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AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER

July Church Council Meeting Highlights: Church Council met for its regular meeting on Monday, July 5 at 7:00 PM with 6 of 11 members present. Financial Report as of June 30th: General Fund \$27,102.28; Building Fund \$3,665.42; Memorial Fund \$11,790.95. Christian Education had a successful youth mission trip, planning for Vacation Bible School and Fair Parking fundraiser. Property is working on more space to store tables, including the possibility of a second shed. Building Fund as of the meeting stood at \$4,725.42, short of the monthly mortgage payment of \$5,849 which is due July 15th. Day Care Steering Committee continues to discuss licensing and are planning a Zoom meeting with another congregation that runs a child day care. Motion was made and passed for the congregation to sponsor Boy Scout Troop 129 with Keith Belau as the liaison. The next meeting is Monday, August 2nd at 7:00 PM. Full minutes of the meeting are available in the church office.



Notes from our Treasurer: The Church Council expresses its gratitude for your faithful giving to our mission. Giving to the General Fund continues remains strong and at the same level of giving at this time last year. Building Fund giving also remains at the same level as last year, however, the monthly expense has been greater than monthly giving for the last couple of years. The Building Fund has relied on a large surplus for many years that has slowly dwindled to the point where that surplus is now depleted. The Council gives thanks to those willing to make an extra contribution to the Building Fund.



Stewardship/Endowment Committee: The Stewardship Committee met on Tuesday, June 8th. Current members include Pastor Nathan, Dennis Pederson, Nancy Schroeder, Teresa Hasbrook, Jackie Larson and Lainey Carlson. Thrivent Endowment Funds earned \$2,359.24 last year which will be disbursed equally among the following four ministries: Kitowo Scholarship Fund (international), Lutheran Music Program (national), Luther Point Bible Camp (regional), and Rush City Cares (local). The committee is also reading the book, "Ask. Thank. Tell" as it looks forward to encouraging stewardship among the whole congregation.



Children & Youth: The Youth Group met on June 16th for mini golf in Cambridge and then again on July 14th for game night at church.

Youth Mission Trip: The trip to New Orleans was a success, even with the rainy days and humidity! We really enjoyed the people, culture and food of the area and were inspired by our daily work. We worked in a community garden 2 mornings, a bead recycling center 4 afternoons, at our host church one morning, doing flood clean-up, and at a half-way house/food center/thrift store one morning. It took us 2 ½ days of traveling, each way, and although it sounds long and tiring, that's where relationships are formed or cemented, along with many laughs and stories.



Luther Point Bible Camp: We had six campers go to Luther Point Bible Camp this year. Alison Baylor, Riley & Chase Carlson, Alex Flaten, Megan Nelson & Natalie Rood. Their trips have been spread out over several weeks of the summer and we are looking forward to hearing all their stories!



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.

Deaths - Marianne Brekke (December 17, 1945 - June 6, 2021)

Cole Richard Werner (June 20, 1993 - July 18, 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.

Thank You Note: First Lutheran, Thank you so much for the nice quilt and generous scholarship. I've joined the Army Reserve so I'm soon off to Basic Training. Then it's Combat Medic training until February when I'll be back home. I plan on attending South Dakota State in Brookings in the fall of 2022. Thank you again, Luke Flaten

Lutheran Foundations: God the Spirit 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.

On a bulletin board in the chapel at Valparaiso University (where I served as chaplain for Lutheran Summer Music in July) is an image advertising their campus ministry. The image consists of two one-way street signs. The first sign points to the right and says "Faith." The second sign points to the left and says "Doubt." Affixed over this sign, however, was a hastily scribbled post-it note which read, "Doubt is not the opposite of faith."

The sign advertising campus ministry implied that faith and doubt are opposites, opposed to each other in every way. But I like to imagine that the post-it note was affixed by Martin Luther himself. Whoever put up that post-it note intuitively feels what Martin Luther confesses in the Third Article of the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Spirit . . ." Luther says:

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel . . .

I cannot believe, Martin Luther admits. Admitting our doubts, worries, and questions is not the opposite of faith. It is faith seeking rest for one's soul, hoping for someone they can trust and yearning for a place to belong. Doubt is as much a part of the life of faith as trust.

Doubt is faith recognizing that it cannot go it alone. We need the Holy Spirit, the life-force of God's creation, to give us a faith that leads to trust in the life-giving God. More concretely, the Holy Spirit places us in the fellowship of other Christians where doubts, worries and questions are welcome.

"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) This is what Thomas, one of the twelve apostles (Jesus' inner circle), said on that first Easter. His doubts were his prayer, a prayer that was answered as he was welcomed into the fellowship of his friends. Jesus did show up for Thomas a week later. Jesus honored his doubts, invited him to reach out his hands and proclaimed, "Peace be with you."

Thomas was able to have faith because a space was given for him to voice his doubts. May God give you such a space, and may God bless you as you offer that space to others.

Questions for reflection:

1. Consider all the lines of the Apostles' Creed. Which ones do you find easier to believe? Which ones are harder to believe?
2. What are some of your doubts? Try speaking your doubts as prayers to God. As you pray, what do you feel God saying to you?
3. With whom do you share your doubts, worries and questions about faith? Your pastor? Someone else? Find someone you trust to have this important conversation.