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MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Church Council

May Church Council Meeting Highlights: Church Council met for its regular meeting on Monday, May 3rd at 7:00 PM with 9 of 12 members present. Financial Report as of April: General Fund \$34,244.51; Building Fund \$7,660.10; Memorial Fund \$13,631.85. General fund income is about \$5,200 ahead of where we were last year at this time and expenses are running about \$3,200 less than this time last year. Building Fund income is about \$1,800 ahead of last year's balance at this time and expenses are running about \$1,000 less than this time last year. Altar Guild, Decorating and Mission Committee designated funds are about \$4,400 below balances at this time last year. Pastor Nathan gave an update on his role as chaplain to the Lutheran Summer Music Camp for which he will be gone from Thursday, June 24th - Tuesday, July 27th. Most of the pulpit supply and emergency pastoral coverage has been arranged. Worship and Music shared that Baccalaureate is Sunday, June 6th (*late 10 AM service*) and Mission Trip Send-Off is Sunday, June 13th. Mission and Fellowship shared plans to expand coffee fellowship into the Narthex. Christian Education shared plans for VBS in mid to late August. Updates to church insurance policies were approved. Formation of Day Care Steering Committee was approved - members are Val Larson, Brent Stavig, Deb Dahlberg, Denny Pederson, Annette Schellbach, Jackie Larson and Pastor Nathan. Complete minutes of the May meeting are available in the church office.

Graduation Quilts: Every year we wrap our graduating seniors with quilts crafted by loving hands. The fellowship hall was a beehive of activity on Monday, April 19th! Thank you to the 15 quilt stitchers and those who tied quilts. This year they made 10 quilts for our graduating class! They are complete and ready to be presented at the Baccalaureate (*late at 10 AM*) service on Sunday, June 6th.



Children's Blankets to Chisago County Sheriff's Office: Extending God's love to the most vulnerable is at the heart of our ministry together. Among those vulnerable are children who must be quickly removed from their homes for their own safety. Chisago County Sheriff's Deputy Michelle Lalonde paid a visit to the Wednesday Quilters on April 21st, where we gave her a set of blankets for children that will be stored in squad vehicles so that they can be given immediately to children in need. Deputy Lalonde explained that often these children cannot even take a favorite blanket or stuffed animal with them. What a gift, then, to offer them Christ's warmth and love through these blankets!

Luther Point Bible Camp: - We were excited to welcome staff from Luther Point Bible Camp joined us on Wednesday, May 12th. They spent time with our Confirmation youth and held an informational meeting with families on our front porch. Participants in Luther Point's In-Camp summer program live in a community, centered on growing in their relationship with God and others. Their college aged summer staff share the love of Christ and help campers create new friendships in a safe and caring environment. Worship and Bible study give opportunities for campers to experience their relationship with God in new and unique ways. Luther Point believes EVERYONE should be able to come to camp. To that end, both the camp and the congregation offer scholarships. Go to www.lutherpoint.org for more information or contact the church office.



First Communion: 16 3rd - 6th graders attended First Communion classes and have begun receiving their first communion. Alison Baylor, Levi Cummings, Avery Dahlberg, Hudson Grams, Maxwell Medina, Lola Mold, Addison Stavig, Kennedy Stavig, Chase Stream, Willow Stream, Ava VandeKamp, Kyle Winberg, Nolan Winberg, Hunter Zaske, Kinley Zeltinger and Riley Zeltinger will formally be acknowledged on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd.

Lutheran Summer Music: Last fall, the council offered their support for Pastor Nathan to be the chaplain for LSM, the nation's premier faith-based music academy for high school students. In addition to musical instruction and numerous performance opportunities, LSM students form an intentional community, living together for four weeks (*Sunday, June 27th - Sunday, July 25th*) on the campus of Valparaiso University in Indiana. This is both an opportunity for Pastor Nathan and a mission and honor for the congregation to support this important, life-changing experience for youth. How will the congregation financially steward this? Pastor Nathan will use his entire two weeks of continuing education time for this experience, and funds budgeted for continuing education will not be used. He will also take two weeks of unpaid salary, the difference to be used to pay for extra pulpit supply and emergency pastoral coverage. Pastor Nathan will share more about LSM and his time away at the Adult Forum on Sunday, June 20th. See more at lsmacademy.org



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.

Baptism - Lettie Rae Christensen was baptized Sunday, May 9th

Gracious God, we thank you for the new life you give us through holy baptism. Continue to strengthen us with the Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

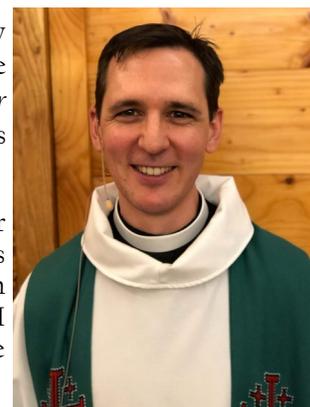


Thank You: To my First Lutheran Friends, Thank you for the multi-signed birthday card. A huge, pleasant surprise and reminder of my many nice days in your church! I miss my Rush City friends and your Church Council meetings! My health is good overall. My 2 doctors tell me I'll likely make it to 100 years - to which I responded, "oh, no!" Love, Ray Henderson

Lutheran Foundations: God the Creator 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.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." These lines are foundational to our faith. We teach them not only at Confirmation, but speak them in worship and at every baptism. This affirmation is increasingly counter-cultural where everything is "mine" and where we "make our own way." To say that God is the creator, however, means that we are not. "Aside from this one alone I regard nothing as God, for there is not one else who could create heaven and earth," Luther says in the Large Catechism.



This is not about God simply laying the foundation of our lives, but God making us complete in every way from the beginning. Luther begins his personal explanation in the Small Catechism by affirming that not only has God created "me together with all that exists," but that "God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties." Everything we are today and every power we possess is God's. Everything we see, hear, touch, move, think and make decisions about - all that is God's. Without the warmth of the sun, the air we breathe, and nourishment from plants and livestock, we would cease to exist in minutes. Being created by God means we are destined for dependence, not independence.

In one of this longest sentences in the Large Catechism, Luther proclaims: "Hence, because everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given, sustained, and protected by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank God without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to God's service, as God has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments."

In other words, all of life is a gift. Though we surely have responsibility for it, even our personal life is not our private possession. It is a gift we live out in praise and joy before God and in help and service to our neighbor. Every day, we receive far more than we can give back. This calls us to humility, but also to treasure every breath we take.

Questions for reflection:

1. A medical expert famously said, "No two heartbeats are exactly alike. Each heartbeat is unique." How does this lead you to treasure each moment you're alive?
2. What does it mean that you are called to dependence, not independence?
3. Perhaps you or someone you know has a disability such as being blind, deaf, unable to walk or whose mind can't make certain decisions. How do others help with this disability? How does the disability lead to a greater appreciation of life?