

**First Lutheran Church**

**3601 Dakota Ave**

**South Sioux City, NE 68776**

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# **First Lutheran Church**

**July 2019**



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***Loving others in Christ for outreach to all,  
while providing for God's diversity.***

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**Arise, shine, for  
your light has come...**

**Isaiah 60:1**

**The deadline for the August Newsletter is July 18.**

# Worship at First Lutheran

## July 7

### Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Isaiah 66:10-14

Second Lesson: Galatians 6:[1-6] 7-16

Psalm: 66:1-9

Gospel: Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

## July 14

### Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Deuteronomy 30:9-14

Second Lesson: Colossians 1:1-14

Psalm: 25:1-10

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

## July 21

### Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Genesis 18:1-10a

Second Lesson: Colossians 1:15-28

Psalm: 15

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42

## July 28

### Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Genesis 18:20-32

Second Lesson: Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]

Psalm: 138

Gospel: Luke 11:1-13



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### Church Coordinators For:

Altar Care: Kathy Anders 274-4383

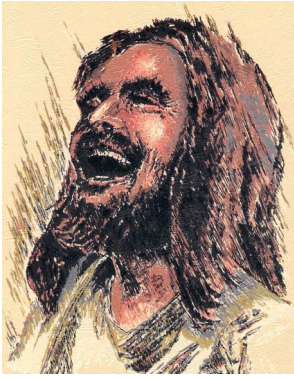
Sandy Larson 494-2135

Lectors: Rita Todd 494-2968

Ushers: Worship & Music Committee

Women of the ELCA Chair:

Bonnie Prosser 494-3384



## Adiaphora Pastor Doug

Altar in the wall, altar as a table, is an altar by any other name. If there is only one type of altar, only one placement, then it is law. The law has been fulfilled by the Son, Jesus the Christ. We are Lutherans, who are protestants.

What does it mean to be a Protestant?

**Protestant.** A Christian belonging to one of the three great divisions of Christianity (the other two are the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church). **Protestantism** began during the Renaissance as a protest against the established (Roman Catholic) church (see also established church).

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/protestant>

The root of Protestants is an adjective, protesting.

An altar is one piece of furniture often found in a worship space. However, it is not necessary in order to worship. As one disciple here at First Lutheran has said on multiple occasions, we just need a bench (or stump) to sit on, to hear the Word of God. God does not exist in or on the altar. God cannot be contained and is everywhere. The altar, either in a wall or on a table, does not matter. Altar tables have been around in the Lutheran church for a long time. Some church buildings were built with the altar in the wall, some not and some had the table introduced.

The picture below is from Faith Lutheran Church, in Maskell NE. This church is significantly older than First Lutheran. Note two altars. One being an altar table. Also note the placement of the

communion rail. The rail is not open. Some might say this blocks our access to God. That would be putting a limitation on God, who is unlimited, omnipotent and accessible at all times and places, with or without an altar or a communion rail in place or not.



Lutherans are ever-reforming. We are a church of the reformation and celebrated that reformation of 500 years ago. Re-formation does not happen just once. First Lutheran is part of the ELCA, who is continually walking with others to be a church based in the body of Christ, reaching out to who we encounter. That means that we look for how God is calling us to do ministry, how to do worship, how to reach the other. That also means we care continually in a reformation in mission, ministry and worship.

*(cont. on page 13)*

## Anniversaries

- Jeff Carda and Shelly O'Brien—July 25
- Dan and Daniele Feenstra—July 27
- Preston and Suzie Fischer—July 9
- Don and Lucy Gagnon—July 3
- Ottie and Jackie Gierman—July 23
- Gary and Sharon King—July 26
- Leroy and Beth Koster—July 14
- Rob and Shauna Meier—July 14
- Lee and Carrie Novak—July 25
- Bob and Trish Porter—July 12
- Lance and Linda Swanson—July 24
- Dob and Carol Zastrow—July 2

## Congratulations

**Congratulations to Sami Kenny and Aaron Scheffler**, who were united in marriage June 8. Please keep them in your prayers as they begin their new life together.

## Happy Birthday

Nellie May Anderson—July 22  
Betty Barto—July 20  
Jennifer Bass—July 22  
Jaimee Benson—July 10  
Chad Cain—July 17  
Dan Feenstra—July 1  
Mallory Feenstra—July 5  
Ron Frank—July 14  
Jim Hansen—July 11  
Chris Jensen—July 29  
Chris Kleinberg—July 6  
John Koskovich—July 17  
Destiny Krantz—July 29  
Jed Litras—July 7  
Kim Long—July 9  
Merle Long—July 19  
Lane Ostendorf—July 8  
Brianna Petrick—July 8  
Barb Quintard—July 7  
Paula Reider—July 22  
Tanya Rich—July 1  
Rick Robinette—July 2  
Kelly Robinson—July 4  
Lydell Sila—July 19  
Lonnie Slaughter—July 24  
Eleanor Tasker—July 27

## Youth Birthdays

Ali Gill—July 6  
Chase Jensen—July 22  
Tinley Kinnaman—July 6  
Aniyah Petrick—July 8  
Kane Petrick—July 17  
Xzavier Sheridan-Parker—July 5  
Zander Sheridan-Parker—July 5

## With Deepest Sympathy

*We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the following families. Please keep them in your prayers.*

Merle and Kim Long and family, on the death of Kim's mother, Doris Haage, who passed away Monday, May 27. Services were held Saturday, June 1 at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Craig IA.

## Bishop's Report

*Jesus said to them ... "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."— Matthew 28:19-20*

We prepare to gather in Kearney for the 2019 Nebraska Synod Assembly, a pivot point between our annual themes of "We Are Church Together" and "We Are Church for the Sake of the World." The Great Commission is a reminder of how essential both of those themes are to our life together—Jesus did not give his final command to a lone individual, but to a gathered body; he did not restrict them within the boundaries of tribes or nations but sent them to every people in the world. Most importantly, he sent them—us—with a promise: "I am with you always."

That's a promise to cling to and stand on as we continue to make our way further into a future of rapid and constant change. It's not a matter of whether we like or even want that change—it's happening. The Spirit is busy. The issue is whether we're going to resist that change or be part of it; whether we're going to arrive in the Spirit's future as *Christ's* church, or be stuck somewhere in the past wondering what happened to *our* church.

It's a challenge to be sure. There's no Google Map to that future, no Twitter feed of what's to come, no Pinterest page of life hacks for the as-yet-unknown. We simply live in the time and ten-

sion between promise and fulfillment.

To Lutheran Christians, *tension* is like mother's milk. Not the tension of internal anxiety or external friction between human beings, but the tension of paradox—the tension of holding two seemingly irreconcilable truths at the same time. Things like “Jesus was fully human *and* fully divine;” “the most important thing in worship is Word *and* Sacrament;” “the Word of God is always Law *and* Gospel;” “each of us is fully saint *and* fully sinner;” and on and on and on. As someone once said, “the most important word in Lutheran theology is ‘and.’” We've been practicing the tension of “and” theologically for over 500 years. That should be good preparation for us putting it into practice in daily life as well, but we're learning it's not that easy.

I am asking you to read the enclosed reports closely. I want you to recognize and step into the tensions they reveal. I pray you will engage other members of your congregation in conversation about them. I hope you will show up at Assembly ready to concentrate, deliberate and celebrate these tensions. If we default to the either/or language that most of life calls us to, we'll miss our chance to be part of the Spirit's changes, and whatever Christ's church becomes, we will be left as mere spectators, not full participants in its ongoing mission.

Here are a few examples of the tensions you'll encounter here and at Assembly, matters in which the temptation to “either/or” is strong, but in which we need to settle firmly into the *and*:

We are a fluid, active, ever-changing living organism *and* we are a significant human institution with dependable structures, rhythms and habits;

We are a financially healthy ministry that receives and hands on well over \$3 million a year *and* we are an institution that faces the reality of steadily declining income;

We have ever-growing, increasingly flexible opportunities for training leaders *and* we face a shortage of at least 1000 pastors and deacons;

We have made great strides in deepening spiritual practices and discipleship formation *and* we are still way behind the Spirit's lead and the church's need;

We are a body widely recognized for the bold breadth of our stated welcome to all *and* for being the most homogenous denomination in the country; and

We want to grow *and* we don't want to change.

Please understand—I'm not suggesting there's a right answer in each of those tensions. I strongly affirm both sides of every one of these tensions, and I'm convinced that we need to embrace all of them if we're going to keep up with the changes the Spirit's making. Yet I'm not so foolish as to think that merely saying so makes it easy—or even possible. It's going to take effort, and it's going to be hard going for a while; probably a long while.

Having said that, there are a few specific matters to which I want to draw your attention as we prepare for another opportunity to be together in Assembly, and some important questions related to them. In brief, they include:

**Leadership:** Where are the leaders we need? How will we invite them, prepare them and support them? What roles will lay members fill in Christ's future church? How will we make use of the new office of Deacon? Are there adaptive roles like Parish Ministry Associate still waiting to emerge?

**Congregational Vitality:** What makes for a healthy congregation? Is a congregation's survival as critical as its mission? What stands in the way of cooperative ministry among congregations? Do congregations exist for their members, or for their communities? How truly inviting and welcoming are we?

**Sustainability:** How do congregations and the synod generate the resources needed to carry out their missions? How do we more rapidly spread the spiritual formation needed to sustain the drastic changes happening around us? How

do we make the most of partnerships with our Serving Arms, with other denominations and with one another to ensure we carry out the Great Commission? How do we build on the advances made under the Strategic Vision we adopted four years ago, while preparing to draft its replacement?

Most of these questions have pretty simple answers. They just don't have *easy* ones. The same is true of the tensions I mentioned above. Naming and living in both sides of the "and" is simple; it's just not easy. The fact is, discipleship is a simple way of life; not an easy one.

Still, while we have room to grow in our discipleship, it's important to note that we carry out a ministry that impacts countless lives in endless ways through myriad efforts. Whether providing resources and support to the ministry of one of our smallest congregations, or providing relief following historic disaster in our own backyard, or feeding the hungry around the world, or building bridges between separated peoples, or bringing hope to those in despair,

God continues to make use of the members and ministries of the Nebraska Synod to fulfill the Great Commission. The world is a better place for your work in it.

Please remember that and know that I give thanks to God for you and for the ways God uses you to give the world life-giving glimpses of the Kingdom of God. I also give you thanks for the continuing privilege of serving in this office.

I thank God as well for providing--and you for supporting--one of the finest, most dedicated collections of synod staff members in the whole of the church. They serve selflessly and well.

And I thank Debbie and our kids, Nate and Becca, for the constancy of their love, support, encouragement and grace. I cannot imagine doing this work without them.

As we move toward the very near future of Assembly, I look forward to seeing you in Kearney,

and to all that the Spirit has in store for us.

Gratefully yours in Christ,  
Brian Maas, Bishop

## **Church Council Minutes**

### **Council Meeting**

**May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Members Present – Pastor Doug, Chad Cain, Sue Hunter, Deb Kenny, Brandon Trautwein, Kathy Anders, Linda Johansen, Terry Sorem, and Judy Blessing.

Members Absent - None

Other Attendees – Susan Monk, Roger Monk, Lee Trautwein, Rita Todd, Jane Krogh, Bob Barto, Helen Koskovich, John Koskovich, Mary Wolf, and Mike Hunter.

May agenda advanced on Judy's motion, Deb seconded.

All in favor, none opposed, the ayes carry it.

Pastor Doug lead everyone in an exercise involving a "new pastor" and "lay member" in pairs.

Prayers said

Guests were invited to speak

Concerns:

Table in front of the altar. Jane K. felt that this presented a barrier and was contrary to Lutheran principles of direct connections to God.

Chad C. mentioned the removal of the altar rail. Pros and cons were discussed.

New paraments had been ordered and bought involving 6 months of work but the lectern was later taken out.

Sue mentioned that the paraments can be removed. Other ways of altering the altar were discussed.

John had a concern regarding the availability of council minutes and requested that they be put back in the newsletter.

Pastor Doug mentioned that with digital distribution, these minutes can be distributed once again without much difficulty.

John then delivered a petition per the church's constitution that calls for a special congregational meeting to terminate Pastor Doug and requesting the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod (Brian Maas) be contacted.

It was announced that Bishop Maas had already been contacted by church leadership.

Mike mentioned that he hadn't seen many attend council meetings in the past.

There was a discussion of the history of conflicts at FLC and previous pastors of FLC SSC.

Helen voiced a concern regarding the 10 Commandments no longer being read aloud.

The report from April was discussed, a motion to accept it as written was made by Sue, Judy seconded this motion, and the motion carried with the ayes carrying, none opposed.

### **Old business was discussed:**

Tree removal

Nursing home to the north (Regency Square Care Center): a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter will be sent to the administrators as no response has been heard regarding the first letter. This letter discusses concerns regarding the poor condition of the concrete alley to the north of the property which the nursing home uses pursuant to an easement agreement with the church.

Parsonage work: Pastor Doug men-

tioned that the garage floor, and patio have concrete/structural issues that will need to be addressed.

Terry will write up a proposal for the next Church Council Meeting.

Sunday school: teachers are needed for next year's Sunday School. (Linda Swanson did a lot of the teaching in prior years).

Synod Assembly will be May 30<sup>th</sup> through June 1<sup>st</sup> in Kearney, NE at the Younes Center

Gary Panko's 45 years of ministry shall be recognized by a future event.

### **Property repairs and improvements:**

A change was proposed regarding the traffic flow signs to the parking lot.

Caulking around the frame of the stained-glass windows – both inside and outside or just outside were discussed.

Rental of scaffolding to accomplish this would be \$350 per week.

A radon test done at the parsonage came back with good results.

The council then reviewed church policy updates for May.

These will be voted on during the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting as council members hadn't reviewed them thoroughly enough for the May meeting.

Church attendance trends were discussed. Numbers were compared by Chad from 2015-2017, and 2016-2018, with attendance numbers being consistent among these years.

Long-term trend is now 7,000-8,000 visits per year. People are still giving and online viewing of worship is growing.

April giving met an all-time-high of \$29,413.00

New security cameras were discussed – one theft of creamer cups was documented, but no other criminal events have been recorded since.

The Council Retreat 2019 report was reviewed.

Topic of discussion: lies, rumors, and other toxic talk that can undermine a congregation. These common threads of concern were discussed.

Pastor Doug reviewed the number of people removed from church membership rolls each year.

These numbers have been consistent from 2011 through 2018 and about 1/5 of these removals are due to people who have died.

A car wash fundraiser was held recently and 3 youth participated and 15 cars showed up in 2 hours, a good outcome!

Next Council retreat is **May 3, 4 2020** at Camp Carol Joy Holing.

**Bishop Maas's 3 options were discussed, and option C was selected in light of the petition to remove Pastor Doug.**

Chad said that he will take the petition to Bishop Maas.

Option C is the formal consultation process, where the synod team is required to determine if the pastor's call should come to an end or not. The pastor and congregation determine whether or not to accept all of the recommendations. If the team recommends the pastor remain and the congregation wants to act to dismiss him/her, it requires a 2/3 majority vote. If the team recommends the pastor leave (and s/he chooses not to), it requires a

simple majority vote.

The meeting was closed in prayer led by Chad.

Brandon made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Chad, the ayes carried the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

**The next church council meeting is Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Trevor Brass, Secretary

## **Thank You**

**Lucas Fader**-Thank you to everyone who came to my graduation reception. It was appreciated. Thanks also for the gifts. I enjoyed seeing everybody.

## **Social Ministry**

Social Ministry is collecting school supplies. Also being collected are nonperishable food items for families in need. Please leave your donations in the cart in the entryway.

## **Giving Statements**

If we have your email address on file, we will email your giving statement to you after July 1. All others will be printed and available in the entryway. Please pick up your giving statement to help us save on postage costs.

## **Office Closed**

The church office will be closed on Thursday, July 4 in observance of Independence Day.

## **Sunday School**

We are in need of Sunday School teachers and a Sunday School Superintendent for the upcoming school year. Please contact Chad Cain or the church office if you would like to volunteer for either of these positions.



# Financial Reports

## Treasurer's Report - May 2019

Beginning General Fund Balance: \$ - 75,232.87

### Receipts:

|               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Contributions | \$ 42,830.32       |
| Misc. Income  | 145.25             |
| <b>TOTAL:</b> | <b>\$42,975.57</b> |

### Expenses:

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Pastor's salary             | \$ 3,583.34        |
| Pastor's allowances / exp.  | 3,724.56           |
| Auxiliary staff salaries    | 4,745.08           |
| Payroll Taxes               | 345.80             |
| Parsonage Payment/Utilities | 784.97             |
| Parsonage—general fund      | (385.92)           |
| Utilities                   | 965.75             |
| Grounds Maint.              | 276.10             |
| Building Maint.             | 391.17             |
| Office Expenses             | 233.07             |
| Worship & Music             | 672.27             |
| Parish                      | 229.61             |
| Altar Care                  | 36.95              |
| Food Bank                   | 400.00             |
| Social Ministry             | 224.89             |
| Insurance                   | 23.50              |
| Youth                       | 39.00              |
| Benevolence                 | 995.00             |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>               | <b>\$17,285.14</b> |

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Transfer to Capital Improvement: | \$ 100.00     |
| Transfer to other Funds:         | \$ -53,624.18 |
| Ending General Fund Balance:     | \$ 3,981.74   |

## May Attendance & General Fund Receipts

|                          |     |              |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------|
| May 5                    | 151 | \$ 2,021.00  |
| May 12                   | 147 | \$ 3,253.00  |
| May 19                   | 105 | \$ 2,451.00  |
| May 26                   | 84  | \$ 32,640.32 |
| Online/Electronic Giving |     | \$ 2,465.00  |

## Outdoor Worship

There will be an outdoor parking lot worship service on July 14, July 28, August 11, August 25, September 8 and September 22 at 10:30. Holy Communion will be served at each of these services. The 8:15 service on those dates will take place indoors as usual.

## To Love

### **Pastor Nathan Keith, Trinity Lutheran Church, Laramie, Wyoming**

A year ago during Lent we talked about the different atonement theories that have impacted how we understand what Jesus was trying to accomplish on the cross. During that study I shared that for the first 1000 years after Jesus' death we believed that Jesus died on the cross for the much needed sacrifice for the devil so that Jesus could free us.

With this understanding, for the first 1000 years it was believed that the devil had more power than God, so God had to die or be the blood sacrifice for humanity. This blood sacrifice understanding comes out of our Hebrew Scriptures that we call the Old Testament.

Early in our history, the Jewish community brought animal sacrifices into the temple for the church leaders to burn and kill to offer God a gift in the form of a blood sacrifice. This is where early Christians received their understanding that someone needed a sacrifice in order for human beings to be received in heaven. Around 900 years ago, Christians no longer believed that the

devil needed Jesus to be sacrificed. Instead we started to believe that God the Father needed a blood sacrifice in order for human beings to be saved.

I don't know which one was worse. That Jesus needed to be the blood sacrifice for the devil, or that God the Father needed some kind of blood spilled in order for humanity to be with God. This notion of God needing a blood sacrifice is still as strong as it was 900 years ago in American Christianity. It seems that humans can't get over their need to see torture and death to increase their sense of worth.

God didn't need to die to be with creation and humanity. God was always a part of creation from the beginning of time. God wanted to be ever closer to us, so God sent Jesus to be born into our world.

Two Sundays ago, I was at the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Trinity Lutheran is a part of the ELCA. This is the national expression of the church called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Trinity is not only connected to the national church, but we are also connected to a regional church that we call synods. We are connected to the Rocky Mountain Synod, which includes the states of Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and a portion of Texas.

At the synod assembly, my favorite author, Richard Rohr, was our speaker, and he shared something that was humorous and also a bit sad. He called it the Big Comma. He talked about the Apostles' Creed that is read in so many of our congregations around the country. Richard shared that in the creed we say: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit born of the virgin Mary, (comma) and suffered under Pontius Pilate. In the creed we talk about Jesus' birth (comma) and then we talk about his death. The Big Comma in the Creed is Jesus' life. For 2000 years we've been struggling to understand his birth and his

death, but we forgot to ponder deeply about his life.

Friends at Trinity, you are more important than your birth date and your death date. Yes, that is what we put on your tombstone, but at your funeral, we will talk about your life!! It's the big comma in the creed and it's the big dash on our headstones.

Birth and death have incredible impact in this world, but I hope what we do between them is remembered more. Today I believe that Jesus is giving us a large portion of what his Big Comma, his life, was all about. Jesus says in Verse 34, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another."

Jesus says I give you a new commandment. Jesus doesn't want us to continue to come to worship to offer a blood sacrifice in order for us to be close to God. Jesus came to show us what love actually looks like from God's perspective. Jesus is more about love than he is about death and blood sacrifice.

For too long we have made God the Father into a tyrant whose love for us can only be settled through torture and death. It's confusing for me today, because Jesus was always living through non-violence, peace, and justice. But God the Father is never attributed to those attributes. Rather, it's all about the sacrifice. I wonder why as human beings we feel that blood must be spilled in order for love to prevail. Why can't God's love simply prevail? Jesus' life was about equality for all, love and justice for all, compassion for all. Because Jesus came to earth to show human beings how God would love to have us live, instead of following his example, we killed him. We killed Jesus, not as a blood sacrifice, but we killed him because humanity didn't want to lead with compassion for the sick and dying, we didn't want to lead with justice on our tongues, we didn't want to lead with grace and forgiveness for our friends

and family members, we didn't want to share our resources with those who have none.

Because we didn't want to change, we continued to spill the innocent blood of the prophets and leaders who hoped for a world to live, not only with the hope of peace, but peace that is experienced by all.

Revelation says, "God is among mortals, God will dwell with them as their god, they will be God's people, and God will be with them." This is what Jesus came to accomplish and because he came, we got to experience who God is!!

Richard at the conference said this, God becomes the stuff God loves. That God created the world because God loved it. God became a human being because God loves us. Jesus' life showed us with every breath and with every conversation that God loves human beings. Jesus showed us so much compassion that the leaders of his day needed to silence such notions of peace.

Still in our own culture, we continue to silence those who want justice and peace. We killed Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and JFK, and we killed Dr. Martin Luther King and we jailed people like Nelson Mandela, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Dorothy Day.

The world is never really ready to hear about justice for all, food for all, and love for all. Our own country struggles with these basic Christian foundations. Thankfully, humans didn't silence fully what God came to do. 2000 years later we are still listening to his words, we are still trying to understand and wonder how we might change our own heart to be more like the heart of Jesus. We are still hoping to create a congregation based on what Jesus said today, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

After all, if God so loved the world, why would God need a blood sacrifice? The fact that Jesus was born was enough to say that God would redeem. God so loved the world, that God created it and came to live in it.

In the end Jesus came and accomplished what God was hoping. That was to spend to some intimate time with us. On the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished." But our story is not.

May we be inspired this day, to live in the love that God has given, so that when we breathe our last, our friends and loved ones may say that you helped them see and feel the goodness of love that the life of Jesus has given us. May the big comma of Jesus' life compel you to live out your great dash with kindness and peace and love.

## **Volunteers Needed**

First Lutheran's Food Bank distribution needs help from our young adults on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each summer month. Help is needed in the morning at 10:00 and in the afternoon around 1:30.

## **Fellowship Breakfasts**

There will be Fellowship breakfasts served from 9:30-12:30 on July 21, August 18, September 22, October 13, November 10 and December 8. If you plan on attending the July breakfast, please sign up in the entryway.

## **LWR School Kits**

Now is the time to think about purchasing supplies for school kits. The end of July and first part of August, stores have school items on sale and we can save much money if we purchase these supplies at this time. Bags and a list of supplies needed for each bag will be on the bulletin board if you wish to fill one. They won't be shipped until the first part of November, but now is a good time to buy and save money.

## **Churchwide Assembly Six Weeks of Prayer**

When the ELCA Churchwide Assembly convenes on Aug. 5, its voting members meet with confidence in God's grace around word and water, wine and bread, to carry on their work on behalf

of the entire church. This year will also include the election of a new secretary and a presiding bishop. As members of the ELCA, we encourage you to enter into a time of prayer for all who are involved and for the entire church. Starting at the end of June, the prayer of the day will be centered towards the upcoming ELCA assembly in August.

### **Daily Prayer during the Assembly**

#### **Monday, August 5**

Holy God, hope of the poor and balm of the brokenhearted, stir up in us the gift of your Spirit that we may hear your good news and proclaim it in word and deed; through Jesus your anointed, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### **Tuesday, August 6**

O God, the giver of every good gift, you set before us the feast of gladness. Gather your fractured human family, welcome us in our weakness, feed us with your mercy, and clothe us with life itself: Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **Wednesday, August 7**

Glorious God, through the waters of the sea you led your people from slavery to freedom. Through the waters of baptism you bring us with Christ from death into life. Roll away the stone of our fear and doubt that we may sing your praise and dance to your glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Song. Amen.

#### **Thursday, August 8**

Almighty and all-merciful God, for freedom you have set us free from every power that would enslave us. Create in us the heart of a servant and bind us to our neighbors with the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **Friday, August 9**

O Light Unseen, O Love unknown, O Life unending, your Word came as one among us to draw us to your loving heart and give us your abun-

dant life. Pour out upon your wounded world grace upon grace through your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Light and our Salvation. Amen.

#### **Saturday, August 10**

O God, source of all life, you raised Jesus from the dead and gave us the Spirit of his resurrection. Unbind your church from sin and the fear of death. Set us free to praise you with grateful hearts and to serve the world in Jesus' name, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **Leadership Lab**

Leadership Lab is July 22-July 27. If you have registered, please contact the church office so Pastor Doug knows who is attending. Registration has closed, but we may still be able to get anyone interested in going enrolled.

### **Listening Sessions from the Synod**

The evening of Wednesday, August 14 will be the date for Listening Sessions, as described in the letter from the Bishop. Members will receive an information packet with more information to participate. Please refer to the Bishop letter for details on how these sessions will be conducted. Look for materials to be sent via United States Postal Service to your home address.

### **Proverbs Bible Study**

First Lutheran is entering a time of discernment, and wisdom is needed to move forward. Wisdom can be found in the book of Proverbs. A Bible study will begin on July 14 (and run until September 8) after the second service to study the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is loaded with God's desire for us to follow and learn.

The study will last approximately one hour and will meet weekly after the second service (except September 1). The chapters will be provided for you each week, so you can read it and be prepared to discuss it. I know how difficult it can be

to read the chapters ahead of time, but this will allow us the most opportunity to hear God's words.

Please bring your Bible and your willingness to hear God's words for you.

## **In the Red**

In the Red, Red Ink, In the Hole, Shortfall, Deficit, Debt, Arrears, Negative, Slippage, Crunch, Pinch, Dead Horse, Inadequacy....

All of these are names or terms used for our running Treasurer's Report and it does not really reflect the actual status of our accounts. I know this for a fact since it has been widely publicized, whispered, shared with anyone who would listen, and gossiped about-that we are deep in debt. Let me put your fears aside in this one aspect of the Church. We have money in our General Fund and we are up to date on all of our obligations and payroll. Yes, we have experienced shortfalls in the giving for most months. We have not gone into debt to borrow money or take out any loans. We were given a "gift" from the Kenneth Priest Estate-and we have continued operating by using these funds. Just to be clear, the description of a gift is "An item given to someone without the expectation of payment or anything in return-it is meant to be free." Our current Treasurer's Report does not reflect the funds being subtracted from the Estate Gift. The Treasurer's Report we have been using has shown the negative balance forwarded for every year from the General Fund even though the money has been used out of an Estate Gift fund.

Based on changes that are being recommended to the Council from the Synod, we will be re-vamping the Accounting side of Church business. It will be easier to maintain and understand but will also be transparent. The Council decided to present a change to the Treasurer's Report to show the congregation how things look in reality. No smoke and mirrors; no slight of hand, no conspiracy. I, for one, am hoping this will halt the negativity-literally and figuratively. The previous

shortfalls will be subtracted from the Kenneth Priest Fund (which is the fund that has been picking up the shortfalls) so the report will show the 2019 actual expenditures and giving.

As you know, a petition was presented at the last Council meeting and is now in the hands of the Nebraska Synod. At the Council meeting when this petition was presented, a comment was made that really hit a nerve with me. "Giving is being reduced or withheld because of dissatisfaction of some" -whether real or perceived I feel this is a way to punish the Church. It doesn't matter as the giving is supposed to be going to "God's" Church and not for individual's agendas. I realized that it may be a big reason why we had a budget shortfall and may have impacted the giving at FLC for both the Church and its mission. Sad but true that some give based on their having things their way or no way at all.

Based on this petition and current unrest with some members of our congregation, I would have thought our Council meetings would have been a revolving door with complaints, concerns, suggestions, ideas or just curiosity in the past years. I can count on my ONE hand, the number of people who have attended a Council meeting in the past 2 years or more. It appears to be easier to complain to one another but not use the tools the Church has in place to try to overcome. Again, sad but true.

The opinions given in this message are mine and I stand by them.

Sue Hunter

Treasurer

## **Adiaphora (cont.)**

At the Nebraska Synod assembly, a worship space was created for those assembled. Worship, in a conference center, surrounded by the other, people not just from Nebraska, but from around the world. Below is the altar that was used for worship during that time. Worship was led from behind the altar table and from in front of the

altar table.



The Augsburg Confession proposed that the “one holy, Christian church” is “the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.” As long as word and sacrament are in place, the confession stated, “it is not necessary for the true unity of the church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere.”

While I was out caring for my mother, I was blessed by an opportunity to worship with a friend of mine at Christus Victor, in Elk Grove Village IL. They have a very beautiful sanctuary. A single pulpit/lectern, with a large cross upon the wall behind the altar table. Warm, welcoming to all. Access to God for everyone. God is present at all times. See picture below.



Ultimately, a good Lutheran Worship should contain the following elements:

**Gathering**, the gathering of God’s people assembled together to worship God.

**Word**, scripture, sermons, hymns and song bring the word of God and the Word (Son) to all who hear.

**Meal**, the meal that Jesus commanded us to remember Him by and receive peace in the forgiveness of His body and blood.

**Sending**, to be called out of worship into the world to make disciples of all nations.

Want to read more on worship? See the Living Lutheran “Worship 101” at:

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2019/06/worship-101/>

Ultimately the placement of an altar, the placement of a cross, the baptismal font, a communion rail look/placement, band music, organ music, altar or not does not make the worship. All of this is what Martin Luther would refer to as *Adiaphora*. “Luther’s assertion that word and sacrament are what matters when it comes to worship, and the rest is *adiaphora* (theological nonessentials), is critical to becoming a more just and inclusive church” (<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2017/10/26157/>)

Ultimately, this should allow individual congregations, such as First Lutheran, to continually reform worship, seeking out new expression of church that can reach the “other”, aka, the least, last and the lost. Not just those that claim membership. It allows for the creation of disciples, who in turn will come and want to partake and may even want to become a member of a congregation, or maybe not. They will come and hear the Word of God.

We can find much to divide us. The outside world is continually divided. When we are willing to walk in our differences, we can be united in the love of God for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. The world is divided, and this congregation stands divided too. I am saddened at what has been used to divide this congregation. Worship, in all of its rich differences, should be what unites us, not divides us. We should “Act in such a manner that you are living proof of a loving God.” Our mission statement: Loving others in Christ for outreach to all; while providing for God’s diversity.



Father in heaven, I ask that you unite our congregation in Your loving embrace. Help us to walk together and speak the truth. Even if this means we must swallow our pride, make it so. It is only through Your Love, revealed to us through Christ Jesus, that we can be whole again. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

Pastor Doug



## July Flower Chart

**July 7 (Altar)** Given by Don and Lucy Gagnon in honor of their many blessings.

**July 14 (Altar)** Given by Lee Mathiason and sons in memory of Tony Mathiason.

**(Chancel)** Given by Chad Cain and Brianne Lake in memory of Ray and Mary Cain's 63rd wedding anniversary.

**July 21 (Altar)** Given by Will and Sandy Larson in honor of Lance and Linda Swanson's wedding anniversary on July 24.

**July 28 (Altar)** Given by Ray and Colleen Schleusener in memory of Alyce Schleusener.

**JULY 4—OFFICE CLOSED**

**JULY 12—DINNER AND A MOVIE at 6:00 p.m.**

**JULY 14—OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 10:30**

**JULY 21—FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST from 9:30-12:30**

**JULY 28—OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 10:30**

**AUGUST 9-AUGUST 11—FLEA MARKET**

**AUGUST 11—OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 10:30**

**AUGUST 14—SYNOD LISTENING SESSIONS**

**AUGUST 18—FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST from 9:30-12:30**

**AUGUST 25—OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 10:30**

**SEPTEMBER 2—OFFICE CLOSED**

**SEPTEMBER 8—OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 10:30**

**SEPTEMBER 11—CONFIRMATION CLASSES BEGIN**

**SEPTEMBER 22—FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST from 9:30-12:30**

**SEPTEMBER 22—OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 10:30**

**OCTOBER 13—FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST from 9:30-12:30**

**OCTOBER 27—HALLOWEEN PARTY from 1:00-2:30**

# J u l y 2 0 1 9

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY                              | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|  | 1  | 2<br>5:30pm Worship & Music<br>7:00pm AA<br>7:00pm Al-Anon          | 3                                      | 4 Independence Day<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><b>Office Closed</b>                         | 5<br>8:30am TOPS                                  | 6<br>1:30pm Dakota County<br>Amateur Radio Club<br>Testing<br>2:15pm Spirit Connection<br>Practice  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 7<br>8:15am Worship<br>10:30am Worship   | 8  | 9<br>5:00pm Prayer Shawl<br>Ministry<br>7:00pm AA<br>7:00pm Al-Anon | 10                                     | 11<br>8:00am Breakfast with<br>the Pastors   | 12<br>8:30am TOPS<br>6:00pm Dinner and a<br>Movie | 13<br>2:15pm Spirit Connection<br>Practice  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 14 Holy Communion<br>8:15am Worship<br>10:30am Outdoor<br>Worship<br>11:30am Proverbs Bible<br>Study         | 15   | 16<br>7:00pm AA<br>7:00pm Al-Anon                                   | 17                                     | 18<br>2-4pm Food Bank<br>5:30pm Chamberettes<br>7:00pm Dakota County<br>Amateur Radio Club | 19<br>8:30am TOPS                                 | 20<br>10:00am Prayer Shawl<br>Ministry @ Parsonage<br>2:15pm Spirit Connection<br>Practice  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 21<br>8:15am Worship<br>9:30am Fellowship<br>Breakfast<br>10:30am Worship<br>11:30am Proverbs Bible<br>Study | 22<br>7:00pm Women of the<br>ELCA Executive<br>Meeting | 23<br>7:00pm AA<br>7:00pm Al-Anon                                   | 24                                     | 25   | 26<br>8:30am TOPS                                 | 27<br>2:15pm Spirit Connection<br>Practice  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 28 Holy Communion<br>8:15am Worship<br>10:30am Outdoor<br>Worship<br>11:30am Proverbs Bible<br>Study         | 29   | 30<br>7:00pm AA<br>7:00pm Al-Anon                                   | 31<br>6:30pm Church Council<br>Meeting |  |   | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">August 2019</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | August 2019 |  |  |  |  |  |  | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |  | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| August 2019  |  |   |  |  |   |   |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| S  | M  | T   | W                                      | T  | F   | S   |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|  |  |   | 1                                      | 2  | 3   |   |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 4  | 5  | 6   | 7                                      | 8  | 9   | 10  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 11   | 12   | 13  | 14                                     | 15   | 16  | 17  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 18   | 19   | 20  | 21                                     | 22   | 23  | 24  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 25   | 26   | 27  | 28                                     | 29   | 30  | 31  |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |



# Thanks to our July Volunteers

| <u>July 7</u><br><u>Fourth Sunday after Pentecost</u>   | <u>July 14</u><br><u>Fifth Sunday after Pentecost</u>   | <u>July 21</u><br><u>Sixth Sunday after Pentecost</u>                            | <u>July 28</u><br><u>Seventh Sunday after Pentecost</u> |
|---|---|--|---|
| <u>Lectors:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am   | <u>Lectors:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am                     | <u>Lectors:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am  | <u>Lectors:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am                     |
| <u>Cantor:</u> 8:15 am Brandon Trautwein  | <u>Cantor:</u> 8:15 am Linda Johansen                   | <u>Cantor:</u> 8:15 am Chris Knudsen   | <u>Cantor:</u> 8:15 am Tim Niemeyer                     |
| <u>AV Operators:</u><br>8:15 am Scott Koeppel<br>10:30 am Jenni Durant                        | <u>AV Operators:</u><br>8:15 am Janell Sila<br>10:30 am | <u>AV Operators:</u><br>8:15 am Mike Hunter<br>10:30 am Trevor Brass             | <u>AV Operators:</u><br>8:15 am Janell Sila<br>10:30 am |
| <u>Acolytes:</u> 8:15 am Ashlyn Rich<br>10:30 am Britton Taylor                               | <u>Acolytes:</u> 8:15 am Tyrese Gill<br>10:30 am        | <u>Acolytes:</u> 8:15 am Jacob Gill<br>10:30 am Katelyn Lieber                   | <u>Acolytes:</u> 8:15 am Jessica Baker<br>10:30 am      |
| <u>Ushers:</u> 8:15 am Ottie & Jackie Gierman<br>Chris Knudsen<br>10:30 am Bart & Terri Gotch | <u>Ushers:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am Bart & Terri Gotch   | <u>Ushers:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am Rick & Jennifer Lieber,<br>Branden and Hailey | <u>Ushers:</u> 8:15 am<br>10:30 am                      |
| <u>Altar Care:</u>  | <u>Altar Care:</u>                                      | <u>Altar Care:</u>   | <u>Altar Care:</u>                                      |