

“Were not our hearts burning within us”- Luke 24:32

(Read full passage on the road to Emmaus Luke 24:13-35)

Greetings Friends in Christ,

I know we just heard this story in Luke a couple weeks ago, but it perfectly fits our situation. Now, we aren't walking along a road with some friends and certainly we aren't running back to a group of friends to tell them the good news once Jesus is revealed, but we are journeying on a path, like these two in the story, that seems to have so many unknowns and lost hopes.

And yet, these two people are walking with a stranger, who is Jesus, while Jesus listens to them. He walks with them. Jesus doesn't try to solve their problems or change their situation of lost hope, at least not right away. However, when Jesus tries to part ways with these hikers, they invite him to stay with them. That is when Jesus reveals himself to these hopeless people.

How true is that for us right now? We are staying in our homes following stay at home orders from our state knowing that by doing this we are following Christ by loving and serving our neighbors by staying at home, wearing masks, and taking care of ourselves to eliminate the spread of a terrible virus.

Even as we are following these crucial things, it is difficult work. Not unlike these two hikers, who had hopes for the future because of Christ, and then on their journey to Emmaus none of that came to fruition and they are walking down a path of so many unknowns and questions for what their futures hold for them and for the world. They were filled with hope and then in almost an instant hopeless. We are waiting for good news to come our way so we can get back to our normal lives when we can gather together for fellowship and worship. We are waiting in so many unknowns having lots of questions for what our futures now hold. We may have once been hopeful and now feel hopeless for when ever this will all end or have a positive outcome. Yet, Jesus walks beside us or in our case sits beside us listening to our anxieties, sadness, hopelessness, questions, and so on. Jesus doesn't immediately take all that away because we need to feel those things. We need to get them off our chest. This doesn't mean that Jesus is just sitting around for this pandemic to end. No, Jesus is staying with us just like he did with the hikers in Luke while revealing himself to us. Jesus stays with us and continues to reveal himself in the world.

For me, I see Jesus in the healthcare workers working tirelessly to keep people alive, healthy, and safe. I see Jesus in the “essential” workers in stores making sure we have food, supplies, and other essential daily living items. I see Jesus in mail and delivery workers. Jesus is working through scientists, health experts, and government officials. Jesus is working through us in phone calls, letters, those helping to get groceries for people most at-risk, and in our messages to one another. Jesus works through livestreamed and televised worship services around the world. And Jesus is in the homemade masks being made and donated. Jesus is with the lonely, those dying alone, and those grieving losses. Those are the breaking bread moments in our world where Jesus is constantly being revealed to us and the whole world. Holding us in our fears, hopelessness, and unknowns working to bring peace, rest, and most of all hope.

Let us pray,

Jesus, you knew pain, you knew the loneliness, the weakness, and the misery it brings; you knew the agony. Be with us in the unknowns and pain we suffer now; be the hand that we can hold, the listener we can count on, and the hope that changes the world; be present, Savior, for we need you now.

Amen.

In Peace,

+Pastor Sarah

A letter from our Congregational President

Dear First Lutheran Friends,

I hope you are staying safe by “social distancing” and trying to remain positive. The pandemic situation can be very scary for all of us, but remember, we are all in this together and better days are ahead of us. With prayer and staying in touch with our friends and family we will all be OK. Good things may be a result of this, too. I'm sure we all have a new sense of what's really important and meaningful in our lives. I hope this will bring you some peace. I look forward to the day we can be together again as one First Lutheran family.

Keep the faith and blessings to all of you.

Nancy White

Church Finances

Many thanks to all who support First Lutheran Church and its extended ministries. FLC's General Fund contributions fuel this congregation's operational needs and extended ministries. **General fund offerings are shared** with our NE MN Synod and the ELCA Church-wide office to help ELCA Bible camps, youth ministry, seminaries, global outreach, various endeavors to promote peace and justice, and administrative costs.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the ministry at our church! Please continue to send in your offerings to help us continue to be the church in our community.

Ways to give:

- 1) Mail in offering to the church
- 2) Drop off offering in our mail slot on the office door
- 3) Give online (To sign up for online giving, contact the church office)

Don't forget you can give weekly, or for the entire month! Again, thank you for all the ways you support the ministry here at First Lutheran!

Monthly offerings:

March: \$15,237.98

April: \$10,314.00

A special thank you to the ministry that keeps us worshipping every Sunday morning. In these difficult times, it helps to keep us connected. Thank you to Pastor Sarah for continuing to lead our congregation when everything at this time is uncertain. Thank you to Pastor Katie Larson for joining in our services so she can continue to lead her congregation. Also, thank you to those who bring the rest of our service together: Elaine Sweeney on organ, Cheryl Forstrom with her beautiful voice, and Kathy and Forrest Kolland for broadcasting service for all of us to see! We appreciate all of you!!



Messages of Hope

In the midst of all the chaos and devastation, I am filled with optimism, encouragement, and hope. I see families reconnecting with each other and strangers helping strangers coming up with clever and creative ways to fulfill every need. God has the ability to make something good out of any situation. I truly believe when all this is passed, we will be better and stronger people for it. Thanks be to God!

-Linda Smith

“Strengthen Our Foundation” Capital Campaign

As of May 3rd, the total amount that has been contributed to the campaign is \$37,500.00. We would like to thank everyone who has continued to donate to this fund, but at this time until this COVID-19 is over, we will suspend the campaign so we can focus on the day to day general expenses of the church. We will continue to give updates in the bulletins and newsletters on our campaign efforts and funds raised so that all are aware of the progress and how close we have come to our goal when all is said and done. Our goal for this campaign will be to raise \$150,000 to help cover some of the costs of the repairs and projects that were recently completed (and for future projects) by our 2020 annual meeting next January. We appreciate any and all help we can get in helping maintain our beautiful building! God bless!

**Happy Birthday to all our friends and family at First Lutheran!
We miss all of you and hope to celebrate soon!**

Happy Belated Birthday to the following April congregants:

Aaron Foster, Jace Soderberg, Barbara Wray, Linda Smith, Landon Tokarczyk, Luca Soderberg, Caroline Rue, Sandra Fairbanks, Bertha Engebretson, Lillian Rue, Phyllis Frand, Charlene Olson, Daniel Perunovich Jr., Courtney Schnortz, Carol Cummings, Maynard Elg, Lori Marinac, Rudy Bautch, Evelyn Hoaglund, Deno Kubena, Tyler Rutherford, Keith Schweiberger, Jack Bautch, Louis Demillo, Brittany Johnson, Candace Clark, Brittany Kopelciw, Shirley Scofield, Ava Weyrauch, Joan Rhude, Derek Bautch, Susan Chacich, Hannah Anderson, Mary Gargano, Delores Sikich, Clem Williard, Savannah Haataja, Carol Kopelciw, Vivienne Mandt, and Justin Prescott

Happy Birthday to the following May congregants:

Molly Cencich, Suzanne Rian, Francis Panula, Larry Tuin, Russell Carlson, James Chacich, Reid Wherland, Logan Kasola, Emily Moen, Beverly Jenko, Ethan Lund, Kristin Renskers, Diane Riihluoma, John Rue, Ann Vucetich, Erica Rantala, Blake Kolden, Irene Auel, Carolyn Pingatore, Addilynn Foster, Madelyn Moen, Sue Sundvall, Ardythe Johnson, Emma Otto, Kobie Zgonc, Muriel Scofield, Gage Rantala, Donna Lean, John Marinac, Nancy White, Duane Maki, Lois Pulis, Lori Vincent, Dan Anderson, Amanda Walters, and Karen Podominick.

Happy Birthday to the following June congregants:

Doris Baasie, Ace Barsness, Bradford Benson, John Brandt, Carol Catani, Michael Cencich, Mavis Danielson, Candice Duncan, Andrea Gargano, Christina Gargano, Travis Griffiths, Lila Hill, CJ Jespersen, Cash Johnson, Rian Johnson, Gary Kangas, Shirley Kolden, Carson Link, Gloria Maras, Joseph Mohn, Mica Morgan, Dick Podomonick, Kay Ranger, Phyllis Rian, Jonathan Rue, Cody Rutherford, Ilexa Rutherford, Syllas Schweiberger, Madi Soderberg, Darlene Stavnes, Natalie Stimac, Ruchard Sundvick, Shirley Szweduik, Faith Tuin, Jenny Walters, Addison Weyrauch, Alice White and Pollie Wilen.



Mask Making

A huge thank you to those who spent time making and donating masks to the church so we can send them out to facilities in need! Here are just a few of the ones we received.

Remember: We are still accepting mask donations. Someone is at the church on Wednesdays from 11:00-11:30. You can either call the office and someone will run out and get them, or you can knock on the door. If other arrangements need to be made, contact Rian at the church office (218)263-8388

We will continue to send them out if we still are receiving them! Thank you so much and stay safe and healthy!

