



November 2020
#716

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

I must admit that I look forward to writing this newsletter article when the subject doesn't need to be Covid 19. Sadly, this pandemic has shaped so much of our lives, including the life of the church and the preoccupations of its pastors.

I have been quite proud of you all who have attended worship here. You have done what you have needed to do in order for us to gather. You've worn your masks. You have avoided physical contact and generally have practiced social distancing. Thanks for your commitment to the common good. While this has been about protecting individuals, it is mostly about caring for the common good. The goal is to stop the spread of the virus, so that together we can have a healthier shared life.

We will continue offering three services a week until the end of the year. At that time, we will evaluate our decision to have a Thursday night service and two services on Sunday. Thursday night has certainly provided us more worshippers than the Saturday night 5:30 service did during the summer. This time provides people who are going to be away on the weekend to worship with us. The 8:30 service is the smallest gathering so far. If you feel more comfortable with small crowds, I encourage you to consider this opportunity.

I suspect that it might be a while before many of our younger families return to worship. Worship looks and feels different to all of us and to them. First, there aren't many kids present, and kids are attracted to other kids. And the experiences that involve kids have been changed or eliminated: the children's sermon is not up close and personal; the nursery isn't available; faith formation classes are not happening in person. And I would also say that younger folks are more accustomed to living their lives online. Watching worship on a screen is more comfortable to many of them than it is to older folks.

The presence of online worship will forever change our lives together. I suspect that it will mean that people will be less regular in worship than perhaps they have been. If they can watch it, they will feel less compelled to attend in person, in light of whatever situation they are experiencing.

I really rejoice in our online presence. It has brought us so many gifts. And it has enabled those of you who don't feel comfortable being in the public at this point to still remain connected to us. But I am still convinced that church life is primarily a rubbing-elbows kind of experience. The Gospel of John tells us that the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. Literally, this great piece of scripture says that the eternal word pitched its tent in our neighborhood, our campground. It didn't remain an idea; it rubbed elbows with human beings. I suspect that such rubbing elbows is what we are called to do, although I fully grasp how much the pandemic has changed this reality.

(Continued on page 3)



From Intern Paula

This may seem like an odd time to write about lament. After all, it is November. It is the month set aside to give thanks with a grateful heart for people we love, experiences we have enjoyed, beauty we have beheld, food we have ingested and grace we have received. So why in the world would I write about lament during this time of thanksgiving?

Part of my decision to do so originates from a book we are discussing in seminary, *When Tears Sing*. Another part of my decision to reflect on this topic is the fact that we are living in the midst of a very deadly virus and our lives have been disrupted and “somewhat” re-ordered. And lastly, my decision to write about lament in a season - which is typically thought of as the season of thanksgiving, is grief. If you are thinking of moving on to the next article at this point, stay with me. As Christians, we know that death does not have the last word and believe it or not, neither does grief!

Grief, either from death, broken relationship, transition, loss of health, loss of work or loss of our way of living, is that period of time where we experience a more careful measuring of our lives. That period of time when we pay prayerful attention and have greater awareness and acknowledgement of life-the-way-it-really-is. Grief also pays attention to the many ways we avoid, deflect, and defend against life-the-way-it-really-is. But I surmise, that paying close attention to *one another* in the midst of life-the-way-it-really-is, has the ability to turn our grief into a “spirituality of tears” (*When Tears Sing*; Blaine Wallace). *Whereas, in the cascading pain which trickles down or gushes out, we find lament.*

Psychologist Thomas Attig states, “...grieving involves nothing less than relearning the world of our experience.” And when grieving persons bring their sorrow, suffering and pain to a community of faith, there is a sense of surrender and relational lament is formed. In his book, *When Tears Sing*, author Blaine-Wallace calls this relational piece “...the space in between where lament is the passion that emerges between those who mourn. This type of lament differs from the solitary wailing walls to which we bring our

sorrow, suffering and brokenness.” In essence, caring for one another during the deepest part of loss and doing it collectively, is holy and truly what binds us together in love. It is also what speaks volumes to the world.

We have all lost something during this pandemic. Some have lost loved ones through death. Some have lost closeness to loved ones, some have lost connection with friends, and community. Covid-19 has not been kind. It has divided us physically, emotionally, spiritually and politically. I have found myself at times, grieving losses due to this virus and I surmise... you may be, too. But when the spirituality of tears sing, hearts are opened and a community is nurtured. Relational lament allows us to open our hearts to the pain not only in us and around us, but beyond us.

Well...you might ask me what in the world does any of this have to do with the month set aside to give thanks? What does giving thanks with a joyful heart have in common with relational lament? What can this type of vulnerability possibly bring to a faith community or a world that is reeling in pain? My answer: I believe the spirituality of tears flowing together is one of our greatest gifts. Being cloaked in this type of love allows us to see more fully the eternal now that beholds us. It allows us to live life-the-way-it-really-is...together. And truthfully, I can't think of anything greater to be thankful for than this. I hope you join me in a great thanksgiving this year as we let our tears sing in relational lament!

Shalom,
Paula

Sunday	Scripture Readings
11/1	Rev 7:9-17, Ps 34:1-10, 22 1 John 3:1-3, Matt 5:1-12
11/8	Amos 5:18-24, Ps 70 1 Thess 4:13-18, Matt 25:1-13
11/15	Zeph 1:7, 12-18, Ps 90:1-8 [9-11] 12 1 Thess 5:1-11, Matt 25:14-30
11/22	Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24, Ps 95:1-7a Eph 1:15-23, Matt 25:31-46
11/29	Is 64:1-9, Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 1 Cor 1:3-9, Mark 13:24-37



FAITH FORMATION

Holy Moly

Our children and youth Faith Formation classes are underway! The Holy Moly crew has had a lot of fun, experienced a great deal of laughter and have learned (are learning) how to make a puppet's mouth move during a dialogue about Abraham, Sarah, Issac and Rebeka!

A note to all households participating in Holy Moly: Your November Activity Packets are available on the shelf next to the library. Just stop in and grab the one with your name on it! The stories will lead us into the Advent Season!

Eyes to See

For our older students, tune in to Ms. Kelley's **Eyes to See** video and experience the world of wonder that unfolds from her excellent story-telling! BIG thank you to Kelley for putting her heart and soul into these amazing stories!!

*****Please send Paula pictures of your kids engaged in the Bible stories and activities and/or watching the videos. We would also love to hear their comments!**

(Continued from page 1)

The pandemic is growing old to me. I want to be able to experience life not in the mixed way that it is causing us to do right now. I want the joy that I have known throughout my life when people gather not to be diminished by my and other people's questions: Should I be here? Should I have just stayed home? Should or shouldn't I hug her? Why is he not wearing his mask? All of these questions diminish my joy. I want that diminishment to disappear. But it can't yet.

In the meantime, we wait. But for me, such waiting is not simply a matter of sitting on the couch. We wait with anticipation and with hope. We don't throw in the towel. We don't become crabs who critique everybody and everything they do. We don't stop doing everything. Sure, we are as safe as we can be. Sure, we do all that we can to protect ourselves and others. But in our own ways, we still live because we trust that life, not death, reigns.

Confirmation News

Confirmation classes are underway and we ask that you keep these kids in your prayers as they learn and grow in their faith. What a great group of kids! Please keep them in your prayers as they balance school, tests, activities and friendships during this topsy-turvy time. Our students this year are:

Final year: Lexi Daggett, Anna Frietsch, Elizabeth Frietsch, Jamie Neel, Mylie Neel, Dade Paugh, Karley Plekes and Erik Truelsen.

Second year: Matthew Badley, Colden Jones and Addison Schmitz

First year: Layla Giles, Owen Rop and Piper Sweet

*****I'm sure they would love to hear from you! Words of encouragement and stories of faith are a great way for these kids to learn what it means to be a part of this faith community!**



October 15, 2020

Dear Members and friends of First Lutheran,

As we're living in complex times and much uncertainty about how our church life and faith journey will look like next year, I would like to share with you how our annual stewardship program will unfold this year. Our theme, like our times, is a little complex. Our basic theme is "Building a Resilient Community". There are some added words we wish to put into our theme, and those additional words are: "Building a Hopeful Community"; "Building a Connected Community"; and "Building a Serving Community". So, we want to think about being "resilient, hopeful, connected, and serving."

As I think about stewardship, I think about working with our membership and friends on ensuring the future of the church for our younger members and folks that haven't yet even been introduced to our faith community. I think about persevering through these very challenging days caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. The definition of resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or toughness. We are no doubt in difficult days, but they will end, and our fervent hope and prayer is for the ability in 2021 to recover as medical science responds with either a vaccine or therapeutic medicines to bring this pandemic to its end.

As we work to recover, we want to build on the long-standing traditions within our faith community to remain hopeful, be connected to each other, and to serve in meaningful ways. From my first introduction to First Lutheran in 2013, I was struck and impressed with this congregation and its capacity to be Christ's body here in Muskegon. We have been a hopeful body of Christians interconnected to each other, and we have had so many great ways of serving each other and the local community, along with the larger world, through the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The response to the pandemic has challenged much of what we were. Our call is to work to recover quickly (be resilient), to stay connected to each other, to regain our hopefulness for the future, and to build on our ability to serve.

As we get into November, you will hear more from our Stewardship team on this year's program and campaign. I encourage you to respond generously to our efforts so that we can be the resilient community that we always have been.

Pat Clifford,
Stewardship Chairperson



**American
Red Cross**

**Blood Drive
Monday, November 23
12:00-5:45 p.m.
You Can Make a Difference**

Be the Lifeline many patients need at this critical time of the convergence of the Coronavirus and Flu Seasons. Blood supplies continue to be much-needed. To donate, you must schedule an appointment online. No walk-ins will be accepted in order to monitor the flow of donors safely. Due to many precautions implemented, our last Blood Drive held at First Lutheran was safe and successful!

Red Cross donors are asked to please schedule their appointments at the Red Cross website at redcrossblood.org or Call **1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**. If you have further questions, please contact Judi Dix at 231-463-7886.

**Weekly Offerings For
September**

Weekend of 9/5 & 9/6

General Fund: \$13,499.88
Mortgage Fund: \$1,235.00
Abiding Memorial: \$150.00

Weekend of 9/12 & 9/13

General Fund: \$5,833.06
Mortgage Fund: \$395.00
Abiding Memorial: \$25.00
Dollar-A-Day: \$81.00

Weekend of 9/19 & 9/20

General Fund: \$6,598.13
Mortgage Fund: \$699.00
Abiding Memorial: \$25.00
Dollar-A-Day: \$81.00

Weekend of 9/26 & 9/27

General Fund: \$5,552.70
Mortgage Fund: \$805.00
Abiding Memorial: \$495.00
Dollar-A-Day: \$31.00

Total General Fund Offering received:	\$31,483.77
Total General Fund Offering needed:	<u>33,354.92</u>
	-\$1,871.15

Total Mortgage Offering received:	\$3,134.00
Total Mortgage Offering needed:	<u>7,192.00</u>
	-\$4,058.00

Official Acts



Deaths

Joyce Radel

Date of Birth: 7/26/1940

Date of Death: 10/6/2020

Daniel Klinger

Date of Birth: 8/7/196

Date of Death: 10/5/2020

Marilou Hughes

Date of Birth: 1/6/1937

Date of Death: 3/28/2020



November Birthdays!

1	John Majkol Dennis VanEtten Olivia LaChapelle	13	Stefanie Freeland	28	Jennifer LaChapelle Courtney Fielstra Andrew Swirczek
2	Deb McCarthy William Uetrict Noah Rop Benjamin Rop	15	Barbara Pellerin Rachel Metiva Lincoln Daniell	29	Ellen Bisson Natalie Dunlap
3	Megan Tanis	16	Kathy Arends Beth Milligan Scott Hanson Nathan Veihl Simon Werling		
5	Dale Roest Amber Cahill	21	Kathy Sauro Mark Nelson		
6	Mitchell Anderson	22	Beverly Bringedahl Darrell Van Fossan Mandy Wheeler		
7	Judy Larabee	23	Sandra Nord T. J. Udell		
8	Ronald Rich Faith Fiser	24	Linda Cates		
9	Edward Bleich Rachel Glavich	25	Suzanne Udell Denise George		
10	Daniel Breunsbach Barbara Bonifield Rhonda Meloche Cynthia Russell	26	Douglas Fenbert Jennifer Young		
11	Michael Jones	27	Dora Cvengros Karen Crummel Sandra Fazer		
12	Nick Garcia				



Chimes Articles

Articles and information for the Chimes should be submitted via email to Rhonda Smith at rhondak33@comcast.net or placed in her mail box next to the church offices no later than the **15th of the month.**



Thank You!!

Thanks to Theresa Buchan who assembled the October Chimes.



Dear First Lutheran Family,

Thank you for the outpouring of love, Prayers and cards during my hospitalization and this long recovery time. I still have good days and bad days, and it is comforting to know I have the love and support of my Church Family!

Thank you all so much!

Ed Bleich



**Stephen
Ministry
Is
Life
Encouragement**

Are you, or is someone you know, in need of a good "SMILE"? If so, please contact Sue Lathrop at 231-788-5654, Robin Policka at 231-638-3055 or Pastor Bill.

Keepers

Flo Bates

725 Harvest Lane
Muskegon, MI 49442
767-2494

Elaine Brevick

Seminole Shores
850 Seminole Rd
Norton Shores, MI 49441

Linda Cates

1585 Wolf Lake Rd.
Muskegon, MI 49442
788-1806

Jean Sodini

Robbinswood Northcrest Campus
2650 Ruddiman Ave.
N. Muskegon, MI 49445

Pat Mullinnex

Mailing Address:
2284 Riverwood Drive
Twin Lake, MI 49457
Home Address:
Sanctuary at the Park
570 Harvey St.
Muskegon, MI 49442

Wally Tallent

Hillcrest Nursing & Rehab
Community
695 Mitzi Dr.
Muskegon, MI 49445
744-1641

**FRIENDS OF FIRST
WHO ARE HOMEBOUND**

Dorothy Wood

Hillcrest Nursing & Rehab
Community
695 Mitzi Dr.
Muskegon, MI 49445

November

(NOTE: Events via Zoom and Facebook Live are indicated)

Weekly Events

Other Events

Sunday	8:30 a.m.	Worship	1	Dollar-A-Day Weekend
	10:30 a.m.	Worship		
	10:30 a.m.	Worship (via Facebook)	3	7:00 p.m. Lion's Club Meeting
	12:00 a.m.	Bell Choir Practice		
	7:00 p.m.	AA Meeting	6	5:00 p.m. High School Youth Overnight
	9:00 p.m.	Compline (via Facebook)	8	6:00 p.m. Listening for the Word
Monday	12:00 p.m.	Quilters' Group		
	4:30 p.m.	Lakeshore Dance Academy	10	9:30 a.m. 1st on 2nd Quilters
	7:00 p.m.	AA Meeting		
	9:00 p.m.	Compline (via Facebook)	10	6:15 p.m. Trivia
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	Seniors Helping Our Parish	11	Veterans Day
	11:00 a.m.	"The Apocalyptic Books" Study (via Zoom)	11	8:30 a.m. Stephen Ministry
	4:15 p.m.	Lakeshore Dance Academy		
	5:30 p.m.	Lakeshore Dance Academy	13	5:30 p.m. Bunco
	9:00 p.m.	Compline (via Facebook)	17	6:00 p.m. Lion's Club
Wednesday	4:00 a.m.	Journey Through Grief		
	6:00 p.m.	Ukulele Class**	17	7:00 p.m. Lion's Club
	6:30 p.m.	Guitar**		
	6:30 p.m.	Kids' Lummi Stick Class**	20	8:00 p.m. Crafty Group
	7:00 p.m.	Confirmation**		
	8:30 p.m.	Lectionary Study	23	12:00 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive
	9:00 p.m.	Compline (via Facebook)	24	6:30 p.m. Unfinished Objects
<i>** Not scheduled for November 25</i>				
Thursday	12:00 p.m.	Bible Study (via Zoom)**	25	8:30 a.m. Stephen Ministry
	5:00 p.m.	Lakeshore Dance Academy**		
	6:30 p.m.	Worship Service	26	Thanksgiving—Office Closed
	9:00 p.m.	Compline (via Facebook)	27	Office Closed
<i>** Not scheduled for November 26</i>				
Friday	** Faith Formation Material Uploaded **			
	7:00 p.m.	AA Meeting		