



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

News and Notes from Pastor and Principal February 2021

Connecting People with Word and Sacrament

As you no doubt are aware, worship is now being offered in person and streamed live. Certainly if you are not able to be with us for a weekend service, the streaming ability is a tremendous blessing for you and many others. Ultimately though, whether at this time you are choosing to worship in person or online, physically gathering together should always be our desire if possible. While we understand that everyone is at a different comfort level regarding in person gatherings due to the ongoing pandemic, we encourage you to remember the blessings of gathering together as brothers and sisters in the faith and strive toward joining us in person once again.

Safe practices, like distancing and mask wearing, are being taken. Ultraviolet cleaners were just purchased for the school classrooms. Our plan is to also use them in the sanctuary for additional cleaning. Even with every other pew closed off during a service, there is still plenty of room in the sanctuary and the narthex if needed. As a result we have been able to worship together as safely as possible even when conventional worldly wisdom might say otherwise. We pray that we will be able to continue to do that as the Lord continues to bless us through Word and Sacrament as we approach the season of Lent.

Lent Worship Series - The Struggle

The road to the cross was a struggle. This Lenten season, we see Jesus descend the mount of glory so that he could enter a valley of suffering. He would be rejected by his people and betrayed by one of his disciples. Satan tempted him to give up, but he pressed on to the cross for you. Hebrews 2:18 says, "Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." The struggle was real.

The Christian life is a struggle. The struggle is real. Faith in Christ doesn't make us exempt from difficulties. But faith in Christ does give us strength to press on. This Lenten season on Ash Wednesday, the Sundays in Lent, and Holy Week, we will meditate on the words of the Psalm writers who put the struggle of the believer into poetry and prayer. They cried out to God when they struggled against their enemies, against temptation, against guilt, and against the perspective that this life is unfair. The Psalm writers were able to press on in the struggle because they know that their God was in control. They knew and prophesied that the promised Savior was coming. Their struggle is our struggle. Their hope is our hope. Their God is our God. This is a Savior who entered our struggle to win the victory over the struggle, to equip us for our struggle.

Midweek Lent Worship Series - Hands of the Passion

Whether they were lifted to bless God's chosen people or to stone God's chosen prophets, hands in the Bible are rarely noticed but always in action. This year our midweek Lent worship services will explore the many roles hands played during the Passion of our Lord Jesus. We will revisit the actions of key-biblical figures to witness God's all-powerful, saving hand at work.

Holy Communion

Even though Holy Communion is being offered during regular worship services, we recognize that not everyone is comfortable with being in those services yet. However, it has also come to Pastor Heuer's attention that there may be some communing at home while watching the live stream. Although not wrong, it has been determined after careful study and thought within our synod that this may not be the best practice for receiving the Lord's Supper. While it is commendable that you desire to receive the Sacrament, we, as a congregation, still want to reflect an orderly practice of what God's Word tells us. If you have any questions or would prefer to receive the Sacrament outside of attending the worship service in person, please contact Pastor Heuer. Something can be arranged with you.

Sunday Live Stream Schedule

- ❖ Worship - 8:00 AM
- ❖ Bible Study - 9:15 AM

Lent and Holy Week Worship (When there are multiple services, * indicates which will be live streamed.)

- ❖ Ash Wednesday with Communion (February 17) - 6:30 PM
- ❖ Midweek Lent Services - 6:30 PM
- ❖ Maundy Thursday with Communion - 3:30 and *6:30 PM
- ❖ Good Friday - 1:30 and *6:30 PM
- ❖ Easter Sunday with Communion - *8:00 and 10:30 AM

Current Bible Studies

- ❖ The Christian Living in Today's World - Sunday at 9:15 AM (also live streamed)
- ❖ Sing to the Lord: A Study of Lutheran Hymnody - Thursdays at 9:00 AM (Zoom available upon request)
- ❖ The Life and Teachings of Jesus (Men's Bible Study) - 2nd Saturday of the month at 8:00 AM

Video Sunday School Lessons

During this pandemic, certain things have been harder to do than others. Sunday School, for one reason or another, has been one of them. For the remainder of this school year, we shifted to making video Sunday School lesson resources available for families each week. YouTube links are emailed to parents to use as they see fit for "Sunday School at home". If you have not received those links and would like to be added to the list, contact Pastor Heuer.

Bible Reading and Online Discussion Group

Pastor has started a Bible reading and discussion group on Facebook linked with our church's podcast - Christ's Love, Ours to Share (<http://firstelkhorn.podbean.com>). The group with the same name is described as follows:

"A group organized by First Lutheran Church in Elkhorn, WI for the purpose of reading and discussing God's Word as we grow together in Christ's love through worship and home Bible readings."

The days when worship services are held will be dedicated to discussion of the message in worship that day. Monday through Friday (except during Lent) a Bible reading and short devotional thought will be shared on the page through the podcast. Saturday will be set aside to reread the readings from the week. Check out the group and ask to join today. Search for "Christ's Love, Ours to Share (First Lutheran Elkhorn, WI)", follow the group link (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/718700429070005>) or find the link posted on our church's Facebook page.

Even if you are not interested in being part of the group, you can still read along with us as the reading plan will be shared each week in worship and in the news bulletin. A printed calendar for the next two months is also available in the back of church on the counter under the steps. Our reading together at the beginning of this month will finish up the book of 1 Peter. When Lent begins the readings will be readings from our worship services not focused on during the sermon.

Lutheran Elementary School

We have reached somewhat of a milestone when we finished the first semester January 22. The time seems to go quickly when we stay busy educating the students. Morale among the students and staff has remained excellent. We can give credit for this to our Lord as we learn all our lessons in the light of His Word. It also may be due to the need for human companionship that is being satisfied every day at school. The Lord created us to be sociable creatures who thrive on relationships.

Our extracurriculars have changed from sports to robotics and handbells. The four robotics teams had a tournament January 17 and will have another one February 27, both at Shoreland Lutheran High School. The classrooms have been working with Mrs. Rachel Nolte on their handbell skills. She directed them as they enhanced worship during advent season and will again during the lenten services. Our students will soon be starting to prepare for the Social Studies Fair. They will prepare projects that deal with history, geography, government, or culture. Viewing will be in spring on Friday, April 9 between 6:00 and 7:00.

Since our congregation voted to enter the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, we have been busy with various tasks. Our main team consists of Misty Quinn, Dave Nommenson, and Mike Falk. We have been taking some online training and filling out forms to complete the application process. Mrs. Quinn serves as the Bookkeeper and Task Manager while Mr. Falk has the position of Administrator. Mr. Nommenson is our consultant and advisor. Our current school families will be able to apply during the next few months. May the Lord bless our school and church through this program.

General News

Family Open Gym Night

Are you looking for an evening of fun and fellowship? Sunday, February 7 will be a Family Open Gym Night from 6:00-8:30 PM. Have some fun with volleyball or cornhole. Grab a hula hoop or a ball out of the gym closet. Enjoy kid friendly board games up in the mezzanine. Prepackaged snacks will be provided. Then about halfway through, we'll gather for a brief devotion. *We ask that you please wear a mask unless you are participating in a physical activity.*

Audio Video Project Update

We have recently completed technology upgrades to our sanctuary's sound system along with the addition of new screens and a camera. These technology upgrades will be a tremendous blessing to our congregation as we gather for worship. The video displays allow us to place the order of service, hymns, graphics, videos, and announcements up on the screen in a better, clearer, and easier to see way. The video camera and other included software allows us to live-stream a regular Sunday service for those who may not be able to join us in worship that weekend. The projected cost for the whole project was \$30,510. So far \$26,555 of that has been provided which leaves us with a remaining balance of \$3,955. Any special gifts toward these upgrades are appreciated. We thank you for your generosity.