



THE FIRST FRUITS

Serving Christ by proclaiming Christ crucified in the
Minnesota North District of the LCMS

First Evangelical Lutheran Church; Grand Rapids, MN
A member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod



Pastor's Corner

Let me address “the elephant in the room” as I begin this month’s message to you. By now it would seem that nearly everyone knows bits and pieces of my plans to announce my retirement. The news of this has reached many ears very quickly and I want to make sure that the information is clear and accurate. How I wish the Gospel message would spread as quickly!

It is my intent to retire from full-time ministry among you at the end of December of this year. The Elders and I are in a process of working out details, but I am willing and available to serve beyond this date on a more limited part-time basis. Nothing is set in stone, but our timetable would be for a six-month transition period while the calling process for a new pastor proceeds onward. Sue has some major responsibilities as the LWML Regional Vice-President for the Minnesota North District for taking care of local arrangements for the District LWML convention which will be held in Grand Rapids June 22-24, 2020. First Lutheran is, actually, the host congregation.

We hope that after this main event is over we can make a transition, leaving the Grand Rapids area after over 46 years and relocating to Detroit Lakes, MN. This is a nice central location which is closer to three of our daughters’ families. I have also served the congregation in Detroit Lakes for several months as a vacancy pastor during my first attempt at retirement (I keep flunking retirement). We feel quite confident that this will be a healthy move for us.

October, 2019



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Speaking of health, this is a motivating factor in deciding to retire. As I have reached the age of 72 I am finding that the list of body parts that don't work like they used to is getting longer. I was recently cleared of cancer concerns, but I still have lingering concerns about the condition of my pancreas. We are in a "watch and see" mode. In the meantime, the condition of my voice is not improving. All things considered, it seems that it is time to pull back and enjoy life at a more leisurely pace.

In preparation for this transition period, we are initiating the call process, taking care of some of the details and steps in the process prior to the end of the year. On October 22nd at 6:30 p.m. President Don Fondow of the Minnesota North District will preside over a pre-call meeting to outline the steps that follow. I encourage you to attend this meeting to be informed.

In the meantime, there is much work to be done. I don't know how objective I can be, but I think that my time among you as pastor has been a time of stability and growth toward a healthy atmosphere at First Lutheran. There have been some exciting signs of this progress. The last thing we need is to go backwards in our willingness to serve, to grow, and to reach out to people we don't even know yet. Let's keep our eyes on the cross and keep being keenly aware of God's hand leading us onward, trusting God to

provide a faithful pastor to continue a vital and vibrant ministry to our community and to the uttermost parts of the world.

PASTOR ZEIGE



The Annual Open Door Coat Rack will be collecting items from October 7-28th. Please bring clean and gently used (or new) coats, boots, scarves, mittens, gloves and caps to First Lutheran from October 7-27th. All sizes are needed for children and adults. There will be a tote located in the foyer in which to place your donations. Items will be taken to the United Methodist Church on October 28th. Distribution will be at the United Methodist Church on October 29th and 30th from 9am to 7pm on those days. If you would like to help at the distribution site - please call Judy Peterson at 398-0849 to schedule a shift for helping. They would appreciate this very much! Average number of people served each year is 1,030!

Thank you all.
Board of Human Care

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sunday School is going well. We feel so blessed to have this opportunity to continue to help our children understand how much Jesus loves and cares for all of us.

Thank you to Jeanie Benton, who is now our Nursery-Pre K teacher. Thank you Jeanie.

We have an awesome staff—teachers, substitute teachers, craft helpers, media helpers, and those involved with music! The children will again be signing at the beginning of the 10:30 service, on the 3rd Sunday of most months---which is our Youth Sunday.

Please keep our mission project; “How Can I Help?” in your thoughts and prayer, as we as an entire Christian community reach out to those in Ethiopia, so they too will have Christian materials in their homes and schools.

We are in need of a Release Time teach for our 3rd graders. Classes meet every other Wednesday, from October through March. Please pray fully consider if you would be willing to serve in this area. Remember, many of these students do not come from families who have a home church. What a wonderful opportunity we have to share the “Good News of Jesus” with them.

A snack list will be in the folder by the church officer to sign up for our students. They enjoy fresh fruit, Oreo’s and

Chocolate Covered Graham Cracker Cookies! Thank you.

Again, please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers.

*In Christ,
Mary Buech
Sunday School Superintendent.*



The Mission Board has designated that the **Thanksgiving Day Offerings** will be donated to our area food bank. They continue to help more and more of our families with the necessary food and other supplies which they so badly needed. Continue to also pray for these families.

LIBRARY CORNER:

*Library Volunteers: Janie Carlson, Sheila Cline,
Darlene Baltus*



SOUTH OF SUPERIOR

by Ellen Airgood is found at FIC Air. The story takes place in a town in Upper Peninsula, Michigan where the author runs a diner besides writing her first novel. Madeline Stone arrives in the town to find herself pulled into a life changing drama while caring for a family friend. She finds a sense of family, belonging, and the love and goodwill of her neighbors.

FAITH BEGINS AT HOME by Mark Holmen found at 268.43 Hol. In the past, faith was a central part of the family's home life, passed on from generation to generation. Today, the reality for many families is that faith is no more than one-hour, drop-off Christianity, if it is present at all. How does a family put Christ at the center of their busy lives? Filled with a wealth of practical ideas, inspirational stories and biblical truth, this book will inspire, motivate and equip you to help your family succeed. The author helps other congregations equip the home to be the primary place where faith is nurtured.

REMEMBER REFORMATION IS THIS MONTH!



WOMEN OF THE REFORMATION

by Roland H. Bainton found at 920 Bai. This book describes fifteen women from throughout Europe who were not afraid to live up to their religious convictions to the point of persecution and separation from their families. Through God's Word, we understand that small things DO COUNT. Are we handling small things well in our life? With God's help, we can be faithful with all that we've been given. We can learn from Katherine von Bora (Mrs. Luther), Katherine Zell, Giulia Gonzaga, and Ursula Van Munsterberg to name just a few.

THAT I MAY BE HIS OWN by Charles Arand found at 238.41 Ara. The description online tells that it deals with the "historical setting in which Luther composed his catechisms." It also says that "the book presents a solid introduction to the history, theology and significance of Luther's catechisms.

JOURNEY INTO PRAYER by Ilto Rudnick found at 248.3 Rud. The CPH page online says it "provides a solid roadmap for reaching the ultimate destination: personal conversation with God in His Word. Whether you are a new Christian or a seasoned prayer warrior, this book is a helpful, practical resource that will help you focus on your prayer life and find new ways to communicate with your Lord and Savior."



Trust in the Lord

On Thursday, September 5th I was on my way to the Church at 7:00 am. I was two miles from my house when out of the ditch a deer ran out in front of me and I hit it head on. I hit the deer so hard with my van that I carried it until the van came to a complete stop. The van was not reparable by the insurance company. I have thanked God so many times that the airbags didn't go off because they could have really hurt me.

We didn't have rental insurance, so I had to find another car quickly. I enjoy researching and looking for new vehicles, but I wasn't ready this time. I only enjoy it when I *get* to and not when I *have* to. I wasn't in control of the timing. I had a hard time dealing with this as I couldn't find a vehicle by the end of the day Friday. That meant that we had to keep the rental at least a week as Matt was leaving to go to Missouri for work so we would have to wait until the following Thursday or Friday to find a vehicle. I couldn't control anything that was going on.

I spent many hours praying to God to handle this and the hardest part is putting my whole trust in Him. I am sure you can all relate. Yes, we say that we trust God and put our whole hearts in believing him, but we want things done *OUR* way, and on *OUR* time and when it is convenient for *US*. Change is *HARD*.

Some of us can handle change with a breeze and just go with the flow. Some of us can't handle change so easily as our norm is no longer a norm, our safety zone is changing and can feel like it is no longer safe. We have a lot of change going on in the Church these days and you can feel the change in the air. No matter which side of the fence you sit on, God is with *YOU!* That is right, *GOD* is in control *WE* are not.

There is nothing too big nor too small that He cannot handle. If you are feeling overwhelmed by all the changes, pray. Prayer is the answer to all our worries. I woke up Tuesday morning after the accident and realized that the stress from the accident and not finding a vehicle was affecting my whole family. I was short to the kids and my husband. I realized that *I* was the negative one, *I* was taking my stress out on my family and those around me, *I* needed to change my perspective and how I was handling this. I was able to find a vehicle and no it was not local, and I needed to wait until September 14th to go and get it. I trusted God was going to handle the situation, and He did.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

That scripture is so powerful. Take your time and read it again.

Like I said earlier I like to be in control. I like to know what is going to happen next. Accidents happen, death happens, sickness happens, mental illness happens, change happens. We are not in control of what happens around us, but we are in control of how we react to what is happening around us. We are in control of our emotions and how we act towards other people. Are you acting with love or something else?

God is love. God loves you and he wants us to love each other as He loves us. This can be hard when we don't agree with other people. How can we love others when they sin or do things we don't like? Judging them isn't up to us, it is up to God. Choose LOVE, Choose POSITIVITY, Choose GOD.

Psalm 34: 17 *When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.*

Blessings to you and your family,
Jessica Pellinen
Family Ministry Program Director



Are you ready to take the baton?

I told Pastor Zeige I was impressed with his sermon on Rally Sunday. The title was Imparting the mind of Christ and was based on 1 Corinthians 2: 7-16. His message, in my mind, was the need for us to share with the next generations the gift we've been given. I've been praying for the children and youth of our congregation. 1 Corinthians 9: 24-26 "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we are imperishable."

Christ commanded us to make disciples of all men. If you study the growth of Christianity, much of it was because one believer shared with another believer. Yes, there were men who became prophets and leaders, but the believers were spreading the word.

For years, our congregation bemoaned the lack of young families in our church and the low numbers of children in Sunday school. We also complained that our youth disappeared after confirmation. The

Lord has blessed us with some fantastic young families in the past couple of years. In addition, we have Jessica Pellinen, our Family Ministry Activities Coordinator. I heard this congregation make a commitment to support the children of the church at an annual meeting.

What are we as a congregation doing to help these young families and children?

- 2019 VBS. We didn't have nearly enough adults involved. In fact, we only had 3 adults involved as class leaders. Without our wonderful youth, we couldn't have had VBS.
- 2019 Family Camp – The leaders were parents of the young families in the church. The rest of us, except for a few, failed to support them with meals.
- 2019 Sunday School – Plea went out for teachers. We have a preschool class, a 1st through 3rd grade class, and a 4th and 5th grade class. There is also a toddler class to be held once a month. Jessica Pellinen is doing that, oh, but then she is also trying to help with the youth on Sundays.
- 2 people plus Jessica are leading the youth on Sunday. Where is everyone else?
- 2019 Release Time starts in October. We use this as outreach to the children of our church and the

community. We need 3 teachers, 1 each for grades 3 through 5. We still need one. Only 13 days involved from October to March

What are our reasons for not getting involved?

- I don't know how to teach. We have wonderful materials; Jessica is always on hand to help leaders and come up with fun learning activities and crafts.
- We go south in the winter. You deserve it after years of hard work. However, could we take part of a year?
- What are your reasons?

Jessica Pellinen is our Family Ministry Activities Coordinator. Notice she is "coordinator". It is not up to her to organize and run everything herself.

What are YOU doing to impart the mind of Christ to the youth of First Lutheran? It's time for the batons to be passed to other people. Please pray to the Holy Spirit to guide you into service in our congregation in some way.

Respectfully Submitted by
Lois Bendix



“Sharing the Love of Jesus”
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES -
UNAPPROVED
SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

Present: Gary Rosin, Tom Shelhamer, Greg Taylor, Deb Robertson, Doug Carlson, Jessica Pellinen, Mary Buech, Dwight Kessler, Tom Lattimore, Pastor Zeige, Linda Urevig

Call to order: Tom Lattimore called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Opening devotion and prayer: Pastor Zeige led us in devotions and prayer from Psalm 133:1-3. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head,”. Today we need to strive to live in unity and not be at odds with one another in our church. This unity starts with us as council members.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Agenda with additions to New Business (3. Moving Printer; 4. Paying Contractor; 5. Coffeepot for Fellowship Hall; 6. Brad’s Reporting Line; 7. Bibles; 8. Thanksgiving Offering; 9. Board of Missions) and accept the Minutes as written.

Oral Reports of Boards and Committees

1. Boards of Christian Education & Youth: Report in Packet

2. Board of Elders: Report in Packet. Tom S. There was a question about the pay increases in the proposed Elders Budget. Were performance reviews done? Tom S. stated that the proposed increases were for cost of living. He would check into the performance reviews.
3. Boards of Human Care & Missions: Report in Packet. Mary B. stated that Media Fund line from the Board of Missions budget will be removed. It was clarified that there still is a two-term limit for board members.
4. Board of Stewardship: Report in Packet. Doug C.
5. Board of Trustees: Report in Packet. Gary R. It was noted that the board’s minutes needed to be corrected to show that the two motions listed in the minutes were actually made and approved.
6. Revolving Trust Fund Committee: Greg T. Next meeting will be in October.
7. Wiebe Grant Committee: Greg T. No Requests
8. Direction and Planning Committee: Greg T. Will be researching the feasibility of a church daycare and will update the council by next Spring.

Family Ministry Program Director's Report: Report in Packet. Jessica stated that she is impressed with the working relationship with the school district and the other churches involved with Release Time.

Pastor's Report: Report in Packet
Financial Secretary's Report: Report in Packet. Deb R. noted that this month's amount short, YTD income to YTD budget, is the smallest she has ever seen (230.61).

YTD income 2019: \$200,188.39

YTD income 2018: \$195,111.45

Treasurer's Report: Report in Packet

As of: August 31, 2019

General Fund Chkg: \$33,265.84

Building Fund Chkg: \$48,081.57

Mortgage loan balance: \$111,742.44

Revolving trust fund Chkg: \$253,499.23

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the oral and written Board and Committee Reports.

Correspondence – None

Unfinished Business

1. New Media Update – Tom L. stated that most of the equipment is in place. AVE will be here Thursday and Friday or next Monday to finish programming and do training. Tom noted that it will take time to learn all that the system can do.
2. Capital Projects Update – Gary R. stated that the garage is ready to be

painted, have the door hung and electric hookup done. The front door and sacristy windows are being worked on. Summer of 2019 Completion Date.

3. Outside Building Cameras Update – Greg T. stated that the cameras will be installed next week.
4. 2020 Budget – Proposed budget for 2020 was discussed. In October we will discuss any changes made to the board budgets and will vote to approve the 2020 proposed budget to be presented to the congregation.
5. October Congregation Meeting – October 27th was the date set for the congregation meeting. There will be a Pot Bless meal before the meeting and the Elders will be in charge.
6. Treasurer's Duties Update – Roessler's office has the information they need. They completed the payroll checks for the 8/31/2019 payroll. A printed report is in the September meeting packet.
7. Pastor's Retirement Update – Tom L. has contacted District President Fondow. A pre-call meeting with the congregation has been set for October 22nd.

New Business

1. Paper Towel Dispenser in Upstairs Bathrooms

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to put a paper towel dispenser in both upstairs bathrooms to be paid from Thrivent Funds.

2. Direct Deposit

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to go forward with direct deposit for employees with two people having access (Roessler and Jennifer F.). (There is a written report about the direct deposit from Jennifer F. in the September meeting packet.)

3. Moving Printer – Discussion regarding moving the printer back to the room behind the secretary's office and have the room by pastor's office used by the counters. It was decided that more discussion was needed before any changes would be made.

4. Paying Contractors

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to pay Holets \$13,472.20 for garage build and installation of front doors and sacristy windows from Capital Expenses in the Revolving Trust Fund. (The total reflects a \$4000.00 credit from the old garage.)

5. Coffeepot for Fellowship Hall – After discussion it was decided that the coffeepot from Holiday Gas Station was not needed at this time. Church of the Nazarene is interested in it and we will give it to them.

6. Brad's Reporting Line – Brad reports to the Trustees, but his salary is in the Elders budget. The trustees will do his performance review and make recommendations to the Elders.

7. Bibles

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to pay for the Bibles from the Sunday School account instead of using Thrivent Funds.

8. Thanksgiving Offering

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to have the Thanksgiving offering go to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

9. Board of Missions – Our Together in Missions contract with Rev. Dr. Thomas and Mary Aadland will expire on December 31, 2019.

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to change our Together in Missions contract to support the missionary work of Kip and Tami Baudoin in the Ukraine.

Caring and Sharing

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM

Pastor Zeige closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Urevig,
Recording Secretary

COMING EVENTS

October 1st – Board Meetings 6:30PM or
as decided by each Board

October 8th – Council Meeting 5:30PM

October 22nd – Pre-call Meeting with
District President Rev. Dr. Donald J.
Fondow

(Time to be determined)

October 27th – Pot Bless Meal followed by
Congregation Meeting after Second
Service



NOVEMBER “FIRST FRUITS” ARTICLES

**November “First Fruits” items are
Due by October 15th.**

**ALL ARTICLES NEED TO BE
EMAILED TO
Debbie.Robertson@hotmail.com**

