

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

A local Pastor recently forwarded an article to me describing a 2020 US Religious Census that measured denominational affiliation among Christians in Washington County Nebraska. He wanted me to see it because the largest single religious group in this county is ELCA Lutherans, with 2,338 members in four congregations. A nice thing to know.

I don't care.

I was ordained in the early 1990's, when "church growth" was all the rage. Conference after conference featured "church consultants" who helped congregations grow in membership and money. The church was learning from the world important lessons, and it was becoming just like everything else in America: focused on organization, program and metric-based outcomes.

The church growth movement was a response to the fear that declining membership, attendance, giving and influence were indicators that the church was dying, especially older, mainline denomination churches. So we learned. We adopted worldly standards, values and practices. As we became more like the world, we became less like the church.

We created a self-fulfilling prophecy. Our fear is actually killing the church.

There is another way.

Saving the church should not, cannot, be our mission. The harder we try to save the church, the more like the world we become. The more we are focused on kingdoms of our own construction, the less we abide in the Kingdom of God. The more we focus on ourselves, the less we can be an instrument of God's grace in the World.

I get the obsession with numbers in the church. I get the impact of decreasing attendance, the importance of healthy giving. My own livelihood depends on such things! But we are the church, and we are not defined by anything that can be measured in numbers.

We are defined by our faith in the Word of God, the love and grace given us in Jesus Christ.

The early church did not succeed in the ways of the world. Quite the opposite – it flourished because it was not like the world. It embraced Christ-like values of justice and community. It served. It did not worship empire or wealth or power or fame. All of those things worked against it. All of those things persecuted the church.

Which may be why the church survived. Which may even be why the church grew.

(Pastor Glen's Newsletter Article Continued on Page 2)

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We are now livestreaming our worship services on Facebook Live.

Please join www.facebook.com/flcblair to be

alerted whenever a live video begins. This is a real-time, virtual worship experience, and we invite you to join us if you can't be with us in person.

Each live video will begin as the regularly scheduled worship time.

(Continued from Page 1)

What would it mean for us today to step away from the temptation to be like the world, to forsake the allure of scale and prominence, to refuse to be one more shiny object in a landscape cluttered with shiny objects? What would it mean for us to trust that God is up to something right here, right now, in and with and for us just as we are?

On the day of Pentecost, Peter, the once hesitant and often misspoken disciple, stood in front of the assembled crowd and spoke impossible words, including these:

But God raised [Jesus] up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. Acts 2:24

Easter means that death has no power over us. Even our own. Even the death of the church. To save the church, we must believe that. To save our faith, we must live like we believe it.

-Pastor Glen



VBS 2024!!



JUNE 24 – 28

Mark your calendars now!!

And, we need YOUR help!!

- Class Leaders
- Station Leaders (Simulation Station and Storytelling)
- Class and Station Helpers
- Donate funds for Art, Snacks, Service Project, & Lunch
- Decorating team to prepare for the week
- Behind the scenes work prior to VBS
- Kitchen Staff

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



The FLC Youth Garage Sale is BACK!!
so... **WE WANT YOUR STUFF!!**

Furniture, clothing, kitchen items,
sports equipment, outdoor decor...anything!

We are taking all donations NOW!!
Contact Erika for more info.

Come shop
JUNE 13-15!!

CONFIRMATION

17 eighth graders will be confirmed at FLC on Sunday, May 5th. Please congratulate these students, and pray for them as they enter a new phase of their faith journeys.

Ty Aguilar	Lindsey Moeller
LeLah Filows	Kamie Nelson
Hannah Gross	Ike Petersen
Wyatt Gunderson	Finn Soderberg
Kennedy Hilgenkamp	Taya Templar
Ella Jenkins	Maren Thompson
Jay Jensen	Lauren Wehrli
Ayden Klitzke	Blake Work
Brevin Leggott	

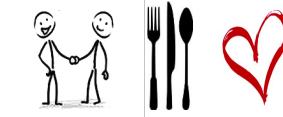


WE REMEMBER IN
OUR PRAYERS-Please keep these
people in your
thoughts and prayers

†Family of Marilyn O'Neil
 †Norman Frey (Rhonda McMurtry's dad) - healing & prayers
 †Elijah - healing
 †Josh Foulk - healing
 †Thomas Uhlman - diagnosed with lung cancer
 †Trina Kaiser - healing
 †David Kaiser - healing
 †Helen Garnett (Jim Garnett's mom) - healing
 †June Jenson - prayers
 †Chris Chance - healing
 †Randy Backman - healing
 †Clint Clausen - prayers
 †Crew Workman - healing
 †Mike Boeka - prayers for healing
 †Deloris Matson - early stage lymphoma - healing & prayers
 †John Wick
 †Vivian Walvoord - healing & prayers
 †Betty Wolsmann - healing
 †Florence Larsen - prayers for healing
 †Keith Matzen & family - prayers
 †Dana - healing
 †Clark Jenson
 †Betty Anderson
 †Sunni Wilson (mother of Melody Dubon)
 †Wayne (father of Deb Henson) - prayers for healing
 †Ruth Ann Persson - healing
 †Gordon Soderberg - healing
 †Irene Thorsen
 †Jo Royuk (mother of Anne Chrans) - healing
 †Russ Sonderup - prayers
 †Meredith Dickerson - Alpha Gal Syndrome
 †Zach - cancer healing/treatment side effects
 †Misty - healing and pain relief
 †Marilyn Svendgard
 †Sue Marsh - healing
 †Merriebeth Ferguson (sister-in-law of Merriellen Bourn) - cancer - healing
 †Chris Kesling - healing
 †Alex - surgery & healing
 †Mary LaScala
 †Martin Kuhr - prayers and healing
 †Riley
 †Georgia (great niece of Debbie Katt) -prayers & healing
 †Kyler Reed - healing
 †Scott & Katie Abrams - prayers & healing
 †Kay Melby (Angela Ulven and Kari Hernandez's mother) - healing
 †Patrick McKinnis - continued healing
 †Stacy Thompson Green (daughter of Marcy Bottorff) – prayers & healing
 †Larry Kastrup – healing
 †Leo Aguilar-Hicks – healing for Leukemia
 †Lekura Parish
 †Tornado Victims and all those we name in our hearts.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

MWM MID WEEK MEAL



Pickup or Delivery

We serve our meal in the east parking lot
2146 Wright St.

Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

For Planning

Text # of meals to 402-533-0918
NOT REQUIRED

For Delivery

Text name & address & # of meals
402-533-0918

Volunteers STILL Needed!!

Cooks

You join a group of folks to cook the meal on
Wednesdays 1pm-3:30pm

Servers

You join a group of folks to serve the meal into to-go containers on Wednesday 4:45-6pm

Delivery Drivers

You deliver meals to 5-7 locations on
Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

Please contact Erika if you can volunteer!!
All times are flexible—weekly, biweekly,
monthly, whenever it fits into your
schedule!

LET'S ROCK THE BLOCK!

Join Habitat for Humanity to help our neighbors in Blair!
Small repairs, yardwork, painting and more

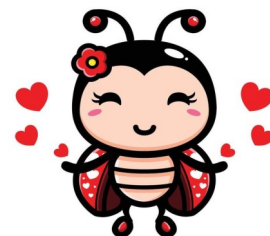
Saturday, May 4th 8am—1pm

Breakfast & Lunch Provided

Headquarters right here at FLC!!

To volunteer, contact Erika!!

The Christian Growth Board would like to remind members of FLC to consider including the Christian Growth Fund in your estate planning.



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Communion Update:

Thank you for helping with this accommodation for Pastor Glen: because it is difficult for Pastor to bring communion to members in the pews, if you find it physically difficult to come forward during communion, we invite you to pick up the communion elements as you come into the Sanctuary and receive them during the communion liturgy when the Pastor indicates.

Funeral Coordinators

The Women's Steering Team is in need of TWO people to be Co-Coordinators to facilitate funerals. These people would work with the family to provide workers for the funeral luncheon. The family is responsible for providing all the food. Please contact Sarah Boeka, Coordinator if you are interested in this position or would like more information. sboeka@abbnebraska.com or 402-669-6008.

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed Monday, May 27th for Memorial Day.



May 12, 2024

Women's Bible Study

The Friday Morning Women's Bible Study will begin a new study entitled "**From Beginning to Forever**" by Elizabeth Woodson. "Too often we have just a fragmented understanding of parts of the bible. This leads us to see the Scripture through the lens of our individual stories, causing us to miss God's bigger story-His redemption and restoration of the entire world. In this study, Elizabeth Woodson explains how all sixty-six books of the Bible combine to form one unified narrative. We will see how the rich theological truths found in Genesis through Revelation show us the eternal significance of what God is doing in the world and how He invites us to be a part of it." This Bible study will combine a video with a study guide and meets in the church library on Friday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. If interested in coming to this Bible study, contact Susie Pinquoch at (402) 426-8182 or email at spinquoch@gpcom.net.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

W.O.W. Meal is over for the summer! (In House Meal)

Starting on Wednesday, May 1st you are welcome to order meals for delivery or pick up with MWM since the W.O.W. meal will be over for the summer. Please reach out to Erika and or the church office to place your order! W.O.W. meal will resume when the fall Wednesday services start back up.

Martha Sorensen
Tracy Gross

New Christ in Our Homes are here

Christ in Our Homes-If you would like a Christ in Our Homes daily devotional they are available at the Welcome Center in the Narthex and also on the usher table outside of the LIFE Center for April, May, and June. The Christ in Our Homes is a book that has a daily devotional to read and pray. Please stop by and pick one up if you would like or if you need one delivered please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.

American Cancer Society Road to Recovery program in Nebraska

The American Cancer Society-Road to Recovery program is trying to open a program in Washington County. Road To Recovery provides rides to and from cancer treatment in the Washington County area and we need one more volunteer to open the program.

Interested parties can visit cancer.org/drive to learn more/sign up or call 800-227-2345.



**Use your
drive for good.**

Give people with
cancer free rides
to treatment.

American
Cancer
Society

Road To Recovery



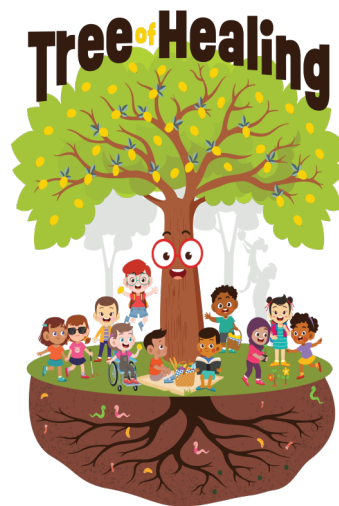
Thank you Deb Katt!!

After over a decade of leading Children's Music at FLC, Deb is retiring. We thank you for all your time and effort and love in leading our kids!!



VBS 2024

Alongside 1st United Methodist!!



June 24—28

Go to www.firstlutheranblair.org to register on our Google Form!!

Please register your kids as soon as possible to help us plan.







Tree of Healing

VBS 2023

**Do you love little kids?
Be a VBS Helper!**

**June 24-28
9am—12pm
Contact Erika!!**



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!!

Blessing of FLC Graduates
Sunday, May 12th 10:15am

****Seniors, please let Erika know if you plan to attend.
Also, please give a senior photo & a toddler/baby
photo to Erika by May 5th.**

CONFIRMATION

17 FLC Youth will be confirmed on
MAY 5th @ 2pm

8th Graders: Don't forget Banquet &
Rehearsal! May 1st @ 6:15pm



Do justice, love
kindness, and
walk humbly with
your God. Micah 6:8



New Orleans (NOYG) Team Bonding #9

May 29th @ 7pm

Created to be **DISCIPLES**
who love our neighbors

REQUIRED for ALL participants!
Parents come at 7pm for update
Our regular meeting will follow

To Serve As Jesus Served... *projects and events of the church, the community, and the world reported monthly by the FLC Social Concerns Committee.*

**FLC AMBASSADOR
SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE
May 2024**

Courageous Conversations to Look at Domestic Violence will be rescheduled

First Lutheran Church members are invited to participate in the second session of Courageous Conversations. Domestic Violence will be the topic of this session which is sponsored by the Social Concerns Committee. The program will be rescheduled. Suzanne Smith, Director of the Bridge, has agreed to lead the program. Members of the Social Concerns Committee do encourage your participation in this program which is a very serious problem in both the National and local scene.

Equal Exchange Display To Be Continuous

Following a meeting of the Social Concerns Committee, it has been decided that the Equal Exchange Display will be on a continuous display for the near future. The display will be found along the north perimeter of the Social Hall. Here, members of the congregation can pick up items such as coffee, teas, chocolate candies, and nuts. These are all grown by farmers in Third World Countries through the Equal Exchange Program. This is a program designed to provide a fair and equitable price to the farmer by by-passing the middleman.

We invite members of the congregation to take a look at the inventory. Cost is suggested pricing. Members of the Social Concerns Committee will reevaluate the program after a period of time to see where to go from there.

Gardeners are Encouraged to Plan for the "First Fruits and Garden Market"

First Lutheran Gardeners are invited to make plans to grow a few more garden crops this summer to help supply the First Lutheran Church "First Fruits and Garden Market" this summer. Plans are to start the "kick-off" of this program on the weekend of June 29-30 and continue throughout the summer into Fall. During the market, gardeners can supply the market with vegetables, flowers, or baked goods. Good-will donations for these products will go to the ELCA World Hunger Campaign.



Thank You Notes

Dear First Lutheran Church,

Thank you for the beautiful Easter Lily that Ellen Whitaker delivered to me. I enjoyed the visit and I am enjoying the Lily. It has several more blossoms so will be pretty for a long time.

Love,
Betty Megrue

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Flowers for Worship Services

Would you like to provide flowers for worship services at First Lutheran in celebration of an important event in your life or to honor someone important? We would be grateful for your gift! Please follow these directions:

1. Sign up for an available weekend on the flower chart on the bulletin board outside the Sacristy door. Only one family per weekend please.
2. Mark your calendar or leave yourself a reminder! You will NOT receive a reminder notice from the church prior to the weekend you have chosen.
3. You are responsible to order and pay for a floral arrangement and provide for it to be delivered or brought to the church on the Friday afternoon prior to the weekend you would like it used. The church staff is NOT available to order or pick up flowers for you.
4. You may wish to consider the season of the church and choose suitable colors. Please bring LIVE flower arrangements only.
5. Information about the flowers and to whom they are dedicated must be provided to the church office (office@firstlutheranblair.org) by Thursday afternoon. It will be included in the weekly email blast.

Monday Morning Bible Study

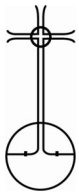
On April 8, the Monday morning Bible study began talking about the book Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church Is

Transforming the Faith by Diana Butler Bass.

Dr. Butler Bass shares her surprising findings from her extensive, three-year study of churches across the country. She discovered that many churches are

flourishing without resorting to mimicking the mega-church, evangelical style. Christianity for the Rest of Us describes this phenomenon and offers a how-to approach for Protestants eager to remain faithful to their tradition while becoming a vital spiritual community. She describes how certain consistent practices - such as hospitality, contemplation, diversity, justice, discernment, and worship - help congregations rediscover authentic Christian faith and witness.

Come be a part of this conversation – Monday mornings at 9:00 am. in the library.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
May 2024