



May 2020
#710

The Chimes

First Evangelical
Lutheran Church
1206 Whitehall Road
Muskegon, MI 49445
Phone: (231) 744-1522
Fax: (231) 719-9015
office@firstlutheranmuskegon.com



From Pastor Bill

Every morning when I come down the stairs to the first floor, I am met at the bottom of the stairs with a headline from an old newspaper that boldly proclaims, “Hope, Not Fear.”

It’s the right message. It certainly is the message that Easter brings. The angel in Matthew’s account of the resurrection says to the women, “Do not be afraid.” The Easter message is that hope is the right habitation for us.

Yet I wonder what that means in a time like this. What does hope look like when death, plague, and self-preoccupation are constantly entering our homes through our televisions and computers? What does it look like when most of us seldom leave our homes, isolating ourselves in our caves, and, some people might say, tombs?

For me, “hope not fear” has always been the invitation to leave the home, to enter the world, and embrace

the world’s people and its pain. It has never been about hibernating.

These are definitely new days, unprecedented ones, everybody is saying. Hope for us now means hanging out in the tombs for a little while longer, not because we want to avoid life and people, but because we want life and people to be healthy and whole. It’s odd. But hope right now looks like hiding out. It looks like loving from a distance and doing so by not allowing fear to be what shapes us.

I trust that this quarantine time won’t last forever. But many things will change because of the coronavirus. Life won’t ever be quite the same. Church life won’t be the same. I am just beginning to think about what those changes might look like. Without a doubt, our on-line presence will become even more important than it has been. It has been so intriguing to see the connections we make weekly because of our Zoom educational gatherings and our Facebook Live worship services.

Hang in there! This is a terribly lonely time for me. I have been very busy, in part because of the changes of technology. But I really miss the one-on-one encounters with you and the large-group gatherings. I have no idea when we will be back together again. But trust me, I will grieve until we can meet again—in person. Zoom is nice, but not the same.

Church Calendar for May

Lectionary Bible Study (we look at the readings for the coming Sunday)- **Thursdays at noon to 1:00**— If anyone would like to have an evening Bible study Pastor Bill would like to know. He would start one.

Video and Discussion—Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. We watch a video of a well-known thinker of our time (e.g. Brene Brown, Richard Rohr, Barbara Brown Taylor) and then discuss. Both require an invitation that you can get from Pastor (bill@firstlutheranmuskegon.com).

Confirmation—Wednesday nights at 7:00 via Zoom.

Paula’s Reading Segment for Kids—Friday at 10:00 a.m.

Worship is Every Sunday at 10:30 and generally can be reached through Facebook. (Most of the time we will be on Facebook Live.)

Church Council will meet on Thursday, May 28 on Zoom at 7:00.

Vacation Bible School—Tentatively scheduled for June 22-25. Mark your calendars!



From Intern Paula

As I sat down to write my reflection this month, I couldn't help but think how I could republish the one I wrote last month. Social distancing, isolation and altering our lifestyles to stay safe and keep others safe, too, are still policies that are in place. This separation has taken its toll on all of us in myriad ways and we are aware that life *will* look differently as we move into the future. News forums, state and federal officials and conversations among ourselves (via Facebook, FaceTime, text, email, phone, and letter) have coined the phrase, "What will the new normal look like?" New normal.

I wonder if that's what the disciples and Jesus' followers were thinking after the resurrection. What would it look like without Jesus walking the dusty roads with them and using clever parables to reinforce what God's love looks and feels like? What would it look like without Jesus proclaiming justice for those who are marginalized? What would it look like for the disciples to now *be* the hands, and feet and heart of Jesus? I surmise it would be a bit scary to envision life without Jesus around. An emptiness where the unknowns far outweighed the foundational knowledge they had gleaned during "normal times." I have to chuckle a bit, because what in the world was "normal" about Jesus?

The world was in turmoil time and time again, people were hungry and fear always seemed to be lurking around every corner. Angry Christians, angry Jewish leaders and even an angry and fearful Peter were the norm. No...there was nothing normal about the time when Jesus lived. And what we have perceived as our normal, everyday way of doing things—even worshipping, may not have truly been normal, either. The poor were/are still homeless and hungry, people were/are cast into lots and put into cages and the political powers that be were/are constantly vying for position. Normal? This is normal?

I certainly don't intend to minimize the beauty and love which continues to permeate our nations, neighborhoods and homes both in the past and currently; however, I do believe that we have an opportunity, maybe even a responsibility as Christians

to look more closely at the teachings of Jesus. If there is ever a time in our lives where people need to see and feel the love of Christ, it is now and...as the future unfolds. The Easter message of new life, new hope, new joy is exciting. The *abnormal* life of Jesus is foundational for moving forward and creating a *new normal*.

Being separated from all of you, my family and everything that felt familiar before the pandemic, is hard. And as I write this reflection, I am acutely aware of the unknowns and what it will look like as we anticipate coming together again. Part of me longs for what life was like before the coronavirus but part of me also, looks forward to what our *new normal* can become. Easter may be behind us friends, but it is also in front of us, too! I wonder, I just wonder if those who experienced the resurrection firsthand had any idea of the impact that their new normal would have on all who were to follow. The impact on you...and on me.

Peace be with you,
Paula



American Red Cross

May 11th Red Cross Blood Drive Redirected
Schedule to donate at 313 W. Webster, Muskegon
Every Thursday, 1-6 p.m.

Due to the extra precautions and additional staff required to provide a covid-19 safe setting for the First Lutheran Blood Drive, donors are asked to please schedule (or re-schedule) their appointments with the Red Cross Headquarters, located at 313 W. Webster St., Muskegon. Their drives are offered on Thursdays from 1 – 6 p.m. and other drives can be sought at the Red Cross website at redcrossblood.org or Call **1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**.

As you know, blood supplies are dangerously low and much-needed at this time. Please consider donating at the Red Cross Site, which has been set up to be very safe and user-friendly!!

To donate, you must schedule an appointment online. No walk-ins will be accepted in order to monitor the flow of donors safely. The Red Cross plans to resume Blood Drives at First Lutheran on July 27th. If you have further questions, please contact Judi Dix at 231-463-7886. In the meantime, your donations are needed now!!



by
Pastor Bill

Weekly Attendance and Offerings For March

Robert Reich's **The Common Good** really resonates with this pastor's concern for the well-being of not only us as individuals, but also with my commitment to who we are together.

Although Reich doesn't view the problems faced by our culture through religious lenses, what he writes coincides with the questions asked particularly by the Old Testament. He, like the prophets of the Old Testament, is unwilling to evaluate how we are doing as a nation on the basis simply of how individuals are doing. He asks us to be focused on the common good—the well-being we have in common.

Reich argues that the common good can be recovered in our land when we establish an ethic of leadership based on trusteeship (stewardship), when we rediscover an appropriate use of shame and honor, when we have a renewed commitment to the truth, and when we recommit ourselves to civics education for our children.

The book has criticism for Republicans and Democrats alike. Reich worked in the Clinton administration, so he has had many opportunities to experience the challenges of both political parties. He is especially concerned with the climate that has overtaken our culture during the past few years, a climate he sees as having roots in national developments that take us back to the sixties and seventies.

The book is well written and is not filled with a lot of insider vocabulary. I found myself saying "A-men" many times as I read Reich's work.

Weekend of 02/29 & 03/01

Attendance: 218
General Fund: \$9,852.91
Mortgage Fund: \$1,188.00
Dollar-a-Day: \$688.57

Weekend of 03/07 & 03/08

Attendance: 181
General Fund: \$7,801.80
Mortgage Fund: \$1,185.00
Noisy Offering: \$175.95

Weekend of 03/14 & 03/15

General Fund: \$4,421.93
Mortgage Fund: \$465.00

Weekend of 03/21 & 03/22

General Fund: \$5,840.97
Mortgage Fund: \$1,638.00

Weekend of 03/28 & 03/29

General Fund: \$16,398.81
Mortgage: \$455.00
Dollar-a-Day: \$121.00

Total General Fund Offering received: \$44,316.42
Total General Fund Offering needed: 41,693.65
\$2,622.77

Total Mortgage Offering received: \$4,931.00
Total Mortgage Offering needed: 8,990.00
-\$4,059.00

Official Acts



Deaths

Ray L Cvengros
Date of Birth: 04/23/1937
Date of Death: 03/18/2020

Peter Van Hoesen
Date of Birth: 01/13/1944
Date of Death: 04/07/2020

Weekend	Scripture Readings
05/02 & 05/03	Acts 2:42-47, Ps 23 1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10
05/09 & 05/10	Acts 7:55-60, Ps 31:1-5, 15-16 1 Peter, 2:2-10, John 14:1-14
05/16 & 05/17	Acts 17:22-31, Ps 66:8-20 1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21
05/23 & 05/24	Acts 1:6-14, Ps 68:1-10, 32-35 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11, John 17:1-11
05/30 & 05/31	Acts 2:1-21, Ps 104:24-34, 35b 1 Cor 12:3b-13, John 7:37-39

May Birthdays!

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Scott Gearhart
Christine Livingston | 19 Athena Wei
Greyson Jones
Kelsea Kent |
| 2 Brock Freeman
Morgan Wittkopp | 20 Nancy Pennak
Peggy Jobe
Diana Duell
Orion Swirczek |
| 3 Dee Schmitt | 21 Robert Schalow |
| 4 Charles Dawson
Mary Bowen
Ann Holmes | 22 James Boyle |
| 5 Josee Cooke | 23 Shelby Anderson |
| 7 Suzanne Johnson | 24 Dolores Brondyke
Natalee Lindell |
| 8 Barbara Nelson
Trent Kent | 25 Eric Rop
Emma Veihl |
| 9 Robert Gundy
William Naymick | 26 Stephen DeVries
Joe Bachelder
Amber Nienhouse
Xavier Golden |
| 10 Charles Jamerson | 27 Robbin Dibble
Lisa Daggett
Alex Mead |
| 11 Ted Tallefson
Sofia Besteman | 28 Suzanne Fiebelkorn
Sharon Ingram
Paige Archer |
| 12 Connie Mead
Warren Kent | 29 Edward Wosinski
Jay Freeland
Penny Cooper
Sara Musser |
| 13 Rosemary Loch | 30 Peter Ostrom
Walter Love
Robin Cox
Teri Gust |
| 14 Bernard Harrell
Paulette Archer | 31 Eric Baker |
| 15 Sarah Daniell | |
| 16 Sharlene Bourdon
Kent Johnson | |
| 17 Rich Pennak
Ann Dean
Todd Lowry
Susan Rop | |

FLC OUTDOOR MAY *Dwelling Faithfully with God's Creation*

Just for fun!
Use this BINGO card to see how many squares you
can check off!
Create a card for each week in the month of May!
Always keep the center square: **EXTEND GRACE**

NOTE:

- Here are some ideas to use for subsequent cards:
- Go for a physically-distanced run or walk or roll
 - Track your time on your phone or Facebook
 - Daily: write five things you are grateful for
 - Bake/make something you typically purchase
 - Smell a growing flower
 - Read a poem
 - Spend 30 minutes outdoors each day

Drink a liter of water a day	Replace one single-use plastic item with a reusable item	Pray outdoors
Call a friend (or two) on the phone	EXTEND GRACE	Pick-up trash while out on a walk
Declutter one room in your home	Take 15 minutes of screen-free (TV too) silence each day	Try something new (perhaps a new activity, hobby, food or habit)!

Thank You!!

Thanks to Lark Roberts who assembled the April Chimes.

Attention Golf Leaguers!

We will keep you informed as to when the season will start!
Questions? Call Kent Johnson at 719-0111