



# Worship Notes

Friday, January 22, 2021

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Dear Friends and Family,

This Sunday we will have our Zoom Congregation meeting. I will send out the link on Saturday for this meeting.

Pay close attention to the weather, and announcements during the Zoom meeting. If we are getting the really nasty snowy conditions, we may move the voting to the next Sunday. If it is just raining, we may still hold our voting this Sunday. We will make that announcement during the Zoom portion of the meeting, which will go on as scheduled no matter what the weather is.

*Thank you for your generous support of our ministry*

Your continued giving makes an impact in our community as our church continues to be a beacon of hope.

Mailing your donations to the church office and maintaining your automatic giving helps support ministries across the nation and around the world.



*Please keep in prayer the following:*



Bradley Anderson, Josie Blake, Bev Coulter, Nancy Dowell, John Ellison, Linda Ellison, Dave Erlandson, Jim Erlandson, Brad and Jodie Haist, Cassie Jern & Family, Delores Johnson, Graham Johnson, Bob Kerschke, Ila Roseberry, Norman Worthington, Evelyn Volz, Darrell Thirtyacre, Donna Larson, Beckie Bean, Joy Johnson, Pat Root, Diane Bradley, Anna Lovdahl, Kim Anderson, Matthew Council, Rose Youngquist, Kathi Cruce

*Please let the church office know any updates that are needed to our prayer list.*

### T-shirt and Canvas Tote Orders

Did you get your order form for a T-shirt and Canvas Tote bag? Becky Terpening has made these available for order. She designed the logo and is prepared to give \$5 of every order to the church as a fundraiser.

Take a moment to order your T-shirt now. When we resume in-person worship, we will wear our new T-shirts as we gather once again in the sanctuary.

When we will return is still open for debate. Our council meeting in February will revisit the subject and reflect on the mitigations for our State and other recommendations to make a determination that honors our commitment to keep our community safe.

### This week in worship

We live in an era that has been labeled as "post-truth". Experts of science, history, medicine, are all facing backlash as a growing movement to not trust experts grows in our society.

Jesus arrives at a synagogue early in his ministry, and the people are amazed at the authority with which he teaches. How can we ground ourselves in the authority of Jesus and restore our trust in those who teach with authority in our own era? Join us this weekend in worship and hear more about the authority of Jesus.



## Congregation Meeting

This year's annual meeting will look very different than year's past. We are not able to gather in person for this meeting. We will be able to meet by Zoom.

A letter will be sent by our council president, Rose Sandstrom, sharing all the details. Here is a brief recap:

**Sunday, January 31st at 9 AM we will have our actual Annual meeting** on Zoom. We have items to be discussed, and your input and questions are valued. Please make sure you are able to join us for this meeting. Zoom has an option for using the phone to call in, if you do not have computer access.

**Then voting will happen on Sunday, January 31st from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM** in the church parking lot. (An announcement during the Zoom meeting will be made based on the weather if we will go forward with voting this Sunday or wait until the next.)

## The Season Lent Approaches

The season of Lent begins this year on Wednesday, February 17. Ash Wednesday will be different for us, following along with how everything for almost a year has been different.

Pastor Jamie is looking for a volunteer to help prepare swatches of black cloth and safety pins to be mailed to members. You will be invited to wear this swatch on Ash Wednesday, instead of coming to church to receive the traditional ashes on your forehead.

An online worship service will be available for Ash Wednesday. Ideas are still being considered for a mid-week Lenten experience.

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## *Blessings*

Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright,  
in the congregation. — Psalm 111:1

We Lutheran-Christians tend to be more reserved with our piety. We don't have a lot of "Praise the Lord" or "Hallelujah" exclamations taking place during a worship service. We might occasionally utter a Praise the Lord when the snowfall received is less than the snowfall predicted. We might occasionally sing out "Hallelujah" if it is a part of our hymn for the day. But the spontaneous shouting out "Praise the Lord".

Our ancient psalmists were not afraid to cry out a word of praise, to sing to the top of their lungs the familiar "Hallelujah." These expressions are about joy, hope, and faith in the Lord. These words are expressions that name our reliance on a God who is present in all things. These words express gratitude for what the Lord is doing in and through our lives.

Over the last year, we have spent a great deal of time lamenting what has been lost. We have cried out against God for the perceived injustices of a pandemic. We have wondered why our politicians are so far apart on solutions. We have craved for normalcy. And we have not spent a lot of time shouting out words affirming our joy in the Lord's presence. We have not spent a lot of time singing Hallelujah for the blessings of God.

So let's heed the advice of the ancient psalmist. Let's cry out together, "Praise the Lord." For what, you might ask? How about for the peace of having a God who has stood by us throughout the pandemic. For a God who has walked in and made our houses sacred space as we worship with our community online. For a God who has shown us the ways to keep our community and loved ones safe, with masks and social distancing, and the vaccine that has begun to be distributed.

Singing Hallelujah doesn't make the headaches of life go away. Praising the Lord doesn't mean life is all hunky-dory. But it does ground us in the joy of the presence of the Lord. This is one of the baptismal blessings, that we will know the joy of the presence of the Lord.

What will happen if you spontaneously shout out "Praise the Lord"? Will people around you wonder why the Lord brings you such joy? Will those nearest you ask why your hope and faith give you such security in a time when the world is so chaotic? Yes, yes they will. And that is a great reason to celebrate and to "Praise the Lord."

In Peace,

Pastor Jamie