



THE VOICE

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

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH / JANUARY 2021



Gifts of Hope Online Market Goes Global

INFO: BJOHNSONFRANK@GMAIL.COM

First Lutheran's 2020 Gifts of Hope Market was a bustling place in cyber space! This year's online market erased limitations of time and distance, inviting any and all to join the congregation in focusing on "gifts that give twice." Shoppers from California, Pennsylvania, Montana, Washington, Minnesota, Illinois and Ireland, browsed the interactive digital catalog and streamed into the virtual market on December 5 and 6.

Donors funded all-abilities Zoom classes from their recliners, gifted

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market bags and laundry supplies and hot pads from their kitchen tables and placed orders for wells, scholarships, solar lanterns and earrings on their cell phones. Parents poured over catalog pages and watched video clips with their children before families chose infant formula, vaccinations, personal protective gear, soap and sanitation supplies and water filters. Health care policies, clothing for teens and toys and games for children in foster care made their way into shopping carts. Selecting face masks, original art, handmade note cards and crafting kits brought delight. From the safety of their own homes, donors provided life-giving virtual telehealth counseling sessions, assistance for people seeking legal
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Dimensions Grateful for Partnership with First Lutheran

BY MICHELLE ZIMMER
[DIMENSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM](#)

It is hard to believe that 2021 is almost here! As we reflect back on the year, it is important to remember that there ARE great things that happened. Of course, we celebrate the opening of Dimensions at First Lutheran. We are so grateful for the partnership and to have the opportunity to provide a quality early childhood program for children, families and our community. We are looking forward to the time when we can all connect in person.

This month, I would like to introduce you to Abbie Whisler, one of our infant teachers...



I am Abbie Whisler and I am currently an infant teacher at our new Dimensions location here at First Lutheran. January is my 10-year anniversary with Dimensions! In the last 10 years I have spent

most of my time with infants, but have also had the opportunity to be with toddlers and preschoolers, too. I have worked at all three Dimensions locations and I am super excited to be at First. I am married and have 3 children (ages 9, 7 and 3) who have gone through the Dimensions program (my youngest is currently in the preschool room at First Lutheran). It has been such a blessing for me to have my children be a part of the Dimensions program and see them learn to love nature, the world and become independent well-rounded thinkers. When I am not busy with my kids, I enjoy lifting weights and running half marathons. I also look forward to being able to travel again and explore the world with my family. A goal I have for myself is to see the good in every situation and make the best of each day!



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Adult Forum

Info: connie.kisling@gmail.com

Recordings at www.vimeo.com/flclincoln

January 3, 2021 – Current COVID-19 and Inoculations Outlook – Dr. Bob Rauner, First Lutheran member

January 10 – Transition Plans, Call Committee Updates and Q&A Session – Pastor Stephen Griffith; Steve Eicher, Call Committee Chair; and Mike McDannel, Council President

January 17 – Annual Meeting Preview and Q&A Session

January 24 – Annual Meeting Preview and Q&A Session

January 31 – Celiac Disease: Its Presence Should Not Make You Sick – Kim Hiser, APRN, DNP

Bible Studies - Tuesdays 5:45 pm and Wednesdays 10:45 am

Info: pastorsteve@flclincoln.org

Tuesday's group is studying Colossians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Wednesday's group is studying Matthew.

Saturday with the Guys - 2nd Saturday; 8:00 am (Reading *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis

Info: jim.kisling@gmail.com

Coffee Talk - Mondays; 1:30 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; 7:00 am

Info: rockwell@windstream.net

Gather and Gab - Thursdays; 8:00 pm

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Women's Circles - Varying dates and times

Info: cyndi@flclincoln.org

"Promise" is the FaithTrek Word of the Month

INFO: LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

What does God promise us and what promises do we make to God? God never breaks his promises to us, but how do we keep our promises to God? During the month of January, we will explore the word, *Promise*. Activities, music and scriptures will be available through the FaithTrek app and weekly e-mails.

Middle & High School Learning

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Middle and high school learning lessons will be sent out via e-mail on Sundays. Our word of the month for January is, *Promise*. We will look at the promises (resolutions) we have made for the New Year and compare them to God's promises for us. Included with the lessons are mealtime conversation sheets that contain short discussion topics centered around a Bible verse and a fun family game that can be played before or after the meal. The conversations are adaptable to all ages.



We are offering a learning opportunity for parents to learn how to teach, pray and worship with their kids at home. The, *How to Teach Kids at Home*, course will give you hands-on ideas on how to engage your kids in at-home faith-filled activities. This is a great resource, especially during the pandemic, when we are unable to meet in person for worship and learning. The live, online class will offer 45 minute sessions on Zoom each week, as a group, for four weeks. We will schedule the days and times when we know who is interested. If you would like more information about the course, [visit How to Teach Kids at Home with Allison Liles for Groups.](#)

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For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20

Dinner+Learning

JANUARY 6 & 20; 6:30-7:30 PM

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Families will continue to learn at home via the Dinner + Learning website and youth will gather on Zoom the first and third Wednesday from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. January's topic is communion.

High School & Middle School Youth Group

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Meetings will occur on Zoom or as drive-through activities until we are able to gather again in person. Please watch weekly e-mails for updates.

How to Teach Kids at Home Online Course Offered

INFO AND TO REGISTER: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG OR LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Gifts of Hope Market Goes Global

(continued from page 1) advice or help with complex immigration forms and bedrolls for persons experiencing homelessness. Record numbers of chicks, roosters, pigs and goats were herded into God's Global Barnyard shopping carts.



Watch the "Messages of Gratitude and Hope" video from the nine programs supported by Gifts of Hope at <https://vimeo.com/490889616>

The resulting Gifts of Hope Market total of over \$16,000 was a record-setter. 100% left First Lutheran through donations directed to ELCA World Hunger, Mission Market Place (Proceeds go to ELCA World Hunger), Mosaic International, Matt Talbot Homelessness Outreach, Gotta Be Me, Lutheran Family Services, Center for Legal Immigration Assistance, CEDARS, and Empowered by Light.

Thank you for your generosity, for giving gifts that give twice and for doing outreach and ministry in a new way.

Souper Bowl of Caring Kicks Off January 3

JANUARY 3-30; DRIVE THROUGH ON FEBRUARY 7; 10:00 AM-NOON
INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

We don't know which teams will be playing, but we can still get ready for the big day and help with another big challenge many of our neighbors face every day...hunger. You can help by donating the following nonperishable foods for the Lutheran Food Pantry. Other nonperishable food will be accepted also.



WEEK ONE (January 3-9) Pancake Mix vs. Oatmeal	WEEK TWO (January 10-16) Pork and Beans vs. Chili
WEEK THREE (January 17-23) Pasta vs. Rice	WEEK FOUR (January 24-30) Canned Vegetables vs. Canned Fruits

Bring your donated food to the display in the Gathering space. Due to not meeting in person for worship, match ups will be counted at the end of the collection on February 7 so drop off any items at your convenience. A Noisy Offering and additional food and personal care items collection drive-through will be held Sunday, February 7, from 10:00 am – Noon, giving you the opportunity to vote for your winning team!

Choirs and Ensembles Begin 2021 on January 6

INFO: MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

All adult and children choir rehearsals will resume via Zoom starting Wednesday, January 6. All are welcome! Contact Masako for the link to join the rehearsals. Following the COVID protocol, small string ensembles will begin rehearsing in January, following individual practices. Check the church online calendar for specific rehearsal times.

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Zoom Game Night for All Ages

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10; 4:00 PM; RSVP BY JANUARY 8
INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG OR LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG



If you've been missing the chance to get together in-person to laugh and play games, this activity is for you! Join our Zoom Game Night to play "Roll and Write Games". If you've ever played a game like Yahtzee, then you've played this type of game. There is no limit to how many can play and all ages and abilities can join in the fun. Game cards will be provided, as well as dice, if needed. So, grab a pencil and a snack and join us for an evening of fun. RSVP to Sharon or Lindsey by Friday, January 8, so you receive the Zoom link.

Valentine's Day Talent Show

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13; 6:30 PM
INFO: KATHLEEN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG



If you enjoyed the Grateful Hearts online concert in November, then you are sure to LOVE the Valentine's Day Online Talent Show! What is your God-given talent? Is it comedy, music, acting, drawing, storytelling, dancing, hula-hooping or something else really unique? We are looking for members, like you, and of all ages, to send a recording of themselves, featuring their talent. All recordings are due to Kathleen Simley by Friday, February 5. Contact Kathleen for specific self-recording instructions or to schedule a recording at church.

Christmas Eve "Thanks"

Did you say or think, "Wow!", at the end of the two Christmas Eve worship services? If you watched the credits run at the end of the services, you would have seen the magnitude of members it required to offer the worship services that we did. Over 75 people, of all ages, gave their time and talents to create beautiful and inspirational online worship experiences. So, thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who contributed to our Christmas Eve worship and for sharing and giving of yourself! We are deeply grateful for each and every one of you.

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Join the First Lutheran Fellowship Facebook Group

INFO: LJSNYD@OUTLOOK.COM

Have you joined the First Lutheran Fellowship Facebook Group yet? There are currently 100 members of all ages who are engaging with one another in fun ways through this group. Each month there is a photo challenge for the group. January's challenge will be HOPE and PRIDE. Don't wait! [Click here to join](#) the group and the fun now!

Donations to Decorate Our New Spaces

Thank you to those who gave contributions towards the purchase of church decor for our new spaces:

In memory of George McKinsey by Marsha McKinsey; Paul Thoren by Karen and Jon Peppmuller; Howard and Roberta Johnson by Cherie Johnson; Ron Reineke by Julie Reineke, Lindsey, Jake, Tristen, Maxx, Megan and Zach; Bruce Wigodsky and Tony and Helen Piccolo by Jan Wigodsky; and Marvin Pahl, George Radcliffe and Vallee Rae Anderson by Norm and Sylvia Kempf. In celebration of Terry and Karen Clementson by Jim Sowers, Rick Sowers, Laura Elgar and Chris Clementson; Bryce and Andrea Wigodsky by Jan Wigodsky; and by Lee and Kay Rockwell.

Be on the Lookout for Kairos Time in Your Life

INFO: CAROLINROMA@YAHOO.COM

Have you ever thought about what time means? Did you know there are different kinds of time? Most of us think of “chronos” time when we talk about daily schedules, calendars and appointments. Chronos time is keeping track of time, measuring it, noting the seconds, minutes and hours; whether in anticipation or in dread.



Kairos time, however, is time that seems to stand still: important moments that we share with our loved ones such as births, weddings, or perhaps alone at awe-inspiring views of nature. Kairos time isn't concerned with productivity; it is open-ended, without goals or intentions. Kairos time is creative time—exploring and experiencing life without looking at a watch, calendar, and without distractions. Kairos time is paying attention to, and savoring the moment. That.Is.Right.Now!

As the year 2021 begins, be on the lookout for Kairos time in your life. Notice what moments in life you enjoy so immensely that it makes you lose track of time: Talking with a loved one? Exploring your favorite craft? Hiking on a trail? Dancing? Praying? Engage in more Kairos time events in 2021 and let your heart be opened to new experiences. Better yet, plan for open-ended Kairos time regularly and release the desire to fill up all of your minutes each day. Happy New Year!

151st Annual Meeting to be Held Virtually

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31; 12:30 PM

INFO: PASTORSTEVE@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

The 151st annual meeting of First Lutheran Church will be held Sunday, January 31, at 12:30 pm. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the present pandemic, the meeting will be held virtually. The Council's Executive Committee is working to ensure voting can be handled effectively. Details of the meeting and voting will be published in the weekly *First Things First* e-newsletter and in the News blog on our website.

Two annual meeting preview and Q&A sessions will be held via Zoom on Sundays, January 17 and 24, at 9:30 am. Members will be able to meet candidates for office, learn about the 2021 budget and ask questions. Further information, including how to log in, will be published in the weekly *First Things First* email.

Council Corner

BY MIKE MCDANNEL; COUNCIL PRESIDENT

MICHAEL.MCDANNEL@GMAIL.COM

The Church Council meeting on December 8 had an end-of-the-year feeling. We discussed topics that will impact 2021, like the 2021 annual church meeting (*see the article to the left*) and the 2021 church budget. Also during the December meeting, Scott Seebohm, volunteered to be the Church Council liaison with the Property Committee, a prospective First Lutheran Governance Task Force was discussed and we applauded the Gifts of Hope digital catalog, created by our Communications Director, Kathleen Simley.

Member Happenings

We rejoice with Matt and Natalie Peters whose son, Carson David Peters, was baptized on Christmas Day.

Ready! Set! Dream!

BY BARB JOHNSON FRANK, FIRST LUTHERAN MEMBER

Our congregation embarked on a major building and renovation project because we knew in our hearts that the spaces we cherish, built to the glory of God, were meant to welcome all. My weekly routine involved being launched from worship and gatherings from those holy spaces to be a sign of God's gracious love in the world. I'm guessing that was true for most members of First Lutheran Church.

It took a world-wide pandemic to jolt me into more expansive ways of thinking. When 2020 nudged me toward faith practices beyond my familiar rhythms, there was no way I could have predicted how much of my spiritual growth would be supported by technology. My access to meaningful worship, thought-provoking book group conversations, conferences, spiritual direction sessions, inspiring music, sermons that buoy me, writing workshops, planning meetings and Bible studies come that way.

Although nothing ever will fully replace in-person conversations and human touch, I believe the next few months present rare opportunities to discern how technology can stretch our congregation's vision for outreach and connections. We have the tools and expertise needed to make new dreams possible.

Outreach through technology transcends barriers. Whether it's work schedules, transportation difficulties, being home-bound or traveling out of town, technology has an answer to these and most any barrier to doing outreach today. This year's Gifts of Hope online market is a perfect example of this.

If you get queasy at the thought of outreach and invitation, technology has your back. Emails and social media offer comfortable tools that make it easy to invite others into the ministry of First Lutheran. Worship services, treasured music, daily blog posts and informative Adult Forum sessions are archived on the church website - ready for easy and quick sharing.

It matters more than you think. The Gifts of Hope market always meant that, through their choice of gifts that give twice, people became part of life-giving stories. This year technology's reach added even more to the Gifts of Hope experience. An email from Tiffany Clifton, director of Gotta Be Me (one of this year's Gifts of Hope programs) recently shared, *"Because of Gifts of Hope, every day we have new folks from First Lutheran calling, emailing and making contact to learn more. It's so wonderful! It's a ministry of almost-instant engagement and excitement!"*

What ministries, small or large, interest you? If you're willing to "think outside the box", technology can help you grow something new. Contact Kathleen Simley, our Communications Director, for advice. Ready! Set! Dream!

COVID-19 Update

INFO: PASTORSTEVE@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Our COVID-19 Crisis Task Force and Church Council have begun to imagine whether and how to plan for reopening in the spring and summer. For now, the church office is open for business. We will continue to livestream our worship services and meet as small groups on Zoom. We will consider small groups to work on projects in the church, on a case-by-case basis, and continue to follow all safety precautions.

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Call Process Expected to Pick Up Pace in January

BY STEVE EICHER; CALL COMMITTEE CHAIR; EICHERSTEVE@GMAIL.COM
FOLLOW THE CALL PROCESS AT WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/CALLPROCESS

The Call Committee appointed to recommend our next Lead Pastor has been meeting regularly since late October and is moving forward on several fronts. We have developed a slate of questions in preparation for the interview process and refined our approach to interviewing. Reverend Megan Morrow, Assistant to the Bishop, recommended two “volunteer” rostered pastors with whom we conducted practice interviews with recently. The experience was invaluable as the committee received great feedback from both pastors about conducting interviews, as well as suggestions about the ongoing search process. Recruitment activity slowed down some in December, given the focus on Advent and Christmas, but it is anticipated to pick up pace in January. The committee is excited to keep the process moving forward for this extremely important event in the life of First Lutheran Church and we ask for your prayers and support.



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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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