



THE VOICE

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



AN INVITATION FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

We are “Celebrating God’s Faithfulness” this year as our stewardship theme – echoing and reinforcing the celebration of our congregation’s 150th anniversary!

We live out our discipleship and stewardship at First Lutheran Church through the many ways we disciple in the world and support ministries with our time, skills and resources. Your investment in the ministries of First Lutheran Church celebrates God's abundant faithfulness in sustaining ministries for the future. Even during this year when we have experienced the challenges of physical separation, you, as members of our congregation, have continued to recognize God's blessings and have responded generously by sharing God's love with those around us. Thank you!

On Sundays in September, ministry partners who are blessed through the gifts of our congregation – whether financial, time or talent – will offer video stories describing how they are able to disciple in the world because of God's sustaining and transforming work through us.

We will celebrate God's faithfulness through the impacting ministries of First Lutheran Church on October 4, Commitment Sunday, and hear from Stacy Martin, President and CEO of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, who will be our guest preacher.

Before Commitment Sunday, we ask that you please go to our stewardship page at www.flclincn.org/stewardship (which will go live Wednesday, September 2) to complete your Financial Commitment Card and your Discipleship Plan for 2021, which also helps us be good stewards of God's creation.

The new realities of 2020 have highlighted the opportunities and convenience of giving online which also benefits our congregation by making receipts more predictable. Please see the link on the Stewardship web page for more information.

To meet our projected ministry needs we invite everyone to consider a 2% increase in their financial gift for 2021. We also encourage everyone to grow their discipleship and stewardship beyond First Lutheran. The stories of everyday ministries throughout our community inspire and empower us to serve Christ and our neighbor with what we can, where we can and when we can.

Join us as we Celebrate God’s Faithfulness and faithfully steward our gifts and share our lives for the sake of the world.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
www.flclincn.org

PHASE 2 REOPENING UNDERWAY

On Friday, August 21, the local health department moved the COVID Risk Dial to yellow (moderate risk). Since we have attached our facilities reopening to this dial, we are preparing to enter Phase 2 of our re-opening plan. We will transition into Phase 2 by allowing small groups to meet in-person inside the facility while following these guidelines:



- Small groups may meet in-person inside with up to 12 people together.
- Small group ministries, committees, teams and outside organizations should call the church office to schedule their meetings and learn about the new risk reduction measures.
- Groups gathering inside the facilities will be required to wear masks/face coverings for the duration of the visit and maintain 6-feet distance from one another.
- Small groups that meet inside the facilities in the evening hours after 4:30 pm will be asked to wipe down the high-touch areas and materials they use with disinfecting wipes when they arrive to their room and again before leaving so the space is ready for other groups.
- Groups meeting outside on the church property can have more than 12 people gather and will not be required to wear masks/face coverings as long as they maintain 6-feet distance from one another.
- In the event that someone participating in an outside activity needs to use the church facilities inside or move around and interact with another person or household, masks/face coverings will be required during that movement.
- Each small group leader will be responsible for contacting the participants in the group ahead of time to remind them of the risk-reduction protocols of Phase 2 and assess whether gathering in-person in the facilities includes all or excludes any group participants. If any group participant does not feel comfortable participating in-person, the group leader will work with the group participants to find a resolution (blended, all online group, etc.) to ensure that we remain a welcoming faith community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church office. Thank you in advance for your patience, flexibility and grace as we journey through the surprises of this pandemic together. God is with us!

LIVE STREAM WORSHIP TO BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER



Thanks to the hard work of First Lutheran member, Brian Niebuhr, we are progressing forward with live streaming our worship service. Even though we aren't worshipping in-person yet, we will be transitioning our pre-recorded worship online service to live streaming from the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings at 8:15 am tentatively beginning Sunday, September 13. You can tune in live on

our Facebook page or watch a recording of it later on Facebook or on our website. Stay tuned for more details.

SEPTEMBER 2020

DISCIPLES LEARN...

FAITHTREK TO KICK OFF NEW YEAR

Sunday, September 13; 11:00-11:45 am

Info: lindsey@flclincoln.org

Mark your calendars for September 13 when we plan to kickoff a new year of FaithTrek in-person at church from 11:00-11:45 am. We will be outside, wearing masks and social distancing. This will be a great way for us to come together as a community to

learn our first word of the month for the learning year and for students to meet their Guides. If weather or the COVID Risk Dial prevents us from meeting in person we will share an alternate kick-off plan. Please register your child for the 2020-2021 learning year at <https://flclincoln.org/learn> and clicking on the FaithTrek link. Even if they will not be participating this fall, registration is required for them to participate in any activities this year.



ADULT FORUM

Info: Connie Kisling at connie.kisling@gmail.com

Adult Forum meets on Zoom on Sundays from 9:30-10:30 am. To join a live Forum session, contact Connie Kisling for the log in information. A recording of each Sunday session is available every Monday at www.flclincoln.org/learn by clicking on the Adult Forum ministry link.

September 6 – *Nine-Mile Prairie* – David Wadin, Professor, School of Natural Resources and Director of Nine-Mile Prairie and Forestry Research Farm. Learn about this 230-acre virgin prairie that is made up of tall grass and more than 390 plant species and over 80 species of birds.

September 13 – *Update on the Call Process*.

September 20 – *Developing New Learning Tools for FaithTrek Families* - Lindsey Boyle, Elementary Christian Education Coordinator; First Lutheran Church.

September 27 – *Climate Change* – Dr. Donald Wilhite, Professor Emeritus, Applied Climate Science, UNL School of Natural Resources.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

High school and middle school learning starts September 13. An app is being developed to communicate and share resources parents and youth can use at home. High school youth will also discuss online material during youth group once a month. We will also focus on a word of the month with FaithTrek students. September's word of the month is, "Neighbor".

CONFIRMATION: DINNER+LEARNING

Wednesday, September 2 and 16; 6:30-7:30 pm

Info: pastorjustin@flclincoln.org

Dinner+Learning this month will look different in that the risk of COVID-19 spread will determine how we gather for learning. The current plan is that 7th and 8th graders will Zoom with Pastor Justin and Sharon on Wednesdays, September 2 and 16, and then on Wednesdays, September 9 and 23, confirmation families will learn together at home. This month we will explore Luther's Small Catechism and how knowing it helps us be good neighbors.

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DISCIPLES SERVE...

KICKS FOR KIDS IN 5TH YEAR OF PROVIDING SHOES AND SOCKS

September 23 - October 4

Info: Donice Kaspar at dkaspar@windstream.net



Kicks for Kids is preparing for its fifth year at First Lutheran of providing new shoes for local children in need. While these are uncertain times, two things have not changed - all children deserve warm, comfortable shoes and the congregation is committed to partnering with schools and families in our community to provide shoes to kids who need them.

Given the possible risk of in-store shopping, this year we are encouraging you to make a cash donation so that volunteer "Church Shoppers" can shop for the children in one trip. If you do still wish to shop for a child yourself, please call Donice Kaspar at (402) 840-1300 beginning September 23, and she will let you know the size needed by a boy or girl on her list.

On Saturday, October 3, from 2:00-4:00 pm, we will end the campaign with a Portico Drive-Through where you will have the opportunity to drop off monetary donations or shoes you have purchased. Monetary donations, marked "Kicks for Kids", may also be left with the church office or mailed.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF FACE MASK CHALLENGE

Info: Judy Bailey at jkbailey47@gmail.com

Lutheran World Relief requested people pledge to making masks to send worldwide this year with book bags. So far they have received pledges for 123,250 masks! The 175 masks in the photo were made by members, Karen Clementson and Judy Bailey. We have also applied for Thrivent funds to help with the cost of postage and fabric. Are you willing to pledge?



GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS DONATIONS NEEDED

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Since we are not able to gather as a congregation this year for God's Work Our Hands, the youth will be making sock kits for Matt Talbot Kitchen on Sunday, September 13. We have applied for Thrivent funds to purchase supplies, but will also need to collect men's white tube socks, tubes of lip balm, bottled water and small bottles of hand sanitizer (if they can be found). Donations can be dropped off at First Lutheran during office hours or at Sharon Hardel's home.

BE A READER FOR WORSHIP

Info: Judy Bailey at jkbailey47@gmail.com

As we transition to live streaming worship services at 8:15 am on Sunday mornings beginning September 13, we are in need of individuals who are willing to read the first and second lessons and the Psalm. Social distancing and other safety protocols will be followed in the Sanctuary during the live stream. If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Judy Bailey to be scheduled.

YOUTH GROUPS TO MEET

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Pre School and Elementary Youth Group

We are developing a drop off kit for families to use at home during the month. This is still in the works so stay tuned!

Middle School Youth Group

Kick off will be on Sunday, September 13, at 6:00 pm in the church parking lot. We will help the high school group make Matt Talbot sock kits and enjoy team building games.

High School Youth Group

We will meet in-person in outdoor settings while practicing social distancing. In the event of rain, we will have online Zoom gatherings.

September 6: Cook out and team building games at Roberts Park starting at 6:00 pm.

September 12: Backyard Movie Night at Kathleen Simley's home. Address and movie title will be sent out closer to the date. We will gather around 8:00 pm. In case of rain, we will reschedule.

September 13: Meet in church parking lot at 6:00 pm to make sock kits for Matt Talbot. We will then head to Sheridan Lutheran to walk the Prayer Labyrinth.

September 20: Racism and Understanding Privilege conversation in church parking lot at 6:00 pm.

September 27: Corn Hole Tournament and follow-up learning conversation at Roberts Park at 6:00 pm.



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MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

Info: music@flclincoln.org

"How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?"

(Psalm 137:4)

It is a very "special" time in which we live. Our priority is caring for our neighbors. Singing is one of the "unsafe" activities right now, which is "foreign" to our worship life. Let's try to be adaptable to the current situation (foreign land). It may not be ideal, but we need to keep "singing" to the LORD using Zoom creatively (avoiding latency). Please contact Masako for the Zoom link.

Chorister Choir - Zoom Wednesday 5:00-5:30 pm

Cherub Choir - Zoom Wednesday 5:30-5:45 pm

Adult Choir - Zoom 7:10-7:45 pm

Spirit Ringers - Zoom Thursday 6:30- 7:00 pm (No Zoom rehearsal on September 3)

All music ministry groups will adjust the form of rehearsals as the protocol changes depending on the COVID-19 risk.

CROP WALK GOES VIRTUAL

Info: [Sandy Latshaw at sjlatshaw@outlook.com](mailto:sjlatshaw@outlook.com)

Register at www.crophungerwalk.org/lincolnne

The 2020 Lincoln/Lancaster County CROP Hunger Walk will be virtual. Walk anytime the week before or the week after the originally scheduled CROP Walk date of October 11. Choose when you walk, where you walk and with whom you walk. Consider registering and joining the First Lutheran Walk 'Team' at www.crophungerwalk.org/lincolnne. Send a note to friends and family to support you by making a donation at that site. If anyone wishes to donate in honor of a special someone, they can add that recognition in the textbox that appears when they are making their donation.

DISCIPLES TELL THEIR STORIES...

GOD'S TIME HAS ONCE AGAIN PROVEN TO BE PERFECT

by Michael Zimmerman, First Lutheran Member

Erin and I welcomed our daughter, Lucy, on May 9th in circumstances that definitely weren't what we had in mind. Every new parent imagines that special moment of bringing your first child into the world, telling the family the news and celebrating with them.

But a few months before Erin's due date, our expectations had to change.

Every one of us have felt the impact of the Coronavirus on our lives. It's robbed us of so many things that we take for granted. Whether that be dinner out with friends, taking that long overdue vacation, cheering your favorite sports team, or going to church, we all haven't been able to do the things we love right now.

Erin and I had baby showers planned with both friends and family and were excited to show off our home which we moved into in February. Those had to be cancelled. Then, we were told the sad news that nobody will be allowed to visit us as the hospital for the birth.

Still, we haven't felt more blessed. God's timing has once again proven to be perfect. We have a cheerful little girl that we're so excited to have you all see grow up at First Lutheran. We've also been gifted an abundance of valuable, necessary time to grow as first-time parents.

In your discipleship, I pray you focus less on the things the pandemic has taken away and more on the gifts God is giving you right now. Maybe you've been given more opportunities to reconnect with an old friend on Zoom, renew your exercise routine with daily walks or catch up on all those to-dos around the house. It's been inspiring to see how we've all adapted and tried to make the best of our current situation. I believe we'll all be more grateful for this period in our lives if we see it as a blessing rather than a punishment. Stay safe, be kind and we hope to see you all again soon!



MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Our sympathies to Sharon Yockers whose brother passed away and to Chris and Tim Yates and family in the death of Chris' father. We pray God's blessings on Lucy Jo Zimmerman, the daughter of Michael and Erin Zimmerman, who was baptized on August 16. We also welcome new members, Rev. Sarah Ruch and children, Hannah, Caleb and Aaron, from Aurora, NE.



CHANGING WITH THE SEASONS

Info: Carol Olson at carolinroma@yahoo.com

"You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting." (Psalm 104:19)

For many, fall is a favorite season. People enjoy the change in the air: from humid, hot summer air to cooler, dry air and breezes that are so refreshing. The leaves respond to the decrease in daylight, changing colors and eventually falling from the trees. We humans also respond. God created our bodies to respond to the changing seasons! As you notice the season moving towards fall, pay attention not only to the changes in plants, trees and light, but also within your own body as well. Does your level of energy during the daytime or amount of sleep at night change as fall arrives? Like leaves that change color, dry up and fall from the trees; is there anything in your life right now that you need to release or stop doing? It might be an event, a task or even an attitude. Take some time to ponder about what you might need to release. You might feel more freedom and joy! May your fall season be full of joy and release!



CHURCH COUNCIL CORNER

Info: Mike McDannel at michael.mcdannel@icloud.com

At the August Church Council meeting members of the Lead Pastor Call Committee were selected. They are: Wendy Bonaiuto, Steve Eicher, Grace Monson, Bol Ngok, Dave Schmitter and Amy Tipton. For more information on the Lead Pastor call process, see the *Update on the Call Process for a Lead Pastor* article found on the right.

The Council met with members of the church's Property Committee to discuss potential church roof repair and act on related insurance matters. A \$1,000 seminary scholarship was awarded to Heidi Youngquist through the Seminary Scholarship Fund. The Council received updates on Dimensions Education Program and the church's COVID response. The Council also continues to explore opportunities for us to meet as a church virtually.

You can find the Council's agenda and minutes at <https://flclincoln.org/church-council>.

UPDATE ON THE CALL PROCESS FOR A LEAD PASTOR

Info: pastorsteve@flclincoln.org

As you read in *The Church Council's Corner* article, six very dedicated and capable people have been selected to serve as the Call Committee. They will be installed in September and receive training for their important work. Meanwhile, the Ministry Site Profile is being prepared which will give potential pastors a picture of our ministries, values, commitment and calling. These next several months represent more than a transition from one lead pastor to the next. It is a time of seeking God's will, searching our own understanding and listening for God's word. We call this searching and listening, "discernment." Through prayer, reading Scripture, and reflective conversations, together, we will gain a clearer understanding of who First Lutheran is as a church and what kind of leader is needed for the congregation. Any change, even good change, brings uncertainty. Uncertainty can bring anxiety, perhaps even fear. In this transition, practice trust: trust one another, trust the process, trust God. God journeys with us. God is leading us.



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THANK YOU FROM DIMENSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Info: www.dimensionsed.org

The last few months have been very busy as so many worked to meet our August 10th deadline to have the classrooms for Dimensions Education Programs at First Lutheran ready for children. Together, we have created enriching environments for children to learn and grow, both inside and in the Nature Explore Classroom. Through this process we have felt welcomed and have seen such kindness, patience and willingness to help from so many of you. We want to express our deepest gratitude and thanks as we are moving forward on this wonderful journey together.



First Lutheran
Church-Lincoln



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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.

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