

First English Lutheran Church NEWSLETTER

April 2024



FELC Mission Statement

By the grace of God First English Lutheran Church will grow as one family of faith, secure in the knowledge of Christ's gift of salvation, proclaiming God's love for all.

Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson,
Missionaries/Tanzania

Barbara Wegner, *Parish Secretary*

Liz Ketz, *Financial Secretary*

Kaitlyn Burdorf, *Jr/Sr High Youth Leader*

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First English Lutheran Church
9 NW 3rd Street
Ortonville, MN 56278

 Hello April 



From the President



Greetings FELC:

I want to start by thanking the Board of Lay Ministry members for the wonderful pulpit coverage they have been able find for us and to Becky Parker for arranging for Colleen Natalie to lead our Lenten services. Everyone that has led our services has done an amazing job! We've been very blessed.

We find ourselves in the between stage of one Pastor exiting our congregation while we are preparing to search for, call, and welcome a new Pastor. I saw a social media post that really spoke to me, and I felt compelled to share this message for us as a congregation to consider in preparing our hearts and minds for welcoming a new Pastor. This message was posted from the site of Danella Virgo.

“THE PRICE OF BEING A PASTOR

Being a Pastor is listed among the four most difficult professions in the United States because a Pastor must be:

- Preacher
- Example
- Father/Mother
- Husband/Wife
- Counselor
- Conference caller
- Planner
- Minister
- Visionary
- Director
- Mentor
- Friend
- Reconciliator
- Marriage counselor
- Youth counselor
- Leader's trainer
- Bible teacher
- Intercessor etc., etc.,

Besides being:

- Keeper of the temple
- Cleaning staff

Every Pastor constantly confronts many different things, such as:

The Pastor doesn't visit me.
 Sermon was too long.
 The music was too loud.
 The building is too cold. Etc.



One of the most difficult things in the life of a Pastor is to know that at some point the people they love will abandon or even betray them.

The Pastor is often the loneliest person in the congregation.

You may see a Pastor be surrounded by people, but very rarely people who are interested in their problems, needs or even in their lives.

If you have a Pastor as a friend take care of them, pray for them, connect with the vision God gave them, support them, but above all love them. Remember they are human and in the same way they go through the same needs as you.

Even if you don't believe it, many of them have sacrificed comforts, rest, personal plans and so many things including some of their own family's needs to attend God's call.

Value the time a Pastor puts into work, the prayers they make for everyone, the burden they voluntarily carry for ministry. You don't know how much they appreciate knowing you do.

Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you shepherds according to my own heart, who shall lead them with knowledge and understanding. ... for all the pastors – Thank you for all that you do!”

As we embark on the search for our next Pastor, I would challenge each and everyone one of us to do some self-examination and self-reflection of our own hearts and our own actions. I challenge us a congregation to forgive ourselves and others where we may not have been honorable or fair in our dealings with our former Pastors, and with each other. I encourage each of us to prayerfully prepare ourselves to be in a good place emotionally and spiritually to accept a new Pastor into our congregational family. May we be ready to embrace a new pastor for their own unique skills, gifts, talents, needs, desires, and shortcomings; and not compare them to others. May we see them both as our Shepherd, ordained by God; but also, as a fellow human being who needs our love, our grace, our support, our friendship, and our appreciation. May we be a congregation of grace, of faithfulness, of compassion, of fairness, of generosity, and most importantly of love.

I pray that God will continue to bless the congregation of First English Lutheran Church, so that we may be a blessing to others.

Sincerely,

Kristi Ehrenberg

FELC Council President

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH BOARD MEETING

Council Minutes – March 4th, 2024 (not yet approved)

Members present: Kristi Ehrenberg (president), Marilyn Chindvall (vice president) and Lay Ministry, Julie Schneider- Stewardship, Alan Hodenfield-Youth & Family, Kaitlyn Burdorf-Christian Education, Jane Debner -Evangelism, Michelle Bauer – Lay Ministry, Dale Price-Church Properties, and Barbara Wegner-Secretary.

Meeting was called to order by President Kristi Ehrenberg at 7:52 pm.

Approval of February Minutes – Julie, Jane MSP.

Approval of February Treasurer's Report – Julie, Marilyn MSP.

Board of Lay Ministry – Michelle Bauer – 1st Communion is Maundy Thursday and there are 18 kids participating. The plan is for the kids receiving their first communion to go up first with their families and the congregation will come up after. The board will keep Barbara informed of any changes to plans. The board is thankful for everyone working on putting together the 7 am Easter service and excited for the youth to serve breakfast again. The board accepted the WAM report. Our services are covered through April, and the board is working on getting pulpit supply for May, June, & July. We have 3-4 people willing to be on the call committee working on the Ministry Site Profile. We still need more people for the call committee. If you know anyone interested, let the board know. There are a couple people interested in serving as the president and vice president, but if you know of anyone else, please let the board know. There will be conversations with Zion taking place in the next week or two. The nurses are doing the bible study at Fairway View since Pastor Denise retired and it's going really well. The board wishes to thank the nurses for doing that. FWV studies take place Tuesdays at 4 pm.

Board of Evangelism – Jane Debner – No one can go to the Synod Assembly in June. The Holy Week ads with our times of services & pancake breakfast will be given to the paper March 21st. There are no new transfers in or out. Our New Member Sunday yesterday went well. Kim will discuss with Barbara tomorrow about the photo directory. Marge will contact members who didn't put a photo in the new directory and ask if they would be willing to have their old 2018 photos be used in the new directory. The board will ask the Endowment Committee for help with printing costs for the directory. There are many options for sizes and binding and the board will get printing quotes on Tuesday, March 5th. Amanda Stattelman would like to help with the Just For the Love Of It dinner and the board will look at prices from local businesses for a bid. The tech desk is having issues with streaming because the cords are being bumped by people in the pews next to it. On Sunday, the pew had a "reserved" sign put on it to keep people from sitting there as a temporary solution. The board believes we should get something permanent behind that pew that goes to the floor to prevent this from happening again.

The Board of Properties had also discussed this issue upstairs while looking at the tech desk. One idea is to simply take the pew out so people can't sit there. Another idea is to replace the pew with a half pew (such as we have on the other side). The main CPU box for the computer is right where feet can kick the cords below the pew. The wiring situation needs to be addressed also. There is one known possibility for filling a vacancy on the board of Evangelism.

Christian Education – Kaitlyn Burdorf – Kayla will talk with Sara Tollakson about partnering with Zion. Carmen will look into VBS curriculum. The board wishes to revisit Green Lake's VBS in a year when the GL staff are more organized. The Sunday School kids will sing at church March 24th for Palm Sunday and April 14th. The board also desires to have the kids sing and have a snack with the residents at Fairway View on April 28th. The church has ordered and received all of the chalices for the 1st communion gifts. Some of the grades have already been working on their memorization milestones. They will continue to work on them next year. Liz will be helping by printing the March 10th & 17th Sunday School lessons and placing them in the pick-up room. Amanda Stattelman & Kandra Kellen will be joining the Board of Education. There was a question about the palm leaves for the children to hold on Palm Sunday. Barbara mentioned they were already ordered. No one from the board can attend the Synod Assembly in June.

Youth & Family – Alan Hodenfield – There was no discussion on the Synod Assembly meeting in June. The Super Sub fundraiser went well. It raised \$796.09. There will be two different time periods for the kids to sign up for working on the Easter breakfast. Those times will be posted in the Facebook Youth Group and also be mentioned during Confirmation so that kids can sign up. Senior Recognition is scheduled for May 19th and the seniors this year are Owen, Eliot, Jackie, Wyatt, and Ashton Clark. Juniors and their families should be encouraged to sign up to serve cake and coffee. The New Orleans crew are still looking for fundraising opportunities. They will be meeting soon to brainstorm more fundraising ideas. 3 of our youth are going to the senior high youth gathering this weekend with Kaitlyn. The board is still looking for people to fill the board vacancies.

Senior gifts are given by the board of Youth & Family and the board of Lay Ministry. They will have to work on this.

Stewardship – Julie Schneider – No one at the meeting could attend the Synod Assembly. Becky was absent from the meeting so they didn't know if she would. There are no board vacancies this year. Everyone received the revised opportunity sheets via email. The QR codes are in the pews and the board was wondering on tracking their use. The QR codes go to our VANCO donation page (which people can reach via our website also) so we will not know what method people used to start donating. The board contacted the Synod about possible "Good News" stories so that people can see where their donations are going. The Synod is working on a similar campaign for future use. We could possibly make some of our own and place them on our website, Facebook page, or discuss them in Temple Talks. Last month there was discussion on contacting people who watch our Facebook live worship videos, but the board is unsure how to approach it without offending anyone. The board also discussed people not receiving giving envelopes due to us ordering less for 2025. If they do not get the regular giving envelopes, they also won't get any pink designated funds envelopes. The board would like to have some general pink envelopes placed in the Narthex and would like people to be informed that they are there.

Church Properties – Dale Price – An architect along with a structural engineer looked at the bell tower. The board asked them to find comparable replacements and what we can expect cost-wise as far as the structure is concerned. The board has not heard back from them yet. Gunner came in to look at the inside damage upstairs in the back hallway. The board hasn't received any estimates or ideas from them yet. The church received a check from the insurance company for it. We have not had a contractor look at it and tell us what we need to do yet. The board was unsure if we should cash the check or wait. So, Dale or Glenn will contact the insurance company to see where we are at with that. The board of properties looked at the tech desk and discussed possibly taking a pew out or putting a plexiglass shield between the pew and the computer desk. Glenn suggested building a custom cabinet to hold everything with a slightly elevated seating so that the tech volunteers can see the front easier. Concerning the water fountain that was installed, the request for the invoice came in at roughly \$400 less than the \$4,000 estimate. It seems to be working well. Dean also got the kitchen plumbing worked on. We had some issues with the handwash sink and some leaks, nothing drastic. The board still doesn't know if they can take the bells down, if we can ship them out or retrofit them on site, etc. The board is still waiting on the engineering firm looking into that to report back to them.

Next council meeting will be on April 8th at 7:00 p.m.

Closed with Lord's Prayer at 8:18 p.m.

April 2024 Youth News

March Highlights

On **Maundy Thursday** we welcomed the following students to the Lord's Table during their 1st Communion: **Tenley** daughter of Tyler and Alicia Adelman; **Vayda** daughter of Cody and Jennifer Backstrand; **Poppy** daughter of Ashton and Caiti Conroy; **Reba** daughter of Kris and Nikki Evje; **Jake** son of Eric and Beth Fladhammer; **Arlie** daughter of Kyle and Courtney Giese; **Mason** son of Dustin and Ashley Hanson; **Owen** son of Alan and Amy Hodenfield; **Hayden** daughter of Holly Kannas and Clay Kannas; **Baylor** son of Jason and Kandra Kellen; **Bohdi** son of Dustin and Jamie Kindelberger; **Jaxton** son of Randy and Nicole Koch; **Avery** son of Cass and Emily Sigler; **Brinley** daughter of Mac and Kayla Minder; **Kova** daughter of Tim and Kalika Thompson; **Hannah** daughter of Dave and Katie Webster; **Landri** daughter of Josh and Sara Wollschlager; **Henry** son of Josh and Rachel Zinski; and **Joey** son of Pete and Carmen Zupfer.

On **Easter Sunday** the youth group served a delicious pancake breakfast as a fundraiser.

Upcoming Events for April:

Wednesday, April 3rd: Confirmation Classes as needed. Youth Group at 5:30 pm. Block Family providing supper.

Sunday, April 7th: Sunday School

Sunday, April 14th: Children Singing during the church service and Sunday School to follow.

Wednesday, April 17th: Confirmation Classes as needed. Youth Group at 5:30 pm. Backstrand Family provides supper.

Sunday, April 21: Mentor Meeting and Sunday School will meet today.

Wednesday, April 24th: Youth Group at 5:30 pm. Wollschlager Family provides supper.

Sunday, April 28th: LAST DAY of Sunday School and you will be going up to Fairway View today.

Wednesday, May 1st: LAST DAY of Youth Group at 5:30 pm. Olson Family provides supper.

Thank you to these people for their generous donations to the youth.

🌸 Glenda Reiffenberger 🌸 Glenn and Deb Henningson 🌸 Sharon Smith 🌸 Vern Nickolauson

CONGRATULATIONS to Archer Dorry on his being elected to the Lutheran Youth Organization for the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. This group will help with the planning of upcoming Jr and Sr High Gatherings. We are proud to have him representing our congregation!!!!

We are so blessed that our youth, Archer Dorry, Ashton Sletten, and Kirby Olson, got a chance to attend the Senior High Youth Gathering with our High School Youth Leader, Kaitlyn Burdorf. They all came home revived and excited to share the love of God.



Kaitlyn, Archer, Ashton, & Kirby

Parish Nurse Article for April

Sarah, also spelled Sarai in the Old Testament was the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac. Sarah was childless until she was 90 years old. God promised Abraham that she would be the "mother of nations" (Genesis 17:6) and that she would conceive and bear a son. But Sarah would not believe. She doubted God and laughed at the idea. After all she was 90 years old. She decided to devise her own plan and gave Abraham her maidservant, Hagar, so that Hagar might bear a child for them. Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. As prophesied, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Sarah died at the age of 127 years old.

Things we can learn from Sarah's life:

- *God will do what He has promised
- *God is faithful
- *God desires our obedience
- *God's timing is not ours, waiting requires trust, and God is always on time

Sarah



CHURCH NEWS

We really appreciate all of our members who have volunteered to help lead our services. Thanks!
Lac Qui Parle Women of the ELCA (LQP WELCA) is having a Gathering Tuesday April 16, 9AM, at Garfield Lutheran in Madison. The program will be Kim Derich sharing her experience / mission work in Guatemala. **ALL** are welcome (yep, including the men).

SW MN Women of ELCA will be having their convention in Redwood Falls Saturday May 4th.

Last month we welcomed our new members, Jason and Kandra Kellen and their children Baylor and Laklyn.

The next Endowment Committee meeting is April 7th. Please remember to turn in any fund requests before they meet.

There are generic pink giving envelopes available in the Narthex if you would like to designate funds for a special purpose but haven't ordered any envelopes.

Volunteers needed for Just for the Love of It community dinner on April 10th, 5:00-6:30 pm. Sign up sheets in the narthex for bars, set up, clean up & servers. Thank you!

Thank you to the Day of Love, Altar Guild, and others for the cards and nice thoughts and prayers for me. -Clara Zeek

Brian and I would like to thank the congregation for all the prayers on our kidney transplant journey. Brian wasn't a typical transplant patient. After the transplant he ended up with C-Diff, followed by CMV (a form of mono), critically low white blood cells leading to a stay at the hospital and his first ambulance ride, followed by an uncommon stomach bug that caused severe dehydration. Through all these challenges we still feel blessed that the kidney is working. Thank you for all the prayers, they were very much appreciated. And a challenge to all is: "Become someone's Super Hero and be a donor. Colleen & Brian Pribyl

May the God of all consolation be with Vern Nickolauson and family on the death of Eleanor Nickolauson on March 21st. The funeral will be held at First English Lutheran Church on May 4th at 11:00 am. There will be a visitation 1 hour prior to the service.



Meets in the
Church Lounge
on Wed. April 3rd at 9 am.
Hostess: Ev Johnson
Lesson: Eryls Sis

KDIO BROADCASTS

- (March 3rd) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.
- (March 10th) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.
- (March 17th) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.
- (March 24th) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.
- (March 31st) was sponsored by Curt & Penny Hormann in honor of their grandchildren, Avery, Oakley, & Ryley Sigler and DJ Bartels.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING and COMFORT for Carol Barrett; Keith Giese; Marcus Hanson, Arlen LaCombe; Gail Olson; Harris Selvig; Beth Swanson; Brandi Tweeter; Monty Athey, Jessy Buth; Paul Erdman; Rosie Frank; Larry Helgeson; Natalie Henneberg; McCoy Jipson; Janice Redfield; David Scholberg; and Jerry Stotesbery. AT FAIRWAY VIEW NEIGHBORHOODS: Janet Anderson; Ricky Anderson; Arvilla Bergseth; Adeline Burgess; Ruth Hansen; Jim Hipple; Vivian Janssen; and Roger Nornes. ALL OUR MILITARY who are deployed to areas of conflict, especially Alexander Johnson (Ev Johnson's grandson). If you would like a name added/removed, please contact the church office.



THE PINK ENVELOPES

for each month are for designated funds. You may designate your extra gift to any fund you wish. Our Board of Stewardship also designates a special emphasis for each month of the year. September special gifts go to the Endowment Fund which helps cover the cost of the KDIO broadcasts when we do not have a weekly sponsorship.

Thank you for supporting FELC's giving emphasis!

April 2024

Designated Funds

Building (please specify)	\$ _____
Operating Fund	\$ _____
Other <u>SWMN Funding Initiative</u>	\$ _____

Name _____

- JanuaryTechnology Fund
- February.....Service Trip Scholarship
- March..... Big Stone Lake Area Food
- April.....SWMN Funding Initiative**
- May..Global Missions - Companion Synod South Africa
- June.....Someplace Safe
- July.....Families in Need
- August..... Baptism Chests
- September.....Endowment Fund
- October.....Jaycees Project Christmas
- November.....God's Work, Our Hands/Service Projects
- December.....ELCA Missionaries

Upcoming Stonecroft Ministries Sponsored By Women's Connection

Tuesday, April 16th, at 5:30 pm at
Big Stone Tabor Methodist Church.
The cost is \$6.00, and there is a
free nursery available by reservation.

Speaker: Kimberly Dyborg of International Falls, MN
"Giving God Your Yes"

Special Feature: Marlee Hunt with
History of Yoga and Exercises

Music: Meg Scholberg of Ortonville - Violin Music

FOOD WILL BE SERVED & ALL ARE WELCOME!



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The congregations and all the baptized who are the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are claimed by this mission: God places us in cities, farms and towns together under one prairie sky. The Risen Christ surprises us with opportunities to plant God's Word in the world.

Walking together in confidence, we cultivate life-giving congregations, nurture partner ministries, and cooperate in the life of the ELCA.

By God's grace, together
we have what we need.

'As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name throughout the world.'



PROGRAMMED RETREATS

SPRING FEVER YOUTH RETREAT (April 20, 2024): If you are an experienced camper who can't wait until summer to come back, or if you are brand new to camp, this is the perfect retreat for you! Come join us as we explore God's word, play games, spend time outside, and enjoy the beauty of camp in the spring!

During this unforgettable Saturday at camp, we'll immerse ourselves in the thaw and crisp air of spring, while experiencing the joy of community, friendship, and spiritual growth. Get ready for a fantastic lineup of spring-themed activities that will keep you engaged, entertained, and inspired. So, mark your calendars and invite your friends to join us for the Spring Fever Youth Retreat. It's an opportunity to connect with others, deepen your faith, and create lasting memories in a Bible camp setting as we embrace the spirit of spring. Let's have some fun together! Register before the deadline - April 10! - Green Lake Bible Camp

CAMP HOUSE OPENING WEEKEND (May 17-19, 2024): This weekend is **FREE!** You are invited to be the first guests at Camp House (Brimson, MN) for our 2024 season! Join us as we throw open the windows, sweep out the cobwebs, and get the site ready for another season of programming. Tasks will include cleaning, setting up program areas, and some minor building maintenance. Meals will be provided. There are projects for all ages, so bring your family, friends, or youth group and help us welcome summer! Register by May 7th.

Register online at: www.gllm.org



Thank you to those who donated Easter Lilies, plants, floral arrangements, or gave monetary donations to the Easter Garden.

The following were specially dedicated and given:

...in memory of Herman & Alice Ellingson from Dave & Deb Ellingson & family.

...in memory of Adeline Brown from Dave & Deb Ellingson & family.

...in loving memory of Mick Boone and Wes & JoAnn Strei from Richard & Marla and family

...in memory of Patrick Ketz and Donald and Corinne Tiegs from Liz Ketz and family

...in memory of Richard Janke by Pat Janke.

...in memory of Leo and Darlene Barnhardt and Bonnie Hill from Rick & Dawn Barnhardt.

...in memory of our parents and siblings – Larry, Tom, & Julie Saeger from Dean & Karen Strand.

...in memory of loved ones from Marilyn Hanson.



Gifts & Memorials

(December 28th – March 28th)

ALTAR GUILD

Marilyn Hanson.

CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT

Darin & Kristi Ehrenberg.

DAY OF LOVE

Larry & Jyla Dahle *in memory of Curt Anderson.*

Marilyn Hanson and Jerry & Kathy Longhenry.

ELCA MISSIONARIES

Mel & Jackie Domine.

ELCA SW MN Synod

Darin & Kristi Ehrenberg

FOOD SHELF

Gayle Anderson; Marilyn Chindvall; Marilyn Hanson; James & Kate Heinecke; Liz Ketz; and Eldon & Carol Knutson.

KDIO

Dave & Debbie Ellingson *in memory of Mark Block*, Sharron Johnson *in memory of Jim Johnson's birthday*, and Glenda Reiffenberger *in celebration of family.*

LENT (DONATED TO VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL)

Kevin & Becky Backstrand; Lois Bergeson; Mark & Amy Block; Sharon Carlson; Marilyn Chindvall; Larry & Jyla Dahle; Dave & Deb Ellingson; Arlene Gustafson; Ruth Hanson; Marilyn Hanson; Ron & Nancie Haukos; James & Kate Heinecke; Glenn & Deb Henningson; Jim & Julie Hipple; Vivian Janssen; Alex Johnson; Evelyn Johnson; Matthew & Kristen Karels; Liz Ketz; Ann Mattison; Dennis & Jane Pansch; Dale Price; Paula Reisdorph; Sharon Smith; Kathy Stolpman; Dean & Karen Strand; Dick & Marla Strei; Garry & Ethel Swenson; Rodney & Vicki Torgerson; and Jon & Carol Ydstie.

OPERATING FUND

Gayle Anderson; Ronald & Ginger Athey; Sharon Carlson; Larry & Jyla Dahle; Darin & Kristi Ehrenberg; Marilyn Hanson; Evelyn Johnson; Arlen & Ardell Lacombe; Judith Robers; Sharon Smith; Garry & Ethel Swenson; Russel & Ronda Thielke; Josh & Sara Wollschlager; and Clara Zeek.

PARISH NURSE

Dave & Anne Tonn *in memory of Vern Bell's sister, Kathleen.*

SENIOR CHOIR

Cheryl Carl *in memory of Linda Zielike*; Arlene Gustafson; Marilyn Hanson; and Dave & Anne Tonn.

SQUARES

Marilyn Hanson

TECHNOLOGY/COMPUTER

Marilyn Chindvall; Melvin & Jackie Domine; and Liz Ketz.

YOUTH FUND

Cody & Jennifer Backstrand; Marilyn Chindvall; Dave & Debbie Ellingson; Kathy Haukos; Glenn & Deb Henningson; Sharron Johnson; Liz Ketz; Vern & Eleanor Nickolauson; Evelyn Olson; Burton Pansch; Dennis & Jane Pansch; Glenda Reiffenberger; John & Lila Salls; James & Ranet Schmeichel; Eryls Sis; Sharon Smith; Russ & Ronda Thielke; Dave & Anne Tonn.



Spring Gathering

Sponsored by the LQP Women of the ELCA
Tuesday, April 16th



Garfield Lutheran Church in Rural Madison
2018 180th St, Madison, MN
2 miles W of stoplight (HWY 212 & 75),
1 mile south

To help with planning, please call ahead
or send \$5 registration fee by April 10th to:
Bernice Oellien (320-752-4757)
2570 280th Street Madison MN 56256.

9:00 am Registration, Coffee, & Treat

10:00 am Program & Songs from Little Blessings Preschool

Men & women are invited to join us to hear from Kim Derich about her experience & mission work in Guatemala.

Reflection 1: Welcome to the 2024 Synod Assembly!

I know – we’re not there yet! But I’m looking forward to introducing the focus for the assembly over the next 6 weeks. When the Assembly Planning Team started thinking and dreaming and praying about the next Assembly, we recognized how much the past few years have taken a toll on relationships everywhere:

- physical distancing during the pandemic,
- the loss of those we love and never got the chance to say good-bye to,
- conflicts over pandemic practices,
- families divided over COVID or politics or you name it,
- divisiveness fomented by social media, and
- now-ramping-up political campaigns.



“One body in Christ”

Some have said we’ve forgotten how to talk with each other. Many of us miss being with people we used to be connected to. All of us note how in some way, relationships are just hard these days. And this is no less a reality in the church.

Of course, we’re not the first Jesus followers to experience disconnect, debate, or division. Relationships were a challenge for the earliest followers, too. St. Paul reminded the Christians in Rome that God’s very self was given for them in a way they would never expect: in the death of the crucified Christ upon a cross. He wrote, “Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4).

Those who are baptized into Christ are ushered into new life in community. And when we gather at the Holy Meal, Jesus gathers us together with all the other precious children of God.

“So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” – Romans 12:5.

This means that followers of Jesus, and participants in our own faith communities, are freed from those expressions of being bound in our sin - holding grudges, speaking ill of another, judging others, ignoring our neighbors, hoarding salvation as my personal possession. We have been made members of one body. There is a unity amid our diversity, and that unity is forever and only in Christ. **Thought questions:**

- How does living out our baptism as disciples of Jesus Christ free us from divisiveness in our communities of faith?
- How does unity amid our diversity move us to care for our neighbors?

Synod Assembly Theme Series – Reflection #2

4 years ago this week, our world shut down and life changed overnight. One of the public service announcements every night on WCCO TV said: “When all of this is over, and it will be, don’t forget about the things you’ve noticed.”

What did you notice? What do you remember? Many of us remember remote learning and work, cloth masks, wiping down groceries, leading worship in a room with no one. We remember the suffering, death, the sacrifice of medical staff and teachers, the resilience and perseverance of pastors and worship leaders. For so many months, I remember we were in this together. United in a fight against suffering and death for the sake of health and life. Alone, but together. For a while, around the entire world, we were actually one. For a while, it almost seemed we living out the encouragement:

“All of you must be of one mind. Be sympathetic, loving, compassionate, humble. Never return evil for evil, or insult for insult, but give a blessing instead.” – 1 Peter 3:8-9.

Oneness in the church. It seems like it should be easy, right? After all, it is what Jesus prayed for us, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also maybe in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” - John 17:20-21.

Jesus is not saying here that everyone ought to agree with one another, nor that that is even possible. He is not saying that unity means uniformity. He is pointing to a oneness known in the Holy Trinity – something far bigger than whether or not we “agree” with each other on issues of the day. How does that oneness come to us? It begins in Holy Baptism as we are joined to the communion, the persons, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not only this, but in Holy Baptism, the triune God also brings us into community with the whole people of God, as our liturgy states: “We are united with all the baptized in the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and joined in God’s mission for the life of the world.” (ELW, p. 227).

The earliest Christians could not imagine themselves in isolation from others. They were part of a household of faith, in relationship with others in a particular place. It was impossible for a Christian to be the church alone. But this sounds very different from the individualism of our culture and messages we hear today. The oneness of the church as “communion” or “community” is present in the Lutheran Confessions, which describe the one holy Church as the congregation or assembly of saints in which the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered. (Augsburg Confession). We also believe God’s good and gracious work is done through the spoken word and the sacraments, the power of forgiveness, and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of others in the church. (The Smalcald Articles).

To be the church involves being in relationship with others because Christ has made it so. Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it like this: *Because the Word includes us into itself, it makes us members of the body of Christ. As such we share in the responsibility of upholding one another. Thus the word of Christ also presupposes Christian brotherhood. The Word intends that no one should remain alone, for in him no one remains alone. The Word makes individuals part of one body.*

But what is the purpose of this oneness? Why did Jesus pray for it? In his prayer, the purpose for our oneness is so that the world might believe. Over the centuries, and certainly today, we Christians are known by some for our divisions. We can be pretty good at cutting ourselves off from each other for a whole variety of reasons. The prayer of Jesus reminds us how the world will only believe a witness that comes from the life of the beloved community together. One.

As you think about what it means to be one in Christ, consider:

- When has your congregation known the greatest spirit of unity or oneness?
- When has this been difficult over the years?
- How do you live out your oneness today?

SEE MORE FROM THIS SERIES AT:
<https://swmnelca.org/special-messages>

“O God, form the minds of your faithful people into one will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that, amid all the changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joy is found, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.” (ELW, p. 35)

+ grace and peace,

Bishop Dee Pederson

2024 Synod Assembly Theme Series - Reflection #1



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

www.swmnelca.org/synod-assembly

ALTAR GUILD TEAMS – April

Sacristy, Sanctuary, Surplices:

Nikki Evje & Misty Wittnebel

Banners:

Julie Hipple & Jocelyn Schowalter

Flower Committee:

Neva Foster & Ranet Schmeichel



SCHEDULING

KEYBOARD/ORGANIST

Apr. 7: Amy Adelman
Apr. 14: Kathy Haukos
Apr. 21: Lisa Berdan
Apr. 28: Carol Ydstie
May 5: Kathy Haukos
May 12: Carol Ydstie
May 19: Lisa Berdan
May 26: Amy Adelman

LECTOR

Apr. 7: Kim Anderson
Apr. 14: Kristi Ehrenberg
Apr. 21: Ellie Helgeson
Apr. 28: Jon Ydstie
May 5: Sara Mattison
May 12: Marge Dragseth
May 19: Carol Ydstie
May 26: Kathy Randall

ACOLYTES

Apr. 7: Jaclyn & Liv
Apr. 14: Cameron & Nash
Apr. 21: Brandon & Tino
Apr. 28: Mason & Brianna
May 5: Bennett & Bryson
May 12: Bailey & Rylie
May 19: Mikaela & Liam
May 26: Chase & Ava

LAY ASSISTANTS

Apr. 7: Amanda Stattelman & Jim Foster
Apr. 14: Marge Dragseth & Marilyn Chindvall
May 5: Becky Parker & Kirsten Karels
May 12: Marla Strei & Lori Larson

FWV Neighborhoods

Apr. 7: Kim Anderson, Archer Dorry, & Ashton Sletten
Apr. 14: Sara & Ann Mattison
May 5: TBD
May 12: TBD

GREETERS

Apr. 7: John & Lila Salls
Apr. 14: Chase Lovgren & Andy Strei
Apr. 21: Sara Mattison & Liam Johnson
Apr. 28: Nancy Nolop & Ev Johnson
May 5: Glenda Reiffenberger & Kirsten Karels
May 12: Lori Larson & Marilee Haukos
May 19: Paula Reisdorph & Amanda Stattelman
May 26: Jim & Neva Foster

SOUND SYSTEM

Apr. 7: Liz Ketz & Marina Thomson
Apr. 14: David Ellingson & Marina Thomson
Apr. 21: Marge Dragseth & Marina Thomson
Apr. 28: Terry Kalberg & Marina Thomson
May 5: Liz Ketz & Marina Thomson
May 12: David Ellingson & Marina Thomson
May 19: Marge Dragseth & Marina Thomson
May 26: Terry Kalberg & Marina Thomson

USHERS











Apr. 7: Brent Zahrbock, Dean Strand, Vern Nickolauson, & Dave Ellingson
Apr. 14: Eldon Knutson, Darin Ehrenberg, Harley & Ellie Helgeson
Apr. 21: Russell Thielke, Warren Wiese, Gale May, & Connie Newman
Apr. 28: Eugene Stotesbery, Jim Foster, Gale May & Keven Berdan
May 5: Ev Johnson, Gale May, Kim & Jon Anderson
May 12: Art Vollmer, Ron Athey, Deb & Glenn Henningson
May 19: Dean Longnecker, Josh Wollschlager, Rodney Torgerson & Dick Strei
May 26: Tami Lundberg, Marilyn Chindvall, Jackie & Mel Domine

**THANK YOU TO ALL
OUR VOLUNTEERS!**



**YOU ARE
APPRECIATED!**



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
April 2024 † † † First English Lutheran Church			Daily Devotions are available @ www.firstenglish.net go to "Lutheran Faith" & then "Prayers, Study, & Devotionals."			
March 31  <p>7:00 am Lay-Led Easter Sunrise Worship Service 8:00 am Easter Breakfast Served by Youth 9:00 am Worship (w/Hans Sacrison) – communion – KDIO Broadcast & FB Live 10:30 am FWV Worship – Pre-recorded</p>	1 Easter Monday April Fool's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV)	3 9:00 am Circle 4 Bible Study 9:30 am TV Broadcast 3:30 – 5:30 pm Confirmation as needed. 5:30 pm Youth Group (7-12), Finance Committee Meeting & TV Broadcast 7:00 pm Senior Choir	4	5 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	6
7 9:00 am Worship (w/Deacon Melissa Gall) – Communion – KDIO & Facebook Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship, Sunday School, Board of Christian Education Meeting & Endowment Committee Meeting 10:30 am Fairway View Worship – Pre-recorded	8 7:00 pm Council Meeting	9 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV)	10 Early Out - No Youth Group 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm Just For the Love of It Dinner & TV Broadcast  7:00 pm Senior Choir	11	12 9:00 am Bulletins Printed 	13
14 9:00 am Worship (w/Rev. Hans Sacrison) – Communion – SS Children Singing – KDIO & Facebook Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship & Sunday School 10:30 am Fairway View Worship - Pre-recorded	15	16 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV)	17 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm Youth Group (7-12) & TV Broadcast 7:00 pm Senior Choir Confirmation if needed	18	19 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	20
21 9:00 am Contemporary Worship (w/Jayme Winter) – KDIO Broadcast & Facebook Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship & Sunday School 10:15 am Mentor & Mentee Meeting	22 	23 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV) NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	24 Administrative Professionals Day 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm Youth Group (7-12) Making May Day Baskets & TV Broadcast 7:00 pm Senior Choir  Confirmation if needed	25 	26 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	27 
28 9:00 am Worship (w/Jayme Winter) – Noisy Offering – KDIO Broadcast & FB Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship & Last Sunday School Class (singing at FWV) 10:15 am WAM Meeting 	29 	30 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV)	FINAL YOUTH GROUP MEETING  MAY DAY			MAY 4th 10:00 am Visitation 11:00 am Eleanor Nickolauson's Memorial Service