



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CHIMES

Sharing Christ's Love

June 2020
Volume 59, Issue 6
www.firstgeneseo.org

WORSHIP WITH US THIS WEEKEND!
Virtual Worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Capital Campaign Debt Paid Off!

On May 15, 2020 we made the final payment on our Capital Campaign debt with Thrivent Financial. After 13 years of paying down our \$2.2 million loan we are debt free! This is a great accomplishment all because of your generous donations. Once we are able to gather again, we will celebrate this great accomplishment.

We continue to receive payments on your pledges to this campaign and the surplus funds will go into the Building Fund to help pay for other maintenance and repairs on the building and grounds.

*Thank You for your support of this campaign.
God is Good, All the Time!*

COVID-19 Update

In anticipation and hope that our region of Illinois will have entered Phase 3 of the plan "Restore Illinois" by the end of May, we are preparing to **reopen the church office and church building on Monday, June 1**. The church office will resume normal office hours. Staff will be in the office during those hours to answer the phone and to receive visitors. We ask all visitors to the church to call ahead, to ensure that your visit is at a time that we can safely receive you.

The south exterior doors closest to the offices will be unlocked during those hours and all persons (*staff and visitors*) coming into the building will be asked to enter and exit from those doors. There will be a "sign-in" sheet by that entrance, and each person who enters and exits will be asked to sign in. **All persons in the building will be required to wear a face mask** (*covering worn over the nose and mouth*). We ask everyone to follow social distancing guidelines.

Groups (*i.e. ministry teams, small groups, etc...*) will still be asked to meet virtually, for the time being. The building is open so that people can come and go to grab items they need, to work on ministry projects, and for the staff to resume on-site work. The building will also not be open yet for use by any outside groups.

Worship Today

Worship is essential to the life of the congregation and to me, but today it looks, sounds, and feels very different than what I am used to experiencing as a congregant and as a presider. I believe that's pretty obvious considering that the world has changed so drastically in such a short amount of time. This year, and especially these last several months, worship looks different than it ever has before. Today I can worship as never before. The variety of how and what people are doing for worship out there is fascinating to me and a testament to the essential nature of worship. We are called to worship in all times and in all places, but today's world is so very different. It might not ever be the same. Worship is indeed always in constant transition, and now, it has had to develop and adapt to the times in the fastest way possible to best worship God, and to serve God's people who are looking and hoping to worship.

Worship today looks so different digitally, in empty sanctuaries, or at homes produced through amateur or professional lenses with software and hardware which sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. Worship today sounds so different when there aren't a bunch of others singing with me. It sounds different through speakers, or through computer microphones, or on the television, or through earbuds, or really good headphones. It feels different in too many ways to name here. It's just plain different and it's hard to worship in this digital way. I have not always been the biggest fan of worshipping in this way, resisting it in many ways up until now; however, I think it's important that we continue to adapt and do a new thing to give glory to God in today's world. So right now, digital is the way, until a new way reveals itself, or we are able to

gather again. And even when we can't gather in person as of yet, and when we aren't sure what we are doing all the time, we still worship God every week as best as we are able. I trust deeply that God hears our songs, our prayers, our words, our hopes, our laments, no matter how we worship or when we worship God. The call is simply for us to worship today, for today is definitely different, than yesterday.

I have been reminded often of the wandering Israelites in this time. Shortly after their deliverance by God to freedom from slavery, the Israelites wandered around in the desert for forty years. I've barely made it forty days in the wilderness, but they were able to make a life in places where they weren't comfortable. They wandered around looking for this promised home, but kept having to set up tents and make camps, when they couldn't find this promised return to some sort of normal. Even though there were so many mistakes made by God's people, even though they complained most of the way, even though it wasn't ideal for them, God continued to be faithful to them the whole way. God's enduring faithfulness to them inspired them to build an altar to worship God wherever they happened to be, wilderness or promised land.

The same is true today. May we build an altar and worship God today where we are right now. Obviously today, that's in a lot of different places. Worship God today at home or in an empty (*hopefully full soon!*) sanctuary. Worship God today after you read this, whenever that might be. Worship God by yourself in quiet prayer or with your family who are not able to sit still today. Read the Bible today, pray some prayers today, sing a new song to God today. Worship God today in your Sunday's best, or in your dirty or clean

—Continued on page 3

work clothes. Worship God in your pajamas today. Worship God today in person live through Zoom, or on Facebook or YouTube later today. Worship God on Sunday, or on Saturday, or on Tuesday at midnight when you can't sleep. Wherever we are today in our wanderings, God will continue to be faithful, always inviting us to reconnect as we worship and praise God. And when we connect again to each other, however that happens and whenever that might be, God is praised. For today, yesterday, and tomorrow is a day that the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it, as best as we can. Amen.

—Pastor Matt

June 7, 2020—The Holy Trinity

Today's texts include Genesis 1:1—2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 and Matthew 28:16-20.

June 10, 2020—Healing Service

We will be having a Service of Healing on Wednesday, June 10 at 6:30 p.m. Join us on Facebook or YouTube for a service of the word.

June 14, 2020—Pentecost 2

Today's texts include Exodus 19:2-8a; Psalm 100; Romans 5:1-8 and Matthew 9:35--10:8.

June 21, 2020—Pentecost 3

Today's texts include Jeremiah 20:7-13; Psalm 69:7-10, 16-18; Romans 6:1b-11 and Matthew 10:24-39.

June 28, 2020—Pentecost 4

Today's texts include Jeremiah 28:5-9; Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18; Romans 6:12-23 and Matthew 10:40-42.

FIRST WORSHIP & MUSIC

Please keep the following Lifelines petitions in your prayers:

World and Community: For our leaders: President Donald J. Trump 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 Raul Falcon, Griffin Fleming, Josh Francis, Jakob Gradert, Brian Hanshaw, Geoffrey Lindesmith, Taylor McKean, Jessica Ruggles, 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. 6).

Health and Wellbeing: For all who are fighting COVID-19, Michele _____ (*Jodi Martin's friend*), Diane & Dick Anderson (*Kathy Nelson's friends*), Bryn Holevoet and his 3 children and families (*Virginia Klavohn and Merri Lu Swanson's nephew*), Candy Joseph (*Dolores Riekema's daughter and Deb Spence's sister*), Becky Neeley (*Jenni Johnson's mother*), Peggy Schram (*Doris Swanson's daughter*), Janet Stees, and Deanna Swanson.

Joys: Following out-patient surgery at Mayo to remove a melanoma, Roger Spittler has been told that he is now cancer free. He will be seen again in three months. Sherry Dickens says thanks for your prayers.

Thanksgiving: For the Easter and Spring season as we continue to celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection, the promise of Eternal Life, and experience the beauty of creation budding forth in flower, bloom, and green grass. Jesus Christ is Risen! Alleluia! For the safety of everyone during the Kewanee Fire and the for the Firefighters, First Responders, and Law Enforcement as they worked to protect the Kewanee Community. Guide the businesses that sustained extensive damage as they make decisions for their future. —Kathy Nelson

Sorrows: On the deaths of Sharon Stenzel, member; and Rudy Rexroth, member.

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

First Lutheran Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to each of our 2020 First Lutheran Scholarship Recipients!

- *Bek Hartman* is going to be a sophomore at Appalachian State University. He is studying math and education, with plans to become a high school math teacher.
- *Hannah Himmelman* is going to be a sophomore at Concordia University Wisconsin. She is earning a degree in Rehabilitation Science, with plans to become an occupational therapist.
- *Sydney Himmelman* is going to be a senior at Illinois College. She is studying math and secondary education, with plans to become a middle school or high school math teacher.
- *R. Hayes Murphy* is going to be a freshman at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He plans to study pre-med and become a Physician Assistant.
- *Bailey Winfree* completed a year of study at Black Hawk College and is preparing to begin studies at St. Ambrose University this fall. She plans to study public relations.

SUMMER BLOOD DRIVE

All donors will receive a voucher for a \$5 gift card!

First Lutheran Church
Sponsored by Social Ministry Committee

Tuesday, June 2
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Fellowship Room
114 E. Main Street

To schedule an appointment email Nancy Cassens at jncassens@gmail.com or online at www.bloodcenter.org

Please eat before donation. Must have photo ID to donate.



TROOPER TRACY Blood Donor/Advocate

WWW.BLOODCENTER.ORG

Congregational Garden

The Congregational Garden is planted! The committee is asking for donations of grass clippings to help keep weeds to a minimum. If you would be willing to donate, please call Karen Myhre at (309) 533-7053. Also, additional volunteers for garden maintenance would be welcomed!

SCHOLASTIC SUMMER READ-A-PALOOZA

It's Book Fair Time! As a fundraiser to benefit Lutheran Social Services of Illinois Storybook Project, our church is partnering with Scholastic Books to host a virtual book fair! Our book fair will run from June 1-14. To participate, just go to our book fair page at:

<https://www.scholastic.com/bf/lutheransclsrvcsofilhdst>

You can select and order your books directly from Scholastic Books and Scholastic will ship your books to whatever location you chose. There is a selection of books appropriate for grades pre-school through high school. You can stock up on summer reading for home and/or donate books to LSSI Storybook Project! To see the Storybook Project wish list visit www.firstgeneseo.org. You can find more information on the Storybook Project at:

<https://www.lssi.org/prisoner-family-ministry/pfm-the-storybook-project.php>

This is a great way to stock up on summer reading for your children and grandchildren! And it's an easy and fun way to help LSSI by donating books and proceeds to the Storybook Project. Please join us virtually as we Share Christ's Love by celebrating reading this summer!

—Social Ministry

 **READ · CELEBRATE · GIVE** 

Council Highlights from Cathy Runty, Council President

FIRST MINISTRIES

Council has been meeting via Zoom since March, and will continue to meet in that fashion as necessary.

- The Finance Ministry has secured Financial assistance for the church through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The forms have already been completed, filed, and accepted, and the money has been deposited in the church account. This money will help ensure that staff at the church is able to be paid, and will help cover bill payments from April and May.
- The staff continues to work on improving the electronic worship experience. Council approved spending up to \$5,000.00 from the Faith Formation Fund for equipment for the sanctuary to be used for live streaming worship. Council and staff are planning for the virtual worship option to remain available, even after we are able to worship together again.
- The Council approved up to \$2,000.00 to be distributed from the Scholarship Fund to this year's applicants. The Finance Ministry is working on a proposed revision to the

bylaws for the Scholarship Fund, and any recommendations would be submitted to the congregation at the annual meeting.

- The Council has chosen to delay two projects due to the current circumstances: repairs to the stained glass windows in the sanctuary and improvements to the south campus area.
- Over the past few months, the Worship & Music Ministry has been considering options for scheduling for the Christmas Eve services. That conversation has been postponed for this year.

April Financial Report

General Fund Offering:

April actual	\$29,723
April budget	\$36,833
YTD actual	\$192,433
YTD budget	\$185,832

Net Income Over Expenses:

April actual	\$829 deficit
April budget	\$112 deficit
YTD actual	\$33,432 surplus
YTD budget	\$14,801 surplus

A Note of Thanks!

Dear First Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your kind expressions of sympathy. It is deeply appreciated and will always be remembered by the family of Sharon D. Stenzel. First Lutheran Church was very important to Mom.

God's Peace!

Susan Hucke and Judith Stenzel

My heartfelt thanks to each of you who sent cards, memorials, phone calls and the many expressions of sympathy at Virgil's passing. I am blessed to be part of the First Lutheran family. Thanks also to Pastor Matt for comforting words at the graveside service. There will be a celebration of life at church at a later date for Pastor Juliot.

—Marilyn Juliot

Thank You!

I want to thank both pastors and the congregation for their cards and prayers while I was hospitalized and under home health for cellulitis, an infection of the knee cap and right leg. After two and a half weeks under medical supervision, I was finally released and allowed to return to my normal routine on April 24th. Again thanks for your support through prayers, cards, and telephone calls. It was greatly appreciated.

—Gary Daniels



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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COUNCIL

Cathy Runty—*President*
Johanna Hager—*Vice-President*
Jodi Barnhart—*Secretary*
Gary Gesme—*Treasurer*

Anne Calder, Lance Camp,
Kathy Heller, Jill Laingen,
Cheryl Saint Vincent, Linda Sheley,
Mike Slaymaker, Patty Turner

Meeting Schedule:

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

PRESCHOOL STAFF

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

**NEXT CHIMES DEADLINE:
TUESDAY, JUNE 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-Thursday

Sherry Dickens
Monday-Thursday, select hours