



Worship Notes

Friday, May 14, 2021

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Janice Algren
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Dear Friends and Family,

United High School celebrates graduation today, and Monmouth-Roseville High School will in a couple weeks. Congratulations to all who are graduating. This week in worship, we will celebrate three graduates: Derek Johnston, from United High School; Jamie Reynolds, from Penn Foster College; and, Rachael Nuckles, from Sarah Lawrence College. Join us as we celebrate their educational milestones and bless them into their future endeavors.



Thank you for your generous support of our ministry

Your giving matters. Thank you for all your generosity.

You keep our ministry going strong here in Monmouth, Donations from our ministry extend what we are capable of doing as we partner with the larger church across our state, nation and world.

Donations may be brought into worship and placed in an offering plate, mailed in, or you can use electronic giving. Contact the church office for more information.

Please keep in prayer the following:

Bradley Anderson, Josie Blake, Bev Coulter, Nancy Dowell, John Ellison, Linda Ellison, Dave Erlandson, Jim Erlandson, Cassie Jern & Family, Ila Roseberry, Norman Worthington, Evelyn Volz, Beckie Bean, Joy Johnson, Pat Root, Diane Bradley, Anna Lovdahl, Kim Anderson, Matthew Council, Rose Youngquist, Kathi Cruce, Gary Gaskill, Charlotte Volz, Amber Kerr, Julie Kerr, Jaxson, Chris, Michael Hackspacher



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

New Mask Guidance

At the recent council meeting, we were preparing to maintain the mask protocol until Illinois entered Phase 5 of the recovery plan. Well, the CDC released new guidance on Thursday that says anyone who is fully vaccinated may now choose to not wear a mask when indoors.

Therefore, we are adjusting our protocols at church. If you are fully vaccinated, you may now choose to not wear a mask when attending worship, a meeting, a Bible study, or just stopping by to visit the pastor or secretary.

If you choose to still wear a mask, you are free to do so. And you are on your honor when you do not wear a mask to be fully vaccinated. We will not ask anyone to prove their vaccination status.

Check out the "Blessings" section on the next page for more information about how we will be gentle with each other as we adjust to this new guidance.

This week in worship

The Season of Easter is a Week of Weeks—7 Sundays to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Yes, the empty tomb is so important it gets 7 Sundays to be proclaimed.



This Sunday is the 7th Sunday of Easter. We will hear the resurrection appearance in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus gathers with his disciples on a mountain-top in Galilee and commissions them for their work. Today, the same commission is given to us. Jesus sends us to bring the Good News to all the corners of the earth. Join us as we hear how this commission sends us, and where it is leading us today.

Living the Creed

Check out our final Living the Creed for the season. We wrap up our at home learning with the end of the Easter Season. The PDF will focus on our Acts lesson that we will hear in worship on Sunday.

Peter is standing before the council in Jerusalem. He has some explaining to do. He did something that they had not done before. He shared the Holy Spirit with outsiders How dare he!

As he speaks before his fellow Apostles, Peter explains why God revealed to him this was not only possible, but necessary. The council, upon hearing Peter's testimony, agrees with Peter and announces the gifts of the Holy Spirit is truly for all.

We will explore how this lesson teaches us and opens the way for us to hear God leading us to proclaim the Good News in ways we have never done before.

This Sunday's Worship Helpers

Worship Assistant: Pam Best
Usher: Steve Erlandson
Organist: Janice Algren
Flowers:



An Altar Flower ordering form is on our website. Download the PDF to learn more about your options today.

Sign up for Altar Flowers for May and June by calling the Church office.

Blessings

I [Paul] therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3

It was about 14 months ago, that we began this strange new era. Over the last 14 months we have been hammered with messages about avoiding large gatherings, wearing masks, avoiding traveling, and staying away even from our closest loved ones. Now after 14 months of that daily messaging, we are nearing the end of our pandemic. Many of us are pandemic weary, we have been weary of this from almost the beginning, and our weariness is heavy. Many of us are uncertain as we approach the end, and words of caution begin to lead us into a new normalcy.

Now, the CDC has released updated guidance for those who are fully vaccinated. We did not have this information at our most recent council meeting when we were preparing to wait until July to make a change in protocols at church. But now, with the news released late this week, we are able to make the change and provide new protocols for gatherings at church beginning this weekend.

As we enter this new normalcy, when some will be excited to burn the masks, and others will cling to them a while longer, we must remember the words of Paul in Ephesians which I cite above, a message he echoed in his letter to the Philippians: Let your gentleness be known to everyone. Gentleness will be our guide as we navigate these final weeks of the pandemic. Gentleness with those who want to hurry up and see an even faster end to the remaining pandemic mandates. Gentleness with those who cling to caution, and avoid gatherings, and still wear masks even as most give them up. Gentleness with each other as we follow our doctor's advice and choose our own path with the vaccine.

Gentleness is experienced in this way: no gossip or harassing statements, yes to respect for those who decline a handshake or hug, love in our eyes for the one before us, a kind smile and giving one another the belief they have their best interests in mind with how they choose to be. Gentleness is really a guide for all of life, but especially now as the pandemic nears its end, we need gentleness more than ever. This is a principle that should extend beyond the doors of our sanctuary, it should guide us as we go to local shops, concerts, sporting events, movies, and anywhere more than 2 or 3 gather. May our being gentle be a sign of the faith we have in Jesus, and a sign of the Spirit at work through us, as we build our new post-pandemic normalcy. In peace, Pastor Jamie