Robert Schnase, a Methodist Bishop. It was entitled Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. I was impressed with the book and its wisdom. The five practices were listed as (1) radical hospitality, (2) passionate worship, (3) intentional faith development, (4) risk-taking mission and service, and (5) extravagant generosity. With these challenging practices in mind we can ask ourselves: How do we at First Lutheran measure up in relationship to each practice?

Radical Hospitality: We like to think of ourselves as a welcoming congregation. But we must continually ask: Do we, out of love for Christ and our neighbors, actively seek to invite and welcome newcomers and get them actively involved in our special Christian family?

Passionate Worship: First Lutheran is highly regarded for the rich opportunities to encounter Christ through music, prayer, scripture, preaching, and Holy Communion. Yet, we must continue to seek to have more of our people regularly experiencing life-changing renewal as we are gathered in sacred time and space.

Intentional Faith Development: At First Lutheran we have taken important steps to renew our youth and family ministry and offer Bible study and forums for adults. As Christian disciples, and with future easing of Covid restrictions, we will need to involve more of our people learning together of God's forgiveness, grace, and call to service.

Risk-taking Mission and Service: Our committees of Congregation and Community Ministry, Social Justice, the Green Team, and others are giving important attention to the needs of people and on earth. Risk-taking means stepping into sometimes uncomfortable territory, and we must be prepared to reach beyond our usual comfort zones, following the guidance of Jesus to love and serve people in need.

Extravagant Generosity: We learn from the Apostle Paul that we will be "enriched in every way through our generosity" (2 Cor. 9:11). In this month of October, we have the great opportunity to be generous in indicating where we can use our time and talents to serve actively in our church. And we are called to pledge generously of our financial resources, as together we can produce a truly "fruitful congregation."

Let us all pitch in these days to make all five of these practices come alive and be evident to all!

Pastor Bill

Council President Message

At its September meeting, the Church Council received reports from the Health Advisory Team and the Call Committee. The Call Committee reported it will be screening five potential candidates in the coming weeks.

A revised draft report concerning Council members' duties and responsibilities was adopted by the Council. In other action the Council approved a continuing resolution establishing a standing Technology Committee. Individuals interested in becoming a member of the committee should contact the church office or Harry Hunt.

At the request of the Finance Committee, the Council directed the committee to develop three potential 2022 budgets for the Council to consider before recommending a budget to the congregation for approval. The three include a balanced budget, a 15% deficit budget, and a 10% deficit budget. Also, at the recommendation of the Stewardship Committee and the Funds Management Committee, the Council approved the creation of a Legacy Society for First Lutheran Church. Details will follow in later newsletters.

Finally, the Council received a request for a sabbatical leave from the Director of Music, Emily Bruflat. After a detailed discussion of the proposal, the Council decided to refer some questions to the Director of Music and invite Emily to attend a future meeting before voting on the proposed request.

If you have any questions concerning this report, feel free to contact me (507-382-8256 or wjk111@hickorytech.net).

Bill Kautt, Council President

Installation of New Bishop for SW MN Synod: *Would you like to attend on October 9?*

The Installation of the newly-elected Bishop for our Southwestern Minnesota Synod, the Rev. Dr. Dee Pederson, will take place on Saturday, October 9, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. The event will be held at Granite Falls Lutheran Church, 350 9th Avenue, Granite Falls, MN 56241. RSVP's can be made at www.swmnelca.org/installation. Pastor Bill plans to attend. Let him know if any First Lutheran members are interested in attending.

Stewardship: *From Launch to Commitment*

On Sunday, September 19, we launched our days of stewardship emphasis under the theme "Faithful Worship-Generous Giving." During these days, we invite each member and each family of our congregation to pause, reflect on God's blessings in their lives, and respond to God's call to make a difference in this congregation and in the lives of others. We are all asked to respond in two significant ways: (1) to complete our "Estimate of Giving" cards and bring them or mail them to the church on or before "Commitment Sunday" on October 24, and (2) to demonstrate how we can also help generously by filling out the "Time and Talent" survey we received at church or via mail. Let us all, at this important time in the life of First Lutheran Church, be faithful in our worship and generous in our giving.

Stewardship Committee: Bob Stenson, Annalise Rivas, Bruce Gray, Brett Petersen, Karen Smithers, Garrett Paul, Harry Hunt, Bill Kautt, Pastor Bill

FINANCIALS

259,948 INCOME

255,466 EXPENSE

4,482



Youth & Family Faith OUT LOUD! *Fall Fun*

September was an exciting month at FLC, as it was the start of a new school year! We kicked off our Confirmation and Sunday School programming and started gearing up for our HS Youth Group. We are so glad to be gathering (with the guidance and safety protocol provided by our HAT team) again! A BIG THANK YOU to Barb Haack for donating our new big moose friend MARTY! This gentle giant helped us ring in the new Sunday School year on Rally Sunday last month! **Sunday School Teaching Assistants:** Looking for energetic assistants to assist with our Game/Craft Sunday School Sundays!

Here's what's going on in October:

2nd Annual Pumpkin Carving Contest: Deadline to submit your masterpiece is October 29th! Grab your paint brushes and pumpkin carving utensils - this contest is back by popular demand! Submit a picture of your decorated pumpkin to Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com) by October 29th for a chance to win a prize! The



three categories that FLC staff will be judging are: Scariest Pumpkin, Funniest Pumpkin, and Most Creative Pumpkin. Get carving!

Trunk or Treat at First Lutheran: Friday, October 29th at 4:30pm. Come one, come all! We're bringing back Trunk or Treat at

First Lutheran! All youth are invited to trick or treat at First Lutheran on October 29th at 4:30pm. We're looking for members to volunteer to decorate their trunks! Interested? Contact Calleigh (cc.flcstp@gmail.com) to sign up!

Jr. High Youth Gathering: Saturday, November 20th

We are incredibly excited to announce that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Board is hosting a 2021 Junior High Youth Gathering for our 6th-9th graders! Interested? Reach out to Calleigh for more information. Deadline to register is October 16th.



member, who is actively involved in worship and congregational life at First Lutheran Church. Confirmation students are asked to get together with their mentor at least twice each year.

Confirmation Volunteering

The clean-up day for Resurrection Cemetery will be Saturday, October 16, 2021, 10 a.m. - noon.

Tom Thorkelson will give us directions on trimming, hauling, and raking. Please bring hedge shears, gloves, rakes, wheelbarrows, power tools, etc.

Let's get the cemetery ready for the next season!



ELCA National Youth Gathering: July 24-28 in Minneapolis, MN

Open to Youth in 8th-12th grade, we invite you to join us this coming summer for the ELCA National Youth Gathering held in Minneapolis! Interested in attending? Reach out to Calleigh for information on how to register!

We need YOU to help with our Youth Programming!

Here's how you can get involved:

Confirmation Mentors Needed!!! A confirmation mentor is someone willing to befriend and guide a confirmation student in matters related to faith and life. Ideally, a mentor is an adult, non-family

Worship & Music OUT LOUD! *Back to the Music*

For the last 18+ months, a lot of focus has been placed on technology. Indeed, we are still searching for volunteers to help us with our next phase of recording worship to provide it to homebound members and others who just can't join us on a Sunday morning very often.

However, I would like to return to the music. Our Handbell Choir recently started up rehearsals again on Wednesday nights. There are many soloists and small groups lined up over the next several weeks to provide a variety of music during our worship time. Much care is given to the selection of seasonally appropriate music, and time is spent on rehearsing and "living with" the music before it is offered on Sunday mornings.

Listening to a hymn or song, singing it, reading the text of a hymn like a poem - all of these are ways to worship through an artistic lens. Anyone can do these things regardless of perceived level of talent! You are encouraged to take your bulletin home each week this month. Here are several suggestions: Meditate for a few minutes on your favorite hymn from that service. Or, consider a hymn you didn't like very much and ask yourself why. Sit with it for some time. Use the lyrics as a form of prayer. Memorize your favorite line and use it as a mantra during the week.

The instruments at First Lutheran have had a wonderful year of regeneration to help us get back to the music. Our grand piano repairs were completed in March, our handbells and hand chimes just had a refurbishment and came back to us like new, and beginning October 4th, our organ is undergoing its first phase of repairs and improvements.

Next time we chat, I would love to know two things: your old favorite hymn and your new favorite hymn. Perhaps I'll share some of mine with you. What a great conversation starter and way to talk about faith!

-Emily Bruflat, Director of Worship & Music

Buildings & Grounds Committee: *Jumping into Fall*

Major projects completed this last quarter: The courtyard has been completed. We now must replace the scrubs that did not take root this summer (next spring). The Little Free Library was installed by the church sign near the playground along Traverse Road. Thanks to Carol Solberg for the donation which paid for the library. Three evergreen trees along Traverse Road were taken down, more are scheduled to follow. Thanks to Pat Duenwald and Dave Pehrson for their efforts and the use of their chainsaws with this project. Also, thank you to the individuals who assisted with the clean-up of these trees during "God's Work - Our Hands" Sunday. Major maintenance items taken care were the patching of two different leaks in the roof and replacing a key switch in the air-conditioning system. We are still waiting for bids on repairing the sidewalk to the northeast basement door.

The committee is looking for some additional members. Anyone interested would be welcome. We generally meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30. Contact the church office if you are interested. If you cannot commit to serving on our committee, we do appreciate individuals volunteering to help with weeding, watering, mowing and general clean-up of the grounds in the fall and spring.

Finally, as we are in the middle of our stewardship campaign, buildings and grounds will need an increase to its budget as utilities are increasing, and hopefully, usage will also increase as we approach a pre-pandemic schedule. *Patricia Duenwald, Steve Erickson, Paul Haukoos, Bill Kautt, Dave Kennedy, Bob Moline, and Dave Pehrson*



News from the Resurrection Cemetery Committee: *Beautification; Maintaining History*

All of you who give to the church faithfully by envelope, please notice the "new kid on the block" in upcoming boxes. You will find an envelope labeled "Cemetery Upkeep". Please consider a gift which helps us maintain the beautiful grounds. Resurrection Cemetery is owned and operated by First Lutheran Church, but, is "self-sustaining". We therefore depend on your generous gifts to cover mowing and other expenses.



There is another way to serve: please join us for our annual "Clean-up" day at the cemetery on Saturday, October 16, 10 a.m. to noon. Bring gloves, clippers, a rake, a wheelbarrow, or power tools. We will give you the opportunity to pick up brush, trim bushes and trees, rake the grounds, or clean up old flowers. Old and young are welcome!

All dry summer long, a dedicated group of volunteers has watered the 28 new little cedar trees on the West side of the cemetery. They and some spare ones on top of the hill will create a natural border when they

grow up.

The Resurrection Cemetery on the FLC website under **Resources** and you will find pictures, a list of the committee members, and links to Find-a-Grave. The history of the cemetery is summarized in the attached brochure which also gives information about grave lots and burials.

A new directional sign has been installed near the entrance of the cemetery. A box next to the sign contains brochures. The Cemetery Committee has been working on the design and production over the summer. The sign shows ownership, contact information, i. e. , address, telephone number of the church, email and website information, and the link to burial records. Thanks go to Joel Moline for the artistic rendition of the map, and to Barb Haack and Barb Wilkinson, members of the Sign Committee.

Nita Aasen, historian and recorder for transactions at the cemetery, has transferred and will continuously update burial records to the Church Office for them to be current on our FLC website homepage Resurrection Cemetery Link. Purchases of grave lots and burials are to be initiated with Angela, our Office Coordinator.

Please consider joining our committee or help in other ways. You will work with a dedicated group of people who honor the place where we bury our family and friends.

Barbara Wilkinson – chair

October Worship Info

Oct. 3: Mary Gaebler

Oct. 10: Pastor Bill

Oct. 17: Steve Kidder

Oct. 24: Pastor Bill

(Stewardship Commitment Sunday)

Oct. 31: Pastor Bill

(Reformation Sunday with Communion)