



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHIMES

February 2021
Volume 60, Issue 2
www.firstgeneseo.org

Sharing Christ's Love

WORSHIP WITH US THIS WEEKEND!

Saturdays at 5:30 p.m.

Sundays at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

Worship livestreamed on Facebook

Sundays at 8:15 a.m.

Celebrate Mardi Gras at First!



*Transfiguration Weekend
February 13 & 14, 2021*

Weekend Schedule

Saturday Informal Worship at 5:30 p.m.

Sunday Worship at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

Services will include special recorded music from our favorite Jazz Band,
"River City 6" and a special children's message made possible
by our many church families!

Ash Wednesday ~ February 17, 2021

Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes

Services at Noon & 6:30 p.m.



On Wednesday, February 17, the church around the world celebrates Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, the season of preparation for Holy Week. This year, our Lenten theme is "A Story to Tell." First Lutheran's Lent & Holy Week Brochure detailing all opportunities will be mailed under separate cover.

Welcome Back!

I have lived in many different places in my life; twelve, to be exact. And after living in so many places, I have to say that there is no better experience than being welcomed back home again. Time seems to stop in those places you left, but the amazing thing that I have found is that it picks right back up where you left off when you return. Coming back home is awesome. It is like the connection we have had with people and places, never goes away. We will continue to have those connections even, if we can't be around all the time. The same is true of God. Our connection with God is a connection that won't quit. No matter how far apart we are, God connects with us. No matter how many miles we think separates us from each other and God, God connects with us. No matter our collective or individual pasts, God connects with us. God seems always looking to connect and reconnect us again in some way. I think the Bible is full of stories of God looking to connect with people and places, and helping us to connect with each other.

As you might have already heard, it is our pleasure to welcome you back to in-person worship beginning on February 6 & 7. We resume in-person gatherings for ministries and groups inside and outside the church with restrictions. We resume High School Youth group which will meet every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. for Prayer and Ping-Pong. We resume in-person Faithtime and Confirmation on Wednesdays. As always, we will continue to offer opportunities for gathering virtually. Hopefully when we come back, we will be able to pick up right where we left off.

We hope to welcome you back in whatever way you have been connecting with us and with God. In-person or virtually, we welcome you back. We welcome you back, if you have been waiting for us to resume worship the last

three months. We welcome you back, if you are waiting to return until after you get the vaccine. We will always welcome you back, if you have been away for not just months, but years. And it won't be just us welcoming you back, but God will be. For where connection is found, there God is.

As we move into this season of Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 17, maybe the time is now to reconnect in whatever way you are able. Connect online. Connect in-person. Connect on the phone. Reach out and connect with someone old or new. Connect again with God through prayer, fasting, and service. Connect again with God's creation on a hike or doing a polar plunge for charity! In some way (it really doesn't matter which way), God is calling upon us all to connect again.

As always, we give thanks for your patience during this time as we have had to reinvent and reimagine. We thank you always for your generosity during a time of scarcity. We thank you for your faithfulness and trust. We thank you for your leadership and service. Pastor Laura and I thank God for not only welcoming us into God's family, but inviting and allowing us to serve yours.

In all the different ways in which we are connected to you and to God, we are thankful. We are thankful for your partnership in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which continues to challenge and inspire us to love and serve God and neighbor in all times, even times like this.

Our prayer is always to welcome you back in some way and to see you all soon, Amen.

—*Pastor Matt*

February 6 & 7, 2021

Epiphany 5

This weekend's texts include Isaiah 40:21-31; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 and Mark 1:29-39.

February 13 & 14, 2021

Transfiguration of Our Lord

This weekend's texts include 2 Kings 2:1-12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 and Mark 9:2-9.

February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday, Noon & 6:30 p.m.

Today's texts include Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10 and Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21.

February 20 & 21, 2021

Lent 1

This weekend's texts include Genesis 9:8-17; 1 Peter 3:18-22 and Mark 1:9-15.

February 24, 2021

Midweek 1, Noon & 6:30 p.m.

Today's text is Mark 2:1-12.

February 27 & 28, 2021

Lent 2

This weekend's texts include Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 4:13-25 and Mark 8:31-38.

Drive-Thru Communion

This month, Drive-Thru Communion will be Sunday, February 14 from 9:15-10:15 a.m. in the south parking lot. We plan to continue to offer this ministry on the second Sunday of each month until all COVID restrictions are lifted.

FIRST WORSHIP & MUSIC



Drive-Thru Ashes

On Ash Wednesday, February 17, First Lutheran will be providing an opportunity for Drive-Thru Ashes from 5-6 p.m. Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion will be offered at each worship service. Please watch for more information about Ash Wednesday and Midweek worship in the upcoming Lent & Holy Week Brochure.

Please keep the following Lifelines petitions in your prayers:

World and Community: For our leaders: President Joe Biden and Governor J.B.Pritzker. For health care workers. For all who work for peace and justice. For those serving our country in the military, especially Josh Francis, Jakob Gradert, Brian Hanshaw, Jason Kinnard, Geoffrey Lindesmith, Jessica Ruggles, Brandon Sandoval, Brian Sandoval, Christopher Unrath, Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

Church: For our bishops: Rev. Elizabeth Eaton and Rev. Jeff Clements. For our partners in ministry: Pastor Daniel Meiyen and the people of Osupuko Parish in Tanzania, Rev. Raja Socrates, Bishop of the Arcot Lutheran Synod, India. For missionaries who share the Gospel around the world. For Catherine Nelson, seminary student. For Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. For our pastors, parish staff, Preschool staff and Church Council (names listed on pg. 8).

Health and Wellbeing: For all who are fighting COVID-19, Lonnie Anderson (*Kathy Heller's brother*), Mandy Baumgardner, Kim Johnson (*Pastor Laura Kamprath's father*), Kyle "Blue" Pittenger, Tristan Pittenger, Peggy Schram (*Doris Swanson's daughter*), Rose Smith (*Kathy Nelson's friend's niece*) and Kim Stadler (*Kathy Rogers' daughter*).

Joys:
Thanksgiving: Hillcrest Home is improving with no active COVID-19 cases at this time. Hillcrest administrator, staff, employees and residents thank you for your prayers as they faced this extremely difficult crisis and experienced the deaths of many of the residents.

Sorrows: On the deaths of Loretta Denys, mother of Scott Denys; Cale Young, friend of Ryan Cathelyn, Carol Gustafson, member; Dennis Ebarb, father of Troy Ebarb; and Paul Hansen, brother of Margi Ficken.

If you wish to submit a prayer request, please contact the church office at 944-3196 or by e-mail prayer@firstgeneseo.org. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or are admitted to the hospital, please call the church office. In the event of an after-hours emergency please contact Pastor Matt at 703-505-9517.

FIRST PRAYER

FIRST MINISTRIES



Faithtime Kids

Faithtime resumed January 27! We are so glad to be back together again. We will continue to meet on Wednesdays from 6-7 p.m.

- *Please Note:* During Lent (February 24-March 24) Faithtime Kids will meet from 5:30 to 6:20 p.m. to allow families to attend Worship at 6:30 p.m.

All children Grades K-6

February 3 — *The Good Samaritan*

Memory Verse: *Matthew 22:37-39*

February 10 — *Love Is*

Memory Verse: *Hebrews 13:8*

February 17 — *No Faithtime (Ash Wednesday)*

February 24 — *The Lord's Prayer*

Memory Verse: *Colossians 3:16*

Confirmation (7th & 8th graders)

Confirmation students are continuing the unit "Lutheran Living." We meet each week with an in-person option and a Zoom option. During Lent, students will attend Midweek Worship in-person or via the Livestream and then participate in small group reflection time after worship. Here's our schedule for the month:

February 3 — *Saint and Sinner*

February 10 — *The Church*

February 17 — **Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:30 p.m.**

February 24 — **Lent Worship & Small Groups**

Blood Drive

Save the date!

Social Ministry will be sponsoring a Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Drive on Thursday, March 4 from 3 to 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. Schedule information will be coming!!

Volunteers Needed ~ *Can you help?*

We are so excited to be able to resume in-person worship the weekend of February 6 & 7! We are looking to finalize our ushering schedules and could use some more volunteers! This is a great opportunity for Confirmation students to earn service hours as well! If you can be of help ... please contact Morgan Sarber at worship@firstgeneseo.org.

Kindness Challenge

Families with children ages 2-grade 6 were sent a "Kindness Challenge" calendar to complete in the month of February. Children in grades K-6 will have 28 days to complete an act of kindness on their chart. You can do these in any order! After you complete one of the spaces, you can cross it off by using a sticker, stamp, or coloring it in. Ages 2-4 will have a much simpler version to complete. Once they complete the challenge, they can send Abbey Cathelyn (youth@firstgeneseo.org) a picture of their completed board, drop it off at the church office or mail it to First Lutheran Church. Each child that completes the kindness challenge will receive a prize dropped off to their home!



Valentine Cheer for our Shut-in's

Every year, our First Lutheran family has a Valentine card collection for our shut-in's to let them know how much we love and appreciate them. However, because of the pandemic, we will need to do things differently this year. Rather than having a decorated Valentine bag for each shut-in, we will have a decorated Valentine box on a table in the Fellowship Room. Everyone is invited to add their Valentine cards and letters to the box and Social Ministry will sort and mail these to our shut-ins. If you want a card to go to a specific shut-in, add their name to the envelope and we will make sure that person receives your card. Because of the pandemic, we request that no treats or gifts be included. We will be collecting Valentine cards and letters until Monday, February 8 and will mail them so they are received by February 14. We currently have 16 seniors on our shut-in list. A list of their names and addresses are available at the display for anyone who would like one.

- This pandemic has been especially hard on our shut-ins. This year it is more important than ever to let them know how much they mean to us. Thank you for *Sharing Christ's Love* with these very special people!

FIRST MINISTRIES



Prayer and Ping-Pong

All High School Youth are welcome to join Abbey and Pastor Matt in the Youth Room on Tuesday nights at 6:30 p.m. for Prayer and Ping-Pong and other games.

First Lutheran Preschool Registration

First Lutheran Preschool will begin enrolling for the 2021-22 school year in March. Children must be 3 years of age by September 1, 2021. If you are interested in more information, would like a tour or would like to get on the registration list, please contact the preschool at 944-4306.

Souper Bowl of Caring ~ *Let's Tackle Hunger*

In 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: *"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."* Since then, more than \$160 million has been generated for



local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that transforms the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and caring for those in need. Through this mission, young people learn to make a positive difference in the world as they collect food, raise money, and serve at hunger-relief charities and show caring and compassion in local communities across the country.

All the food donations from our collection will go to the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry. We will have two shopping carts set up in the Fellowship Room as you come in for worship the weekend of February 6 & 7 or you can stop by during office hours the week before and drop off your items. We will also be collecting monetary donations in the football helmets which will benefit ELCA World Hunger. A list of the food pantry's current needs can be found at geneseofoodpantry.org under "current needs" but any donations of nonperishable food items are welcome.

FIRST MINISTRIES

2021 Church Council

President: Jodi Barnhart

Vice President: Gary Gesme

Secretary: Linda Sheley

Parish Treasurer: Mike Ficken

Cabinet: Jodi Barnhart, Gary Gesme, Linda Sheley, Mike Ficken, Kathy Heller, and Pastors Laura & Matt Kamprath.

Members: Jodi Barnhart, Anne Calder, Lance Camp, Mike Ficken, Gary Gesme, Johanna Hager, Kathy Heller, Jill Laingen, Cathy Runty, Linda Sheley, Mike Slaymaker, Jacob Steffes and Phil Wildermuth.

Please feel free to contact any of these members with any joys or concerns you may have about First Lutheran.

First Lutheran Preschool

Happy Valentine's Day! We'll be sharing our love and kindness with others this month by making valentines for our families, friends, and church member shut ins. The 3-year-old class will be working with the color pink and the heart shape. They will use beets to color paint and have a pajama day. The 4-year-old classes will be using the book "*The Word Collector*" by Peter Reynolds to learn how powerful their kind words are. They will use their kind words to design valentines. They will also be continuing their letter journey through books and projects.

- **No School** on Monday, February 15 - Presidents' Day

Lent Devotional ~ *A Story to Tell*

Our congregation is invited to use a brand new devotional resource, *A Story to Tell*, for daily at-home devotions through the season. We will also use this as the basis for our Wednesday worship opportunities. Devotional books are available to pick up at the church when the office is open, and they will also be available on Ash Wednesday.

The Word In Season Devotional Booklets

These daily devotions offer inspiration and focus for each day. The January—March issue is available at the Resource Center in the Fellowship Room. Help yourself to a copy and enjoy!

Council Highlights for January 18, 2021

The Congregation Council met via Zoom on January 18, 2021.

New Business

- Approved a request for \$100 from the Music & Arts Fund for a banner design for the Faithtime Kids Easter video.
- Approved designating the 2020 surplus benevolence allocation to Northern Illinois Synod.
- Approved a return to in-person worship on February 6 & 7, under the same guidelines we have used previously. Approved resuming in-person ministry and building usage by outside groups, effective immediately, for groups of no more than 25 people.

December Financial Report

General Fund Offering:

December actual	\$51,153
December budget	\$65,333
YTD actual	\$480,206
YTD budget	\$481,999

Net Income Over Expenses:

December actual	\$58,586 surplus
December budget	\$23,545 surplus
YTD actual	\$87,245 surplus
YTD budget	\$9,307 surplus

First Book Club

First Book Club will resume their in-person book discussion on Thursday, March 18 at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. March's book title is *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet fishing village. Kya Clark is barefoot and wild; unfit for polite society. So in late 1969, when the popular Chase Andrews is found dead, locals immediately suspect her. But Kya is not what they say. A born naturalist with just one day of school, she takes life's lessons from the land, learning the real ways of the world from the dishonest signals of fireflies. But while she has the skills to live in solitude forever, the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. Drawn to two young men from town, who are each intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new and startling world—until the unthinkable happens.

Be sure to pick up a copy today and begin reading this story that asks how isolation influences the behavior of a young woman, who like all of us, has the genetic propensity to belong to a group.

Thank You

My heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who gave so much of their time preparing and serving the Christmas dinner to our members and the public. God was surely smiling down on you for your faithful service.

—Marilyn Juliot

A Note of Thanks!

*"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice!"
Philippians 4:4*

We rejoice for the amazing answers to prayer for the annual Community Christmas Dinner. God provided so many blessings for those receiving meals as well as those serving. The team prepared and served 126 meals on Christmas Day. God provided just the amount we needed to meet the reservations received. Deep gratitude to all of the individuals who provided for this meal in any way; from the planning, food prep and financial donations we were able to give the gifts of relationships and time. We glorify God when we serve our neighbors and family.

—Janet Larson, Marlee Stiener
and Jennifer Johnson

Food Pantry Collection

The Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry is collecting *taco shells, cereal, pancake mix, soda crackers, jelly, lotion, laundry detergent, toothpaste and mouthwash* to share with those in our community. Donations may be left in the basket by the church office.



- The food pantry will continue to offer curbside food pick up every Tuesday from 9-11:30 a.m. If you or your family need assistance, please reach out to the food pantry at 944-3165.

Please Note: The Food Panty will be closed on Monday, February 15 in observance of President's Day.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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COUNCIL

Jodi Barnhart—*President*
Gary Gesme—*Vice-President*
Linda Sheley—*Secretary*
Mike Ficken—*Treasurer*

Anne Calder, Lance Camp,
Johanna Hager, Kathy Heller,
Jill Laingen, Cathy Runty,
Mike Slaymaker, Jacob Steffes,
Phil Wildermuth

Meeting Schedule:

Cabinet — Monday, February 8
Ministries — Monday, February 8
Council — Monday, February 15

PRESCHOOL STAFF

Misty Slaymaker, *Director*
Margi Ficken
preschool@firstgeneseo.org

**NEXT CHIMES DEADLINE:
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9**

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Wednesday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday
Office Closed
Closed for Lunch ~ Noon-1 p.m.

STAFF SCHEDULE

Rev. Laura Kamprath
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Rev. Matt Kamprath
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

Morgan Sarber
Monday-Thursday

Mary Jo Brummet
Monday-Thursday

Abbey Cathelyn
Monday-Wednesday

Sherry Dickens
Monday-Thursday, select hours