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OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Church Council

September Church Council Meeting Highlights: Church Council met for its regular meeting on Tuesday, September 7th at 7:00 PM with 9 of 11 members present. Financial Report as of August 31st: General Fund \$20,010.69; Building Fund \$4,447.60. Pastor Nathan has been asked to return as Lutheran Summer Music chaplain next summer - he will put together a proposal for next month. Organist position is currently on hold due to having enough substitutes. Christmas Eve Services this year will be at 4:00 PM and 9:00 PM. Kitowo Scholarship Fund raised \$505.00 from the sale of Jerry Mollberg's hand-carved bird. Property Committee continues to look into an updated handicap button for the front door and figuring out the church bell's deficient ringing. Day Care Steering and Strategic Planning committees continue to meet. A local buyer has made an offer to buy the church van for \$500 - the buyer will have it scrapped and used for parts. The church will not charter the Boy Scout Troop this year due to lack of adult leadership. New business: Pastor gave an update on COVID-19 mitigation strategies: Air and furnace filters will be updated to MERV 13 ratings and physically distancing seating will be offered in portions of the sanctuary. In addition, motion approved to purchase supplies to make to Corsi Boxes for additional air filtration in classrooms. 2022 health benefit option approved Pastor Nathan. Next regular meeting is Monday, October 4th at 7:00 PM. Full minutes of the meeting are available at the church office.

Notes from our Treasurer: The general fund supports the general operations of the church. Included in the general fund as of August 31st are committee funds totaling \$19,128.18. Average monthly expenditures total \$17,459.00, which means we began this month with \$882.51 available for monthly expenditures. Our giving is \$3,878.49 less than a year ago at this time. The largest expense is payroll and benefits at \$13,350 per month which is paid on the 4th Friday of the month. The building fund expenditures per month are \$5,849 which are paid on the 15th of each month for mortgage and interest. We began this month with \$4,447.60 which will fall short unless the first two collections in September defray the difference. The Memorial fund pays for special items, many of them designated by the donor. The current balance in memorial fund is \$13,499.36. - Nancy Schroeder, Treasurer



W.A.S.P.: Begun in 2017, every Wednesday we are delighted to welcome 11 elementary-aged children who are participating in the Wednesday After School Program. They have a snack, listen to a Bible story, sing songs, and then do a craft or games based on the story. In addition to JoAnn and Pastor Nathan, we are thankful for regular volunteers Troy Heling and Annette Hanson-Sias. This year we also look welcoming some guest storytellers. The afternoon concludes with a free, light meal for families at 5:00 PM.

Confirmation: Our faith formation ministry for 6th, 7th and 8th graders began in September. Building upon the promises of baptism, confirmation may either begin one's participation in this community of faith through baptism or mark the renewal of such participation from an earlier baptism. Four 6th graders meet from 4:15 - 5:00 PM with Pastor Nathan to hear and reflect upon foundational stories of faith. Five 7th graders and three 8th graders meet with Pastor Nathan and JoAnn from 5:30 - 6:15 PM for study of Luther's Small Catechism and Bible Study.



Thank You from Bishop Lull: Last month, we included in our prayers the sister of our bishop, Jean Reynolds. Bishop Lull shared a few weeks ago: "I am grateful for the care, concern and prayers you have shared during the eight months that my sister, Jean Reynolds, lived with me. She died quietly at home early on Monday morning. At 96, she had made a bold move to Minnesota, sorted through her affairs, expressed gratitude for her life, and found something to enjoy each new day. I am grateful for the flexibility I have been able to claim these last two weeks to be with her more and to serve as her caregiver. It was a privilege through and through. There will be a Service of Christian Burial in our hometown of Fremont, Ohio at a future time. - Patricia"



Thank you from Dale Oscarson: Thank you to all who sent prayers and who made me the prayer shawl. It helped me get through some difficult times I was wearing the shawl one day to dialysis when I got the news that I could be off it. I knew that the shawl had a lot to do with that and God. It meant a lot to me. This was a life-changing event. I'm so glad to be a member of First Lutheran with so many blessed members who helped me get through this. - Dale (& Angie) Oscarson



Thank You from Lutheran Summer Music: Thank you for your gift of \$589.81 [from the church's endowment fund] . . . Your gift is a blessing to students, parents, congregations, and communities across the country. It's also an investment in our commitment to musical excellence, Lutheran faith, and nurturing community. . . Your gift will make this life-changing program possible for the next generation of young musicians, inspiring them to use their gifts to serve others and make a difference in the world.





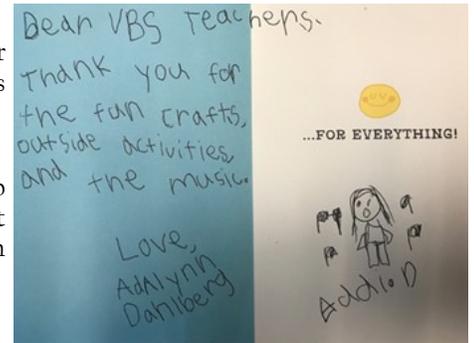
Thank You from Luther Point Bible Camp: Thank you for supporting the many ministries of Luther Point Bible Camp by donating items to our Summer Celebration Auction! Our partnership in ministry helped raise over \$15,000 to support this valuable ministry. It was a wonderful summer allowing us to get back to in-person camping after suspending our programs in 2020 due to the pandemic. We welcomed over 500 campers on site and held four day camps at churches. The love of God shine through in everything we did.



In the Family: We're happy to share births, baptisms, marriages and deaths for members and others connected to our church family. Keep in touch and let us know who we may have missed.

Death - Helen May Johnston (May 4, 1930 - September 17, 2021)

Compassionate God, give courage and faith to all who mourn, that they may have strength to meet the days ahead with steadfastness and patience; not as those who are without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life in your presence, with those they love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Lutheran Foundations: Baptism by Pastor Nathan

Our series for this year focuses on the Small Catechism. Since the beginning of the church, many Christians have developed a “catechism” (*a word that means “to resound in the ear”*) as a basic summary of the Christian faith. Our catechism, developed by Martin Luther, is famous for its brevity (*it fits easily in your pocket!*) Luther intended for his catechism to be learned by heart, a life-long habit of grounding our lives in God’s commands and promises.

Baptism begins and ends with God’s promises. For Lutheran Christians, baptism is not a personal choice but a gift from a personal God. Just as being born of our mother is a gift, so being “born again” of God is a gift. As Jesus explains to Nicodemus, “What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of Spirit.” (*John 3:6, 8*) When it comes to our relationship with God, God is the initiator, the giver, and the promise-maker.



Martin Luther famously called baptism not simply plain water but “God’s most precious jewel” in which God’s word, God’s commandment, and God’s name “is fastened and enclosed.” Just as vows and promises are attached to the rings that couples exchange at their wedding, so God attaches promises to ordinary water that together—water and word—gives us this extraordinary gift of baptism that makes us children of God.

With this gift comes the “big three” promises of the scriptures: forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and evil, and life forever with God. Receiving such great promises are not a matter of personal choice but of falling into the arms of the living God. God, you see, is endlessly in love with us. Once we feel and know that love, we can only fall into it. Couples who wed talk about this all the time. They don’t “decide” to love each other—they fall into it! And when you’re falling, you’re not in control! The love comes as a pure gift! Love is a powerful force that cannot be stopped.

Certainly this love changes our lives forever. Quoting Titus 3:4-7 (*a scripture, by the way, we proclaim at every Christmas Eve*), Luther describes baptism as an inheritance of the Holy Spirit. An inheritance is a legal document. Once it’s signed, sealed and dated, there’s no going back. In baptism, once Christ has died for sins and risen to forgive us, there’s no going back. Our lives are now changed.

How so? Luther concludes his teaching on baptism by building upon the promises of Romans 6:3-5 (*a scripture, by the way, we proclaim at every Christian funeral*). Baptism “signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.” Just as Jesus endured sin and brokenness yet lived it with hope and love, so we too can persevere through our sin and brokenness with the promise that Jesus goes with us all the way. There’s no going back on God’s promises!

*All quotations taken from “The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther” *The Annotated Luther: Volume 2 388-402*) and *Luther’s Small Catechism*)

Questions for reflection:

1. When’s the last baptism you attended? What did you notice?
2. How can you remember your own baptism?
3. A theologian once said, “Baptism is a one-time event that takes a lifetime to complete.” What do you think that theologian meant?