



THE VOICE

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

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH / AUGUST 2021



Pastor Erin Heidelberger Accepts Call to Serve

First Lutheran Church is excited to announce Pastor Erin Heidelberger as its new Lead Pastor!

Pastor Erin was born in Grand Island, Nebraska, and raised in Brookings, South Dakota. She earned her BA in Spanish and Political Science at South Dakota State University (SDSU) in 1996. While at SDSU, she first heard a call to ministry through faith mentors and her involvement in college ministry.

She was born into a Lutheran family, but spent her adolescent and college years in an evangelical denomination. As a young adult, she returned to the Lutheran

church, drawn back to Lutheran liturgy and preaching and truly grasping the gospel news of God's grace for the first time. She continued to hear the call to ministry - now more focused on proclaiming God's love and grace through Word and Sacrament. She earned a Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies from Regent College in Vancouver, BC, in 2005, and her M.Div. from Luther Seminary in December of 2014.

Prior to ordained ministry, Pastor Erin worked for many years in university admissions. She also held jobs as varied as church youth director and administrative assistant at a national fish hatchery in Black Hills, South

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Dimensions Children Have Summer Fun in the Nature Explore Classroom

BY MICHELLE ZIMMER

DIMENSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM

So much has been happening over the summer, it is hard to believe that it is almost over. The children spent as much time as possible out in the Nature Explore Classroom. There is so much to do like planting, harvesting, watering, playing in the dirt, sand and mud and finding crickets, millipedes and roley polleys.

We can't forget playing in the water, running through the sprinklers blowing lots of bubbles and so much more! A perfect way to spend your summer days!

The last day of our summer session will be on July 30. We are closed for one week for professional development for our teachers. This



includes lots of learning, working in the rooms and spending time together. We have very few opportunities to have all staff from the three locations in one place and are always excited about the chance to learn and grow together. We jump right back in on Monday, August 9, as we begin another school year.

New Learning Year for All Ages to Kick Off

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12; 9:30-10:30 AM

INFO: LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG OR SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Mark your calendar and plan to join us for the kick off of our new learning year for all ages! Look for more information about this special event in the coming weeks! All preschool through high school age students will need to [pre-register online](#) for the new year.

Learning Leader Training Planned

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22; NOON-2:00 PM

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG OR LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

FaithTrek and middle and high school learning leaders for the new year will gather for a learning training session. Lunch will be provided. Please plan to be there if you are a volunteer. Volunteer leaders are still needed. Contact Lindsey or Sharon if you are interested!

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ADULT LEARNING

Adult Forum

Sundays; 9:30-10:30 am; Chapel

Info: connie.kisling@gmail.com

August 1 – Coronavirus, Variants, & Our Concerns for Kids and School – Dr. Bob Rauner, First Lutheran member. Hear the latest variant concerns and preparations for the new school year.

August 8 – Synod Assembly Report. First Lutheran members who attended this year's Synod Assembly will share what they learned.

August 15 – Our South Sudan Refugee Church Population – Bol Ngok, First Lutheran member. Hear how our South Sudan church family was impacted by the pandemic and how we might offer help and support.

August 22 – Smarter Charitable Giving – Tyler Mainquist, First Lutheran member. Learnt ways to effectively use what the IRS permits when it comes to claiming charitable giving and deductions.

August 29 – Ted Talk: Empathy is Not Endorsement. Dylan Marron, a digital creator, has racked up millions of views but found that the flip side of success online is internet hate. Hear how he has learned to cope while actually speaking with the people he disagrees with.

Bible Studies - Tuesdays 5:45 pm and Wednesdays 10:45 am; Zoom & In-Person

Info: pastorbill@flclincoln.org

Coffee Talk - Mondays; 1:30 pm; In-Person

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

A Few Good Men Bible Study - Tuesdays; 7:00 am; Zoom

Info: lrockwell@windstream.net

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

Info: tlbeermann@hotmail.com

Gather and Gab - Thursdays; 8:00 pm; Zoom

Info: sharon@flclincoln.org

Saturday with the Guys - 2nd Saturday; 8:00 am; In-Person

Info: jjm.kisling@gmail.com

VBS Families Learn How to Be Loved, Be Kind and Be You

INFO: LINDSEY@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Families enjoyed a wonderful week of Compassion Camp Vacation Bible School July 5-9. Every evening focused on the theme - Be Loved, Be Kind, Be You - and included a delicious meal and fellowship followed by music, crafts, yoga and Bible stories. Kids had the chance to make their own pizzas, learn new yoga poses, act out scripture and make food for Matt Talbot. Special thanks to our volunteers: Cyndi Crouse, Jan Christensen, Annette Watts, Carlene Falos, Kristi Fisher, Pastor Bill, Pastor Steve, Judy Peterson, Bennett Bacon, Cami Boyle, Steve Lenzen, Karen Lenzen and Masako Bacon.



Music Ministry News

INFO: MASAKO BACON; MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Our worship music schedule in August includes:

August 15 - Women's Choir; (8:15 am) / Men's Choir (10:45 am)

August 22 - String Ensemble (8:15 am) / String Ensemble and Percussive Praise (10:45 am)

August 29 - Summer Mixed Choir (10:45 am)

Sing in our one-time commitment summer choirs!

Please wear masks out of caring for others.

Rehearsals will be:

Women's Choir – August 11, 7:10 pm

Men's Choir – August 15, 9:45 am

Summer Mixed Choir – August 29, 9:45 am

Be a part of our string ensemble! Contact Masako for more information about rehearsal times.

Our Children's Choirs will kick off with a family celebration on Wednesday, August 25, at 5:00 pm. Anyone from Kindergarten through 6th grade is encouraged to attend. Rehearsals begin on September 1. The Cherub Choir (K-Grade 2) and Chorister Choir (Grade 3-6) meets every Wednesday from 5:00-5:45 pm.

Our Spirit Ringers bell choir will begin a new year on Thursday, August 26, at 6:30 pm. They will rehearse every Thursday from 6:30-7:30 pm. Contact Masako if you are interested.

Our Adult Choir will kick off a new year on Wednesday, September 1, at 7:10 pm. They will rehearse every Wednesday from 7:10-8:10 pm and will follow COVID protocol to keep everyone safe.

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Confirmation: Dinner+Learning

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18; 6:00 PM; ACTIVITY CENTER

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Dinner + Learning is for youth entering 7th or 8th grade and their parents. We also welcome older youth and adults that would like to have a Confirmation refresher or have never participated in a Lutheran Confirmation program. Before the pandemic we had about 20 adults on the confirmation journey, in addition to our youth and parents. We will gather the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month through the school year, from 6:00-7:30 pm, with our first gathering on August 18. We will have pizza and salad available so if you plan to join us, please let Sharon Hardel know by August 16.

Envelope Challenge Continues for 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering

INFO: SHARON@FLCLINCOLN.ORG



Accept The Envelope Challenge

Support our Youth Accompaniment Trips

- Choose an envelope from the wall in the Gathering Area
- Read a fun fact that is revealed about the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering
- Enclose the amount of money listed
- Place the envelope in the offering plate or turn in to the office

\$11.00	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$15.00	\$16.00	\$17.00	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$20.00
\$21.00	\$22.00	\$23.00	\$24.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$27.00	\$28.00	\$29.00	\$30.00
\$31.00	\$32.00	\$33.00	\$34.00	\$35.00	\$36.00	\$37.00	\$38.00	\$39.00	\$40.00
\$41.00	\$42.00	\$43.00	\$44.00	\$45.00	\$46.00	\$47.00	\$48.00	\$49.00	\$50.00
\$51.00	\$52.00	\$53.00	\$54.00	\$55.00	\$56.00	\$57.00	\$58.00	\$59.00	\$60.00
\$61.00	\$62.00	\$63.00	\$64.00	\$65.00	\$66.00	\$67.00	\$68.00	\$69.00	\$70.00
\$71.00	\$72.00	\$73.00	\$74.00	\$75.00	\$76.00	\$77.00	\$78.00	\$79.00	\$80.00
\$81.00	\$82.00	\$83.00	\$84.00	\$85.00	\$86.00	\$87.00	\$88.00	\$89.00	\$90.00
\$91.00	\$92.00	\$93.00	\$94.00	\$95.00	\$96.00	\$97.00	\$98.00	\$99.00	\$100.00

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Envelope Challenge. As you will read in the Accompaniment Reflections below, the youth and adults had an amazing experience on their accompaniment trip to Savannah, GA. If you haven't yet taken an envelope from the wall in the Gathering area yet, we are continuing the challenge into September as we also need funds this fall to start our registration process for the ELCA Youth Gathering next summer in Minneapolis, MN. Youth entering 8th through

12th grade this fall are eligible to attend. Our middle school youth will also have the opportunity to go on an accompaniment trip and a location will be determined in early September. Any additional donations are welcomed and appreciated.

Youth and Adults Reflect on Accompaniment Experience

From July 3-9, 12 youth and 4 adults traveled to Savannah, GA, for an accompaniment experience. Their week included serving local agencies and individuals in need, as well as learning more about the history and culture of Savannah. Here are some reflections the participants shared at the end of their experience:



Serving on the accompaniment team was Sophia Johnson-Alvarez, Tristen Halsey, Xander, Aden and Will Niebuhr, Liz Scharton, Dakota Fisher, Nicholas Bushard, Hannah and Caleb Miles, Faye Belew (from Faith Lutheran in Seward) and adult sponsors, Sharon and Kent Hardel, and Pastor Sarah and Pastor Miles Ruch.

Where Did You See God This Week?

I've experienced God in the people I've met. They have taught me so much about what it means to love and serve. That is something which I cannot be more thankful for. – Nicholas Bushard

I felt God at the ocean. The astounding realization that my God could have made every single thing and perfected every detail in the ocean was amazing. – Hannah Ruch

I felt God through everyone I met and came with on the trip. I've seen God at every worksite I've been to, no matter how big or small. He is always watching. – Liz Scharton

This week I experienced God in our Youth Works leaders, Samuel and Domo. Since the other two people on their team were sick and couldn't help, they took up all the responsibility and did their best to make sure we all had a fun time with only the two of them. You could tell God was guiding their hands as they found time for all of us this week. – Aden Niebuhr

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Noisy Offering to Support Backpack Program

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1; DURING WORSHIP



The Lincoln Food Bank Backpack Program helps students who qualify for their school's Free or Reduced Lunch Programs by providing a food-filled backpack to the child and family over the weekend. The Backpack Program is a way to help students return to school where they know they can have breakfast or lunch. First Lutheran has been a sponsor of the Backpack Program for many years serving area neighborhood elementary schools. The Backpack Program was paused last school year because of the pandemic, but is expected to resume this school year. It costs about \$250 for one student to receive weekly backpacks for an entire school year. Our August Noisy Offering will support First Lutheran's Backpack Program.

It Takes a Team to Worship

INFO: MASAKO AT MUSIC@FLCLINCOLN.ORG
[SIGN UP AS A WORSHIP ASSISTANT](#)

Every week we depend on volunteers to make our worship actually happen and in a meaningful way. We need greeters to make everyone feel welcomed. We need communion assistants and people to set up communion so each of us can partake in holy communion. We need readers so we can hear the word of God. Every job is important and supports our worship liturgy in some way.

Thirteen volunteers are needed for each worship service or a total of 26 volunteers every Sunday. This might sound like a lot, but for the size of our congregation it is minimal. If you served as a worship assistant before the pandemic, but haven't since, please consider volunteering. We would love to have you back! If you haven't volunteered in the past, consider starting now. With simple instructions or a brief orientation, you will be set to go! There are jobs for individuals, couples and families and for elementary-aged kids to the oldest of members.

We can prevent last-minute scrambling on Sunday mornings if, together, we can secure all worship assistant roles by Friday each week. So, take a moment and look at the [sign up for August](#). If you see an area where volunteers are needed, please consider signing up. The link to the online sign up is always available on the [Resources page](#) of our website. It takes a team to make worship happen every weekend. Consider being a part of the team!

Member Happenings

We welcome through baptism on July 18, 2021, Dax Jake Wiebelhaus, son of Beth and Brandon Wiebelhaus. Sponsors are Jon and Holly Pettlon.

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Endowment Board Awards 15 College Scholarships

INFO: AL WILLIAMS; AW4CSONS@AOL.COM

Congratulations to the following First Lutheran students for receiving this year's 2021 Endowment Board scholarships:

Tyler Scheel - University of Nebraska Lincoln
Avery Watts - Carleton College
Alexis Sandman - Nebraska Wesleyan University
Emma Krause - University of Nebraska Lincoln
Bryce Johnson - University of Nebraska Lincoln
Caden Peppmuller - University of Nebraska Omaha
Anna Kruse - University of Nebraska Lincoln
Mandy Snyder - University of Nebraska Lincoln

Grace Monson - Nebraska Wesleyan University
Sienna Mathes - Marymount University
Ethan Cotter - University of Wyoming
Indigo Mathes - Montana State University Bozeman
Bailey Sandman - Nebraska Wesleyan University
Abby Watts - Middlebury College
Navy Mathes - Gustavus Adolphus College

These students are amazing representatives of First Lutheran. We are very proud of all of you! Good luck in the upcoming school year!

A Church Picnic for All Ages

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29; NOON; ACTIVITY CENTER
INFO: JUDY BATTERMAN; JUDYBATTERMAN@GMAIL.COM

Join us for the congregational church picnic! Couples and families are asked to bring a main dish and a side, salad or dessert. Singles just bring one dish. Beverages and tableware will be provided. Everyone is invited to attend. There will be games, great food and lots of fellowship. It will be held in the Activity Center at First Lutheran so bring your hot/cold dishes when you come to worship and keep them warm/cold in the kitchen. We look forward to seeing you!



Heidi Youngquist to be Ordained

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6; 6:30 PM; SANCTUARY
RSVP TO HYOUNGQUIST96@GMAIL.COM

Our sister, Heidi Youngquist, will be ordained into the ministry of word and sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America on Friday, August 6, at 6:30 pm at First Lutheran Church. The congregation is invited to this special event. The ordination will also be livestreamed at <https://youtu.be/sRZS5dLXSog>. A coffee and cake reception will follow the ordination ceremony. Heidi has been called to serve as staff pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, SD.

A Month of Celebrations

INFO: DENISE MAINQUIST; DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM

Mark your calendars for a month of celebrations in August as First Lutheran Church bids farewell to our interim pastors and a warm hello to Pastor Erin.

Pastor Steve's Farewell and Godspeed will be July 31 and August 1 at each worship service. There will be a Sunday morning reception between services to send Pastor Steve off with our blessings. We will have a basket at the reception for cards.

Pastor Erin will be installed as Lead Pastor on August 21-22 at each service. We will have a special reception between services on August 22 for her as well. Watch for more information on New Beginnings activities to meet and connect with Pastor Erin and bless her new beginning at First. If you would like to help her and her family explore Lincoln, we are accepting gift cards to local restaurants or coffee shops. Gift cards can be dropped off at the church office by August 8.

Pastor Bill's last Sunday at First will be August 29. We will have Farewell and Godspeed for him at each of the services on the 28th and 29th and a special reception between services on the 29th. We will have a basket for personal cards at the reception. If you would like to contribute to a purse for Pastor Bill, please send the money to the church office by August 21 with a notation that it is for Pastor Bill's farewell.

How exciting to have an entire month of celebration after over a year in the wilderness! Let us praise God and give thanks for God's unwavering love!



Pastor Steve Bids Farewell

It has been a great privilege to serve as your Transition Pastor for the past year. I have enjoyed my sojourn with you, and have learned much. I appreciate your fondness for the liturgy and your addiction to donut holes. I celebrate the way you embrace your Welcome Statement and the dedication of committees that lead in the areas of Worship and Prayer, Learning, and Serving. I rejoice that you have worked through the call process so quickly and so thoroughly. I believe you have made an excellent choice.

Several of you have asked what is next for me. First, there will be two months of packing, moving and unpacking. After living in two downtown condos for a year, Mary Kay have bought a house in northwest Lincoln which will give us more space and locate her just a bit closer to her church in Seward. Beyond that, I hope to have time for reading and advocacy, and will likely help another congregation along the way.

Thank you for your many expressions of appreciation. Thank you for letting me walk with you along this journey. Thank you for friendship and support. I pray many blessings for you!

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Spiritual Practice: Jesus Prayer

INFO: DENISE MAINQUIST; DEEMAIN12564@YAHOO.COM

This is one of the most famous prayers in Christianity. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus praised the tax collector for humbling himself in prayer, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

There are several variations of the prayer. Choose the one that feels best for you.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.

Jesus, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

This is a prayer that is always available when you need to focus or calm down or give thanks. Simply say your chosen version of the prayer for as long as you need to, breathing naturally. You may want to end with a short prayer of gratitude.

Expressions of Gratitude

Thank you, First Lutheran Church, for being one of the 156 most generous congregations of the ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response program. Your generosity makes a difference to our neighbors around the world.
~Rev. Robin Brown, Director, Congregational Mission Funding

On behalf of Fresh Start's Board of Directors and staff, thank you for your wonderful donation of \$2500. It means so much to our work and the success of our programs.
~Connie Benjamin, Board Member

Dear First Lutheran Family, I can't tell you how much we truly appreciate your continued and generous support! Bridges of Hope would not exist if we didn't have congregations and people like you. Thank you for your contribution of \$2000! ~Rhonda Mattingly, Executive Director

Pastor Erin Heidelberger Accepts Call to Serve (cont)

(continued from page 1) Dakota. She served her pastoral internship at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Spokane, WA.

Pastor Erin began serving her first call at Zion Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, SD, in March 2015 and her call has evolved from co-pastor to solo lead pastor. She just finished serving her first year as off-site intern supervisor and has served on a local Lutheran Campus Ministry board for five years.

She likes to spend her time outside of the church hiking, biking, gardening and traveling with her husband of 19 years, Cory, their 15 year old daughter, Katarzyna (Kasia), and their aggressively friendly Labradoodle, Ezra.

Pastor Erin will begin her ministry at First Lutheran on Monday, August 16. She shares, "*I'm incredibly excited to be joining First Lutheran in ministry and I'm grateful for the Holy Spirit's work in bringing us together! I look forward to getting to know you and walking with you as we proclaim God's love and grace to the community of Lincoln.*"

Parish Ministry Associates Serve the Lord with Gladness

God has been raising up dedicated lay leaders in our Synod for over 25 years. Parish Ministry Associates (PMAs) are looked to for pulpit supply, visitation, education, worship and many more ministries. They serve congregations that can't call a pastor or that are between pastors. They are hometown evangelists who share the Good News all week long in their communities and work places.

We have several PMAs at First Lutheran and will be celebrating them on Sunday, August 15. Pastor Bill Peterson was a PMA before answering the call to ordained ministry. His wife, Judy Peterson, and First Lutheran member, Nancy Clay, are also PMAs. Judy and Nancy each share their story on how they became a PMA and their experiences in serving in this ministry.



by Nancy Clay

In the late 90's, Pastor Dave Nystrom heard about a new ministry within the ELCA and felt I would be a possible candidate to participate. I began a three-year education program. In the Spring of 2000, I became a certified PMA.

Shortly after certification I accepted the call to ministry as the Director of Children and Youth Ministries at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. I felt God very near, seeing how he inspired the children and youth in service and in sharing their faith with others.

Following that call, I served as Director of Music and Christian Education at American Lutheran Church. During a time when Pastor Henry Thorberg was ill, I helped by planning and leading Sunday worship. It was a humbling experience, but God never failed to give inspiration and I felt the Holy Spirit in our midst.

I certainly did not ever think I would be called to step in and lead in some of the ways I was asked to lead, but the preparation of the PMA program and God's direction never failed me.

The ELCA is in need of more believers to serve as Parish Ministry Associates. Opportunities to serve God are many. PMAs are a rich resource for churches as trained lay leaders. I hope you will consider this lay ministry certification program and prayerfully see if this is a way you might be called to serve.



by Judy Peterson

I grew up in Western Nebraska and attended a small Lutheran church. Church music was important in my family and I grew to love the hymns and Sunday School songs. I played for my dad to sing at various church events and sometimes my mom sang with him.

I had the opportunity to learn more about the theology, history, areas of ministry, and general Bible knowledge through the Parish Ministry program when we lived in Herington, Kansas. The PMA Program seeks to equip people for

Parish Ministry Associates Serve the Lord With Gladness (cont)

their own ministry as servants of Christ. The Program also helps identify and nurture gifts that God has given to his people. Many PMAs do pulpit supply. I did this on occasion which was a stretch for me, but the congregation received it well. I had always enjoyed working in the church, especially in the areas of children's ministry and music. The classes I completed helped me to further my understanding of the church that I was serving in.

I have served as a church musician since I was in high school. I became involved with two other church musicians when we lived in Kansas and we enjoyed playing three keyboards together for our worship services. This included the organ, piano and Korg keyboard. We also played together for weddings and funerals. Our practice time became a highlight of the week and was such a blessing!

I also became the director for our children's program there which was called Christian Life Night. I was able to devote more time to the program when I retired from teaching special education in the schools there. Kids from age three through eighth grade came on Wednesday nights for supper, worship, study and confirmation. A Bible story was introduced in worship with a video, singing and other activities. They went to classes and read the story in age appropriate Bibles and reinforced it with a variety of activities which included crafts, drama, food, and games. It is my prayer that this learning will stick with them for life and be a basis for their faith journey. The confirmation students attended worship with the younger ones and then attended their own class. I enjoyed using some of the teaching strategies that I had used to try to engage the seventh and eighth graders in the study of the Bible and Catechism.

I enjoyed directing the children's Christmas program and organizing community Vacation Bible School with three other churches which was hosted at our church. It was a joy to see the eyes of the kids when they walked in and saw the church transformed into a cave, a rain forest or the sea. The singing was spirit filled and the energy was high!

The PMA program is a great way to delve deeper into one's understanding of the Bible and our Lutheran church. It has certainly helped me to further my ministry.

.....

Are you someone who:

- Desires to develop skills in Bible, pastoral care, church history, spirituality, leadership and more?
- Has a heart for the people of God and an interest in serving others as a member of the "priesthood of all believers?"
- Demonstrates spiritual maturity?
- Demonstrates leadership skills which can nurture and guide others?
- Feels a deep sense of commitment to serve Jesus Christ and the Church?

If so, prayerfully consider becoming a Parish Ministry Associate in the Nebraska Synod, ELCA. For more information, visit the [Nebraska Synod website](http://www.flclincoln.org).

Six Month Financial Update for 2021

INFO: BRYAN HANSON; BRYAN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

Operating Results

Obviously more financial assumptions than normal had to be built into the 2021 budget last fall due to unknowns with the pandemic and when staffing changes would occur. Overall at mid-year, we find ourselves with a \$37,521 surplus. Receipts are \$14,190 over budget (+3.0%) due to 27 of the 185 offering pledges already paid in full. Expenses are (\$23,331) under budget (-4.9%) in the compensation, pension/health insurance, and payroll tax accounts. We have been blessed with the leadership of Pastor Steve and Pastor Bill and look forward to Pastor Erin's transition.

Year-to-date contribution statements will be mailed after July month-end is closed.

In addition to regular offerings, a total of \$16,186 was contributed in the first half of the year for various benevolent purposes such as Food Pantry, World Hunger, Endowment Fund, Matt Talbot, and the Pastor Discretionary Fund.

Building Project

\$2.688 million has been contributed to-date to the initial capital campaign pledge drive that began in 2nd quarter 2018. Approximately \$189,000 pledges remain to be contributed.

In addition to the monthly mortgage payments which began in August 2020, mortgage pre-payments totaling \$355,000 have been made with excess campaign funds and an estate bequest reducing the mortgage balance to \$1,667,535 as of June 30th. In March the mortgage interest rate was re-negotiated with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund reducing from 4.625% to 3.95%, which saved \$1,000/month in interest expense.

In May, the Council approved a follow-up 'soft' capital campaign with the goal of driving down the mortgage balance as far as possible the next three years. Funds received from this capital campaign will be used to make the monthly mortgage payments, in addition to pre-payments through 2024. A campaign goal of \$700,000 - 25% of what was received from the initial capital campaign - will allow us to cut the mortgage payment in half by the end of 2024 (and save thousands of dollars of interest which nobody likes to pay!)

Youth and Adults Reflect on Accompaniment Experience (cont)

(continued from page 4) I experienced God when we had our feet washed because everybody was crying and I went out of my comfort zone and hugged them. – Tristen Halsey

I felt God during our nightly worship, especially when we were all singing. I also felt God a lot during the feet washing. – Faye Belew

It's hard to pick just one place God has been present on this trip as there have been so many moments that God is so clearly at work. I've seen these 12 youth come together and bond as one more than any group I've travelled with or led. They embraced one another in a way that transcends age, gender, personalities or anything else. They embody what it means to be siblings in Christ. – Sarah Ruch, Leader



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Be a Part of the Communications Ministry Team

INFO: KATHLEEN@FLCLINCOLN.ORG

We are looking for volunteers to be a part of our Communications Ministry Team who are interested in or have skills in the following areas: photography, videography, social media, podcasting, blogging, interviewing and general writing. If you are interested in one or more of these areas, we would love to have you! Contact Kathleen to learn more!



[First Things
First E-Newsletter](#)



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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.

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