

The Messenger

A newsletter of the people of First Lutheran Church, Waltham

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham
The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
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March/April 2023
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On Saturday, March 4 a group of 12 church council members gathered for a four hour retreat. Our ultimate goal was not to plan more events or activities, but to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We began with a series of seven questions including these two: "How are things with you and God?" and "How are things with First Lutheran and God?"

There is not space to report out everything from our rich discussions. I will simply note that what strongly emerged was a sense that we are blessed, with much more positives than negatives; that our tending to relationships is very important; and that in the wake of the pandemic we are truly in a time of transition.

Toward the end of our time together, we engaged a process that would help us identify a Bible story that we sense is connected to our story right now. What emerged is the following passage from the Exodus narrative:

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God thought, 'If the people face war, they may change their minds and return to Egypt.' So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt prepared for battle. And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had required a solemn oath of the Israelites, saying, 'God will surely take notice of you, and then you must carry my bones with you from here.' They set out from Succoth, and camped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. The LORD went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. (Exodus 13:17-22)

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Holy Week Schedule

Join us as we retell, reengage, and celebrate the central story of our Christian faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



April 2 - Palm Sunday

8:15 & 10:30 am

Traditional Palm Sunday service with the reading of the Passion from Matthew's Gospel.



April 6 - Maundy Thursday

11:30 am in person - An abbreviated service of Holy Communion at the end of Thursday Knitters.

7:30 pm in person and FB Live - A service with optional individual absolution, communion, and stripping of the altar for Good Friday.



April 7 - Good Friday

7:30 pm in person and FB Live

Worship including the reading of Saint John's passion account.



April 8 - Easter Vigil

7:15 pm in person only

We celebrate Christ's Passover from death to life in a worship service that includes an outdoor fire, stories of deliverance, John's Easter account, and Holy Communion.

April 9 - Easter Sunday

8:15 in person only & 10:30 am in person and FB Live - Festive worship with Holy Communion, flowers, bells, and brass.

Nurturing Faith

Spring Adult Forums

Jan-May, 2023

We are continuing to explore principal parts of the Christian faith while also engaging stories of scripture. Note these forums are offered both in person and via zoom (*the zoom link is shared in our weekly e-news*). Join us! The upcoming schedule is as follows:

Mar. 5 Topic: Prophets and the call for justice
Mar. 12 Story: Mark 6, "Feeding of the 5,000"

Mar. 19 Topic: The Ten Commandments
Mar. 26 Story: Mark 7, law and purity

Apr. 2 Topic: Creed and Lord's Prayer
Apr. 9 Easter, no adult forum

Apr. 16 Topic: Baptism and Communion
Apr. 23 Story: "Ethiopian Eunuch"

April 30: Special Intergenerational Event

Lenten Wednesdays

Each Wednesday in Lent we are gathering via zoom only (no in-person) to discuss, learn, and pray. A zoom link is shared in the weekly e-news. Here are the upcoming themes:

March 8: The Examen—a way of reflecting on events of the day

March 15: Praying using scripture

March 22: Rhythms of Prayer

March 29: Prayers of Others

Intergenerational Learning Hour

April 30, 9:15 am
Founder's Hall

Join us on April 30 for an intergenerational event where we will make art, share in conversation, and enjoy fellowship. A simple breakfast will be served.

Resisting Racism

Watching and discussing "The 1619 Project"
Every Other Sunday at 7:00 pm

A group of 16 gathered via zoom on March 5 for our first conversation on this six-part series. It was a deep conversation. We invite anyone to join us for upcoming episodes:

March 19—Race as a political invention

April 2—Music (black music as American music)

April 16—American Capitalism

April 30—Fear

May 14—Justice

Each discussion follows a similar format as we ask:

1. What stood out to you most in this episode?
2. Did you learn anything new? If so, what?
3. Did any part of the episode strike a particular emotion in you? If so, which part and what emotion?
4. How do you feel about continuing to watch the next episode?
5. How has this series and our conversations impacted you since we met last?

To participate:

- A. Watch the hour-long episode beforehand on Hulu. If you do not have access to Hulu, please contact Pastor Maehl.
- B. Enter the Zoom conversation using the link that is shared via our weekly e-news.

The 1619 Project aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative.

Congregational Retreat Update

Over the weekend of February 24-26, 54 people participated in this year's retreat at Camp Calumet in Freedom, NH. There were deep conversations, laughter, snow tubing, good food, and the deepening of relationships. Next year's retreat is scheduled for the weekend of February 23-25, 2024. Mark your calendars.

Walking Together in God's Love



*From the
Vicar*

During our confirmation class last Sunday, we got to talking about this word that Lutherans like to use often, and that word is: GRACE. As a class, we all had heard this word used often, particularly at church. But when it came down to us defining 'grace,' we struggled to articulate what grace really means. And might that be true for so many of us today, too? We use the word 'grace' often, but what does it really mean?

In our class we turned to the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber for some guidance. During the 2018 Youth Gathering in Houston, TX, Rev. Nadia gave a talk on grace, in which she said, "I wish someone had told the 15-year-old me what grace was. Because grace isn't some fluffy, theological word that sounds good but really means nothing. Grace is the way in which God is like the great heavenly composter, making beautiful things out of total feces."

Grace, as Rev. Nadia preaches, is when our tears turn to joy, when our own pain is a balm for those who also hurt, and when our failings are redeemed into something beautiful through the love of God. We experience the gift of grace through others and God in our lives; and maybe that's why grace can be challenging to define. Grace is a God's free gift of love that we didn't do anything to earn. I heard someone say once, grace is like when you adopt a dog. The dog becomes a part of your family and there was nothing your dog did to earn it. Your family chose the dog, just like God chooses us, over and over again, no matter what.

After listening to Rev. Nadia speak, our class decided that grace was much deeper than we had originally thought. It wasn't just about feeling good. It is about God's deep love for us that is freely given – and it is for everyone.

In Christ,
Vicar Samantha

Family Resettlement

In an earlier newsletter we reported that members of First Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church of the Newtons, and St. Paul Lutheran Church, in Arlington have formed a 25 person Neighborhood Support Team (NeST) to accompany a family being resettled in our area through Ascenia Care Alliance (formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England).

On February 21st, team leaders finally got to meet our "match"—a family of 4 from Haiti—mother, father, and two young children—who are in the United States seeking asylum. Over the next two weeks members of the housing subcommittee secured an apartment in our area and were able to furnish it through donations. On Saturday, March 4 the family was thrilled to move in.

Over the coming months we are looking to raise upwards of \$25,000 (potentially more) across our 3 collaborating congregations in order to pay rent and other expenses for the first year. We welcome financial gifts in any amount. To contribute, please direct your donation to First Lutheran Church and indicate "*Family Resettlement*" in the memo line. Checks are welcome and you may also give online using the following link:

<https://firstlutheranwaltham.org/donate-2/>

Our thanks to all who are serving on the NeSt team; especially this month to Emily Citrone and Signe Johns who gave enormous time and effort securing and moving furniture and purchasing groceries and other supplies on the day of the family's arrival.

May God bless the family, guiding and providing for their needs; and may God inspire leaders, faith communities, and people of good will world-wide to care for those most vulnerable in our world,

Doing Justice, Serving All

Thursday Luncheon

March 16, 11:30 am

All are welcome

The Thursday knitters welcome any who are free and would like to join in, for a lunch at noon on Thursday, March 16. All **ages and genders are welcome**; do come to enjoy fellowship, food and conversation. The atmosphere is casual.

Many of the 'regulars' who come on Thursday will be preparing the food. Menu items will honor the memory of First Lutheran members who compiled their recipes in First Lutheran Church cookbooks of old. Our thanks to Carol Hansen for the menu idea.

The luncheon will be served either in Founders' Hall or the Pearson Room, depending on the number of attendees. In order for us to plan accordingly, please **RSVP by Monday, March 13** by emailing or calling the church office. Thank you!

Summer Camp

Reminder



A reminder to parents/guardians of children ages 8-16 who may wish to attend summer camp.

We are not registering a group for a particular week, but are asking parents/guardians to register on your own. Once registered, contact Pastor Maehl for scholarship aid. We offer half of the cost for one-week to any child from our congregation, and can offer additional aid as needed from those in our church and/or wider community.

(From the Pastor - Continued)

I invite you to re-read this passage from Exodus and note the following:

- If God is leading us on a roundabout path, it is for our own benefit.
- Trusting that God is leading us, we need not prepare ourselves for battle.
- We carry with us something of our ancestors in the faith (this is part of our calling)
- God protected the Israelites with a cloud to block the heat of the sun by day, and a pillar of fire for light, protection, and warmth at night. God is protecting, enlightening, and warming us too.
- God's not leaving us.

Then if you are able, prayerfully consider how these themes are playing out in your own life:

- Can you trust that God is leading you, even if it seems to be a roundabout way?
- Despite the challenges and dangers of life, can you resist any urge to be (figuratively) "preparing for battle?"
- What of your ancestors in the faith do you carry with you? Is carrying this part of your call?
- Can you identify ways God is actively protecting, enlightening, shading and/or warming your life?

I will conclude with a call and a hope-filled prayer. The call that you might continue to engage the ministry of First Lutheran during this time of great social transition. The hope-filled prayer that the God who has brought you thus far along the way, will deepen your sense that what was true for the Israelites of old is true for us; namely, that God is not leaving us.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



Members of our First Lutheran Community: Sarah Allen; Jen Biter; Eddie Hughes; June Jahrling; Erika Jerram; Steve Latter; Kathryn McCowan; Don & Britta McNemar; Kerry Meaney; Cynthia Niiler, Joan and Jüri Niiler, Alexa Turner.

Friends and Family: Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Kate Benbenek (*friend of Inpakala Pandian*); Elaine Chan (*aunt of Catherine Pinch*); Emily Clemens (*niece of Joan Clemens*); Lavara Clemens (*mother of Joan Clemens*);

Pam & Ken Cochran (*COTW partner*); Steve Codner (*father-in-law of Emily Codner*); Leslie Crowe (*friend of Connie and Jeanette Fagone*); Emily Dallman (*friend of Dianne Poulos*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Chuck Flinner (*father of Kat Flinner*); Sylvia and Chris Lee-Thompson (*friend of Susan Pintus*); Marybeth; Peter Melanson (*brother-in-law of Matt and Erika Jerram*); Skip Moyer (*grandfather of Samantha DiBiaso*); Pappas family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Susan Raymond (*sister-in-law to Jen & Bill Biter*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander & Leslie Waters*); Margie and Roger Schroeder (*Curt Schroeder's parents*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Wayne Sukow (*father of Cathy Sukow*); Tara Waters (*family of Penny & Marquette Alexander*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

For those who grieve: the family and friends of:

- Lauriana Arevalo (*mother of Augusto Arevalo*)
- Erik Valdemar Jensen (*father of Anne Dugan*)
- Patricia Ann (Bell) Biter (*mother of Bill Biter*)

For our partners: Santuario Luterano, the Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation in Waltham, and for their interim leader: Rafaela Radcke. For other organizations we actively support: the Waltham Family School, the Waltham Community Day Center, Chaplains on the Way, the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, Camp Calumet, and ELCA World Hunger. And for our efforts to resettle a refugee family.

If you would like to add/remove a name to/from the prayer list, please inform the church office.

First Lutheran Ministry Schedule

If you are unable to serve when scheduled please *find a replacement* and contact the office.

March

	March 5 Lent 2	March 12 Lent 3	March 19 Lent 4	March 26 Lent 5
8:15 Lector	Julie Weeden	Kevin Dickert	Tom Neal	Peter Pinch
10:30 Asst. Min.	Rachel Nederhoff	Geri Nederhoff	LuAnn Kimker	Sammy Kalisa
10:30 Lector	Pat Clem	Emily Codner	Jennifer Lambert	Brad Nederhoff
10:30 Usher	Sarah & Milena Rauhut	Emily & Penelope Codner	Pat Clem Norm Adams	Holly & Ezra Diaz
10:30 A/V	Emily Citrone	Prakash Pandian	Curt Schroeder	Ted Sjodin
Altar Care	Ann Sjodin	Doris Speer	<i>Penny & Marquette Alexander</i>	Penny & Marquette Alexander
Counters	<i>Jennifer Lambert Mary Ellen Adams</i>		Ted Sjodin Jennifer Lambert	

April

	April 2 Palm/Passion	April 6 Maundy Thurs 7:30 pm	April 7 Good Friday 7:30 pm	April 9 Easter Day	April 16 Easter 2	April 23 Easter 3
8:15 Lector	Julie Weeden	N/A	N/A	Kevin Dickert	Tom Neal	Peter Pinch
10:30 Asst. Min.	Ann Sjodin	Inpakala Pandian	Rachel Nederhoff	Emily Codner	Geri Nederhoff	LuAnn Kimker
10:30 Lector	Anthony Rivera	Catherine Sukow	Holly Diaz	Pat Clem	Emily Codner	Vicki DeVault
10:30 Usher	Heather, Deidre, Brett Fahey			Sarah & Milena Rauhut	Emily & Penelope Codner	Pat Clem Norm Adams
10:30 A/V	Eegan Pandian	Steve Hoff	Emily Citrone	Prakash Pandian	Curt Schroeder	Ted Sjodin
Altar Care	LuAnn Kimker	Geri Nederhoff		Ann Sjodin	Doris Speer	Peter & Catherine Pinch
Counters	Alan Sieving Bill Meaney			Norm Adams Meg Maehl		Ted Sjodin Jennifer Lambert

April/May

	April 30 Easter 4	May 7 Easter 5	May 14 Easter 6	May 21 Easter 7	May 28 Pentecost Day
8:15 Lector	Julie Weeden	Kevin Dickert	Tom Neal	Julie Weeden	Peter Pinch
10:30 Asst. Min.	Sammy Kalisa	Ann Sjodin	Inpakala Pandian	Emily Codner	Rachel Nederhoff
10:30 Lector	Jennifer Lambert	Brad Nederhoff	Anthony Rivera	Catherine Sukow	Holly Diaz
10:30 Usher	Holly & Ezra Diaz	Emily & Penelope Codner	Heather, Deidre, & Brett Fahey	Sarah & Milena Rauhut	Pat Clem Norman Adams
10:30 A/V	Eegan Pandian	Steve Hoff	Emily Citrone	Prakash Pandian	Curt Schroeder
Altar Care	Penny & Marquette Alexander	LuAnn Kimker	Geri Nederhoff	Ann Sjodin	Doris Speer
Counters		Alan Sieving Bill Meaney		Norm Adams Meg Maehl	Ted Sjodin Jennifer Lambert



**2023 Easter Plants
Order Form**

I/we would like to make a contribution to:

- Easter Lily(s) Tulip(s)
 Daffodil(s) Hyacinth(s)

At \$8.50 a plant for a total of \$ _____

I/we would like to make a donation
to support the church's gardens of \$ _____

As a Memorial Gift
In Memory of _____
Given by _____

As a Living Tribute
In Honor of _____
Given by _____

Name _____
Phone Number or email: _____

***You can take your plants home after the 10:30 service
on Easter morning.***

Please complete this form and return it with your payment to the church office or you may put it in the offering plate.

**THE DEADLINE FOR ORDERING EASTER PLANTS IS
MARCH 19**