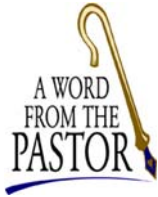


# The Messenger

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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February 2024  
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*Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one.*

(1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

I recently came across this passage in my devotional reading. Paul is clearly using an athletic metaphor to talk about the importance of discipline on our faith journeys. When I read it, I thought to myself, "This is good and true, and at the same time Paul is missing something."

What is good and true is that discipline does matter. Discipline does, after all, share a root with the word disciple; and Jesus did instruct his followers to, "Go make disciples."

We are part of a faith tradition that keeps time in a liturgical way. On February 14, we begin our annual 40 day season of Lent. Like in every year, the Church calls for us to turn more closely toward God, paying more attention to that which pulls us away from love of God and love of neighbor. This takes a measure of discipline.

If mindless or numbing behaviors pull us away, Lent is a time to give one up. If bitterness or resentment is too often eating away at our insides, Lent is a season to strive to let it go. If there is something dangerous that you are putting in your body, (via mouth, ears, eyes), with Lent comes the impassioned call to go cold-turkey.

There is nothing demanded in all of this, nothing required, just the invitation to seek increased intentionality; to making our faith journey more central, when the world keeps calling us to keep it more peripheral. Like eating vegetables, this is good for us and we know it. Paul knows it too.

What Paul does not know is that for the runner there is more than one prize. Paul would have been familiar with competitive running as the first Olympics were held hundreds of years earlier in 776 BCE. But Paul, having been raised to be a devout Jewish religious leader would never have been a runner himself.

I was once a competitive runner, and know of the physical discipline Paul refers to; and, yes, in each race there is only one winner. However, in my experience to be part of a caring group of teammates, training together, encouraging one another, celebrating a whole variety of victories (not just one's own) that is the true prize.

Thanks be to God who keeps welcoming us back whenever we turn; and thanks be to God for the gift of community, for other people to run and train with, to encourage and be encouraged by, to grieve the losses and celebrate the victories. That's the true prize. Keep running your race.

Blessed Lent, Pastor Maehl

## Beginning Lent

### February 14 - Ash Wednesday, 7:30 pm

A bi-lingual service will be held jointly with the Santuario congregation. This service will include the optional imposition of ashes and holy communion. You are invited to attend in-person or tune in via Facebook Live.

### February 15 - "Ash Thursday," 11:30 am

We will offer a service with the optional imposition of ashes. This is offered for those who regularly come for the Thursday knitting group, **and** for anyone else who might find this service meaningful.

## Nurturing Faith

### Keeping Lent

**Lenten Wednesdays:** beginning on Feb. 21, we will be gathering each Wednesday to prepare food for others, share food among ourselves, and worship. You are invited to participate in any or all of these activities:

- 5:15—6:30 pm: We will share in preparing a meal for guests of the Waltham Community Day Center and/or a local women's shelter. *(more about this on page 4)*
- 6:30—7:30 pm: We will engage in Dinner Church. This meal begins with remembering Jesus and sharing bread. Then a meal is served and there is a time for unstructured conversation around the table. Then a scripture passage will be read and we will discuss how the words of Jesus intersect with our lives now. Then comes prayer, cleanup, and singing. Join us!

**Devotional Books:** We will have copies of a Lenten devotional book entitled, *"Gathered into One: Devotions for Lent."* Please take one when you are in church; or contact the church office if you cannot get to Waltham and would like one mailed.

**Lenten Offerings:** We are lifting up the ELCA World Hunger program for special offerings during Lent. Donations can be made at the website below, or given through First Lutheran. More information about current World Hunger efforts can be found at

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/ELCA-World-Hunger>

### Adult Forums

#### The Marks of Discipleship

In February we are continuing our series on discipleship, meeting on Sundays at 9:15 in the Pearson Room. Our upcoming topics are as follows:

- Feb. 4 **Listening:** We welcome Rabbi Ben Chaidell from Temple Beth Israel in Waltham who will lead us in Bible study and discuss ways our congregations might collaborate.
- Feb. 11 **Hospitality:** Including humility, invitation, and participation. (Luke 14)
- Feb. 18 **Patient, Forgiving Love:** God's work in our discipleship (Luke 15)
- Feb. 25 **No learning Hour** due to the congregational retreat



### Congregational Retreat Camp Calumet February 23-25

We currently have 42 people signed up for our annual congregational retreat to Camp Calumet in Freedom, NH. If you are planning on attending, please sign up by February 11.

### Vacation Bible School July 8-12 Save the Date



Our annual week of VBS is scheduled for July 8-12 for children ages kindergarten and older. Save the date if interested and please consider inviting others.

## Doing Justice, Serving All

### Meals for Others Wednesdays in Lent



Beginning on February 21, members of the Justice and Service team invite you to join in preparing meals for our unhoused neighbors.

On Wednesdays in Lent (following Ash Wednesday) from 5:15 to 6:30 we will be cooking in the Church kitchen. Each week we need **one meal coordinator** who will choose the menu and purchase the food\* and then **four helpers** for the meal prep. Examples of meals are Lasagna and salad, other casserole, spaghetti and meatballs, or any dish of your choosing.

\*Note: We will be cooking for 30-40 people; the church has funds for the purchase of food and we can either provide money upfront or reimburse.

**Could you help on one or more Wednesday?** If so please sign up at church or [Sign-Up Here!](#)



### Baby Shower Gifts Needed

The resettlement family we are supporting are expecting a new baby and the NeST team is throwing a shower!

There is an [Amazon wish list](#) where you can order and have it sent directly. (See our "This Week" newsletter for the link) You can also purchase something from the list and get it to First Lutheran by **Sunday, February 18**. If you would prefer to donate money toward a gift, please make a **check to First Lutheran or donate online by February 14**, and then please email Pastor Maehl to say you have done so, so that a gift may be purchased in time for the shower.



*From the  
Vicar*

Winter greetings!

I mentioned in worship this week that the first day of February marked the six-month milestone of my internship with you all. As often happens – it is hard for me to believe that much time has already gone by! However, with this halfway point a significant piece of my internship experience has arrived – I have begun working on my internship project! The project centers on social rhythms and dynamics within the congregation after all the changes and chaos that have come with the pandemic.

What kinds of relationships and discipleship opportunities are we looking for here at First Lutheran? What does it mean to meet not only for worship, but to nourish and foster community along with our faith? These are the kinds of questions that are driving my project, which will be composed of two interlocking pieces. For the first component, I'll be leading a group of young adults in a few sessions of Dungeons & Dragons over the next few months; my hope is that we'll have the chance to better get to know one another, while experimenting with a new way of gathering.

The second component will consist of me designing and distributing a survey for the whole congregation. It will involve intentional conversations with some folks to help me discern questions for the survey itself, followed by distribution and then assessment of the results. The primary hopes of this half of the project will be both for me to gain experience in this kind of work, but also to gather a useful body of information for the ongoing life of community and discipleship in the church. After gathering a small team to look at the results, the plan will be to host some kind of fellowship event or opportunity using the feedback from the First Lutheran community.

I welcome any questions, feedback, or input as I begin this work, so please don't hesitate to reach out to me over the next few months!

In peace, Vicar Eric

# Walking Together in God's Love

## Annual Meeting Update

Our annual meeting was held on Sunday, January 28, highlights include:

**Budget:** We voted a budget of \$359,430; a 2.3% increase over last year. This budget includes continuing our practice of tithing our income to the wider church (10%) and giving another 1% for local benevolence. We also provided a 5% raise to staff.

### 2023 Accomplishments include:

- The efforts of the NeST Neighborhood Support Team in their efforts to resettle an asylum seeking family originally from Haiti. We gave thanks for those who have served as tutors and drivers, and for those who have served on the education, health care, transportation, and other teams.
- Having voted to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation last year, the Justice and Service Team continued to work on expanding our public witness through participation in a Waltham Pride event and increased signage. The team also planned conversations and watch parties in order that we might continue our work of addressing issues of systemic racism.

### 2024 Goals Include:

- Gathering support for sending youth and chaperones to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in July of 2024.
- Continued work together with Lutheran congregations in Arlington and Newton on resettlement efforts.
- Continuing to discern how to foster community, in person and at times virtually, as we continue to live with the effects of the pandemic and changing worship patterns in society.

### Church Council

- We elected Emily Citrone, Signe Johns, and Brad Nederhoff; and we reelected Jennifer Lambert.
- We also offered thanks to Beth Melillo and Ann Sjodin for completing their terms.
- Officers of the Church include: LuAnn Kimker (President), Holly Diaz (vice-president), Susan Pintus (treasurer), and Julie Weeden (secretary).

### Nelson Memorial Apartments, Inc.

- We reelected Steve Mischke, Tom Neal, Catherine Sukow, and Larry Yarbrough to the Board.
- We offered special thanks to Geri Nederhoff for her nine years of serving as president of the board. Geri will remain on the board and continue her diligent and caring work with tenant support.
- Officers of the Nelson Board are: Steve Mischke (co-president), Catherine Sukow (co-president), Janice Ostrander (treasurer), and Paul Weeden (secretary).

**Benevolence:** Also at our annual meeting we shared some of the ways we have given beyond our own congregation:

- \$34,264 given to the New England Synod to support the mission of the wider church.
- Roughly \$41,314 given to support the hosting of Vicars Eric Jensen and Samantha DiBiasco our seminary interns.
- \$3,426 from our annual budget designated for local benevolence was shared with other organizations and individuals beyond our congregation's walls.
- Over \$20,000 was shared through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund including \$5,000 in support of the resettlement family and \$5,000 for Faith Lutheran in Cambridge following a massive fire. Additionally, individuals were helped with food, rent, legal and medical expenses.

# First Lutheran Ministry Schedule

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

## February

	February 4 Epiphany 5	February 11 Transfiguration	February 14 Ash Wednesday	February 18 Lent 1	February 25 Lent 2
<b>Asst. Min.</b>	Geri Nederhoff	<i>Ann Sjodin</i>		Sammy Kalisa	<i>Inpakala Pandian</i>
<b>Acolyte</b>	Gillian Adams	<i>Penelope Codner</i>		<i>Jayden Montenegro</i>	
<b>Lector</b>	Holly Diaz	<i>Emily Codner</i>		<i>Pat Clem</i>	Diana Dupuis
<b>Usher</b>	Emily & Penelope Codner	Heather, Deidre, Brett Fahey		Sarah & Milena Rauhut	Roger, Lukas, Mia Binggeli
<b>A/V</b>	Ted Sjodin	Eegan Pandian	<i>Curt Schroeder</i>	Emily Citrone	Prakash Pandian
<b>Altar Care</b>	Penny & Mar- quette Alexander	LuAnn Kimker	Geri Nederhoff	Ann Sjodin	Dee Speer
<b>Counters</b>		Ted Sjodin Joan Clemens			

## March

	March 3 Lent 3	March 10 Lent 4	March 17 Lent 5	March 24 Palm Sunday	March 28 Maundy Thurs 7:30 pm	March 29 Good Friday 7:30 pm	March 31 Easter Day
<b>Asst. Min.</b>	Emily Codner	Inpakala Pandian	Rachel Nederhoff	LuAnn Kimker	Sammy Kalisa	Geri Nederhoff	Ann Sjodin
<b>Acolyte</b>	Milena Rauhut	Ezra Diaz	Kalyse Black	Penelope Codner			Jayden Montenegro
<b>Lector</b>	Vicki DeVault	Brad Nederhoff	Anthony Rivera	Catherine Sukow	Holly Diaz	Pat Clem	Emily Codner
<b>Usher</b>	Holly and Ezra Diaz	Norman Adams Ken Kimker	Leslie Waters Signe Johns	Pat Clem Valarie Waters			Heather, Deidre, Brett Fahey
<b>A/V</b>	Curt Schroeder	Ted Sjodin	Eegan Pandian	Steve Hoff	Emily Citrone	Prakash Pandian	Curt Schroeder
<b>Altar Care</b>	Peter & Catherine Pinch	Marquette & Penny Alexander	Geri Nederhoff	LuAnn Kimker	Ann Sjodin		Dee Speer
<b>Counters</b>	Steve Waldron Meg Maehl	Bill Meaney Alan Sieving		Isabella van der Weide Joan Clemens			Ted Sjodin Bill Meaney

## Walking Together in God's Love

### Prayer Concerns



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

**Friends and Family:** Adekemi (*friend of Sarah Rauhut*); Kate Benbenek (*friend of Inpakala Pandian*); Doak Borst (*cousin of Ann Sjodin*); Emily Clemens (*niece 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*); Crystal Dixon; Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Chuck Flinner (*father of Kat Flinner*); Sylvia and Chris Lee-Thompson (*friend of Susan Pintus*); Peter Melanson (*brother-in-law of Matt and Erika Jerram*); Skip Moyer (*grandfather of Samantha DiBiasco*); Pappas family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander & Leslie Waters*); Margarita Rivera (*mother of Anthony Rivera*); Margie and Roger Schroeder (*Curt Schroeder's parents*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Tara Waters (*family of Penny & Marquette Alexander*); Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

**For those who grieve:** the family and friends of:

- Carol Hansen
- Jentje van der Weide (*father of Jaap*)
- Elaine Chan (*aunt of Catherine Pinch*)

**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's RIC Welcome Statement:

*Walking together in God's love, we rejoice in the diversity of God's wonderfully made children. We celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and non-binary people and all members of our human family regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, physical and mental ability, faith history, economic status, education, family configuration, or immigration status. We renounce the sin of racism and all forms of discrimination. We welcome all to join us in worship, leadership, participation in rites and sacraments of the church, and fellowship on our journey of nurturing faith, doing justice, and serving all.*

## Celebrations



### Waltham Family School Fiesta Thursday, March 14, 2024

The Annual Fiesta fundraiser is taking place again this year at the Chapel Hill—Chauncy Hall School in Waltham (6:00 - 8:30 pm). Visit <https://www.walthamfamilyschool.org/fiesta> for tickets or more information., Note that the WFS is one of our partner organizations that we support through local benevolence.



Our thanks to members of the Nelson Board for providing the funding for a new defibrillator, now in the church lobby. Also thanks to the Board for providing funding so that the staff (Pastor, Vicar, and Cynthia) could attend CPR training along with three other members of the congregation. Additionally, thanks to LuAnn Kimker for overseeing the purchase of the defibrillator and for coordinating the training.

### First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham

**Ministers:** The people of the congregation

**Staff:** The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor  
tmaehl@rcn.com

Ms. Cynthia Niiler,  
Director of Music and Parish Secretary  
firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

Vicar Eric Jensen, Intern  
eric.jensen@lstc.edu

**Sunday Worship:**

10:30 am

**Sunday Learning Hour;**

9:15 am

**Council:**

President: LuAnn Kimker  
Vice-President: Holly Diaz  
Secretary: Julie Weeden  
Treasurer: Susan Pintus

Emily Citrone  
Pat Clem  
Signe Johns  
Sammy Kalisa  
Jennifer Lambert  
Brad Nederhoff

**Visit us on the Web at:**

[www.firstlutheranwaltham.org](http://www.firstlutheranwaltham.org)

and on Facebook at

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**Our Mission:** We discern that Jesus Christ is calling us to:

*Walk together in God's love: nurturing faith, doing justice, serving all.*