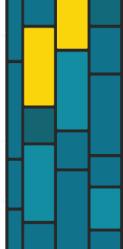


THE VOICE

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

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH / APRIL 2021



Shadrack and wife, Judy



*Kay Rockwell giving goats to
HIV orphan & mother*



*Shadrack receiving proclamation
from the city of Lincoln as a
honorary citizen*

Welcome Extended 8,508 Miles Away

BY BARB JOHNSON FRANK

When it's Adult Forum time at 9:30 am on Sunday morning in Lincoln, Nebraska, it's late-afternoon in Kitui, Kenya, where Shadrack Matuku Musyoka lives.

8,508 miles away from First Lutheran Church, Mr. Musyoka taps his keypad a few times to join the Adult Forum session. Connie Kisling, host for the church's Zoom gathering, smiles as she greets Shadrack, a familiar participant, by name. First Lutheran Church members, Kay and Lee Rockwell, had invited Musyoka to attend, certain that the subject would interest him.

Adult Forum sessions available by Zoom often offer information that the guest from Kenya finds directly applicable to his work in the governor's office. Recordings available on the church website give Musyoka the option of sharing ideas with family members or colleagues, who watch at their convenience.

Musyoka's relationship with First Lutheran began in 2011 when he met Kay Rockwell, then a volunteer for monitoring and evaluation in a U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmer-to-Farmer program focused on improving farming practices and scaffolding the health and well-being of persons affected by HIV-AIDS.

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ADULT LEARNING

Dimensions Still Has Openings for Summer and Fall

BY MICHELLE ZIMMER
DIMENSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dimensions is finishing up enrollment and sending out offers to families for summer and fall. Each of our locations are pretty full, but we have a few full-time and several T/Th spots available (mostly preschool). Pass this information along if you know of anyone who might like to apply, they can go to www.dimensions.org.

This has been a very long year since COVID began. We have all experienced lots of new rules and many challenges. We want to say thank you to everyone at First Lutheran for being so accommodating to what Dimensions has needed as we continued to care for children during this time. We are looking forward to getting back to whatever normal will be.

This month, I would like to introduce you to Lindsey Dill.



Hi! I am Lindsey. I am currently teaching in the toddler room. I have been a part of the Dimensions Education Programs for almost three years. I was born and raised here in Lincoln, NE, and graduated from the University of Nebraska in 2016. I love traveling and exploring new places and learning new things. When I am not traveling or working, I love spending time with friends, being outside, watching Netflix or hanging with my two dogs. A fun fact about me is that I grew up in a family of bowlers. My family on both my mom and dad's side were bowlers and I grew up bowling in a league every Saturday morning!

Game Night is Going Strong

SUNDAY, APRIL 11; 4:00 PM; RSVP APRIL 9
INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Join us for Game Night when we play Farkle or a new game called, Bloom. Or, maybe we will play both! Dice and playing cards will be delivered to those who need them. Please RSVP so you receive the Zoom link.

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Adult Forum

Info: connie.kisling@gmail.com
Recordings at www.vimeo.com/flclincoln

April 4 – Easter – No Adult Forum

April 11 – Transition Plans and Time for Questions – Pastor Stephen Griffith

April 18 – Real Time Stress Reaction to Racism - Tierney Lorenz and Trey Andrews III, UNL. The problems of racism, systematic racism and the effects they have on a community and individual health.

April 25 – Seniors and Loneliness – Teri Vosicky, Immanuel Lutheran. Tools and resources to recognize and deal with isolation among our Seniors.

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

Info: pastorsteve@flclincoln.org
Tuesday's group is studying Titus and Wednesday's group is studying Ephesians.

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: irockwell@windstream.net

Gather and Gab - Thursdays; 8:00 pm

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Women's Circles - Varying dates and times

Info: cynedi@flclincoln.org

FaithTrek Word of the Month is Ministry

SUNDAY, APRIL 11 AND APRIL 25; 9:30 AM

INFO: LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Our FaithTrek word of the month for April is, "Ministry." We will focus on how everyone can be part of the ministry of the church. We will learn about people in the Bible who used their gifts for God's ministry and how everyone has gifts that can be used in ministry. FaithTrek will meet in-person on Sunday, April 11, and Sunday, April 25, with weekly lessons emailed every Sunday in April.

"Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

Ephesians 4:11-12

Middle & High School Learning

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Middle and high school learning will continue to meet in person now that small groups are able to gather at the church. We will combine youth group and learning together so we only meet one time and not twice on Sundays. Please note the youth group schedules for in person gatherings. We will continue to send lessons out via e-mail for families to use at home and for those that are not yet comfortable meeting in person.



FaithTrek families meet in-person on March 21

VBS:Mark Your Calendar

JULY 5-9

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

We have not yet decided on the exact format of Vacation Bible School for this summer, but please save the week of July 5 – July 9 for VBS. Our theme will center around mental health and self care.

Member Directory

INFO: CYNDI@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

The First Lutheran Membership Directory is now available in digital format. If you would like a current copy, please contact Cyndi to request one to be emailed to you. If your contact information needs to be updated, please let Cyndi know.

Congregational Easter Scavenger Hunt

INFO: JUDYBATTERMAN@GMAIL.COM

Since our Fellowship Committee is not able to host the annual Easter Egg Hunt this year they are offering a Scavenger Hunt for the entire congregation! How fun will this be!!

It goes like this:

- Pick at least 6 items from the list of 12 provided below. Find the items or photos of the items.
- Bring the items (and/or photos) to church on Saturday, April 3, between 9:00 am and Noon.
- We will take a photo of you (and your family) with your items and post it on the Facebook First Lutheran Fellowship group page.
- Everyone who comes in with their items will then receive a surprise!

The items include: lily, cross, sign of spring, lamb, Easter egg, stone, 30 coins (to be donated), crown of thorns, nail, Easter basket, photo of spring sidewalk art and item for the Food Pantry.

Do the scavenger hunt with your kids, spouse/partner, friends or by yourself! Let's have lots of members participating! It will be fun, you will get a surprise at the end, but most importantly, others will benefit from it! Now, get ready, set, go!

Joy of Returning to Worship, Joy of Serving

INFO: HAROLDSUTTER@GMAIL.COM

SIGN UP AT WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/RESOURCES

We have 103 worship assistant roles needing to be filled during the month of April - with most of them needed during Holy Week. From ushers, communion assistants, assisting ministers, to greeters and readers, there are many ways you can serve while supporting our return to a full worship schedule. Everyone's help is needed; all ages are welcome; and no previous experience is required. Training will be provided for anyone serving in a new role.

Give Blood: Save a Life

SUNDAY, APRIL 11; 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

First Lutheran is hosting the Red Cross Blood Mobile on Sunday, April 11, from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. We have about 10 spots that have not been filled yet. Sign up!

www.flclincoln.org

High School & Middle School Youth Group

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

April 4: No youth group or learning lessons.

April 11: Blood Drive from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Youth volunteers will help with check in and registration. Game Night at 4:00 pm on Zoom for all ages will also be held.

April 18: TBD.

April 25: Conversation about ministry from 6:00-8:00 pm. What is it? Am I a minister, too? We will also do more planning for our summer trip.



Diaper and Baby Wipes Drive in April

APRIL 5-30

INFO: KSLENZEN@OUTLOOK.COM



From April 5 – 30, our Hunger & Clothing team will be collecting disposable diapers and baby wipes for distribution by the Center for People in Need. They estimate that 6,000 families in Lancaster County are in “diaper need”. In February 2021, they helped 575 families. Diapers in sizes 4, 5 and 6 are requested as this is the greatest need. There will be a display for your donations in the Gathering Area just inside the front doors of the church. Let's help our neighbors take good care of their precious little ones.

Food Pantry in Need

INFO: JUDYBATTERMAN@GMAIL.COM

The Lutheran Food Pantry has been asked to again provide food for families at Matt Talbot and to send extra boxes to the City Mission (in addition to providing food boxes for the Good Neighbor Center.) That means they will go from packing for 29 families weekly to 43.

They are again able to purchase food from the Food Bank, but not all needed items are available. Things that go into every family box include canned fruit, vegetables, tomatoes, soup and beans, pork & beans, cereal, crackers, juice, pasta, canned chicken/tuna, canned and boxed pasta meals, potato products, peanut butter/jelly, pancake mix/syrup, toilet paper, personal products and when available, miscellaneous snack items.

First Lutheran has always been extremely generous in supporting the efforts of the Lutheran Food Pantry and your continued help is needed. So when you do your grocery shopping, please remember to pick up a couple of these extra items. You can bring your food donations to the church and place them in the shopping cart in the entry. Monetary donations are always welcome as well. Thank you for your generosity in helping feed the hungry in Lincoln.

www.flclincoln.org

How're We Goin' to Praise the Lord

INFO: MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Join small ensembles to praise the Lord during worship services.



String Players

Brass Players (with bell covers)

Singers (up to 3 singers - safe distance with masks)

Cherub Choir - Rehearsal on Zoom 5:00-5:15 pm; Wednesdays

Chorister Choir - Rehearsal on Zoom and in-person 5:30-6:00 pm; Wednesdays

Adult Choir - Devotion and Rehearsal on Zoom 7:10-7:40 pm; Wednesdays

Spirit Ringers - Rehearsal in-person 6:30-7:00 pm; Thursdays

Noisy Offering Pig Banks Due Easter Sunday



Just a reminder to turn in your Pig Banks during Holy Week or on Easter Sunday! Your Noisy Offering will help buy pigs through the ELCA Good Gifts program. Thank you for collecting and sharing!

Praying in Color

INFO: DENISE MAINQUIST; DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM

Ask God to be part of this time. Using colored pencils, crayons or markers, write your name for God on a piece of paper. Draw shapes or pictures around it or just start to doodle. Make your drawing a prayer space while you focus on your name for God. You may want to read Isaiah 55:8-13. Then continue to add marks and shapes and words. Just let what happens happen. When you are finished, spend some time with your drawing. What did you notice? How did you feel? You may want to journal on your experience.

This is a wonderful exercise to use when:

Words escape you.

You are restless and unfocused.

Your body wants to be in prayer.

You just want to hang out with God.

You want a visual way to pray.



The words and symbols used in praying in color can focus on people or situations you want to hold in prayer. You can do praying in color anytime for any reason!

Full In-Person Worship Schedule to Resume

INFO: PASTORSTEVE@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

PRE-REGISTER FOR WORSHIP AT WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/WORSHIP

Welcome back to worship at First Lutheran! Since February 17, people have been invited to attend the Ash Wednesday and Lenten services. On March 14, we added Sunday morning to the lineup with services at 8:15 and 10:45 am. Attendance is limited to 25% of capacity or about 80 in the Sanctuary. We have additional seating available in the Activity Center, when needed, and we ask you to register online in advance to help us plan. Our South Sudanese congregation is also gathering for their Nuer language service in the Chapel at Noon on Sundays. We expect to resume Saturday evening services on April 10 in the Sanctuary to allow us to maintain distance between households and take advantage of the newly installed air handling system.

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday - 8:15 am* & 10:45 am
Maundy Thursday - Noon* & 6:30 pm
Good Friday - Noon* & 6:30 pm
Holy Saturday - 5:30 pm
Easter Sunday - 6:00 am, 8:00 am*, 9:30 am
& 11:00 am
*Livestream worship

Register for Holy Week Worship

MARCH 28-APRIL 4

PRE-REGISTER FOR WORSHIP AT WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/WORSHIP

Palm waving, reading of the Passion, stripping of the altar, meditation at the cross, Holy Communion, brass choirs, lilies and your favorite Easter hymns...all in one week...Holy Week. It all begins with Palm Sunday worship on March 28, followed by Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, and ending with Saturday and Sunday Easter worship services. Join us in worship during Holy Week, but a reminder again to pre-register early.

Welcome Extended 8,508 Miles Away

(Continued from page 1)

Rockwell noticed early on that the colleagues had much in common, “I am an educator. I like to learn. It’s just part of my nature. I want other people to continue their learning experiences also. We both want to help people live better lives. We’re concerned about social issues that really affect people. Those are some of the places we’ve connected.”

The pair worked together on a project in Voo, Kenya, designed to provide goats that enable families with children orphaned by HIV-AIDS to build sustainable futures for themselves. Their collaboration grew, as did the humanitarian projects at Voo and Chuluni. The Rockwell family’s visits to Kenya continued.



Shadrack Matuku Musyoka

Years later, Musyoka enlisted the Rockwells’ help in scheduling appointments when he and other officials from the governor’s office planned a visit to Lincoln. “We started in Lincoln because I had a connection with Kay and Lee. They helped us make appointments at the University of Nebraska and with city, county and state officials. Musyoka notes that their experiences in Lincoln are transforming how these government officials envision the role of citizens in a democracy, the importance of empowering women in business and leadership, fair recruitment and hiring practices, the design of affordable housing units and much more.

Musyoka worships in person at First Lutheran when he is in town. When his home church in Kenya closed last fall due to COVID-19, the family joined First Lutheran members in worshiping online. Their relationship with the Rockwells and their experiences at First Lutheran have given Musyoka and his family chances to know practicing Christians in the U.S. He noted, “Many people in Kenya believe that white people could not be Christian because they have money. ‘Why would they worship? Why believe in God? They have everything they need.’ Instead, I see people who are reading the Bible and are passionate about their faith.”

The Rockwells and the Musyokas describe their relationship as “family.” Time spent together in each other’s homes brought the Rockwells “expanded horizons, new relationships and an understanding of how people live in community.” Musyoka smiles when he recalls his neighbors’ concerns for his family’s well-being before Kay Rockwell stayed in their home for the first time. “Kay stayed with us. She went to church with us. Gradually, it became clear that ‘Ah, white people are normal people like us.’”

The Rockwell family speaks fondly of time spent in Lincoln with Shadrack, his spouse, Judy, and their son, Charles. Lee explained, “We’ve gotten to know Shadrack and his family as individuals, as people with whom we can talk about our challenges. We feel a part of Shadrack’s family and they are a part of our family.” The Rockwells look forward to Musyoka’s return to Lincoln to begin the University of Nebraska PhD program in Leadership into which he has been accepted, pending financial assistance.

Welcome Extended 8,508 Miles Away

(Continued from page 7)



Kay Rockewell and Judy Musyoka greeting women after worship

Musyoka reflected, “God will use someone to create opportunities for a person. God will create a connection that will change that person’s life by making it possible to open a door that might have been shut. I would like to think of my life, my hands, my mind, my ideas, my money as God’s. When I give of myself to someone in need, I am not doing it for myself. That is God’s hand. This is my way of telling God, ‘Thank You,’ for giving me what I have. Wherever I am and as long as I can, I wish as much as possible to lift others.”

More connections like the ones between Shadrack Matuku Musyoka and First Lutheran Church are very possible thanks to the growing use of technology as a tool to help the congregation live into its Welcoming Statement. As the Musyoka and Rockwell families demonstrate, time and distance need not be barriers to this welcome. In a world that longs for connections and good news, First Lutheran’s members are finding exciting opportunities to grow “family.”

Church Council Elects Executive Committee

INFO: DENISE MAINQUIST; DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM
VISIT WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/CHURCH-COUNCIL

At their March meeting, the Congregation Council elected officers for 2021: President, Denise Mainquist; Vice-President, Scott Seebohm; Secretary, Rebecca Pfabe; and Treasurer, Brian Niebuhr. Thank you to these who have answered the call to serve in this way.

In addition to their regular meeting, the Council also met in an extended orientation session on March 21. They spent time discussing our mission statement, the three-legged stool of discipleship and our Welcome Statement. They also received an update from the Call Committee, reviewed the Ministry Site Profile and received information on the Council’s role in the call process and the next steps they need to plan for. Pastor Griffith installed the Council and Executive Committee in a brief ceremony that was recorded and will be shared with the congregation in worship.

Member Happenings

Our sympathies to the family of Donna Aschwege who passed away March 20. Her memorial service was held at First Lutheran on March 25.

We also extend our sympathies to members who recently lost loved ones:

Charles Buss, father of Gloria Smith;

Laurie Britten, sister of Carla Osberg;

Kenneth Coolidge, grandfather of Dakota Fisher;

The brother of Anna Furkay; and

Skip Carter, brother to Brad and Linda Carper.

We rejoice with Micaela Nissen and Shane Evans who were united in Holy Matrimony March 20 at First Lutheran.

Jon and Karen Peppmuller and their family also extend this message to the congregation: Thank you so much to our First Lutheran family for all of the cards, thoughts and prayers in regard to the passing of Karen's Dad, Barry Moore. It means so much and we are very grateful!

Call Committee Conducting Second Interviews

INFO: STEVE EICHER; CALL COMMITTEE CHAIR; EICHERSTEVE@GMAIL.COM

FOLLOW THE CALL PROCESS AT WWW.FLCLINCOLN.ORG/CALLPROCESS

The Call Committee continues to make progress in our search for a new Lead Pastor. At the end of January we received a slate of pastoral candidates from the Nebraska Synod and completed all initial interviews within 30 days. Following completion of the first round of interviews we prayerfully discerned the process and candidates. After discernment, we selected prospective pastors for ongoing consideration and second round interviews were scheduled for latter part March. We have also developed a "Welcome to First Lutheran" video to be shared with the prospective candidates. The video highlights the welcoming and accessibility enhancements that were made to our church during the recently completed building project. The Call Committee is doing all we can to keep the call process moving forward for this extremely important event in the life of First Lutheran Church. We ask for your continued 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.