

The Friendly Visitor

First Lutheran Church
Louisville, KY

January 2024



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www.thewelcomeplace.com

Message from the Pastor

Happy New Year!

I've given up on making a New Year's resolution. I've disappointed myself too many times. But I do spend time early in the new year thinking about what my purpose and mission is in the coming year. I think about what direction I want to take my life and where God might be calling me to go. I consider the new possibilities and opportunities that might be waiting for me in the coming year.

I still consider myself "new" to First Lutheran Church. January 15th will mark my 6th month here. It's a good time to start talking about our purpose and mission. It's a good time to start asking the questions, where do we want to go? And who is God calling us to be. What new possibilities and opportunities await us in the coming year?

On our website, you'll find the mission statement for the church:

As a church in this community, our mission is to build a climate of love, grace, peace, and faith where people can connect with God, commit to growth, and contribute to the work of Christ and His church.

It's important to review this over time and consider if it still reflects who we are as a congregation. Some of you probably remember when this mission statement was adapted and who were the main contributors to its development.

We also claim our identity as a Reconciling in Christ congregation who welcomes people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. How does this identity shape who we are and what we do as a congregation?

On Sunday, January 28th we will have an opportunity to discuss what it means to be a Reconciling in Christ congregation. We will celebrate this identity through worship, and we will gather afterwards for lunch and learning. Over lunch, Cassie Smith will remind us what it means to be a Reconciling in Christ congregation, and the program director from Louisville Youth Group, Em Joy, will share with us how we might be supportive of LGBT+ youth in Louisville.

Don't forget that we will have our congregational meeting on Sunday, February 4th following the worship service. It's a good time to reflect on who we are as a congregation and where we are going in the coming year.

I look forward to these opportunities to discern who we are this month and in the months to come as we prayerfully consider where God is calling us a congregation and who God is calling us to be as a church!

Blessings!

John

Message from the President

Greetings to all,

It's a New Year. We always make goals when it is a new year, but really, don't we make goals all the time? We always want to improve ourselves, so starting a new day, a new month, a new year, any time there's a flip of the calendar page we think we can improve ourselves.

So, stop for a moment. You are probably perfectly fine the way you are. If you are thinking you need to improve, consider for a moment – why? Who's moving the goal post?

Recently I saw a short clip from an interview with Taylor Swift. (You may have heard of her.) She said that when she was breaking into music, everyone pushed her to be in a relationship. Once she was in a relationship, she was criticized for not making music, or for not being a fashion icon. Every time she concentrated on changing herself in response to criticism, the critics moved the goal posts.

God does not set goal posts out of our reach. Loving ourselves and treating others as we want to be treated are simple things. Let us just have those as our goal posts, our resolutions. Everything else is superfluous. And remind me of that, occasionally.

Sharon



Nancy Brian made a blanket for the Craft Group which will be donated to Hotel Louisville. Hotel Louisville is a shelter for women and families operated by Wayside Christian Mission and is located at 120 West Broadway

What does it mean to be a Reconciling Congregation?

Happy New Year!

Since February 2007 First Lutheran Church has been a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. Congratulations!

When churches take up the journey in becoming a reconciling congregation a common question is, "We're already welcoming, why are we doing this?" Most churches have a "everyone is welcome" sign outside, but unfortunately, many times this is not true for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Unless a church has an intentional and explicit welcome for LGBTQ+ folks there's really no way of telling if it's an accepting and loving community for queer and trans people. Our welcoming statement acknowledges this by stating "...gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons and their families are often scorned by society and alienated from the church." This is something we strive to counteract with our intentional welcome. When entering a new worship space, the details can make all the difference for a queer person. Is there a statement of welcome? Are there gender inclusive restrooms? Is the church open to LGBTQ+ persons in leadership? Can I marry the person I love here?

After churches become reconciling, a common question is: "What do we do now?" The answer has two parts. First, advocate for the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ at home and within the wider church. The second is to celebrate! Hooray! On January 28th we can do just that as First celebrates Reconciling Sunday. After church we'll talk about Reconciling Works partner commitments as we look ahead to the new year.

Peace,
Cassi Smith
She/her/hers

Please note...

The Church Council has decided to change the date of the Annual Congregational Meeting from January 21st to February 4th following worship. In case of bad weather the meeting will be on February 11th. Following the meeting will be a potluck lunch in the dining room. If you are a committee chair, this will give you a little extra time to prepare your annual report. **Please submit your report to Nancy Brian no later than January 21st**, either in person, in her mailbox in the church office, via email (nbrian@bellsouth.net), or you can mail it to her at 3210 Mid Dale Lane, Louisville, KY 40220.

THE FRIENDLY PUZZLER

Find the underlined words amongst the letter grid at the bottom.
The remaining letters will reveal a hidden message.

1 Samuel 3:1-11

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then the Lord said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle."

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W I L L A M P A M S E C A L P O U N

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 10:30am Worship Service	1 Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	2 10:00am Food Pantry 7:30pm NA	3 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm LYG Staff Meeting 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm No Choir Rehearsal	4 4:00pm Food Pantry	5 Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	6 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
7 10:30am Worship Service	8 Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	9 Food Pantry closed 10:00am Food Pantry	10 10:00am Food Pantry 12:30pm Craft Day 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 6:30pm LYG 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	11 4:00pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Worship and Music Committee Meeting	12 Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	13 9:45am NAMI meeting 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
14 9:30am Breakfast 10:30am Worship Service	15 Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	16 10:00am Food Pantry 7:30pm NA	17 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm LYG 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	18 4:00pm Food Pantry	19 Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
21 10:30am Worship Service 1:00pm Council Meeting	22 Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	23 10:00am Food Pantry	24 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 6:30pm LYG 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	25 4:00pm Food Pantry	26 Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	27 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
28 10:30am Worship Service - Reconciling in Christ service 12:00pm Luncheon	29 Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	30 10:00am Food Pantry	31 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	1 4:00pm Food Pantry	2 Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	3 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire