

First Lutheran Church

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Upcoming Events

Summer Worship Beginning
June 2nd: Divine Worship-
9:30AM Bible Class
beginning 15 minutes
following worship.

June 9: Pentecost

June 16: Holy Trinity Sunday

Empty Chairs at Empty Tables

The following article is courtesy Kory Janeke at timesofrefreshing.blog

In one of the more somber scenes in *Les Misérables*, one of the main characters, Marius, sings of "empty chairs at empty tables." He's grieving because most of his revolutionary friends have just lost their lives in a failed attempt to overthrow the government. He returns to their favorite watering hole, only to find it eerily quiet – just empty chairs at empty tables. Like many *Les Mis* tunes, it's catchy. For some reason it's popped in my head lately. In the odd associations that my mind makes, I connect Marius's lyrics to ministry. I think about those pastors and parishioners who show up to empty chairs and empty tables, empty pews and empty pulpits. Thankfully, this is not the case everywhere. If you have fellow Christians to gather with for worship and Bible study and community, thank the Lord for these blessings! However, many of you are experiencing more empty chairs/pews in your churches than in previous years. It gets discouraging. However, while empty pews is a whole topic of its own, I'm especially thinking today about empty *pulpits* – or podiums or music stands or wherever your pastor proclaims God's Word! During the past number of years in the church body of which I am a member, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, (and in most other churches), we've seen less and less candidates pursue vocations in ministry. This is true of pastors, teachers, Directors of Christian Education (DCEs), and other church work vocations. Adding to this situation, the number of church workers who are retiring or soon to retire is skyrocketing. Many calls for commissioned workers (DCEs, etc.) go unfilled. Many churches are experiencing long vacancies without a pastor. This includes churches both large and small, urban and rural. These vacancies take a toll on our churches and schools and youth groups. If I were more ambitious, I could pepper this post with stats that illustrate the trend toward empty pews and pulpits. Instead, I just want to ask, **what are we doing about this on the local level?**

Monthly Readings:

June 2: Acts 1:12-26, Rev. 22:1-6, John 17:20-26

June 9: Gen. 11:1-9, Acts 2:1-21, John 14:23-31

June 16: Prov. 8:1-4, 22-31, Acts 2:14a, 22-36, John 8:48-59

June 23: Isaiah 65: 1-9, Gal. 3:23-4:7, Luke 8:26-39

June 30: 1 Kings 19:9b-21, Gal. 5:1, 13-25, Luke 9:51-62

Rather than waiting for some top-down solution, a sweeping recruitment strategy from your regional or national church leadership, what can you do? Here are just a few thoughts: **Begin with Jesus' mandate:** *"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'"* (Matthew 9:36-38) Jesus Himself tells His people to pray for more workers for His kingdom! So think about specific people who might pursue a church work vocation and pray for them. Pray for those who are preparing for the ministry at our Concordia universities and seminaries and at other Christian colleges. Pray for the laborers the Lord has given to serve in your church and school and community. **What about you?** (Yes, you!) Perhaps as you pray for the Lord to send laborers, you'll seriously consider that this could include you. This is something for our mature youth to consider, but how about you adults? I was blessed to go to seminary with men who had had other careers, some for decades prior to pursuing pastoral ministry (engineering, insurance, education, etc.). What about you? **Start a conversation:** Talk with your teenager at the dinner table. Talk with that kid in the youth group who lights up when theology begins to make sense. Talk with the church elder whose presence already seems "pastoral." Talk with the young woman who delights in telling Bible stories at VBS. Ask a simple question: *Have you ever thought of becoming a pastor? A missionary? A Lutheran teacher? I think you'd be great at it!* **Who will you encourage?** There's someone in your circles that you can encourage to contemplate serving in church work. Begin by planting the possibility. When I was in high school, I had about 6-8 people who constantly planted "ministry hints" in conversations with me. Sometimes they were subtle, sometimes not! But it made a difference! **Draw attention to the need:** This spring (2018), our church is going to host an evening for youth (and also adults) simply to encourage them to consider church work as a possibility. We're going to enjoy some music and pizza, but we're also going to hear from those who are serving as youth directors and teachers and pastors. How did the Lord lead them into this ministry? What are some of the blessings and challenges you experience in your vocation? What would you recommend to someone considering your vocation? Hopefully we'll help to start some more conversations. If you don't have empty pews and pulpits in your church, give thanks! But other churches are not so fortunate. What can you do to help address this situation? *Lord of the church, please continue to provide laborers for Your harvest. Please work through me to encourage potential and current church workers. Help me to say, "Here I am, send me!" for whatever ways I can serve Your people. Amen.*



Board Happenings

6/4 - Stewardship 7PM

6/11- School Board 6PM

6/11- Elder's Meeting 7PM

6/15- Trustee Workday 9AM

Weekly Happenings

Sunday: Divine Worship 9:30AM
Bible Class following worship service

2nd and 4th Tuesdays: Quilting
9:30 AM (Meeting Room)

Prayer Requests

Serving Our Country: Brett Anthonijs, Robert Boatman, Isaac Davis, Chad Kaiser, Adam Smith, Jeff Stone, Neil Whitehead, William Smolter

Members: Brion Bissell (needs kidney) Eric Lintz, Margot Bridges (homebound) Carl Testerman (stroke) Gene Franklin, the Varner family, Don & Carolyn Weaver, Karla Hood, Kris Weaver, Mike & Mary Jones Harold & Katherine Whitaker (homebound) Don & Sandy Linde, Sharon Mueller, Marilyn Wing (homebound) Douglas Rodenbeck(transition to being homebound) Jim and Rosa Beck,

Non Members: Jonathan Campbell (Diane Baum's co-worker's brother) fighting infection after an appendectomy to remove his ruptured appendix, Steven Dew (Carolyn Weaver's friend), Bill Flynn (Sharon Mueller's brother), whose cancer has returned Ken Hamilton (father of Anna Marie Hamilton, UT student from Alabama) Judy Hamrick (Shirley Watson's neighbor) with a tumor that is growing, JoAnn Harbaugh (Kathleen Holliday's mother) Cheryl Hooks (Diane Baum's friend) undergoing months of chemotherapy after removal of part of her colon and intestines due to cancer ,Helen Linderfelt (Lynda Graves' friend) Joyce Lipscomb (Rick Elmore's friend) Annette Lotivio (Marc Blais's friend) with pancreatic cancer, Joanne Mattingly, Joan Mincey (Shirley Watson's friend) with stage 4 COPD and breast cancer Karen Nall Travis Parrott (the Wolford's son-in-law) needing a kidney transplant Tom Roberts (Sara's grandfather) with Alzheimer's Daniel Rule (the Slifkas' friend) suffering from RSD, Kristy Shirk (Lynda Graves' friend) with cancer of the sinuses Barbara Thornton (Janice Kaiser's relative) Sam and Alex Weaver, and Jean Anderson (Mike Anderson's Mom)

In Other News

Stewardship: Some disciples of John the Baptist were questioning him about the baptism and preaching of Jesus. Many disciples were going to Jesus instead of John the Baptist. John the Baptist answers: "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven" (John 3:27). John the Baptist says this to show that Jesus, His teaching, and His baptism are from heaven. God provides everything we have in body and soul. We are taught this in the meaning of the Apostles' Creed in the *Small Catechism*. In the First Article of the Creed, we learn that God has made us and everything in the universe.

"He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him."

Indeed, "a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven."

But how easy is this for us to forget? How easy is it for us to think that what we have in life is because we have earned it? How easy is it for us to forget that all our skills – the abilities of our hands and minds, the ethic to work diligently, and the desire to improve – is given to us from heaven, just as John the Baptist said? How easy is it for us to forget that it is Christ alone, and the work of the Holy Spirit, that reveals His salvation to us, delivers it to us, and that none of this is our doing? Let us then respond in thanksgiving and give back to Him as He asks – with a first-fruits, generous proportion offering of what He has given to us.

55 Alive: We will resume meeting in the fall. Have a wonderful summer!

Youth News: Thank you for all your support of our youth group this spring! All proceeds made from Bingo Night, Easter Dessert Sale and Rummage Sale will go to our trip to the National Youth Gathering in July!

News from First Lutheran School

On May 23rd, we ended our 149th year of sharing our love of God through Christian education. Our Bible verse this year was Ephesians 4:32: *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."* Our goal was to emphasize showing kindness to everyone, and our students answered this call with enthusiasm. Students diligently raised money for missionaries in Central America, KARM Pennies from Heaven, missionaries in Peru, Heifer International, St. Jude, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. They also collected hats, gloves, and scarves for our local KARM to help those in need during the cold winter months. Whether it was helping another student, saying something kind to someone, or even leaving a daily note for a teacher, students showed kindness every day.

The school was also busy with many activities throughout the year. Each month, we had a large event; August: GermanFest, September: Grandparent's Day, October: Reformation, November: Veteran's Day, December: Christmas, January: National Lutheran Schools week, February: Presidents Day and Basketball Tournaments, March: Trivia Night, April: Spring Musical, Read a thon, and National Week of the Young Child, May: Various class trips and graduation. We want to thank each of you for your love, support, and prayers throughout the year. Your kindness



enabled us to share God's love and provide our students with a successful and eventful year. While this year has ended, we are looking forward to next year (our 150th!) and the JOY it will bring!

Jessie Irwin, Principal

Anniversaries:

1: Jim and Dawn Roberts 10: John and Shannon Milbourn
14: Keith and Becky Hodson; Gene and Arlene Stern
17: Bob and Barb Eisold 22: Steve and Julie Killian
24: Eric and Holly Flanigan; Robert and Sheila Wolford
25: Chris and Cindy Cox 27: Al and Sally Collver; Keith and Cheryl Denton
30: Joe and Angela Lukens

Birthdays:

1: Levi Sprecher	17: Rachel Buckner
2: Paul Ortstadt	18: Bob Hotaling; Carroll Ward
3: Kristy Byrd; Susan Rodenbeck; Christine Sprecher	19: Jennifer Sandie; Ezra Sprecher
4: Cayden Bland; Ken Christensen	21: Sandy Anthonijis; Michael Blomenberg; Sally Collver
5: Karen Farris; Karla Hood	23: Don Weaver
10: William Smolter	25: Emily Dalton; Matt Keller
11: Jen Meier; Sheldon Yeatts	26: John Crockett; Dan Jordan; Maria Sunda
12: Brandon Poore	27: Sherry Ward
13: Miranda Yeatts	28: Al Collver; Gordan McSween
16: Elisabeth Krueger; Elsie Nutter	29: Olivia Cooper
30: Anni Lansley; Avram Sprecher	

Deadline for June Newsletter is Friday, June 21st, 2019

Sundays: 9:30AM Worship Service Bible Class Following

Rev. Larry Rockemann, Vacancy Pastor, Rev. John Schulz, Pastor Emeritus, Jessie Irwin, Principal
