



THE VOICE

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

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH / FEBRUARY 2021



Lent: Seven Last Words

INFO: PASTORSTEVE@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

In just two weeks we will begin our Lenten journey to the cross. Our focus theme will be Seven Last Words. Jesus taught all through his life. He taught about who God is, what justice looks like, and how we are to love ourselves, our neighbors and all the world. He taught with words and through his actions. He kept teaching even in the very last moments of his life.

The Seven Last Words are sayings of Jesus from the cross as told in the Gospel narratives. Some of them Jesus quotes from the Psalms and his Jewish ancestors' ancient songs and

prayers. Some of them echo themes he taught all through his ministry. Some of them remind us how very human he was. And many of them are words we might hear from the mouths of people in our world today.

During Lent we will explore how these "Last Words" of Jesus speak to our everyday lives. Weekly themes include knowing and not knowing; truth, reality and honesty; being present, truly "here" in the now; being forsaken, alone or rejected; desiring and yearning; endings and completion; and trusting. We will have a weekly devotional guide and the themes will shape our Wednesday Lenten services.

See page 6 for our Ash Wednesday and Lenten worship schedule.

www.flclincoln.org

IN THIS ISSUE

Meet Our New
Building
Superintendent

Souper Bowl of Caring
+ Lent + Valentine's
Day Surprise Drive
Through

Valentine's Day
Online Jazz Concert

Ash Wednesday &
Lenten Worship

Re-Opening Plans for
Small Groups and
Worship Services

Registration Now Open at Dimensions for Summer and 2021-22 School Year Sessions

BY MICHELLE ZIMMER
[DIMENSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM](#)

February is a busy month at Dimensions. Enrollment for the summer 2021 and 2021-22 school year sessions will open on February 16 at 6:00 am. The summer session will run from May 24-July 30 and will include sessions for infants, toddlers and preschoolers (First Lutheran will not offer K-1 summer sessions). The 2021-22 school year session will be from August 9, 2021-May 19, 2022. Check out our [website](#) or [email](#) for more information. Sessions fill quickly, so please pass along this information to anyone who might be interested.

This month, I would like to introduce you to Cassie Thelen, one of our toddler teachers.



I'm Cassie Thelen and I am a toddler teacher at First Lutheran. I have worked at all three Dimension sites. I have been working for Dimensions for almost 10 years and also did my student teaching in preschool at the First Plymouth site. I married Kyle in 2011 who I met in college at Concordia University. We have two girls. Emmi is 6 and is in kindergarten at Messiah Lutheran. Kayla is 1 and is in the infant room at First Lutheran. I enjoy time with my family, reading, singing and binge watching Netflix shows.



Meet Our New Building Superintendent

We are pleased to introduce Travis Ferris as our Building Superintendent. Travis will work 15 hours/week on a temporary basis while we continue to seek someone to fill the half-time position. Travis will continue his full-time job as a Preventative Maintenance Technician at UNL. He brings skills in maintenance and repair, with experience as a mechanic, welder and shop manager. Travis and his wife have three sons who attend Dimensions Education at First Lutheran.

www.flclincoln.org

Adult Forum

Info: connie.kisling@gmail.com

Recordings at www.vimeo.com/flclincoln

February 7 – Family Mealtimes are Essential to Lifelong Health – Dipti Dev, UNL. During family meals, parents can foster healthy eating habits and create stronger parent-child bonds. Learn practical research-based tips to make mealtimes healthy, enjoyable and less stressful for everyone.

February 14 – Getting Acquainted With Our Interim Transition Associate Pastor – Pastor Bill Peterson.

February 21 – Lincoln Police Department: Minority Relations & Outreach – Officer Hein with the LPD.

February 28 – Forgive and Forget – Denise Mainquist, Certified Spiritual Director and First Lutheran member. How important is it to forgive? And is it possible to forget? Are there offenses that are so terrible that we should not forgive? This will be a discussion and practice-based session.

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: lrockwell@windstream.net

Gather and Gab - Thursdays; 8:00 pm

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Women's Circles - Varying dates and times

Info: cynidi@flclincoln.org

"Community" is the FaithTrek Word of the Month

INFO: LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

FaithTrek's word of the month for February is, "Community." FaithTrek lessons and Bible stories will center around building a community of faith and loving our neighbors. Families will receive weekly lessons and resources and will also have the opportunity to do a service project. Families are also invited to a virtual game night on Sunday, February 14, at 4:00 pm. Get to know members of our First Lutheran community as this is an event for all ages! Lenten resources will also be available for families beginning Ash Wednesday, February 17.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John: 4-11

Middle & High School Learning

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Middle and high school learning lessons will be sent via e-mail on Sundays. Our word of the month for February is, "Community." We will look at how community makes us stronger and what our responsibilities and obligations to our community are. 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.

Dinner+Learning

FEBRUARY 3 & 17; 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 6:30-7:30 pm unless small groups are able to meet safely in the building. February's topic is confession and forgiveness.

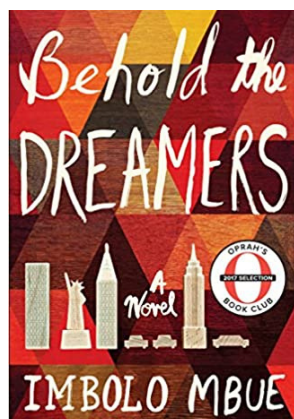
High School & Middle School Youth Group

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

February 7: Youth will help with the Souper Bowl of Caring Drive Through from 10:00 am-Noon and will help count food items after the drive through.

February 14: Game Night at 4:00 pm on Zoom

February 21 and 28: TBD based on COVID Task Force recommendations



Book Discussion: Behold the Dreamers

FEBRUARY 22; 7:00 PM; ZOOM
SHARI.SORENSEN@GMAIL.COM

Behold the Dreamers, by Imbolo Mbue, "is a compulsively readable novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream - the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy." (Amazon.com) Contact Shari Sorenson for the Zoom link to join the online discussion group.

www.flclincoln.org

Souper Bowl of Caring + Lent + Valentine's Day Surprise Drive Through Planned

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7; 10:00 AM-NOON; PARKING LOT
INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Thank you for donating food items throughout the month of January for the Souper Bowl of Caring. On Sunday, February 7, we will accept more food donations, as well as a Noisy Offering, for the Lincoln Lutheran Food Pantry. Drive through the Portico and drop your money in the pan of the team you think will win the Super Bowl. Make plans to also stop at the FaithTrek station to learn



about Lent and receive supplies to make your own Mardi Gras masks to celebrate Fat Tuesday - the day before Ash Wednesday on Tuesday, February 16. There will also be information about Lent and some devotionals to help you reflect during the 40 days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Before the Drive Through, make or purchase some Valentine cards for our shut-ins, frontline workers and teachers and the Fellowship Committee will collect them on the day of the Drive Through. There will also be a Valentine's Day surprise waiting for you!

Endowment Board Disburses \$13,400 in 2020

INFO: [AL WILLIAMS; AW4CSONS@AOL.COM](mailto:ALWILLIAMS;AW4CSONS@AOL.COM)

In 2020, the First Lutheran Endowment Board disbursed \$13,400, which amounts to a 3.5% distribution strategy and matches the 2019 strategy. The distribution in 2020 was as follows:

- Education/Scholarships \$6,750: Nine scholarships of \$750 each to First Lutheran scholarship applicants.
- Outreach \$5,150: \$1500 to the Lincoln Lutheran Food Pantry, \$1500 to the People's City Mission, \$1500 to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund and \$650 to the Center for People in Need.
- Missions of ELCA \$1500: \$500 to the Women of the ELCA, \$500 to the Lincoln Lutheran Food Pantry and \$500 to the First Lutheran Church Camera Fund (to enhance livestreaming capability).

Thanks to you, our congregation, for your tremendous support of the First Lutheran Endowment Fund this past year. Your donations help to grow the Fund that continues to touch so many lives! Thank you for making a difference!

Secret Elves Deliver Christmas Spirit



Twelve families volunteered to be secret elves during the 12 Days of Christmas - leaving gifts for some of our single members who were alone at Christmas. We received many notes of thanks that were shared with our "elves." Barbara J. Johnson wrote a note that sums up the sentiments received in the other notes: *"Many, many, thanks for the 12 Days of Christmas gifts. You Elves are very clever to be so quiet in delivery - with no one ever in sight. The wrapped gifts just appeared at my front door. It brought so much joy to me and extended the Christmas Spirit beautifully!"* We wish we could have visited everyone who may have been alone at Christmas, but are glad we were able to reach 33 members in our First Lutheran family.

Valentine's Day Online Jazz Concert

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14; 7:30-9:00 PM; WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FLCLINCOLN
INFO: LROCKWELL@WINDSTREAM.NET

Omaha's great jazz artist, Camille Metoyer Moten, will headline a special online Valentine's Day concert originating in First Lutheran's newly renovated Sanctuary. Planned by our First Friday Jazz planning group, the 90-minute concert will go live on our Facebook page at 7:30 pm on February 14. A recording of the concert will be on our website through Sunday, February 21.

Camille has been singing and acting for over 30 years. She studied jazz and classical singing at Xavier University in New Orleans. Add to this her strong interest in musical theater and you have a talented performer who receives rave reviews for her many concerts, including her appearances at past First Friday Jazz concerts. She will be backed on piano by David P. Murphy, a prolific songwriter and CC producer.



Share Your Talent in the Valentine's Talent Show



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13; 6:30 PM
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FLCLINCOLN
INFO: KATHLEEN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Share your talent in the Valentine's Online Talent Show! Is your talent telling jokes, card tricks, singing, playing an instrument, dance, juggling or something else really unique? Send a recording of yourself featuring your talent to Kathleen Simley by Friday, February 5. The talent show will go live on our Facebook page at 6:30 pm on February 13. A recording of the show will be available on our website starting February 14.

Worship Music Schedule

INFO: MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

February 7 Cherub Choir

February 14 Brass

February 21 Chorister Choir

February 28 Spirit Ringers & Adult Choir

www.flclincoln.org

Game Night on Zoom

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14; 4:00 PM; ZOOM
RSVP BY FEBRUARY 12 TO GET ZOOM LINK & SUPPLIES
INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Our first Zoom Game Night in January was so much fun we are planning another game night so more of you can join in on the fun! We plan to play minute to win games and Qwixx since they were hits in January. Here are some quotes from January's attendees:

"Not that I'm competitive or anything, but game night with First Lutheran was so much fun! It was great seeing the faces of members again and playing a game that I've never played before with all of my First friends." – Laura Gaulty

"I liked it because it was fun, my whole family could play the game and I got to meet people of all ages." – Aaron Ruch

Kyle said... "It was really fun!" And Colin said the same. Dave said... "I was happy to see so many people participating. It was so good to connect with our church family again. We had a great time and look forward to the next one!" – Kate Schmitter and family

"Game Night was such fun! A great chance to laugh and get to know our church family even better." - Donice Kaspar

Zentangle - A Lenten Spiritual Practice Workshop

MARCH 7; 4:00-5:00 PM; REGISTER BY FEBRUARY 21

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

First Lutheran member, Denise Mainquist, has been practicing Zentangle and she recently shared her work (*see photo to the right*) during the "Peace Among Us" online prayer vigil. It stirred interest with others in learning more about the practice. Denise has volunteered to lead a "mini workshop" on Zentangle for all who are interested. You can learn more about the practice at [What Is It? – Zentangle](#).

Contact Sharon Hardel to register. All ages are welcome. We will order [Project Pack 1 Project Pack No. 01 Videos – Zentangle](#) for each participant and will work through the videos together during the workshop. Suggested donation for the workshop is \$20.00 per person. Send your donation to First Lutheran Church with Zentangle Workshop in the memo line.



A Simple Daily Practice for You

INFO: DENISE MAINQUIST; DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM

When awakening each morning, ask yourself, "What in my body now most needs my loving presence?" This might be a dream, a feeling, a persistent body discomfort, an issue in a relationship, the health concern of a friend, etc. Notice where you most carry this in your body. Notice the felt sense of it. Bring a loving presence - an affectionate, caring, nurturing presence - to this felt sense. Being mindful of your time, promise yourself to come back to it if there is a sense that it is unfinished when you need to stop. Such a practice nourishes our sense of the Larger Loving Presence within whom "we live and move and have our very existence." (Acts 17:27-28)

Stephen Ministers Offer One-to-One Care

INFO: PASTORSTEVE@FLCLINCOLN.ORG
OR FDOOLITTLE@WINDSTREAM.NET

Are you or someone you love going through a challenging time and could use someone to talk to on a regular basis? Reach out to see if a Stephen Minister is right for you. Our Stephen Ministers provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in our congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties.

www.flclincoln.org

Ash Wednesday & Lenten Worship

Ash Wednesday worship will be in-person in the Sanctuary with Communion and the Imposition of Ashes on February 17 at Noon and 6:30 pm. The noon service will be livestreamed to our Facebook page with a recording posted on our website. Communion and the Imposition of Ashes will also be available in-person following the noon service until 1:30 pm and after the evening service until 8:00 pm.

Holden Evening Prayer services will be held in-person in our Sanctuary during Lent on Wednesdays, February 24-March 24, at Noon and 6:30 pm. We will livestream the services at noon to our Facebook page with a recording available on our website.

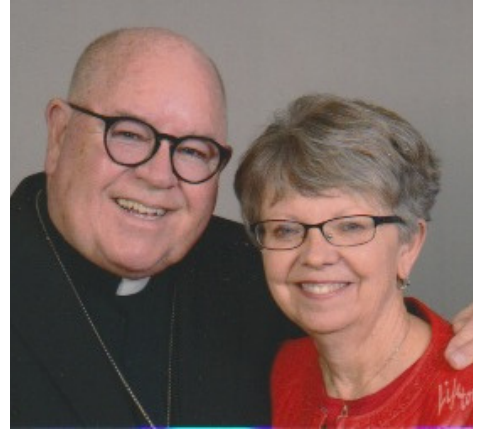
All in-person worship services will be limited to 25% capacity in the Sanctuary with overflow seating in the Commons or Activity Center. Registration will be highly encouraged for planning purposes. Mask wearing and social distancing will be required.

The Call from God Continued to Move Me

BY PASTOR BILL PETERSON, FIRST LUTHERAN ASSOCIATE TRANSITION PASTOR

In our recent sermon texts, we have been hearing call stories to prophecy in the Old Testament and of discipleship in the New Testament. As I respond to the call to be your Associate Transition Pastor, I reflect on my own call to service in Christ.

My call began when God came to me in my baptism as a young child. In Sunday School, I began learning from faithful teachers. I was surrounded by many extended family members. At the age of fifteen, I developed an interest in serving the elderly when I went to work as an orderly in the Lutheran Home in Herington, Kansas. I found great satisfaction and



gained much wisdom in my work with this population. After high school, I attended Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, and graduated with a degree in sociology and social work in 1972.

It was while attending Bethany that I met my wife, Judy. We were both cradle Lutherans and shared most of the same faith traditions and recognized the importance of God and church in our lives. I was licensed as an Adult Care Administrator in Kansas in 1975 which began my journey in Health Care Administration. It was always my belief that I looked at my career as a vocation verses an occupation. For the next 25 years I served as a Long Term Care Administrator and CEO in the acute care setting in my hometown of Herington, KS.

At the age of forty I had a rather strange wake-up call in the night that God was calling me to ministry. I responded by first visiting with Judy and our daughters. I went to visit Wartburg Seminary, applied and was accepted, but the timing just didn't seem right. I continued to serve in health care all the while the call from God continued to move me.

Judy and I began a study in the Parish Ministry Associate program and became commissioned as PMA's in 2003. I then had the opportunity to serve two small parishes while they were in the call process and this furthered my sense of call. Finally, in 2007, I accepted the call and entered seminary training through the TEEM Program. This enabled me to serve my home congregation while I was taking classes at Wartburg Seminary and online. I was ordained on April 18, 2010.

I am both grateful and humbled for this call to First Lutheran and to serve God and the church.

Re-Opening Plans for Small Groups and Worship Services

INFO: PASTORSTEVE@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

In response to the health department lowering the COVID-19 risk dial to orange and removing some restrictions on gatherings, First Lutheran Church is resuming in-person committee meetings and small group ministries. We are also planning how to begin in-person worship services in the Sanctuary. Our COVID Crisis Management Task Force recommends limiting occupancy to 25% of capacity at this time. Following this recommendation, we will hold in-person worship on Ash Wednesday, February 17, and hope to begin Sunday services soon after. Wearing a mask and social distancing is required. We will give more information and further details in the coming weeks.

www.flclincoln.org



FIRST
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

1551 S. 70th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 679
LINCOLN, NE

Slate of Pastoral Candidates Expected Soon

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 preparing to receive a slate of pastoral candidates, currently under development at the Nebraska Synod. We anticipate the slate of candidates will be received at First Lutheran within the next several weeks. Once received, the Call Committee will begin the initial interview and discernment process. The committee has had a number of sessions dedicated to interview preparation, as well as actually conducting practice interviews with two “volunteer” rostered pastors in December. 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. The Call Committee is excited about the upcoming prospect of finding a new Lead Pastor and will keep the process moving forward for this extremely important event in the life of First Lutheran Church. We ask for your continued prayers and support.



[First Things
First E-Newsletter](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Livestream
Worship](#)

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

Annual Budget Report

BY BRYAN HANSON; CHURCH ACCOUNTANT

INFO: BRYAN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Operating Results

Total receipts decreased \$46,080 (-4.7%) due to pandemic curtailed church activities while at the same time our total expenses decreased \$108,878 (-11.2%) mainly due to staffing changes - resulting in a \$62,798 operating surplus for 2020.

In April, the Church Council had the foresight to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan for \$48,000. The funds were received on May 1. In November, documentation was provided to the Small Business Administration on how the funds were used and notice was received on November 16 that the loan was forgiven.

Together, the operating surplus and PPP funds, resulted in a total surplus of \$110,798. On January 5, 2021, the Council approved \$9,279 of additional benevolence payments with the remaining \$101,519 transferred to a Contingency Fund II account. From this fund, the Council approved purchase of a new copier for the office and Call Committee/Pastor relocation expenses incurred in 2021 will be paid from this

Contingency Fund. The remaining funds will be used for potential continued impact from the pandemic and any extra-ordinary expenses for use at the direction of future Church Councils.



In addition to the operating results, our members have shown tremendous generosity!! Examples include \$16,650 for the Gifts of Hope charities; \$16,292 for the Food Pantry/World Hunger (plus several tons of food donations); \$12,218 to the Pastor's discretionary fund; and \$6,134 for the Kicks For Kids campaign.

Building Project

\$2.53 million has been contributed by our members since April 2018 when the three-year capital campaign began, which is 92% of the total pledged amount of \$2.74 million. Expenses for the building project totaled \$4.4 million, requiring a beginning mortgage of \$1.978 million. Interest only payments were made through July, with the monthly principal/interest mortgage payment of \$11,726, beginning in August 2020.

Annual Budget Report (cont)

As we progress into the follow-up three-year 'soft' pledge drive in 2021 those funds will be used to make the mortgage payments through 2024, with any excess funds applied as pre-payments to drive down the monthly mortgage payment to an amount that can be absorbed into the regular operating budget in 2025 - with the assistance of the Mortgage Transition Fund which we will continue to build-up through 2024.

You can read more about the budget in the [2020 Annual Report](#).

