



First Lutheran Church

.....
 Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
 we are nurtured, prepared, and sent to be the light of Christ in our world.

The Church of Jesus

I firmly believe that people these days want a church that is true to Jesus and one that is aligned with his ministry and mission. As Disciples of Christ perhaps we should be asking ourselves, "What would it mean for Christians to rediscover their faith?" What would it mean for us to rediscover Christianity as "a just and generous way of life, rooted in contemplation and expressed in compassion?"

In the first chapter of Acts, Jesus tells his followers, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Then he disappears leaving them with a vital and incredible mission! His words are later fulfilled in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit comes upon his followers -- Acts tells us that "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Immediately, the people gathered together that day begin to speak about "God's deeds of power" in languages that are understood by the international crowd that was gathered in Jerusalem that day. Then the apostle Peter begins to speak about the life and death of Jesus, giving testimony to how "God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power." These words resulted in the baptism of 3,000 people in one day alone!

But the power of the Christian message was communicated not only by words, but also by actions and by deeds as well. Acts tells us that the members of the church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." They shared everything -- in fact, "they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need." And because of this just and generous way of life, rooted in prayer and expressed in compassion, the church had "the goodwill of all the people." It continued to grow, day by day, as "the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

In other words Jesus wants the church, the members of his body here on earth to be spiritually mature, rooted in prayer and contemplation. The fruits of such a community are acts of compassion and generosity. Such a life is described well by the apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy, where he challenges his fellow Christians to "do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share" The result, says Paul, is "the life that *really* is life!"

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Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

Continuing from pg. 1

Jesus wants us to enjoy this kind of life, he wants us to have an abundant life -- one marked by a lack of attachment to material things, one that is open and receptive to others, and one that includes spiritual maturity. He wants us to build a community of justice and generosity, one that is rooted in contemplation and committed to acts of compassion. When we do this, the Christian church won't be despised or rejected by the world. Instead, it will receive the goodwill of the people and with the help of the Spirit it might even grow!

God Bless,
Pastor Ryan

First Lutheran

YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL COMPARISONS REPORT			
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH	September 2019	September 2020	September 2020 Budget
Total Income	199,574.73	173,305.30	212,778.12
Total Expenses	194,810.23	155,109.30	229,022.79
Income compared to Expenses	4,764.50	18,196.00	

As of September 30, 2020, we received a total of \$173,305.30 and spent \$188,990.41 so the negative balance for the year would have been **-\$15,685.11** but we received a total of \$33,881.11 from the federal Payroll Protection Program so our balance is \$18,196.00.

FELC Financial Report- As of September 30, 2020, we received a total of \$173,305.30 and spent \$188,990.41 so the negative balance for the year would have been -\$15,685.11 but we received a total of \$33,881.11 from the federal Payroll Protection Program so our balance is \$18,196.00. Through your generosity and with the payroll protection program loan/grant, we were able to meet all obligations through September but the grant funds are now gone so please keep FELC's financial stewardship in mind and anything you are able to give will be greatly appreciated.

Re-opening Plan Update

Greetings Faithful Servants of FELC,

As Fall is officially here and the weather is starting to change, we continue to evaluate where we are now, but also trying to look ahead at the next few months. Council has decided to extend the closure through October, so we will continue to offer online and drive-up Worship this month. However, we do recognize that the COVID-19 numbers in the county have continued to hold steady and we currently meet the metrics to move into Phase 3 of the re-opening plan when counties are allowed to do that again. And while the famous Washington rain hasn't been that heavy yet, we know it's coming.

We want to be cautiously optimistic when looking at the months of November and December and that if these numbers hold, we could offer a limited in-person Worship option again. This virus does not discriminate, as we witness the unfortunate turn of events in the White House, anyone could get it at any time. If we do re-open, we will need to follow very strict rules from the state, and they would limit what we can do inside the building. It would be very similar to the shortened service we offer during drive-up but would include further tweaks to make it safe to worship indoors.

Part of the limitations are the maximum number of people that would be allowed in the Sanctuary, which would be approximately 40-50 people. We will need to determine how much demand there will be for in-person Worship, should be we be able to offer it. We would like to know if you and your family would feel safe attending in-person Worship in the next few months as we will be sending out a survey to help us determine if there are enough people to even go down this road right now, and if we would possibly need to offer more than one option.

We also have started planning for the November semi-annual Congregation meeting, as that's a critical part of our Church year to approve our 2021 budget and our slate of nominated candidates. Ideally, we would have this in-person, but we know that we may not have enough people willing to meet in person. If we can meet in person, we would offer a drive-up option so you could listen to the meeting in your car and vote from there. The backup option will be to have an online Zoom Congregation Meeting, and with guidance from the Synod, it looks like we could utilize electronic voting since our Constitution does not strictly forbid it.

Be on the lookout for further updates through October as we continue to evaluate all information and options. I know we are all feeling some online fatigue, but if that's the best and safest option, then we will continue in that direction. Thank you for continuing to be flexible as we go through these uncertain times.

In His name,

Benjy St.Germain
FELC Council President

Nominating Committee Update

Last month, we shared how your Nominating Committee was busy identifying volunteers for several service opportunities at First. Thankfully, in the last few weeks, several of our members have agreed to serve when asked. However, we're still looking to fill a few more positions.

Consider how *The Message* (the Bible in contemporary language) paraphrases Romans 15:1: "Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand ..., and not just do what is most convenient for us."

You have gifts to share and we encourage you to consider stepping forward to assume one of these positions:

President, Secretary

If we ask you to serve, it's because we believe you'll do a wonderful job keeping our community moving forward. Please give our request your full and prayerful consideration.

If you've already made that decision, let us know you're interested in serving. We'd love to hear from you!

Paula Holmes- pholmes@comcast.net
Jonathan Thomas- mojudada@gmail.com
Roberta Windham -robertawindham1@gmail.com



2021 Budget Meeting

The 2021 Budget Meeting will be held on October 13, 2020, at 6:00 pm via Zoom. Benjy St. Germain will host the meeting so if you would like to attend, please contact me or Benjy. Please check your budget and contact your council representative if any changes should be made. All are welcome!

Thank you,

Jeanette St. Germain Treasurer



Devotionals

Christ in Our Home

Printed copies of Christ in our Home are available in the basket just outside the front door.

Faith Lens

Weekly Bible studies that engage youth and young adults in connecting world events with the Bible, faith, and everyday life.

<https://blogs.elca.org/faithlens/>

Memorial Garden News

The memorial committee had the arbor in the garden repaired last month. They had Darrin Sutherland replace the flower pot holders with two beautiful crosses. Darrin is a chain saw artist and did an outstanding job.

Thank-you John Faber and the memorial committee.

The Spirit

Volume 37, Number 10
October 2020



Dear Beloveds of Christ,

There are stories in this world that we will never know. Stories that beg to be told and yet they will never be heard because they have been forgotten, covered up, never told or intentionally destroyed.

A few weeks ago, I was floating down the Wenatchee River on an inner tube. It was a beautiful day – perfect weather – no sign of humanity anywhere. Rounding a bend, I suddenly saw a strange site: An old skinny white man wearing only a loin cloth flying a rainbow-colored kite. This man camping/living in an old RV on the banks of the Wenatchee, basically naked, long full beard and hair, arms outstretched towards the heavens and flying a beautiful multi-colored kite. *What story does he have to share?*

A few Sundays ago, the *New York Times* ran a photo essay about hunger in America. The author writes, “In the pandemic economy, nearly one in eight households doesn’t have enough to eat. The lockdown, with its epic lines at food banks, has revealed what was hidden in plain sight: that the struggle to make food last long enough, and to get food that’s healthful — what experts call ‘food insecurity’ — is a persistent one for millions of Americans ... Like many hardships, this burden falls disproportionately on Black and Hispanic families, who are almost twice as likely to experience food insecurity as white families.” (www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/02/magazine/food-insecurity-hunger-us.html) Through the photo gallery in this *New York Times* photo essay, we catch glimpses of the lives of Kandice, Brayden, Doris, Armani and many others. *What other stories are held in this story?*

As I write this article, large swaths of California, Oregon and Washington are on fire. Houses burned to the ground. People missing. People killed. Treasured items gone. Lives disrupted and forever changed. *What stories are lost in the raging fires?*

When you read this article, there is a very good chance that over 200,000 people in the United States will have died from COVID-19. Over 6 million will have been infected. Common sense measures to mitigate the spread of COVID have been politicized. Suicide,

depression, hunger, loneliness, domestic violence, joblessness, and other hardships have increased in these last six months. *What story is no longer possible?*

Today I am more and more aware of the stories that have disappeared, been forgotten, or pushed underground. And I am ever mindful that as people who follow Jesus, we have the responsibility, the obligation — maybe it is a calling — to listen to the stories in the gaps of other stories. And to understand that the biggest voice might not be the place where the story is happening.

In Matthew 18, Jesus says, ‘Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.’ A few verses later Jesus says, “It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.”

You see, we are the people of the book — we are the people who claim the Holy Story. We are the people who believe that the story of God and humanity did not end with the cross but continues in, with and under all of us today. The Holy Spirit is alive and active among us. And the Holy Spirit is calling us through the stories we remember, the stories we share, the stories we hear, and the stories we notice.

Let us listen to one another’s story. Let us be mindful of the stories that exist on the margins. Let those of us who have had big voices quiet ourselves to hear other stories. And let us be mindful that listening to stories is not the end. For those of us who are white, let us take to heart these words from Austin Channing Brown, “In too many churches and organizations, listening to the hurt and pain of people of color is the end of the road, rather than the beginning.” (from *I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*)

I would love to hear your story. How are you doing? Where is God working in your life and in the life of the Church? Where do you see God? What stories need to be told? What pain needs to be shared? What stories do you want to hear?

May the One - whose story we live in - provide care, comfort, love, and justice for you and for this world.

Let us live, move, and be in God’s Holy Story.
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

We are nurtured, prepared...

Educational & Mission Opportunities

Community Action of Skagit County Fundraiser- Spirit of Hope

Please join us for an all-new, free, virtual Spirit of Hope on October 8, 2020! This year our annual fundraiser has a new look and feel as we transition our annual cocktail fundraiser to a virtual platform. **Register** today for this **free, virtual** event!

We're excepting donation items! Learn more [here](#)

Wildfire Support

Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with Lutheran social services agencies and local synods to assess the situation and determine the best ways to respond. We expect immediate needs may include food and other necessities, as well as emotional and spiritual care for those who have been traumatized. Your gifts will support wildfire survivors. Gifts to "U.S. wildfires" will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by wildfires, until the response is complete. Or make a gift to "Lutheran Disaster Response" so we can respond to disasters whenever and wherever they strike. Donate here: community.elca.org/uswildfires.

Lunch and Learn - America and the Holocaust

Tuesdays, October 6, 13 and 20, 12noon-1pm via zoom

This 3-part series is offered by the Holocaust Center for Humanity in partnership with Pacific Lutheran University, generously supported by the Powell Family Foundation.

All sessions are free and open to all. **Go HERE for more information and to register.**

Tuesday, October 6 - Hell Before Their Very Eyes: American Soldiers Liberate Concentration Camps in Germany with Dr. John McManus, Military Historian

Tuesday, October 13 - Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to

Save the Jews of Europe with Dr. Rebecca Erbelding, Historian at the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*

Tuesday, October 20 - Atrocity Pictures: Antisemitism, the Holocaust, and the

Hollywood Studio System Before 1948 with Dr. Steven Carr, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne.

Additional Educational & Mission Opportunities

Other+Wise - Indigenous-Centered Webinars

October 14, 5pm-6:30pm - Indigenous Thought and Theology

Please join **Other+Wise**, ELCA Coaching, and New Story Festival, for these Indigenous-centered Zoom workshops with founder and director, **Vance Blackfox**. Grow your solidarity with Indigenous peoples. **See this flyer for full details and how to register.** It is highly recommended you watch the presentation from July 8, **Truth and Healing for the Sake of Indigenous People**, prior to these workshops.

Open Door Ministries Online Virtual Gala & Auction

November 4-7 ONLINE

Yes, you saw that correctly! We are going online for the Fall Gala and Auction. Like many non-profit organizations, we are moving our annual fundraiser online. Because of the need to wear masks, this year's Gala theme is Masquerade. The annual Gala is our main fundraiser so we hope you will go online and see what we have to offer. With the guidance of Pastor Rick, there will be some informative videos about Open Door Ministry services during these unusual times. We will have items to bid on starting November 4th and culminating with the closing Gala Gathering on November 7th . In addition to auction items we will have the Giving Tree and Fund-a-Ministry options for donations. More information will be coming out as the date gets closer. **If you would like to donate an item(s) for the auction by October 1st please contact Jill Bossen or Fred Row at odmauction@gmail.com.** THANK YOU for your ongoing support!

Examining Whiteness In The ELCA

Thursdays in October (1, 8, 15, 22, 29) 9:30-11am (come to one or all five)

A new series brought you to by the Office of Congregational Relations at California Lutheran University. This is a brave space to uncover our whiteness and process racism in ourselves. We will do the personal work, in community, necessary to show up as more effective co-conspirators and change agents for racial justice in our church.

Anti-Racist work for:

- ELCA Regions 1 & 2
- White people
- Those who benefit from White privilege

those who want to explore whiteness with others

RSVP to Leblanc@CalLutheran.edu for pre-registration and zoom link.

Check out this **[website for more details.](#)**

See ALL Upcoming Events at: www.lutheransnw.org/weekly-update

Sent to be the light of Christ in our world.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here!

The ELCA is the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

First Lutheran

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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2015 E. Blackburn Rd.
Mount Vernon WA 98274
Mailing: PO Box 777
Mount Vernon WA 98273

Worship Services

Sunday Worship 10:00 am

Church Office—office@firstlutheranmv.org

Website w/calendar www.firstlutheranmv.org

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Phone: 360 424-6832 - For Pastoral Emergencies, please
listen to voicemail message for phone number of on call pastor

To reach our Staff:

Pastor- Pastor Ryan Rouse

Pastorryan@firstlutheranmv.org

Holly Oliver,

Parish Administrator- office@firstlutheranmv.org

Pete Olson,

Worship Accompanist- peterdonne@yahoo.com

Janna Beecher,

Parish Assistant-parishassistant@firstlutheranmv.org

Preschool Administrator- Chelsey Olsen—

preschool@firstlutheranmv.org Preschool Phone-360-941-4187

You are created uniquely by
God and you are welcome here.

Your Abilities· Age· Culture· Economic Status· Gen-
der Expression/identity· Life Circumstances·
Marital Status· Questions· Race· Sexual Orientation·
are welcome here.

Our Congregational Leaders

President— Benjamin St. Germain

Vice President— Brad Pickett

Secretary— Sharon Lauch

Treasurer— Jeanette St. Germain

Trustees

Blaine Wollan, Brad Pickett, Donn Hollenbeck

Deacons

Gary Wiegand, Bob Ramborger, Doug Carter

Parish Activities

Frances Wraspir,
Karmen St. Germain, David Jones