



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.

5 Things you might not like, and 5 things you might enjoy, about in-person worship!

As we begin the process of moving worship into our Sanctuary (**see the Reunion's committee article for more details**), after a long period of worshipping online or in our church parking lot, most likely we all have certain hopes and expectations. For instance, the covid-19 pandemic has led many of us to implement a number of changes in our daily lives. We have had to learn to adapt how we interact with others, how we shop, how we work, how we worship, and how we spend our free time, which may lead us to yearn for the familiar and for doing things with a sense of normalcy. And although we may hope for a traditional service, that can speak to our desire for the regular and routine, I would encourage us all to have patience and to temper our expectations of what an in-person worship might look like. That being said, I invite you to consider, "5 things you might not like, and 5 things you might enjoy about in-person worship."

Things you might not like:

You may not be able to sit in your regular seat. Let's face it, we often tend to have our favorite spots that we are used to occupying (some church members can even tell you who usually sits where), but because we need to maintain social distancing certain seats or pews may be unavailable.

Masks will need to be worn at all times when in the church building. Yes, they can be frustrating, and I don't think I have talked to anyone who loves wearing a mask when they go places, but until guidelines change they will be required to be worn correctly (over the nose and mouth) when we gather indoors.

For the time being we won't be singing hymns during our worship service. Don't worry though, because we will have music of the congregation singing from past recordings.

Until covid numbers improve, we won't be gathering at the altar for communion. In order to lessen the chance of covid spreading (if someone has it and doesn't know it) we will avoid moving around the sanctuary. When you arrive at church, you will receive a sealed communion cup prepackaged with a wafer and grape juice. During the service once I have spoken the words of institution at the Altar, and we have prayed the Lord's prayer together, we will all commune at the same time.

There will be no coffee hour, or any type of social gathering, after worship has ended. You may, however, exit the building and converse with other congregants outside as long as you maintain social distance.

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

Continuing from pg. 1...

Things you might like:

Sitting somewhere new can sometimes provide us with a new perspective, because we often notice new things from a different vantage point. You may even discover a better seat that you can try to claim once things get back to normal.

Wearing a mask not only can make us feel safe, it also can make us feel good knowing we are helping others stay safe. Also, not only do they help prevent the spreading of covid-19, they can also keep us safe from other germs. I don't know about you, but it has been a while since I have had a cold or the flu.

Although we won't be singing hymns, perhaps you can see this time as an opportunity to work on your humming skills. As you listen to recordings of our congregation singing, you may be able to guess some of the voices (including your own), and as you follow along in the hymn book perhaps you will find more meaning in the lyrics.

Communing at the Altar can be a very humbling and pious experience, but I encourage you to imagine how wonderful it will be for us to all receive the body of Christ and the same time. There is also the added bonus of not having to wait in line to get to the altar rail.

If you ever struggle with being social with others, it is probably safe to assume that the idea of having no coffee hour probably seems rather appealing to you. If that is the case you can head home after worship without feeling any kind of guilt for not staying to chat with your brothers and sisters in Christ. At the very least, if you do decide to gather outside after worship, you will have something to talk about, "This is some weather we are having today ain't it?"

Please note that the purpose of my article this month is not to dissuade, or discourage, people from wanting to come to our indoor worship service. My primary goal is to help everyone understand that things will be different, at first, and I would rather taper expectations than have people be disappointed. Like many of you, I am longing for the day when things are normal, and we can go back to doing things the way we love. At the same time, however, I also believe we have learned some new ways of worshipping our amazing God, and new ways of loving one another and keeping each other safe, that we can continue to follow as we move forward positively with the light of Christ guiding us.

God Bless you all and I look forward to seeing you soon,

Pastor Ryan



Join us for Worship

Indoor Worship (Beginning 5/23, for those who have their COVID Vaccine)
Sunday Morning at 9:00

Drive-up worship (An outdoor service—open to all)
Sunday Morning at 10:30

First Lutheran

The reopening of our church building at First Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Reunion Committee has recommended, and the church council has approved, limited in-person worship and small group gatherings in our Church building for those who have been vaccinated at this time. To assure the safety of all participants, we will follow the latest state and synod guidelines as they become available. By following these guidelines (and keep in mind that they do change and we will need to adapt), we are hopeful that our in-house activities will continue to expand and not regress.

On May 23, 2021 First Lutheran will be adding an in-person worship service for vaccinated individuals. Approximately 50 people (this number may change by the time you receive the newsletter) can safely be accommodated inside the sanctuary each week, and all attendees will need to be continuously masked and adhere to state guidelines regarding individuals and family/ household units. Please note that our drive-up worship service will continue to be offered for everyone, and a video recording will be available each week through our church YouTube channel.

In order for us to maintain the recommended seating capacity, we will need people to make weekly reservations for in-person worship. This can be done online, or by calling the church office, no later than 3pm each Friday. Seating will be assigned as you enter the sanctuary, and at this time attendees are asked not to congregate before or after the service, but to quietly sit in the arranged space and leave upon completion of worship. Also, until safety guidelines change there will be no singing, communion will be done by individual pre-served packages, and there will be no indoor fellowship after the service. An offering box will be placed in the back upon leaving the sanctuary. Anyone not feeling well, or experiencing a fever, should avoid attending in-person worship.

Small groups may meet in the church building, but please note that prior scheduling with the church office is required, along with the wearing of masks and the following of social distancing guidelines. Group leaders will need to keep a log-in sheet of all attendees and are required to make sure any room/ area used is cleaned and sanitized after each use. Anyone not feeling well, or experiencing a fever, should avoid entering the church building.

We look forward to being together soon,
Your FELC Reunion Committee

YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL COMPARISONS REPORT			
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH	April 2020	April 2021	April 2021 Budget
Total Income	76,507.55	71,392.09	87,897.19
Total Expenses	86,232.36	79,610.52	93,366.22
Income compared to Expenses	(9,724.81)	(8,218.43)	

Thank you for your financial contributions to FELC. As of April 2021, we received a total of \$71,392.09 and spent \$79,610.52 so the balance is negative -\$8,218.43.



2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Saint Paul writes; ⁶ *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.* ⁷ *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* ⁸ *And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”*

As we awaken from what seems like a long winter nap, we need to look forward to what we will do as the Body of Christ that assembles at First Lutheran Church. It’s time to be open and audacious, welcoming many more people into our Christian Family. Our biggest resource is the caring and loving commitment of our members, and we need help to bring that commitment forth.

To that end, we would like to re-establish our Stewardship Committee. Has God blessed you with the Spirit of Giving? Would you like to share that gift with others? If so, please prayerfully consider being a part of the committee. If you are interested please contact Bill Simon at w9simon@frontier.com or the church office at office@firstlutheranmv.org

We are nurtured, prepared...



First Lutheran Membership Class

Are you interested in becoming a member of First Evangelical Lutheran Church? Pastor Ryan will be hosting a new member class on Sunday June 6th after worship at 11:30am. If the weather permits, we are hoping to meet outside, but otherwise depending on the comfort level of those wanting to attend, we can meet in the fellowship hall wearing masks or we can meet under the covered walkway leading up to the church building. If you would like to become a member, but aren't ready to meet in person, please consider joining us at the same time using zoom (Pastor Ryan can use an electronic device so everyone can be included). Please note that the class will be roughly an hour, and it is a great way for the Pastor to get to know you and for you to get to know some new people.

New Member Sponsors needed: If you are a member of FELC and would like to become a sponsor for our new members, please let Pastor Ryan or the church office know as soon as possible. If you want to know what that entails: basically a sponsor is an individual in the congregation who can be another resource and another connection for individuals who are new to the church. If you decide to help out with this ministry, who knows, you may make some new friends.



Summer Camp is (*hopefully*) right around the corner. If your Sunday school student/s are interested in attending & you would welcome scholarship monies, please let us know. Worshippers have donated to a fund, to help offset camp costs. Our hope is to give every student the opportunity to attend summer camp. E mail the church office to request the coupon code or with any questions about donating to this designated Camp Lutherwood fund.

Podcasts

Interested in trying some new Podcasts? Here is a link podcasts highlighted on the Northwest Washington Synod Website.

<https://www.lutheransnw.org/resources/podcasts>

Social Media

Here is a [link](#) to Lutheran social media sites, as highlighted on the Northwest Washington Synod Website.

Check them out...

May 2021



From the Bishop:

In the book *Anxious People*, the author, Fredrik Backman, crafts a humorous, poignant, and wise story of a group of people thrown together because of a bank robbery. But the bank robbery is the least interesting part of the book. The characters, who seem flighty and weird and strange or just unlikeable at the beginning of the book, change into complex humans with such rich inner lives that you love each of them by the end of the story. This was one book that I was sad to see end because I wanted to continue with each character in their journey.

I finished this book during Holy Week. And I couldn't help but reflect on the flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable people that surrounded Jesus that we get to know in the Gospels. These men and women who leave everything to follow Jesus – and who end up leaving Jesus after his arrest – only to once again connect with Jesus after his death and resurrection – are (we must admit) flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable.

- Thomas who is skeptical throughout the Jesus story and who won't recognize Jesus until seeing his wounds.
- Mary Magdalene who can't recognize Jesus until he calls her by her name.
- The disciples locked in a room, afraid to go out, and finally just going back to fishing until Jesus shows up once again.

I mean, ask yourself:

- Would we really have wanted John the Baptist over for a barbecue?
- Would we really have accepted a woman who washed Jesus' feet as being justified when she extravagantly wasted an expensive bottle of perfume?
- Would we have embraced the woman who bled for over a decade and invited her to our book club even after she assured us that she was cured and clean?

I finished this book during Holy Week. And I couldn't help but reflect on the flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable people around me – on the news, on social media, in my neighborhood – and how I have judged them based on a very superficial understanding of who they are and what makes up their story. I call them ignorant or lazy, bigoted or uncaring, dirty or smelly or unclean in some way.

But as I continue to reflect on Backman's compelling story of seven "idiots" (as he calls them), and, as I continue to reflect on Holy Week, (even though it is now way past Holy Week), I see Jesus kneeling down and washing feet. I hear Jesus saying, "Peace be with you." I experience Jesus embracing disciples on a beach, offering them fish, and saying, "Feed my sheep." Loving and caring and forgiving – even though these humans are flighty, weird, strange and, at times, unlikeable.

None of us are Jesus. None of us can embrace the other as Jesus did. And yet, we are called, as sinners and as beloved children of God, to hear another's story. To listen. To reflect. To forgive. To ask for forgiveness. To engage. To be silent when needed and speak when necessary.

For my part, I repent. I repent for my judgment, for my verdict that I render without knowing the complexity of another's story, for my blindness to my complicity, for my withholding forgiveness in the name of self-righteousness, for my refusing to acknowledge my need for forgiveness, and for my judgment on who God loves and who God does not love (because, as I have been taught, if God only loves those I love, than I have remade God in my image).

So I ask you, dear Beloveds of NWWA Synod, with all of your stories, how may your stories be joined into the One Story? How may your hearts be open to the flighty, weird, strange, sometimes unlikeable (but always God's beloved) people that we are called to love? What are your thoughts, feelings, explorations, attempts, experiments? I'd love to hear how you are living into God's Holy Community of love, grace, compassion, justice and peace.

As for you, you are called. By name. Embraced, loved, and cherished – in all your flighty, weird, strange, sometimes unlikeable ways. And always, always, God's beloved.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee



In the Mail...



It was a shock when Dick was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, It was a difficult time as Dick struggled with that disease, and it was a very sad time when Dick died,

The words, a loving and caring church family, accurately describes the congregation at First Lutheran Church. Words of comfort and encouragement sent in notes, & cards, visits from Pastor Ryan, and gifts, blessed our lives. Thank you dear sisters and brothers in Christ.

Beverly Vander Voet & Family

Dear First Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous gift to El Camino de Emaus Lutheran Church. We thank you for your prayers for our ministry as we experience God and serve Christ's church. You and other people of God who pray and give to this ministry are cherished partners who enrich God's important work and mission at El Camino here in the Skagit Valley.

We thank you for your gifts in 2020.

Your gift helps give God's grace a human face through El Camino de Emaus here in the Skagit Valley. Without your support this could not be possible. May God continue to bless you and your ministry to the church!

With a thankful heart,

Pastor Josh-Wojcik
and the members of El Camino

Thank you for your prayers and cards and notes of concern while I have been recovering from my heart attack. It is slow going, and will take a while, but I want you to know how very much it has meant to me to know that you are remembering me in your prayers and Bill and I both thank you for all your concerns for us.

Anna and Bill Bowron

David Johnson and Cheri Whitlock are happy to announce that we are getting married at First on May 15! Struggling through the pandemic has made planning a wedding difficult, but we are so grateful that Pastor Ryan, Church Council, and the Reunion Committee have been so supportive of our efforts to have a meaningful and safe ceremony in the sanctuary.

Although we'd love to invite each of you, we are, obviously, restricted to the number of guests we can have join us. Given that, we are hoping for some volunteers to help from 2:00pm – 4:00pm on Saturday, May 15 to guarantee a safe wedding.

Are there two or three ushers who can help people find safe seating?

Is there someone who is able to help us show and record the meeting on Zoom?

Each of us has family who would love to attend, but age, distance, or deference to COVID-19 prevent them from doing so. Being able to have them join us in this timeless ceremony by using modern technology is something we hope we can achieve.

BTW, no one is asked to wear a tie and the wedding party will be in sneakers, so, yeah... it's informal!

Please contact David luteman74@hotmail.com (360-630-5976) or Cheri auntiecknits@icould.com (360-202-4279) with questions or if you're able to help us.

Thank you so much for your prayers and good wishes. Soli Deo Gloria!

Friendship House Ministry

A huge **“thank you”** to all of you who have kept Friendship House in your hearts during the Covid-19 pandemic. With your donations and support, we have faithfully continued to provide the ***Tuesday Sloppy Joe Monthly Meal***.

News Updates regarding Friendship House:

Thank you to the Church Council for purchasing a **new small chest freezer** to store food items for Friendship House and our Church. This will help us provide continuous meals as additional Sloppy Joe sauce may be stored in the new freezer and enable us to increase our monthly storage capacity to insure a consistent supply. Sloppy Joe mixture may still be dropped off in the kitchen freezer and we will transfer it to the new freezer located in the Church portable. With additional space to store it -Sloppy Joe sauce is always appreciated!

A special welcome to **Barb Sneva** who has volunteered to help coordinate the monthly meals. Barb will join me meeting you at the church to coordinate your food donations and deliver them to Friendship House each month. Thank you Barb! Special thanks are also extended to **Sue Holmes** for her many hours of work to help coordinate the pick up.

As always- we provide this monthly meal **the last Tuesday of each month** and truly appreciate all of our congregation members to help us with this wonderful church mission. Holly has created an easy way to go online and sign up for donations. Please be sure to check the weekly newsletter and find ways to donate by simply accessing the Friendship House **“SignUpGenius”** in our church e-news. You can also sign up by using this [link](#) .

If you have any questions- please contact Barb or me.

Blessings to you all,
Debbie Lisser



A Note from Preschool...

Look for our new sign and our new phone number as you pass by the church! Meyer Sign did a nice job of replacing our faded red lollipop sign. It just makes you want to smile.

We are proceeding in hopes that our church and the Education Wing will be open to occupy students in September. Protocol required by our state and local governments as well as our church will be our guidelines. We are doing a lot of research and envisioning the changes that will be necessary. It is an exciting challenge.

Registrations are being accepted. Children ages 3 to 5 years old who are completely toilet trained are eligible. Families can find more information and registration form on our Face Book page or by going to First Lutheran Church’s Facebook page and click on the Preschool link. They can also call our Administrator, Chelsey Olsen.

We have an opening for a Preschool teacher as well. Anyone interested should call Chelsey Olsen for more information

It’s going to be an adventure to reunite after an entire year away from school, but we are up to the task. Please pray for the children, staff, and board. If you know little ones who would like to have fun learning about Jesus love, our wonderful world and enjoy getting ready to continue successfully in the next phase of education, please share our name and number. If you know someone who might like to teach these children... share with them, too!

Happy Spring!
First Lutheran Preschool Board and Staff

First Lutheran Preschool ... 360-391-8581
Chelsey Olsen, Administrator

Sent to be the light of Christ in our world.

Baby Item Drive

The Social Ministry Committee is still collecting baby items throughout the month of May. The need is always great but especially now after the past difficult year. Suggested items include diapers (all sizes), wipes, baby food, formula, blankets, hats and new baby clothing. All items will be given to WIC and Neighbors in Need. Look for the crib outside the main church entrance.

Thank you for your generosity. Donated items will be a blessing to our less fortunate neighbors with wee ones.



Thank you for your outreach offering.
This year we supported
Community Action, Neighbors in
Need, and Friendship House with
our outreach offering.



Thank You!

The year has started off strong for First Lutheran's Social Ministry, which has been a joy for us after such a long hiatus.

In January, the congregation made a substantial donation to the clients of Mount Vernon's Community Court. Many struggling people received toiletries, warm socks, and snacks because of your generosity.

In February Social Ministry was alerted to an emergency need for warm items for homeless children who attend Little Mountain Elementary. The congregation donated 40 coats, plus dozens of mittens and hats - some of them even handmade - and all donated with love.

And in March Social Ministry realized that we had funds to make a substantial donation of school supplies to the children at Jefferson Elementary.

This past year has been extraordinarily difficult for many people. Together we are improving the lives of people in our community and sharing God's love. Thank you.

Heather Romano



**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

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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

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

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

To reach our Staff:

Pastor- Pastor Ryan Rouse

Pastorryan@firstlutheranmv.org

Holly Oliver,

Parish Administrator-office@firstlutheranmv.org

Pete Olson,

Worship Accompanist-peterdonna@yahoo.com

Janna Beecher,

Parish Assistant-parishassistant@firstlutheranmv.org

Preschool Administrator- Chelsey Olsen

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

Our Congregational Leaders

President— Bob Ramborger

Vice President— Donn Hollenbeck

Secretary— Jennifer Johnson

Treasurer— Jeanette St. Germain

Trustees

Donn Hollenbeck, Jeff May, Vacant Position

Deacons

Doug Carter, Bill Simon, Heather Romano

Parish Activities

Frances Wrapsir, David Jones, Vacant position