



First English Lutheran Church

NEWSLETTER

May 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





From the President



Hello:

Spring has arrived, and the world is quickly awakening from the winter. The grass is green, the flowers are starting to bloom, the farmers are preparing for planting, and all is becoming vibrant and full of life again.



Speaking of vibrant and full of life – I’m so proud of how our congregation has been thriving these past several months despite the absence of a Pastor. God has truly blessed us with some pretty amazing pulpit supply leaders! We will soon be closing out our confirmation, youth, and Sunday school programs for the summer months. I want to specifically thank all those who have been taking care of our youth and children’s programs – both staff and volunteers. We have been blessed to retain such wonderful opportunities for the youth of our congregation thanks to all of you. We also thank those who have volunteered in other ways like serving meals during lent, Just for the Love of It dinners, after service coffee, Caring Friends, and all of our other fantastic volunteers in many other capacities.

I’m excited to share that we are progressing in other ways as well. Our Ministry Site Profile team has been established. Thank you to Marla Strei, Becky Parker, Jon Anderson, and Kelsey Henningson Kaye for their willingness to serve on this committee. There was a joint training session on Thursday, April 25th with our FELC team and Zion’s team with Pastor Dee Pederson and Pastor Heather Culuris from the synod to provide guidance on updating our Ministry Site Profiles. Once the Ministry Site Profile is updated, it will become live on the Synod’s website and Pastors can then begin submitting their profiles for our church’s consideration in calling a full-time pastor. In the meantime, the Synod is still working on seeking possible interim Pastor candidates for our consideration.

Our next step will be to finalize our Call committee. This committee will be responsible for reviewing all Pastor applications that are submitted. They will conduct interviews with the candidates and ultimately select their top candidate to present to the congregation for a vote to extend a call to a Pastor. We can have up to 6 members in addition to the Council President (plus a student representative) as part of this committee. Presently we have 3 volunteers, and we are seeking 3 additional volunteers. We especially need members with children in Grade school and parents of Jr./Sr. high students to ensure that we have a good representation of all facets of our congregation. If you are willing to serve on this committee, please contact me or Barbara in the church office.

We had our first meeting of our joint committee from FELC and Zion churches to start discussing potential partnership opportunities between our congregations. There are still lots of details to work through, but we are moving forward with this process. We will be combining our VBS programs this summer, and we are exploring the option of having a few outdoor church services together with both congregations this summer.

Finally, we are seeking a few more candidates to fill a couple of remaining board vacancies as well as the President and Vice President positions for our Church Council. I believe we will have openings on the Board of Lay Ministry, Board of Youth and Family, and Board of Church Properties. We hope to have all the candidates secured prior to our Council meeting on June 3rd so that we can finalize the voting ballots in preparation for the upcoming Congregational Annual Voting meeting which will be held on June 23rd. If you have an interest in filling one of the remaining council vacancies or the President or Vice President positions, please contact me or Barbara in the church office.



Please continue to pray for the efforts of all of these committees, boards, and our fantastic staff in the work of the church. We ask God to touch the hearts and minds of potential Pastoral candidates and lead us to the candidate that He has chosen to be the Shepherd of our congregation. May God continue to richly bless the members of FELC and all those whom we serve in Christ’s name.

Sincerely,

Kristi Ehrenberg

FELC Council President

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH BOARD MEETING

Council Minutes – April 8th, 2024 (not yet approved)

Members present: Kristi Ehrenberg (president), Marilyn Chindvall (vice president) and Lay Ministry, Becky Parker (treasurer) and Stewardship, Darin Ehrenberg-Stewardship, Kari Dorry-Youth & Family, Kaitlyn Burdorf-Christian Education, Kim Anderson - Evangelism, Michelle Bauer – Lay Ministry, Dale Price-Church Properties, Brent Zahrbock (beginning of the meeting)-Lay Ministry, and Barbara Wegner-Secretary.

Meeting was called to order by President Kristi Ehrenberg at 7:49 pm.

Brent addressed the council to suggest that we keep the stained-glass windows open during service rather than closing the shades because people are happier when the sun is out. Dale mentioned power window shades going from bottom up so that you can close the lower half. Someone will talk with the ushers to suggest that we keep them open during service unless someone complains. Brent left the meeting after this discussion.

Approval of March Minutes – Kari, Michelle **MSP**.

Approval of March Treasurer’s Report – Income to date is down from last year, but we’re holding our own. Kim, Darin **MSP**.

Approval of annual election meeting dates, it will be June 23rd with a backup date of June 30th. June 30th would be the installation service and pushed back if the election meeting needs to be moved. Marilyn, Becky **MSP**.

Board of Lay Ministry – Michelle Bauer – There was some discussion on possible interims, but they may not work out. There is a group getting together to discuss partnering with Zion. There were no WAM minutes. The endowment report's total amount at the bottom was incorrect. The total amount equaled \$1,504.40 but was written incorrectly as \$1,540.40. The Endowment report was accepted with the revisions. Pulpit supply is filled through April and the board is working on May and summer. The board reviewed and accepted the financial report. There are some options to fill board vacancies, but they need to be asked. They're also still waiting on hearing more from people concerning the president/vice president positions. Holy Week services were well attended. Thanks to Marge for managing the Lenten suppers. And thanks to Lois Bergeson for leading our Lenten Fairway View services. The transition team is Marla, Jon, Kelsey and Becky. Kristi Ehrenberg brought up a question concerning the Endowment minutes and camp scholarships. There was no money committed to scholarships at this meeting. If there is a need for camp scholarships it may require an extra meeting of the Endowment committee.

Board of Evangelism – Kim Anderson – Just for the Love of It dinner will be held this Wednesday night. The co-chairs are Kim, Marge Dragseth and Amanda Stattelman. Members without pictures are being contacted to see if they would be willing to have their old photos scanned to add to the new directory. The photo directories will be printed soon and made available free of charge to the members who had their photo taken or submitted. For members who elected not to participate the photo directories will be on sale for \$5. There will be a monthly summer hymn sing at Fairway View and that is planned for the 3rd Wednesday at 1:30 pm (June 19th, July 17th, and August 21st). The board is looking to recognize mothers on Mother's Day, May 12th, with cupcakes following the 9am service. The board is looking to verify the board prospect so they can be added to the ballot.

Christian Education – Kaitlyn Burdorf – The board had a meeting last Sunday with Zion and will be partnering with them to hold VBS on June 9-13, Sunday-Thursday. The curriculum chosen is "the Great Jungle Journey" and more meetings will be held in the future for planning. We will be looking for volunteers from our congregation to help with this when it gets closer. We will know more details after we have more meetings in the future. Cost of this will be significantly less than Green Lake to come. Board will plan to use the funds allocated for VBS. We as a committee are very much against Green Lake again for the following reasons: disorganization, lessons not structured age appropriately, lots of work planning for the counselors for outside of VBS time that was unnecessary, coordinator at Green Lake was not organized and made it hard to plan for VBS. Sunday School to sing on 4/14, "I'm in Love with the King." Author and copyright unknown. The board will partner with Lay Ministry to give Senior recognition gifts for Sunday, May 19th. Last day of Sunday School will be April 28th. We are planning to go to Fairway View to sing and have a snack with the residents. Parents are welcome to attend as well! Kayla is getting this all lined up and letting Fairway View know. There will be a Facebook, verbal, and bulletin recognition of teacher/volunteers at the April 28th service, especially Ashleigh Neuman for taking on the 4-6th grade group majority of the year and Liv Wollschlager for teaching the Prek-K most of the year and the Zupfers for sharing their musical talents with the kids. The board will be adding Amanda Stattelman and Kandra Kellen at the election meeting. The milestones for next year that the board would like to have memorized by the end of the year are as follows: Now I lay me down to sleep prayer (pre-school), Finger Prayer (Kindergarten), Table Prayer (1st gr.), John 3:16 (2nd gr.), Our Father (Lord's Prayer) (3rd gr.), 10 Commandments (4th gr.), Psalm 23 (5th gr.), Apostle's Creed (6th gr.). The students will recite these to the congregation on the last day of Sunday School and receive a special prize if they are able to do this. In the future for the 1st communion classes, on the 1st day of class, the board would like to send home more information about the classes with dates, times, etc. They discussed, instead of Maundy Thursday, possibly having 1st communion the Sunday before Palm Sunday or the Sunday after Easter so out of town family members can attend. Children were antsy at the evening service.

Youth & Family – Kari Dorry – The Easter breakfast was simple, easy, went well, and profited \$732.70. Alan and Kari will work on inviting seniors and their families to Senior Recognition. Last year there were two half-sheet cakes. Barbara will order the same this year and add "Congrats Grads!" to it to not leave out any names. Kaitlyn will get a gift card to Ronda as a thanks for being our Youth group volunteer. There will be a Gala Cleanup to fundraise for the New Orleans trip. The fundraising is going well, and this may be the last one. Kaitlyn is hoping to do a monthly activity with both FELC and Zion youth this summer. There doesn't seem to be a need for Green Lake promotions, but the board appreciates that it is occasionally put on Facebook as a reminder. The board does not have replacement members yet but is working on getting some.

Stewardship – Darin Ehrenberg – Giving is down approximately \$8,300 behind compared to last year at this time. Julie ran across a Synod video on things to do for fundraising. Its theme was "Your cause is greater than your institution." First you identify, then inform, motivate, ask, and thank people for donating to these causes. The idea is to tell people in your congregation what's happening, where their donation money went to, so they can see the good it's doing. Julie came up with a rough draft of a one page "Good News at First English Lutheran" newsletter. This month it discussed first communion. Next month could discuss the Day of Love quilt. There can be information about where we are at with the Zion partnership as well. On one of the slides in the presentation it said overall giving may be up, but when counting inflation's effects, we're still behind. We can put the "Good News" Newsletter on Facebook, the website, and once a month print it out and possibly pass it out with the ushers or have a stack that people can take home. The board members are all staying on the board. The board discussed Facebook views on our services. The Tenebrae service was viewed over 600 times, Sundays was 250, but we don't know how long it has to have been watched to be counted as a "view."

Church Properties – Dale Price – Properties board added a plastic shield behind the control box at the tech desk to stop the wires from getting hit by people in the pews next to it. Marina was pleased with this. We're still looking at a new desk and tying up the wires (that are jumbled together right now), but she has to be present for that. There was a request for Larry's refrigeration to replace the air conditioner in the Narthex. They would like to go ahead with this, which would require a 50% down to get started. We agreed with a price over 8 thousand dollars. But we need the unit. There is still \$11,000 set aside which can cover this. Dale motions to accent the current bid of \$8,076.21 requiring half of it paid upfront. Becky seconded. **MSP**.

We still have water leakage and damage by the stained-glass windows. Dean repaired it once. This is an outside structural repair. The same engineering group looking at the bells, and our insurance adjuster as well, are helping to come up with a plan to mitigate that. That's an ongoing project. We're waiting for a report back from the engineering group concerning the bells, tower, wetness around it, repair and structure of it all. Nobles, the roof installers, came and looked at the area around the bell tower where the water is intruding. We haven't heard back with a report from them yet. We don't yet know who will be totally financially responsible for it yet. The board authorized Dean to talk to Tim Thompson to firm up a timeline and cost estimate for the cross repair or to get a new cross. To repair the cross, it would be roughly \$1,400 (adding new wood and re-brazening the copper). That does not include installation. A new one would cost roughly \$2,800. Barbara ordered some new handicap signs for our parking lot. The new railing is up on the ramp. There are no new board nominations. Glenn, Glenn, and Dale will stay on. Board of properties discussed May 13th as the date for Spring Cleaning with a backup date of the 20th.

Kristi mentioned the next council meeting was scheduled for May 6th, to which Kari Dorry mentioned that (May 6th) was the date of the band concert. Kari mentioned the possibility of moving the council date to the next Monday, which was May 13th, to which Kristi mentioned that (May 13th) was the recommended church Spring Cleanup date.

Approved the moving of the May council date to *Tuesday*, May 7th. Michelle, Kari **MSP**.

Next council meeting will be on Tuesday, May 7th at 7:00 p.m.

Closed with Lord's Prayer at 8:22 p.m.

May 2024 Youth News

Things are slowly coming to an end for this school year's activities. We have finished confirmation classes and Sunday School classes and will be finishing up on the Youth Group on the first day of this month. Thanks to everyone for the help and support throughout this past school year.

Thank you to all of our Sunday School teachers, especially Ashleigh Neuman for taking on the 4-6th grade group the majority of the year, Liv Wollschlager for teaching the Pre-k & K most of the year, and the Zupfers for sharing their musical talents with the kids.

Thanks to the youth who went out and cleaned and picked up trash in the area of Highway 75 that we tend. You did a great job!



We have 17 youth that will be attending Green Lake Bible Camp this summer along with 9 youth and 3 adults. Be watching in the newsletters and bulletins for the weeks that we will be praying for these individuals.

Coming up for May:

1st: Today will be the final day for the Youth Group to gather for this spring. They will meet at 5:30 and the Olson Family will be in charge of the meal.

12th: Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers. Today is also graduation in Milbank. Best of luck to Jaclyn on her big day.

19th: Today is Senior Recognition Sunday at church. We will be honoring Wyatt, Eliot, Owen, and Jaclyn today during the service. The juniors and their parents will be helping serve cake and coffee following the service.

26th: Ortonville High School Graduation at 2:00 pm. Best wishes to Eliot, Owen, and Wyatt on their big day.

27th- Memorial Day

Thanks to the following people for their donation: Marge Dragseth and Jack & Mary Weber. *In memory of Eleanor Nickolauson* from Russ & Ronda Thielke, Sharron Johnson.

Parish Nurse Article for May

Read the *Book of Ruth* in the Old Testament.

Ruth is most remembered saying to her widowed mother-in-law, "Where you go, I will go; and where you live, I will live." Her devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi was endless.

We can't talk about Ruth without talking about Naomi. As a widow Naomi was being taken care of by her sons. At some point in time the sons both died leaving 3 women to fend for themselves. In those days women could not own land and had to depend on a man for everything. Naomi tried to send her daughters-in laws back to their families so they could remarry.

Ruth would not leave Naomi with no one to care for her. The 2 women returned to Naomi's homeland in Bethlehem. Ruth went to the fields to gather leftover grain from the fields after the workers left for the day in order to provide food for both women.

Naomi arranged to have Ruth meet a wealthy relative, Boaz, this would ensure Ruth would be taken care of the rest of her life. Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi was well known in Bethlehem and Boaz gladly married Ruth. They had a son, Obed, he became the father of Jesse (the father of King David).

Ruth



Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld: Ruth in Boaz's Field, 1828

CHURCH NEWS

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

This April the Day of Love quilters held a fundraiser. On April 30th they held a drawing for their beautiful MN Twins Quilt. Thank you to all who participated!

Many thanks to those who helped 102 people enjoy 'Just for the Love of It' on April 10th!! Thank you to Neva F., Ethel S., Garry S., Kathy R., Becky P., Tami L., Marina T., Mary W., Jane D., Marla S., Kaitlyn B., Ronda T., Ashton S., Archer D., Liv W. Liam J., Alexis T., Lola B., James H , Martino C. Bennett K., Kirby O., Sara W., Marilyn C., Judy B., Vicki T., Ginger A., Kathy L. and Dean S. from planners Kim A., Marge D. and Amanda S.!

Thank you to all of our Sunday School teachers, especially Ashleigh Neuman for taking on the 4-6th grade group the majority of the year, Liv Wollschlager for teaching the Pre-k & K most of the year, and the Zupfers for sharing their musical talents with the kids.

Thank you to everyone for all of the prayers, cards, visits, and food that people brought. I am doing good and back to work. – Keith & Lynne Giese & family.

Prairie Five Meals will be hosting community roundtable events on Senior Nutrition in West Central MN, one of which is tentatively scheduled (in Ortonville) on May 23rd. They're inviting people to participate in a one-hour meal and discussion on senior nutrition. If you are interested, please contact the office so we can give them your name since pre-registration is required.

KDIO BROADCASTS

... (April 7th) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.

... (April 14th) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.

... (April 21st) was sponsored by Eryls Sis in memory of Virgil Sis on what would have been his 83rd birthday, April 20th.

... (April 28th) was sponsored by your gifts to the Endowment Fund.



Join us on Sunday, May 19th, during regular worship as we honor Jaclyn Wiik, Wyatt Sherod, and Owen & Eliot Dorry, who will be graduating this month. Thank you to the Day of Love for making the quilts which will be presented during the special blessing ceremony at the end of worship. Join us for cake at our coffee fellowship following the service. The Ortonville Commencement Ceremony is Sunday, May 26th and the Milbank Commencement Ceremony is Sunday May 12th.



PRAYERS FOR HEALING and COMFORT for Carol Barrett; Ashley Hanson, Marcus Hanson, Arlen LaCombe; Ann Mattison; Gail Olson; Harris Selvig; Beth Swanson; Brandi Tweeter; Monty Athey, 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; & 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!

May 2024	
Designated Funds	
Building (please specify)	\$ _____
Operating Fund	\$ _____
Other <i>Global Missions CS So. Africa</i>	\$ _____
Name _____	

January	Technology 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, May 21st, 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: Mary Roelofs of Princeton, MN

“No Matter What”

Special Feature: Levi Waddell with
Wildflowers, care & harvest of seeds

Music: Jody Kuper - Soloist from Milbank
accompanied by Bob Frink

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.'

Spring Cleanup Day

Our annual Spring Cleanup Day is scheduled for Monday, May 13th at 6:00 pm. We will be cleaning up our church grounds. Please consider helping. This is what needs to be done:

- * Cleanup around flowers out front of the Narthex.
- * Rake where needed.
- * Install handicap parking signs.
- * Dig out the old tree.



**PROGRAMMED
RETREATS**

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.glm.org

Upcoming: Spirit Ride & Stride [August 15-19], Fall Frenzy Retreat (grades 2-6) [September 28].



CIRCLE FOUR



Meets in the Church Lounge on Wed. May 1st at 9 am.
Hostess: Arlene Vollmer
Lesson: Arlene Vollmer



Reflection #3: Body.

Fractured, broken bodies: oh, how they hurt! Maybe you have known the pain of a broken bone, aging joints, threatening disease, or serious surgery. Last month, my husband underwent knee replacement surgery, which is a pretty violent procedure; it requires work to gain strength and move forward! No matter who we are, we have known the pain of injury to these beautiful, vulnerable human bodies. At its best, the skills and miracles of modern medicine work wonders, but sometimes we come to a point when there is no cure, there is no therapy, there is no repair for these fragile human bodies.



This week, I'm writing about another kind of body – the body of Christ, which is the church. Why? Because St. Paul likens the church to the human body: ¹² *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.* ¹³ *For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.* ¹⁴ *Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.* (1 Corinthians 12) And then, Paul goes on to point out the importance of the various parts of our bodies – feet, ears, eyes, hands – each is important and necessary, each honored. Why? *“That there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.* ²⁶ *If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.* ²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

Paul's teaching begins with the fact that the Holy Spirit blesses God's precious people with a variety of gifts, and each one is important, each one is essential for health. In Paul's time, people were bragging about their own gift and putting down the gifts of others. Back then, speaking in tongues was a gift that many felt was the greatest gift of all. In our congregations, I'm not so sure that this is the gift people would brag-on, or even claim to have experienced. *“It has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” Is Christ divided?”* (1 Corinthians 1:11-13)

Every church I know wants to say that they are the most welcoming church around. But division is not welcoming. And new people can spot division a mile away. How? These are some of the ways others pick up on the undercurrents in our churches:

- smiles only for the “long-time members”
- pointing to a previous pastor and saying that those were our best days
- gossiping
- making parking lot decisions
- putting down someone else's ideas
- talking about other people, rather than talking TO them.
- bullying

Euww! That's not fun to think about. But it exists, dear friends, and my concern is that the divisiveness that is permeating our communities and country right now, might not do harm to the people of our churches and communities, and that the church might show the world a better way. It's an election year. Divisions will only deepen. And the church, my dear people, has a calling like never before to live a different way: the way of Christ.

Living as the church, the body of Christ, is not something we invent ourselves. This body receives its oneness from the grace and power of God. As Paul also says, *“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”* (Eph, 4:4-5)

What a gift we have received in our baptism into the Triune God! What good news we have to live!

For conversation: What are some of the gifts of the people gathered around your meeting table or the Table of Holy Communion? How might each person you meet be a gift to you in some way? How is your congregation as the body of Christ living out its call to “Live in harmony with one another” (Romans 12:6)? And what does that say to people who know you, or don't know you yet?

Reflection #4: In

People use this little word many different ways each day. “In” can mean that: Something is popular. “Orange is the *in* color right now.” Someone is in a position of influence with others. “She's got an *in* with another member of the club.” Something is moving. “He is going *into* town.” Someone is present somewhere. “There were many people *in* the meeting.” Something is within, or enclosed or surrounded by something. “She is *in* the house.”

This week I am reflecting on that little word “in” which is part of the focus verse for the 2024 Synod Assembly, “One body in Christ,” from Romans 12:5 – “So we, though many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” St. Paul sometimes used the same word(s) that had different interpretations in different letters, depending on the Christian community to whom he was writing. It is important to bear that in mind. Paul was always writing to a specific Christian community in a specific place, with its own unique context, its own gifts, and yes, its own issues and challenges. His messages to the Christians in Corinth sound different than the message he sent to the people in Philippi. And indeed, those early churches were as different from each other as we are in our congregations and communities are different from each other here in the SW MN Synod.

The phrase “in Christ” appears in many of Paul's letters; but notice the similarities: • “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1 • “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1 Cor. 15:22 • “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Cor. 5:17 • “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 • “...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” Ephesians 1:9-10

All of these texts provide a reminder that we are fully in the presence of Christ and belong to Christ. That identity is not ours because we signed up to join a club. It is given in Holy Baptism, as Christ gathers God's children “in” himself. That means we are one with each other in Christ. We belong to each other. We are one, amid our diversity. When Martin Luther gave his lectures on Romans from 1515-1516, he taught that in this section of Romans, Paul begins to focus on how we behave toward our neighbor. Luther had some things to say about how much concern the church was giving to church buildings, the accumulation of property and the many things that pull human hearts away from loving our neighbors. Over five centuries later, we understand some of these preoccupations.

Some of us are concerned about aging church buildings that were planned for a time when the church was the center of the community and enjoyed the privileges associated with that place of prominence. Today, we love those buildings; they hold such precious memories of baptisms, confirmations, fellowship, and funerals. In this changed culture, we know that many are struggling with how to maintain those beautiful structures. We want to leave a legacy for those who come after us. We wonder what the shape of congregations will look like in the future. While there are many questions that face the church these days, being “in” Christ provides both promise and direction. You are “in” Christ. This is the promise: “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39. You are “in” Christ. Your direction for the present and the future is clear: Love God. Love neighbor.

For reflection or conversation: • Might others get the impression that my church has insiders and outsiders, or feels like a club? If so, how? • Why is it hard to love all the neighbors Christ brings with him when we are baptized or come to the Lord's Table? • Will following Jesus ever be an “in” way to live? What would the world look like if it were? • How might you be blessed – and surprised - if you were to see others as “in” Christ with you?

+ grace and peace,

Bishop Dee Pederson

2024 Synod Assembly Theme Series

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



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

www.swmnelca.org/synod-assembly

ALTAR GUILD TEAMS – May

Sacristy, Sanctuary, Surplices:

Marla Strei & Amy Adelman

Banners:

Julie Hipple & Jocelyn Schowalter

Flower Committee:

Paula Reisdorph & Carol Newman



SCHEDULING

KEYBOARD/ORGANIST

May 5: Kathy Haukos
May 12: Carol Ydstie
May 19: Lisa Berdan
May 26: Amy Adelman
June 2: TBD
June 9: TBD
June 16: TBD
June 23: TBD
June 30: TBD

LECTOR

May 5: Sara Mattison
May 12: Marge Dragseth
May 19: Carol Ydstie
May 26: Kathy Randall
June 2: Liz Ketz
June 9: Becky Parker
June 16: Lois Bergeson
June 23: Chris Petersen
June 30: Liv Wollschlager

ACOLYTES

May 5: Bennett & Bryson
May 12: Bailey & Rylie
May 19: Mikaela & Liam
May 26: Chase & Ava
June 2: Archer & Meadow
June 9: Justice & Raimi
June 16: James & Liv
June 23: Ashton & Madilyn
June 30: Amelia & Cameron

LAY ASSISTANTS

May 5: Becky Parker & Kirsten Karels
May 12: Marla Strei & Lori Larson
June 2: Kari Dorry & Brent Zahrbock
June 9: Kristi & Darin Ehrenberg

FWV Neighborhoods

May 5: Barb & Warren Wiese
May 12: Kim Anderson
June 2: TBD
June 9: TBD
June 30: TBD

GREETERS

May 5: Glenda Reiffenberger & Kirsten Karels
May 12: Lori Larson & Marilee Haukos
May 19: Paula Reisdorph & Amanda Stattelmann
May 26: Jim & Neva Foster
June 2: Barb & Warren Wiese
June 9: Bruce & Kristi Redfield
June 16: Mel & Jackie Domine
June 23: Terry Kalberg & Sharon Carlson
June 30: Clara Zeek & Becky Parker













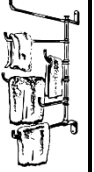


SOUND SYSTEM

May 5: Liz Ketz & Marina Thomson
May 12: David Ellingson & Marina Thomson
May 19: Marge Dragseth & Marina Thomson
May 26: Terry Kalberg & Marina Thomson
June 2: Liz Ketz & Marina Thomson
June 9: David Ellingson & Marina Thomson
June 16: Marge Dragseth & Marina Thomson
June 23: Terry Kalberg & Marina Thomson
June 30: David Ellingson & Marina Thomson

USHERS

May 5: Ev Johnson, Gale May, Kim & Jon Anderson
May 12: Art Vollmer, Ron Athey, & Glenn Henningson
May 19: Dean Longnecker, Josh Wollschlager, Rodney Torgerson & Dick Strei
May 26: Tami Lundberg, Marilyn Chindvall, Jackie & Mel Domine
June 2: Brent Zahrbock, Dean Strand, Vern Nickolauson, & David Ellingson
June 9: Darin Ehrenberg, Eldon Knutson, Ellie & Harley Helgeson
June 16: Russ Thielke, Warren Wiese, Gale May, & Connie Newman
June 23: Eugene Stotesbery, Jim Foster, Gale May, & Keven Berdan
June 30: Larry Dahle, Josh Wollschlager, Scott & Julie Schneider



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
May 2024 † † † First English Lutheran Church			Daily Devotions are available @ www.firstenglish.net go to "Lutheran Faith" & then "Prayers, Study, & Devotionals."			
			1 9:00 am Circle 4 Bible Study 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm Youth Group (7-12) & TV Broadcast 7:00 pm Senior Choir MAY DAY 	2 <i>National Day of Prayer</i> 	3 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	4 10:00 am Visitation 11:00 am Eleanor Nickolauson's Memorial Service
5 Cinco De Mayo  9:00 am Worship (w/Rev. Hans Sacrison) – – Maren Fladhammer Baptism – Communion - KDIO & Facebook Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship & Board of Christian Education Meeting 10:30 am Fairway View Worship – Pre-recorded 2:00 pm Amy Adelman Piano Recital	6	7 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV) 7:00 pm Council Meeting 	8 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm TV Broadcast 7:00 pm Senior Choir	9	10 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	11
12 <i>Mother's Day</i> 9:00 am Worship (w/Rev. Rick Hoyme) – Communion – KDIO & Facebook Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Fairway View Worship - Pre-recorded	13 6:00 pm Spring Cleanup of Church Grounds 	14 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV)	15 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm TV Broadcast 7:00 pm Senior Choir	16 Int'l Day of Living Together in Peace 	17 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	18  Armed Forces Day
19 Pentecost & Senior Recognition 9:00 am Pentecost Worship (w/Liz Ketz) – KDIO Broadcast & Facebook Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship  	20 	21 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV) NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	22 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm TV Broadcast 	23 	24 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	25 
26 9:00 am Worship – Noisy Offering – KDIO Broadcast & FB Live 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:15 am WAM Meeting 	27 OFFICE CLOSED  MEMORIAL DAY	28 8:30 am Day of Love 4-5:00 pm Bible Study at Donnie's Diner (FWV)	29 9:30 am TV Broadcast 5:30 pm TV Broadcast	30	31 9:00 am Bulletins Printed	