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First Things

June 2020

The Newsletter of
First Evangelical Lutheran Church

561 Chestnut Street,

Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110

651-465-5265 • www.tflutheran.org

Jesus himself came near and went with them but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

(Luke 24:15b-16 – Part of Walk to Emmaus story)

Daryl showed up for Easter worship because it was the thing to do. He used to be quite involved in the church at one point in his life – even helped out with the youth group for a while, but for one reason and another he just let it slide. When worship was over one of the youth that knew him came over and asked

if he'd like to go to the nursing home – a bunch of the youth group and some of the other adult were bringing some of the lilies there and leading a short Easter service for the elderly residents. Daryl didn't really want to go, he hated nursing homes, but for some reason he agreed to go.

At the nursing home Daryl stood in the back of the room as the rest of the group lead the worship service. But just as the service was ending, he felt someone grab his hand very tightly. He looked down and saw a man named Oliver Leak – a very old and frail man slightly slumped over in his wheel chair. As the youth group started to leave, Daryl had this strange feeling like he didn't want to leave. He had this sense that Oliver had been left alone too many times in his life. A bit confused he leaned over and told Oliver he would come back and visit him another time. Oliver squeezed his hand even tighter and Daryl left.

Over the course of several months Daryl came often to visit Oliver. At the end of his second visit with him as he was saying goodbye, Daryl told the old man, "I love you." He shook his head as he left wondering where that came from – those aren't words he used very often. But he found himself repeating those words to Oliver after every visit.

One Saturday Daryl arrived at the nursing home and Oliver wasn't in his normal spot. He usually found him by the bird sanctuary listening to the songbirds singing. He went down to Oliver's room and there he met a young woman who was putting Oliver's things in boxes. Oliver had died during the night and it was his granddaughter Nikki who was there. Nikki told Daryl about how their family had gathered the evening before and how they asked Oliver if he was ready to die and if he knew Jesus was with him. She shared how Oliver's



Continued on page two

eyes brightened and he whispered that yes he knew Jesus was with him and he told us that Jesus comes every Saturday, holds his hand and tells him he loves him.

As we enter into the season of Pentecost, this story highlights very well two ways in which the Holy Spirit often functions in our lives. First, like Daryl, the Spirit walks with us, to comfort and reassure us of God’s great love for us in Christ. Boy do we need that kind of comfort and reassurance in times like we are living in right now. And thank you to all of you who are letting the Spirit speak through you as you connect with one another and check in to make sure others are safe and well.

But the Spirit is also one who, as I described a few weeks ago, is like the agitator in our lives – drawing us in and spitting us out. It is the Spirit that gives us the insight and courage, like Daryl needed, to step out in faith and to be willing to move out of our comfort zones. We will need that kind of insight and courage as we move forward not only in this time of COVID-19, but as we look to the future of what First’s mission and ministry looks like.

In the midst of it all, be certain of these two things, Jesus is always walking with you and Jesus always wants to be seen through you. Because of God’s great love for you in Jesus, you are and always will be Easter People!

Pastor Dwight Rudquist

New Members **Welcome!**

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact the office at 651-465-5265.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

For online worship, please check out our website: www.tflutheran.org or our YouTube Channel: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of TF.

OFFICE HOURS@FELC

Monday 8:30am—1:30pm
Tuesday 8:30am—12:30pm
Thursday 8:30am—11:30am

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet on **Saturday, June 13th via Zoom.**

SARAH CIRCLE

Sarah Circle will not be meeting until further notice.

QUILTERS



Quilters will not be meeting in the month of June.

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday 8:30am-1:30pm
Tuesday 8:30am-12:30pm
Thursday 8:30am-11:30am

Prayer Concerns



If you have a prayer concern and would like us to know, please email the office: parishc@tflutheran.org or call the office: 651-465-5265. Please specify if you’d like it to be only for Pastor Dwight, if you’d like your name added to the weekly bulletin’s prayer list and/or sent out to the prayer chain.

We mailed out a membership status confirmation letter along with a Time & Talent sheet in May. This helps us maintain a current church directory. Please confirm your status and fill out the Time & Talent sheet, then mail back to the church! Thank you!

MONTHLY GIVING REPORT

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. —2 Cor. 9:7 (NIV)

Budgeted Weekly Expenses: \$2771.60

04/26 Giving:	\$0,665.00
05/03 Giving:	\$1,774.00
05/10 Giving:	\$2,385.00
05/17 Giving:	\$2,645.00
05/24 Giving:	\$2,325.00

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Becky Hulden with any questions or concerns at: 651-465-3631 or rhulden@gmail.com.

Calling all singers and instrumentalists! As we record week to week for our Sunday worship services we are looking for people of talent to come forward and offer their talents to enhance our online worship services. We would love to have a wide variety! Contact Michelle Lynch, Pastor Dwight, or Angie if you would like to help out or want to know more about this. We would love to work with you.



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Miriana Hackmann	06/01
Don Mueller	06/01
Stan Peterson	06/06
Luke Rogers	06/06
Joe Szczepanski	06/10
Matthew Carlson	06/11
Anna Goranson	06/13
Ann Rue	06/14
Taesia Hackmann	06/15
Helen Swanson	06/15
Miriam Lagus	06/23
Lindsey Clasen	06/26
Leslie Smith	06/27
Roger Gustafson	06/29

Please contact the church office if there are any errors or omissions. Thank you.

From Church Council

The church council has written a new contract for Pastor Dwight and he has agreed to it. In addition to his previous duties, he will be leading us through the call process, making connections with other local churches for youth ministry, providing direction to staff and guiding our response to the COVID situation. His title will be Interim Pastor.

Steeple Vote Outcome

The council would like to thank everyone who participated in the vote concerning the steeple repair. The results were: 45 in favor, 11 opposed. The council has asked the property committee to move forward with the repair process. Don Hanson has contacted Central Roofing and we have been put on the schedule for September/October 2020. We will continue our fundraising drive to try and raise as much of the remaining \$26,000 before the work starts this fall. Please mail your donations to the church.

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to address the confusion that you may be facing regarding the recent statements and policies made by our President and Governor concerning churches being allowed to open for worship, funerals, weddings, and other limited meetings. This confusion is also made more challenging as some churches are choosing to open their doors and hold worship. I, along with the other area ELCA pastors I have been in contact with, believe this is irresponsible and inadvisably putting the members of their congregations at too great of a risk. We have seen both in person and in the news that many are choosing to ignore the guidelines for physical distancing

and wearing masks as some venues are opening to the public. I have heard of churches that have tried holding drive-up worship services in their parking lots and many of the participants have disregarded the directions to say in their vehicles. The stories are endless and unnecessary.

I just downloaded a template provided by the state regarding guidelines for what needs to be in place in order to host worship. I can confidently say, none or few of the churches who are opening are safely adhering to these guidelines. I value your lives too much to put you at risk. And given the nature of this virus, worship would look like this: we'd be limited to the number that could attend, there would be no singing, no spoken responses for the congregation – the Confession and Forgiveness, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalm, we would be sitting so that we are physically distanced from one another, we would have to control how we entered and exited the building, we would have to record each person by name in case there was a need to notify people if someone were to found to be infected, and after it was over we'd have to have the correct cleaning supplies to effectively prepare the space to be used again. On top of that, we couldn't have fellowship/ coffee time. I understand that we are all craving the opportunity to be together, to socialize as well as to worship. But in light of what would be responsible, don't you think we're better off with the online option we have now which helps keep everyone safe? I do!

The church council and I are in the process of putting together a task group to look through the various guidelines for reopening and developing a strategy for First. This group will also be consulting with the area churches, the synod, and other resources to guide our decisions. This will take some time. Please be patient and keep all the members and friends of First in your thoughts and prayers. I promise to keep you updated as this group meets and determines what is in the best interest of First.

God has provided for us in the past, and God is using some very intelligent and thoughtful people who are looking out for the best interests of the public. We need to trust their wisdom and follow their advice.

May God grant us the peace and assurance we need in these trying days. Blessings and Peace to you all!

Pastor Dwight Rudquist

First Lutheran Youth

YOUTH, GRADES 6-12 WELCOME!

CONNECT

to a Christian Community;

INVITE

into the life and love of God;

EQUIP

to make God-honoring choices in their lives and to put their faith into practice.



Wednesday Evenings

7:00pm—8:00pm

Through June & July

I will be holding Zoom Calls to connect with youth on **Wednesdays at 7pm through**

June and July. I am so excited to see you as I've missed you all! If you need something, please do not hesitate to call or text me at 715-220-2782 at anytime. If I am unable to answer please be patient, leave me a message of how I can help and I will get back to you as soon as I am able. I'll be sending out an email soon with more information!

~Michelle



"Hooked on Jesus" will be presented this summer in 6 virtual Bible Camp Days available to you on the TWF Facebook Page and also Youtube. We will be busy in June doing all of the recording to make sure you continue to get the same feel for camp as if we were all able to be together! We will be recording in the 3 different churches so you can travel with us!

Camp Dates available online starting:

July 7th/9th; July 14th/16th; July 21st/ 23rd.

JUNIOR STAFF: Please watch your mail at home for a letter from Pastor Kevin regarding your "role" in continuing to be an integral part of our camp! There has been a few hand selected within the same family to help with the music and skits. You will be asked to record a special greeting to the campers and also help say the bible verses. Watch for more news and details to come about our summer bible camp plans! Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin 651-465-6792/ Cell: 651-815-3993



A Message from Luther Point Bible Camp:

Over the past couple of months the Luther Point Bible Camp Board of Directors has been struggling with the question if we can hold summer camp safely this year due to COVID-19. After much discussion, prayer and a couple tears, the decision was made to suspend all of our onsite programming for summer 2020. During the discussion we kept coming back to the thought that "one is too many." One person contracting the virus at camp is too many. One person bringing the virus to camp is too many.

We are committed to the health and safety of our campers, staff, community and world. We feel it is safest and most responsible to suspend our programming to give the world time to heal.

We believe in a powerful God, one more powerful than the coronavirus. We also believe this God has given us the task to love and care for one another. We are living into that calling every day.

An email will be going out to all of our campers currently signed up with information about the cancellation. Please watch for that email and if you have any questions please contact the camp office.

Sincerely,

Luther Point Bible Camp Staff and Board of Directors

A sincere and warm thank you to all who sent condolences and sympathies for my dad's passing. Knowing so many of you were and still are praying for me and my family means so, so much. God Bless!

Love, Michelle

Hello All,
Celebrating mother's day everyday! We are grateful to have Jean with us, especially now. We have been staying home & staying healthy. Jean has missed our weekly lunches at the local bakery. The bakery finally opened this week offering take out. So, we drove there & bought some yummy pie & cookies. We have been having dinner on our lanai during sunset & enjoy watching the constantly changing light on the clouds & ocean. Pretty spectacular colors; pinks, lavenders, blues & golden yellows. Nature is so beautiful. Wishing good health to you all!

Aloha,
Sat Rattan, Hari
& Jean





Council Meeting Minutes Church Council of First Evangelical Lutheran Church

May 9, 3:00pm-5:15pm via Zoom

“To worship God as an intergenerational praying community, learning God’s Word, and building lasting relationships as we grow in God’s love and grace.”

Next Meeting: June 13. 3:00PM via Zoom

Members Present: Wendy Szczepanski, Rose Anderson, Miriam Flysjo, Becky Hulden, Pastor Dwight Rudquist **Members Absent:** Craig Loen

A. Opening Devotions - Pastor Dwight Next month - Rose

B. Sharing story - everyone

C. Pastor’s report - Pastor Dwight

In the last month, he has recorded 3 services and attended Zoom meetings. He tried to make some phone calls but many people did not answer. He is thankful for all the work Becky has done to get the church the government loan. He is thankful for Angie, Carli, Toni and Natalie who have helped put the recorded worship services together in the past few weeks.

We are looking at a June 1 date to renew our contract with Pastor Dwight. We aren’t sure what his position will look like but would probably involve more hours on a salaried basis. Pastor will meet with Wendy and Becky this week to finalize the details.

D. Treasurer’s Report - Becky

The direct deposits seem to be going up. We are at about 80% of our budget. Our income is adequate for our budget since staff expenses remain low because we have an interim pastor. We moved \$9,000 from checking to a special savings account. There is \$37,934 in the steeple fund. We accidentally put \$4000 that was intended to pay salaries into the steeple fund so that has been moved to the general fund.

E. PPP update - Becky

On Friday, May 8, Becky completed the application for the payroll protection program (PPP). Becky spent a couple of weeks navigating the red tape, finding all the documents she needed and filling out all the forms. Part of the problem was our Constitution talks about incorporation, does not have a date stating when it was written or adopted and it was never registered with the Secretary of State. Now we have dates that say when it originated and it was adopted by

phone on May 8, 2020 by the council. Now it is a legal and ratified document and has been registered with the Secretary of State.

Motion: Wendy made a motion to approve the PPP loan application since it is not an actual liability because it is 100% forgivable. **Seconded by Rose. Motion passed.**

The loan was \$15,500 designed to cover payroll for next 2 ½ months. It is 100% forgivable as long as we use 75% of it for payroll or utilities. The funds should come to us quickly in a special account.

F. Staffing - Youth Minister position

Motion: Becky moved to eliminate the youth ministry position effective July 31, 2020, in order to facilitate paying for a pastor in the future. Miriam seconded. Motion passed.

Motion: Wendy motioned to indefinitely furlough the Choir director position on July 31 because of Covid 19. Second by Rose. Motion passed.

Our decision was based on information given at the ACDA/NATS/ChorusAmerica/BarberShop national Pandemic webinar: There is no safe way for choirs to rehearse together until there is a vaccine or 95% effective treatment in place, most likely 1-2 years. Perhaps occasionally outside in small groups, but only when the wind is not at your back. Masks and spacing DO NOT protect your singers from contagion, and singers are super-spreaders.

G. Duane Olson, Annie Lindgren Memorial - Wendy

Darlene Mueller has agreed to lead the Memorial Committee and Judy Peterson has agreed to continue to be the secretary. Tim Nelson has agreed to continue on as a member of the committee. Wendy will continue as the council liaison. Thank you to all for your continuing service. The Memorial Committee will be looking at the proposal for the new memorial and give the council their recommendation. Julie M. will give her proposed memorial information to Darlene.

H. Steeple Update - Wendy

A letter has been sent out for congregational approval for the Council to sign a contract with Central Roofing, to replace the wooden shingles with copper panels and to borrow money from the church’s other accounts if we don’t have the total required by September 2020. Ballots are included in the letter and members may mail or drop off their ballots, or phone or email their vote to the office by May 19. Fundraising for the steeple roof will continue through the summer and fall and we will hopefully not have to borrow any money. Right now there is a shortfall of \$25,765 from the total needed. Don Hansen will be happy to answer questions via email or telephone.

I. Annual Congregation Meeting

Due to the Covid Virus we cannot have our annual meeting in June. The council is proposing a tentative annual meeting date of August 9.

J. Rose Motion to adjourn, Wendy second



Deb Rhoads created an amazing program about seven years ago in cooperation with Family Pathways. She saw a need in the Taylors Falls Elementary community for weekend meal assistance and because of this, the Food4Kids Backpack Program was created.



During the school year, typically starting at the end of September, our church helps supply weekend food to Taylors Falls Elementary (TFE) school children. Once a week, food is picked up from Family Pathways in Chisago City, brought back to the church and Deb Rhoads, along with many volunteers,



package the food and bring the packages to the TFE school. Each child then receives a food package in their backpack for the weekend. One care package costs \$2.50 and includes two breakfasts, two lunches, a canned vegetable, a canned fruit and two snacks.

The program has continued as the TFE kids are at home doing schoolwork during the Safe at Home order placed in the state of MN. The food supply has went from giving 12 children food for the weekend to 170 children during this time period. The need is great!

How can you help? You can donate money or time; if you are interested in helping, please contact Deb Rhoads at 651-257-1658.



Church Office
651-465-5265
www.tflutheran.org



2019-2020
Council/Officers:

Pastor Dwight Rudquist
c: 651-829-4884
pastorrudquist@gmail.com

Michelle Lynch
Youth Minister/Choir Director
c: 715-220-2782
felcyouthminister@gmail.com

Angie Linngren
Ministry Coordinator,
parishc@tflutheran.org

Wendy Szczepanski—President
Craig Loen—Vice President
Becky Huldén—Treasurer
Miriam Flysjo —Secretary
Rose Anderson
Financial Secretary
Jerry Rhoads

Please hold the ministers and council members in your prayers that God would give them the wisdom, strength, courage, patience and perseverance to serve this community of faith as they lead us in our mission for the sake of the world and the glory of God.

Next council meeting will be on June 13th via Zoom.

Mission Statement

The mission of FELC is to worship God as an intergenerational praying community, to learn God's Word, and to build lasting relationships as we grow in God's love and grace.

(Mission Statement approved 2017)

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations." Psalm 90:1

Please send submissions to: parishc@tflutheran.org
Articles due the 10th of each month.