

The Friendly Visitor
First Lutheran Church

April 2025



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The Pastor's Message

What in the world is going on? Seriously. Major storm systems have made their way through Kentucky in the last 12 months leaving paths of destruction. Airplanes are crashing or almost crashing at a record rate. Tens of thousands of people are being laid off from their government jobs as millions of dollars are being withheld from local communities. People are being accidentally deported and classified war plans are being shared publicly. Makes you kind of wonder, “what is going on?”

Peter was with Jesus and the disciples in that upper room as a terrible drama began to unfold. Jesus predicts a betrayal, and he tells Peter he will deny him three times. The betrayal by Judas occurs in a garden. Peter rushes to defend Jesus and cuts off the ear of a soldier. Separated from the disciples and Jesus, Peter denies that he knows Jesus three times. Jesus is sentenced and crucified. The faithful women make their way to the tomb early in the morning on the third day only to find the body gone. Two angels greet them and announce that Jesus is risen. The women run to tell Peter and the disciples. Peter hightails it to the tomb. There he finds the empty burial clothes just like the women described. And then Luke says, “he returned home, wondering what had happened” (24:12). Peter must have been utterly confused about all that had happened. But he was amazed by the evidence of the resurrection.

When George Floyd was murdered, I attended a peaceful protest rally in downtown Aurora, IL. Hundreds of people gathered just like they did all around the world. This protest was met with a heavily militarized local and county police presence. A couple of individuals became agitated as the police attempted to disperse what had been a peaceful protest. These individuals began breaking windows. A group of older women quickly made their way to the individuals to get them to stop. But it was too late. The police, from within their armored vehicles, began launching tear gas into the crowd. Chaos ensued. I tried to help those overcome by the tear gas but I, too, had become overwhelmed by it. As the crowd dispersed, a young woman broke open the window of a police car and set it on fire. I wondered to myself, “what in the world is going on?”

Early in the morning on the day after the violence, a group of community artists made their way downtown to clean up the glass, install plywood over the broken windows and painted them with images of hope. About a week later, Alison and I invited a diverse group of young activists to our house for a meal. They were angry, hurt, upset and in shock. They were determined to create a better community and to address systemic injustices. Each of them, using their gifts, created organizations to respond to the injustices. Each had a different purpose. Each dedicated to working collaboratively to address system injustices. I left Aurora wondering and amazed at what God was doing.

I don't know what will happen in our country in the next year or two. But I do know this. Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He was victorious over betrayal, violence and death. Jesus is our hope. All that we need is already here. We might take a cue from the disciples who, in response to the death of Jesus and reports of resurrection, huddled together in homes. I suspect that our hope will come as we continue to build community together. The columnist David Brooks said that societies change, “when a creative minority find a beautiful way to live. When a small group of people find a better way to live . . . That's the story of the early church.”

First Lutheran Church can become that creative minority and find a better and more beautiful way to live together. There is a desperate society walking aimlessly among the street of Louisville

seeking something better but having no idea what it is. We know what it is. It is a community of faithful Christians caring for one another and providing healing and wholeness. I pray that one day we, too, will look back in wonder and amazement at what God can do!

Happy Easter!
John

The President's Message

Life can get you down.

There are days I don't want to get out of bed. There are times I don't want to talk to anyone; I don't want to interact with anyone except perhaps the dog (Sorry, Jay).

Winter always affects me because of the lack of sunlight. Conflict, discord, even when they do not directly involve me, is another drain on my mood. Plus, getting older and gaining weight and the twinges of arthritis and wondering if anything I am told to do to prevent this is going to do anything other than make my wallet lighter.

I wrote last month about spring coming and the joy of getting back in the garden. That hasn't happened yet. Winter is not leaving on time. Really being a pest. That gets me down.

Lent is the season that recognizes this. Rather than telling us to ignore our problems, Lent seems to emphasize them. This period in the church calendar allows no "Alleluia," no flowers on the altar and in Holy Week, we will strip the altar further. I don't think this is because those who put together the church calendar wanted to add to our/my depression, but rather to recognize it. To say – "yes, it s####s." Yes, you feel bad right now and you have a good reason to. But know that Easter is coming – The Lord is returning. The flowers will start coming up and the days will finally stay warm, and we can shed the sweaters and long flannel.

Until then, pray and recognize the dark moments. Recognize them for what they are – moments. It will be all right in the end.

Sharon Lillie
Council President

Exciting Move for Bethany

Bethany Lillie reports that she is happily ensconced in New Zealand. Her address is 153 Boundary Road, Dipton West, 9791, New Zealand. Postage is \$1.65

S.L.

Finance News

As announced at the Congregational meeting, we have reduced the amount being pulled from the Rott/Willman bequest from \$9,000 monthly to \$5,000 monthly. The two accounts that were in CDs will be maturing in April. The Endowment/Finance Committee will be looking at the best way to invest these in the current financial situation.

S.L.

Preparations for Palm Sunday

Thursday, April 10th, at 12, anyone interested in helping to make the palm crosses for Palm Sunday is invited to meet at church. If it is available, we will meet in the kitchen, but if there is a class going on, we will meet in the craft room.

New Group Meeting in the Building

PUSH Louisville, a tenant advocacy group will be meeting in the dining room one Friday evening per month. Welcome!





At First Lutheran Church we believe that God delights in the diversity of all creation. As a Reconciling in Christ community, we welcome all into fellowship; recognizing the dignity of every human being regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, race, or any other identifier. You are accepted and welcome here, no matter where you are on your spiritual journey.

If you need to contact one of the church's committee chairs, here is a list of all the committees and their chairs. Please let them know if you have any problems, suggestions for improvements, or compliments.

Building Users	Vicky Frank
Christian Education	Lori Caron
Endowment Funds Subcommittee	Harley Butler
Finance	Drew Wartschlager
Food Pantry	Sharon Lillie
Membership	Vicky Frank
Property	Paul Nellis
Social Ministry	Stephanie McCoy
Vision and Outreach	Paul Nellis
Worship and Music	Nancy Brian

THE FRIENDLY PUZZLER

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

John 13:1-17

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean. "After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

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S A R R I B D E P A R T S T H O U R

By Puzzlemaster Jay R. Lillie

April 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10:30am Worship Service	31 8:30am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	1 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group 7:30pm NA	2 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm LYG Staff Meeting 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	3 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry	4 9:00am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	5 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
6 10:30am Worship Service	7 8:30am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	8 8:30am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group	9 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 6:30pm LYG 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	10 8:30am Catholic Charities 12:00pm Craft Day 4:00pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Worship and Music Committee Meeting	11 9:00am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	12 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
13 PALM SUNDAY 9:30am Breakfast & crafts 10:30am Worship Service	14 8:30am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	15 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group 7:30pm NA	16 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm LYG 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	17 MAUNDY THURSDAY 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Worship Service	18 GOOD FRIDAY 9:00am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG 7:00pm Worship Service	19 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
20 EASTER SUNDAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Council Meeting	21 8:30am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	22 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group	23 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 6:30pm LYG 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	24 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry	25 9:00am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	26 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
27 10:30am Worship Service	28 8:30am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	29 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group	30 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	1 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry	2 9:00am Catholic Charities Food Pantry closed 6:00pm LYG	3 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire