



THE WORK WE DO IN JESUS' NAME GOES ON

Our world is turned upside down, isn't it? I don't know of a time when the lives of so many people in so many nations have been so dramatically impacted. The world is suddenly united in a battle against an invisible virus.

As always, we hold all those infected with COVID-19 and their families in our prayers. We hold health care workers and emergency personnel in our prayers. We hold all our leaders and those adversely affected financially in our prayers. This is a time to be at prayer for our families and for the families of this world.

Governor Pete Ricketts and Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird have extended and intensified the rules for gatherings in our state and city. Consequently, we will now cancel all activities in our facility until May 6.

In the meantime, our ministry continues. The work we do in Jesus' name goes on. Our discipleship will happen in our homes and neighborhoods - which is not a bad thing. We've been encouraging discipleship outside the walls of our facility for a long time. This is our opportunity to practice what we preach.

Our ministry continues with these opportunities:

- Volunteers are checking in with every member of the congregation by telephone. We're trying to stay in touch with you and make ourselves available to you if you have needs.
- We are sending faith formation lessons and resources weekly to FaithTrek families, middle and high school youth and Confirmation students.
- We are offering adult learning, including our weekly Bible studies, on Zoom. Review the list of online adult learning opportunities on page two of this edition.
- We are observing Holy Week and Easter at home this year. Interestingly, we will observe these holy days much as they were celebrated in the beginning. Watch for information on our Holy Week observances in the Wednesday *First Things First* e-newsletter.
- We will celebrate our new spaces and celebrate the resurrection of our Lord in grand fashion when we are able to return to this facility safely.

Thank you for your prayers and flexibility in these challenging times. You inspire us daily as disciples for Christ.

Peace,

Pastor Dan

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
www.flclincn.org

APRIL 2020

ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

ONLINE BIBLE STUDIES

Tuesdays 5:45 pm and Wednesdays 10:45 am

Info: pastorjustin@flclincoln.org

The Wednesday Bible study group continues its exploration of the book of Matthew. The Tuesday evening group is studying the book of Genesis. No previous Bible study experience is needed!

3rd Thursday 10:30 am

Info: sunni@flclincoln.org

Women's Bible Study with *Gather* magazine.

ONLINE WOMEN'S CIRCLES

Esther Circle - Thursday, April 16; 10:00 am

Info: sunni@flclincoln.org

Lydia Circle - Wednesday, April 15; 7:00 pm

Info: fdoolittle@windstream.net

OTHER ONLINE ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Saturday with the Guys - 2nd Saturday; 8:00 am
(Reading *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright)

Info: jim.kisling@gmail.com

Harbor Coffee Talk - Mondays; 1:30-2:30 pm

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Faith to Go! - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays; 6:30 am

Info: tlbeermann@hotmail.com

A Few Good Men Bible Study - Tuesdays; 6:30 am

Info: lrockwell@windstream.net

Visit our online calendar at www.flclincoln.org/calendar as more online learning opportunities are scheduled during the month.

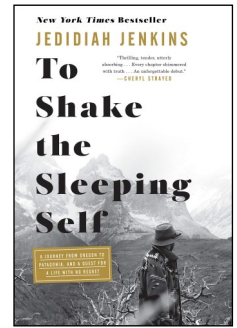
DISCIPLES LEARN...

APRIL ONLINE BOOK DISCUSSION

Monday, April 20; 6:00pm

Info: shari.sorenson@gmail.com

The March book discussion of *To Shake the Sleeping Self: A Journey from Oregon to Patagonia, and a Quest for a Life with No Regret*, by Jedidiah Jenkins, was postponed to April.



Joan Johnson, First Lutheran member, shared, "The Jenkins book got my attention because it was a road trip travelogue through countries I know very little about. I looked forward to reading descriptions of the terrain, flora, towns, and people. What I didn't expect was his writing on his struggles with being Christian. His candor was surprising and welcome. The struggle in clarifying his faith, getting rid of tenets that made no sense but retaining tenets that might not make sense at the moment but were 'leaps of faith', is something most of us go through. But, few of us are willing to verbalize it much less write it down for all to read! This was a thought-provoking read!"

"PAUSE" SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Saturday, June 6; Time TBA

Info: deemain12564@yahoo.com

Save the date for the next spiritual formation experience planned by Spiritual Directors, Carol Olson and Denise Mainquist. They have a solid morning of safe, experiential learning planned for middle school age through adults. More details will be coming in May.

"ZOOM" IN DURING THE MONTH TO STAY CONNECTED

Info: kathleen@flclincoln.org

Due to restrictions placed on social gatherings in Lincoln until May 6, many of our ministries in April will be done online using Zoom. Zoom is easy to use for the oldest to the youngest and for the most tech savvy to the least savvy! Check out all the online opportunities to worship, learn, plan and gather in this edition of *The Voice* and on our online calendar. If there is something you would like to participate in, reach out to the contact person for the event to learn more on how you can join in! Want to schedule an online group? Contact Kathleen Simley!

APRIL 2020



“EMPOWER” IS FAITHTREK WORD OF THE MONTH

Info: sunni@flclincoln.org

God calls us to FIGHT for peace and justice. God calls us to LISTEN to each other and to LISTEN to God’s Word so we are equipped to FIGHT the battles we face daily and in good time and bad times. God also empowers us to be bold disciples so we can help transform the world for Jesus’ sake. The April word of the month is EMPOWER. Jesus’ death and resurrection empowers us to tell the story and ask questions that allows us to grow as disciples and change the world. Family resources will be posted on the FaithTrek webpage at www.flclincoln.org/learn. FaithTrek lessons will be also emailed each week for families to do together in their homes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNING

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Weekly lessons will be e-mailed for you to do at home, along with the possibility of group online discussions. More information will be coming!

HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Weekly lessons will be e-mailed for you to do at home, along with the opportunity to participate in group online discussions. If you have a video you think would make for a great online discussion or you would like to put together a virtual lesson, contact Sharon.

CONFIRMATION + DINNER

Info: pastorjustin@flclincoln.org

Dinner+Learning will continue as planned with the only change being we will move to an online learning experience. For the remainder of the academic year, all the rest of the confirmation lessons will be taught online. Lessons can be found at the Confirmation+Dinner website.

FREE FAMILY RESOURCES

Are you looking for additional faith formation ideas and activities? We have a list of free resources for all ages and families. Visit www.flclincoln.org/news/resources to check out the listing.

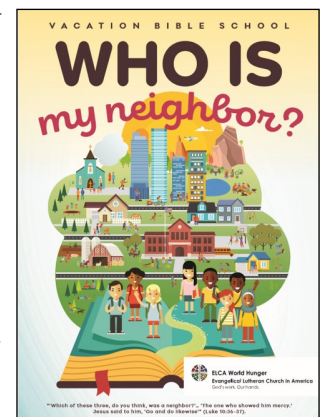
Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND VBS

June 8-12, 2020; 9:00-Noon and/or 5:30-8:00 pm

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Where in the world is my neighbor? Join us for “Who Is My Neighbor” Vacation Bible School when we learn about Malawi, Colombia, Rwanda, the United States, Central African Republic and Japan!



Our learning each day will focus on a theme using stories, crafts and snacks, skits and games, music and service projects. It will be a lot of activity packed into a few hours so we hope you will join us for learning, serving and a whole lot of fun!

Please register by Sunday May 17. An online registration process will be available soon. The cost is \$10 for ages 3 and 4, \$20 for children in K – 6th grade or \$75 per family for the evening session. Scholarships are available. Please contact Sharon Hardel for more information.

We also need many volunteers! We need Guides, storytellers and leaders in crafts, skits, games, snacks, lunch and dinner prep, music, decorations and help with registration. Contact Sharon if you can help.

DISCIPLES SERVE...

DONATE SURGICAL FACE MASKS TO TABITHA

Info: jkbailey47@gmail.com and mariannewarnes@gmail.com

Tabitha is accepting donations of surgical face masks (sewn or commercial). If you are one of our crafty parishioners who would like to provide a needed service, please consider making these much needed masks. YouTube and Pinterest offer great patterns and sewing instructions. First Lutheran member, Judy Bailey, has been busy making masks in her home (see photo to right) and is happy to help you get started. Contact Marianne Warnes for details on how to donate the masks to Tabitha.



THE LUTHERAN FOOD PANTRY NEEDS OUR HELP

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org or scenzen@outlook.com

On March 25, the Lutheran Food Pantry, located at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, received their last delivery of food and supplies from the Lincoln Food Bank. With a lot of people losing their jobs, the demand for assistance has gone up substantially. Please continue to make donations, monetary or food, to the Food Pantry. You can send monetary donations to our church office or directly to St. Andrew's Lutheran Church (please write "food pantry" in the memo line). Donations of food can be dropped off at the homes of Steve Lenzen (4910 South 75th St), Sharon Hardel (4235 A Street) or at St Andrew's (1015 Lancaster Lane). Do NOT bring food to First Lutheran. In keeping with the social distancing practice, please leave the food on the front step of Sharon's or Steve's home. St. Andrew's office manager is working Tuesday-Friday, from 8:00 am-3:00 pm. However, the outside doors of the church will be locked. If you deliver food to the church, please ring the bell by the north entry doors and she will let you in. Thank you for your generosity and helping those in need.

STEPHEN MINISTRY—TELECARE DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Info: pastorjustin@flclincoln.org

We are here to listen! In the midst of these crazy times of the COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves not able to gather in-person as community. This separation and isolation can bring feelings of uncertainty, fear, anxiety, stress and sadness. If you would like to visit with a Stephen Minister in a confidential, caring way over the phone during the quarantine-isolation period, please contact one of the pastors and they will get you connected.

11 WAYS TO CELEBRATE EARTH DAY DURING A PANDEMIC



The Lincoln Earth Day event, scheduled on Saturday, April 27, will not be held due to the COVID-19 outbreak. But, you can still celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day from your home by using the solitary time to reassess your current habits and develop new ones that are better for the planet. Visit www.earthday.org/11-actions-for-the-planet-during-a-pandemic to learn about eleven ways to take action for the planet while social distancing.

DISCIPLES WORSHIP AND PRAY...

WORSHIP USING THE “HOME CHURCH” MODEL

Consider the early church and how those communities of disciples worshiped, prayed, learned and served others in need. They worshiped as very small communities, sometimes as only families and neighbors in small gatherings in homes. Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

As house churches, they read from scripture and remembered God’s mighty acts of bringing God’s people through the storms they encountered along the way. They told testimonies and stories of how God was at work in their lives and the world. They prayed together and for one another and the surrounding world. They fed and took care of the sick and those in need. They even shared a meal together in what was called “love feasts” that signified acceptance and fellowship as the love feast in the church (as people, not building) was a living image of unity in Christ, of being the body of Christ in the world regardless of geography.

All of this is still true today. Perhaps this strange time we’re in gives us the opportunity to rekindle some ancient practices of faith formation in our homes. However, under the current circumstances, we are not able to be "open" like the early church, inviting friends and strangers in to join us. If you live alone, remain hopeful and trust in God. Remember Jesus' sacrifice for you and let the words from the hymn, *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*, keep you mindful of God’s never-ending love for you.

What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever, and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to thee.

WORSHIP OFFERED ONLINE UNTIL MAY 6

With social gatherings restricted until May 6, we will continue to offer worship services online for you to watch and engage in. The services will be pre-recorded and available for you to watch on Sunday mornings from our First Lutheran Facebook page, website home page and the Sunday morning worship email. So, grab a cup of coffee and your cell phone, ipad or laptop computer and join us for online worship in April!

SUBMIT YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS ONLINE

Prayer is the foundation of being a disciple! First Lutheran’s pastors, staff and prayer team pray daily for the needs and requests of our church family. You can now submit your prayer requests online to one of the pastors at www.flclincoln.org/prayer-requests. You can also call the church office at 402-488-0919 or email Pastor Dan or Pastor Justin to share your prayer requests.

APRIL 2020



The Schmitter family is learning a prayer method from Pastor Justin's online children's message

“TAKE OUT TUESDAY” DECLARED DURING MONTH OF APRIL

In an effort to assist Nebraska's restaurant industry, which has been severely impacted by recent orders to limit service to take-out, drive-thru or delivery sales in Omaha, Lincoln and other areas threatened by spread of the virus, the governor officially proclaimed “Take Out Tuesdays” in Nebraska through April. In addition to urging take-out restaurant purchases, Ricketts suggested that Nebraskans purchase gift cards to help restaurants. Plan to take the day off from cooking on Tuesdays in April and support your favorite local restaurants!



YOUTH GROUP ONLINE GATHERINGS

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY YOUTH GROUP

Resources will be shared through email for families to practice faith formation at home. Look for information about a possible virtual “Get to Know Your Bible” class and family game night!

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Look for an email coming about an online gathering on Sunday, April 5, at 6:00 pm!

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

We will have online gatherings every Sunday evening in April starting at 7:00 pm. More details will be coming your way on how to join in!

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Sympathies to the family and friends of Helen Lyles who passed away on March 2; Anna Furkay and Angeline Barkpeh, Victoria Wleh, Julius Wleh and Jones Koffa on the passing of their father, Patrick Wleh; and Matt and Mary Reckmeyer family on the death of Matt's father, Warren Reckmeyer.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTED

Thank you to the following Church Council members who were elected to serve on the Executive Committee:

Mike McDannel - President

Denise Mainquist - Vice President

Judy Bailey - Secretary

Kim Cordonier - Treasurer

150TH ANNIVERSARY POSTPONED

Info: jkbailey47@gmail.com

The 150th anniversary celebration has been postponed until the fall. We will share the new date with you as soon as it is scheduled. If you purchased a banquet ticket, we can either refund your money now or hold it until fall in the hopes you can join us then. We look forward to gathering when we will have even more to celebrate!



STAY INFORMED

Staying informed during this time of rapid change is important. Be sure you are subscribed to and read our weekly e-newsletter, *First Things First*, are following our Facebook page or regularly visiting our website's News Blog for the latest information and updates.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

DISCIPLES TELL THEIR STORIES...

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

by Sunni Richardson

By now, most of you have likely heard I have accepted a new position as Director for Leadership Development with the Nebraska Synod. This is an unexpected path - or one might say - a new destination on my discipleship map. Another way to describe it is, "God at work!"

Leaving First Lutheran is hard! I have been here 12+ years and a lot has happened in that time. We have faced challenges like all institutions do and lived through them. I've taken on new assignments and learned to do new things. Tears have run down my face at memorial services and I have cringed on All Saints Day when we read names of those no longer walking on earth with us. I've been able to create programs and get new ministries off the ground. Through FaithTrek, I've gotten the honor to know our kids and helped them take on the title of "disciple". The congregation has lived through staff changes and now it is my turn. As a rostered leader in the ELCA, my return trips will be rare and infrequent. The original plan was for me to split my time 50/50 between First Lutheran and the Synod during the month of April. The split allowed me to worship with you in the new Sanctuary, preach one last time and celebrate the 150th anniversary. The corona virus has changed those plans and I made the hard, but responsible, decision to wrap up my time at First Lutheran earlier. My last official day was March 31. Please hear me say loud and clear - I will be praying for you as you venture into the new building and align yourself with God's vision. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for walking with me on my faith journey and for allowing me to accompany you! Remember, you are a child of God, loved and forgiven, and nothing, nothing will ever change that. Shabbat Shalom – Amen.



Note: We will celebrate Sunni and her ministry at First Lutheran when we come back together as a community in-person. Look for more information to come! In the meantime, Sunni will continue leading FaithTrek and a few select groups in April.

BEING A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

We are grateful for your continued support of First Lutheran and its ministries through your regular financial giving. Your generosity is especially important during this health crisis so we stay on top of our budget and support our partner ministries who are doing important work caring for those in need. If your employment has changed, know how sorry we are as you deal with financial uncertainty. With respect for all situations, there are numerous giving options to consider depending on your situation:

- Mail your offering to the church (1551 S. 70th Street, Lincoln, 68506).
- Give electronically at www.flclincoln.org/give or through the free app, *GivePlus+*. This safe and secure app is managed by Vanco, the service provider First Lutheran uses for online giving.
- If you would like to learn about setting up recurring electronic giving, contact Bryan Hanson at bryan@flclincoln.org. He will be happy to assist you.

Thank you for being a faithful disciple during these difficult and challenging times.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



1551 S. 70th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506

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“MOVE IN” TIME IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

The building project is nearing the end! Small groups of construction workers have continued their work through the pandemic gathering restrictions. Within two weeks the final “punch list” will be created. With the placement of the cross on the travertine wall and the installation of the altar and pulpit, the Sanctuary is near complete. Some Chancel tile on the top level needs to be placed and the altar rail will be installed soon after. Ceiling tiles are being hung in the Gathering area with carpet to be installed next. And, then, it’s move in time! The new space is absolutely beautiful! More importantly, it addresses our mission to be more welcoming and accessible. We can’t wait to gather with you in these refurbished spaces!



First Lutheran
Church-Lincoln



@flclincoln

Each person is a unique creation of God and, through grace, is a child of God. The people of First Lutheran Church welcome all because God welcomes all, without regard for race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status, physical or mental challenges, imprisonment, addictions, socio-economic circumstances, or anything else that too often divides us. First Lutheran Church is a spiritual community that celebrates the gifts of God that can empower us to engage in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we work and live. Our unity is in Christ.

The Voice is a monthly publication of First Lutheran Church - 1551 S. 70th Street - Lincoln, NE 68506 - 402.488.0919 - www.flclincoln.org