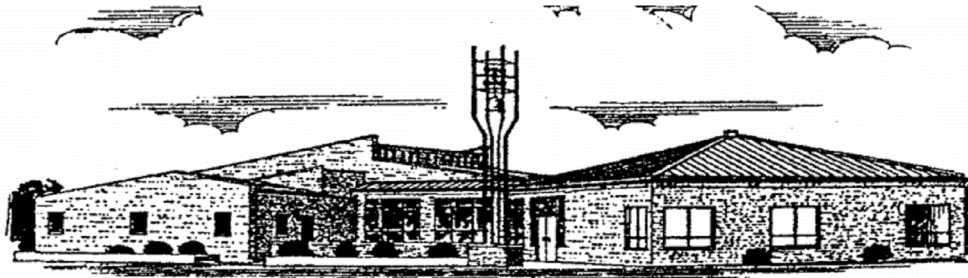


DISCOVER FIRST



EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE WORSHIP,
REACH OUT, SHARE THE GOSPEL AND SERVE

August 2016

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
287 West Main Street, Xenia, OH 45385
372-7421
Pastor Alicia Nierman

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Worship with us on Sunday morning at 9:30am

Church Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:00am-1:00pm



God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1
Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott. Martin Luther

Last week I went with my husband, Pastor Steve, and his congregation's children and parents to LaComedia Dinner theatre for their annual musical theatre production for children. This year's selection is "The Wizard of Oz."

There are lots of frequently quoted lines from the book/play/ movie, but my favorite comes during the scene when Dorothy and her entourage, who have been captured by the wicked witch of the west, confront her at last. The witch takes up her broom and touches it to a nearby torch, setting it afire. Then she touches the scarecrow and sets his arm ablaze. Dorothy immediately picks up a wooden water bucket (which is conveniently on a shelf next to her) and tosses it at the scarecrow. However, the lion's share (pardon the pun) of the water lands on the wicked witch herself. She begins to shrink, going up in a cloud of steam, shouting all the while, until all but her clothes and signature hat remain.

Her tirade begins, "I'm melting! I'm melting!" And then come the lines that intrigue me most, "What a world! What a world!"

I wonder if the screenwriters, or L. Frank Baum, author of the book on which the movie was based, packed more meaning into those lines than just the raging of a dying green crone. I know that these times find me quoting them frequently. "What a world!" indeed.

ISIS is terrorizing the Middle East and the rest of the world. Putin is eyeing territories that no longer belong to Russia. Religious extremists are murdering people at public events all over the globe. Protestors march for rights of which they feel denied. Police officers are murdered in the streets. We've witnessed, over the last year, a presidential election cycle that resembles a play from the theatre of the absurd. Veterans are neglected. Jobs are scarce, prices continue to climb, the national debt rises, and there is hardly a compromise to be found between branches of the federal government. And I can't begin to address the trials, troubles and turmoil many of us face in our personal lives.

Yet there's something we should remember when we're running in circles and shouting, "What a world! What a world!" God has not abandoned us. God's Spirit is with us - strengthening, encouraging, loving, helping. The psalmist reminds us "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Martin Luther would paraphrase these words. In German, they are "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" - a Mighty Fortress is our God. He set it to music and it's one of the best known hymns of Luther, and very dear to us Lutherans. We sometimes call it, "the Lutheran fight song." The inspiring words remind us that even if evil assails us, it can never win. "The Kingdom's ours forever." When we are feeling frightened about today and terrified of a future we cannot see, we should remember these words.

A construction crew was building a new road through a rural area, knocking down trees as it progressed. A superintendent noticed that one tree had a nest of birds that couldn't yet fly and he marked the tree so it wouldn't be cut down. Several weeks later the superintendent came back to the tree. He got into a bucket truck and was lifted up so that he could peer into the nest. The fledglings had learned to fly and were gone. The superintendent ordered the tree cut down. As the tree crashed to the ground, the nest fell clear and material the birds had

gathered to make the nest was scattered about. Part of it was a scrap torn from a Sunday school pamphlet. On the scrap of paper were these words: "He careth for you." *Bits & Pieces*, November, 1989, p. 23.

He careth for you. He careth for me. He careth for us all. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Alicia



FISH SUNDAY August 7th

Since 1994 the first Sunday of each month has been designated as FISH Sunday here at First Lutheran. Please bring an item or two to church on Sunday, August 7th. Please bring in food or toiletry items and place them in the FISH Basket in the narthex. Monetary donations are also accepted, you can use one of the pew envelopes and mark "For Food Pantry."

Our first Sunday of the month food donation is collecting food for the Xenia Hunger Backpack Cuisine Program. This group is attempting to provide food to Xenia children who receive discounted and free lunch during the week but have little or nothing to eat on the weekend. This will be an ongoing addition to our FISH Sunday requests for food for the Food Pantry. Please place your donations into the box in the narthex marked for the Backpack Cuisine Program. (For August we've been asked to bring in Cheesy Mac 2-3 oz single servings.)

Requested items include:

Pop top can microwave 7.5oz single serve
pop top cans of tuna 3oz
individual oatmeal box of single servings
squeezable jam/jelly 20oz
cans of vegetables 8.5 oz
gold fish and animal cracker snack paks
Cheesy Mac 2-3 oz single servings

Non-refrigerated puddings 3.5oz
Dinty Moore beef stew 7.5oz
10 pack fruit juices 5-8 oz
pop top cans of fruit 8-9 oz
pop top cans of chicken 4.5 oz
cereal bars & granola bars box of single servings
peanut butter 18 oz containers



for August is Tuesday, August 9th, 6:00pm

Sunday, September 11th



The day will include a worship service with children (of all ages) in mind. After the service, join us in the narthex for hot dogs, chips and root beer floats. You're sure to have a great morning! Our Sunday School teachers will be commissioned and the children will all be blessed for the upcoming school year



Sunday School Start-up Children's Sunday School class will resume meeting at 9:25am on **September 18th** and will begin the series entitled "Deep Blue - One Room Sunday School".



Catechism The Catechism Class will resume September 18th, and meeting each Sunday at 11am

Adult Sunday School Class



The class resumes **September 18th**, meeting 11am to 12 noon. Sessions are led by Jim Will. The fall session, entitled, "The Way, the Truth, and the Life," will focus particular attention on Ravi Zacharias's book, "*Jesus among Other Gods*". Advancing a compelling and vigorous defense of Christianity, Zacharias highlights the singular significance of Jesus Christ, and shows us why we ought to be traveling the road with Him. Don't miss this opportunity to develop and deepen your understanding of and commitment to the Gospel. There is no fee to participate.



Choir Practice to Resume

Hard to believe summer's almost over. That means choir will soon begin another season of serving The Lord in song. First practice will be **Wednesday, August 31st at 6:00pm**. First Sunday to sing will be **Sunday, September 18th**. New members are ALWAYS welcome! Come and make a joyful noise with us. :) *Lisa*



Our Outreach Committee has begun a School Supply Campaign for the children of the Xenia Public Schools. We will be collecting items during August and continue until school starts. Below are needed supplies for children in K-5.

- Wooden pencils #2 lead
- Boxes of 24 count Crayola crayons
- Boxes of Crayola colored pencils (primary colors)
- 70 sheet wide ruled spiral bound notebooks
- Wide ruled 3 ring notebook paper
- Vinyl folders w/2 pockets & 3 brads in the middle
- Pink erasers & eraser caps
- Fiskar scissors (blunt point or pointed)
- Glue sticks or Elmer's school glue
- Expo Markers (black)
- Highlighters
- Pencil bag w/holes to put in 3 ring notebook
- Pencil boxes

Please bring in an item or two and put them in the blue barrel in the narthex.



If you have a new e-mail address or the church does not have your email address **PLEASE** be sure and let us know. Call us or e-mail it to firstluthxenia@sbcglobal.net

Outreach Opportunities through the Congregation..



Volunteer to help on Thursday evenings at ***The Caring Place***. Talk with **Barb Swinehart**, or **Deb Baldwin** about ways in which YOU can help serve others.



We continue to collect items for the FVPC here in Xenia. The following items are needed and appreciated: soap, conditioner, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant, lotion, combs & brushes, razors (like Bic), envelopes, lined writing tablets, pens & pencils, paperback books, coloring books & children's books. A donation basket is in the narthex. *(FYI...from May, 2003 - February 2011 the congregation donated 15,115 items to the Prison Ministry. Since March, 2011, 8,095 items have been donated to the Family Violence Prevention Center. **Thank YOU***



COLLECTION Continue saving your old prescription glasses, they will be taken to Africa by Betty Peppo's son, Dr. Roger Pacholka, and his mission team.

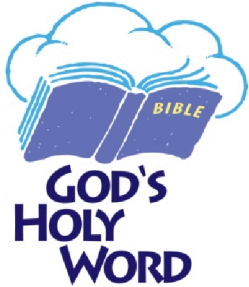


Continue collecting Campbell Product UPCs for Oesterlen Home in Springfield.
(Please be sure and save only the square UPC symbol on the label.)





Upcoming Event at First.....**Strategic Planning Retreat** **Saturday, October 1st**
More information will be coming. The congregation is invited!



BIBLE BULLETIN is a collection of 260 Bible studies during a five year program that offered a unique means in this hurry-up world to provide Bible information with separate, single-page Bible studies. **Sunday, August 28th** is the last Sunday for the program. If you were gone on any Sunday during the past five years, come by the church office and pick up a copy.



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR AUGUST

August 7th (12th Sunday in Pentecost)

Genesis 15:1-6
Psalm 33:12-22
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
Luke 12:32-40

August 14th (13th Sunday in Pentecost)

Jeremiah 23:23-29
Psalm 82
Hebrews 11:29-12:2
Luke 12:49-56

August 21st (14th Sunday in Pentecost)

Isaiah 58:9b-14
Psalm 103:1-8
Hebrews 12:18-29
Luke 14:1, 7-14

August 28th (15th Sunday in Pentecost)

Proverbs 25:6-7
Psalm 112
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16
Luke 14:1, 7-14



FIRST AND FRIENDS BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, August 30th at First Lutheran

Meeting Time: 6:00 to 7:30pm

"Lila" written by Marilynne Robinson

Come to our meeting after you've read the book. Be ready for a fun and lively discussion! We meet from 6 to 7:30pm the last Tuesday of each month so you'll have approximately a month to read each selected book. We're a general interest, non-theological book club. We'll be reading both fiction and non-fiction, and once we get started participants will be able to vote for future selections. Many of the books we will be choosing from may be available at the library. Others may be audio books or e-books, paperback or hardcover. Everyone is free to choose the format of each book that works best for them and to purchase or borrow each book selected. Questions? Concerns? See Adele Lerch or Pastor Alicia. Don't forget to bring a friend! We do want the name of our book club to really represent who we are – First Lutheran along with our friends!



Lay School is a school for all who sit in the pew during Sunday morning worship. The courses present an opportunity for you to enrich the fabric of your faith life; to gain more understanding of how God has been, and is still, a work in the lives of people of every age through his Word. The tuition for each class is \$55.00 + books if required. Check with Evie in the church office for a registration form.

Dayton Campus: "Christian Ethics" led by Bishop Tom Breidenthal who was elected Bishop of the Diocese of Southern Ohio of the Episcopal Church in November 2006. The course will consider how Christian Ethics relates to Christian faith generally. Class meets at Good Shepherd LC, 901 E. Stroop Rd in Kettering, 9am-4pm on Saturday, September 24th, October 22nd, November 19th & December 17th.

You must register prior to September 10th.

Chillicothe Campus: "Putting it All Together: The task and Art of Biblical Theology". Led by The Rev Dr. Wray Bryant, Ph.D at Capital University and Trinity Seminary. "Texts: *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today*" and also "*Surprised by Scripture: Engaging Contemporary Issues*" Class meets at Calvary LC, 74 W. Main St, Chillicothe, 9am-4pm on meets on Saturday, Sept 10th, October 8th, November 12th & December 10th. **You must register prior to August 31st.**



How can we improve our Nursery??

If you have not looked into the church nursery in the past year you should. Thanks to Greg Szwec it was completely refurbished. Greg did a super job and for that we are grateful.

Now we need to make sure that we put the nursery to the best use for those who need and use it. If you have any ideas or thoughts about how we should use the space or something that we need to make the nursery more useful to you please let Rick McClelland know. You can talk to him before or after church on Sunday.



Dear Church Community,

I would like to thank every single one of you for such a friendly welcome and for making the beginning of the week always a little bit better. Also, I would like to thank you for all the great gifts I received from you on my last Sunday at church. I really appreciate it and it was a great experience getting to know all of you during my 10 months here in America.

Thank you again,
Annika Hamann



A note from Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in La Crescent, MN...

Thank you Rick for spending the night with our group. I've heard your hospitality was OUTSTANDING! Our kids are telling me IT WAS THE BEST CHILI EVER!

The bus rolled into La Crescent about 5:45pm Sunday evening. Everyone is safe, and definitely tired! Please pass on our deep appreciation to the people of First Lutheran. **Grace and Peace**

(**Thanks** to everyone in our First congregation who provided hospitality for this group of young people, whether it be cleaning & mopping before their arrival, providing food and beverages for them or just being here to welcome them to Xenia. **YOU** are all very much appreciated!)



My sincere and heartfelt "thank you" to you, the congregation of First Lutheran Church, for the wonderful reception and generous gift in recognition of my 20th anniversary of ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. It meant a very great deal to me that you celebrated this milestone with me, and I with you. I was truly surprised. I didn't have a clue. You are indeed a blessing to me. I thank God for you all.

Yours in the love of Christ,
Pastor Alicia



As your summer activities continue, remember that the expenses of the church go on through the summer and that your support is needed during this time. Please remember your pledge this summer as you plan your time to be gone.

How Rich Are You?

They huddled inside the storm door - two children in ragged outgrown coats.

"Any old papers, Lady?"

I was very busy, I wanted to say no, until I looked down at their feet. Thin little sandals, sopped with sleet. Their soggy sandals left marks on the clean hearthstone. "Come in and I'll make you a cup of cocoa." Cocoa and cake would fortify them against the chill outside.

After serving them I went back to the kitchen and started on my household budget as they sat enjoying the room's warmth. After a few minutes the silence in the front room struck through to me. I looked in.

The little girl held her empty cup in her hands looking at it. The boy asked in a flat voice: "Lady, are you rich?"

"Am I rich? Mercy no!" I looked at the shabby slipcovers.

The girl put her cup back in its saucer carefully. "Your cups match your saucers." Her voice was old with a hunger that was not of the stomach.

Then they left, holding their bundles of papers against the wind. They hadn't said thank you. They didn't need to. They had done much more than that. Plain blue pottery cups and saucers. But they matched. I tested the potatoes and stirred the gravy. Potatoes and brown gravy, a roof over our heads, my husband with a good steady job – these things matched too.

I moved the chairs back from the fire and tidied the living room. The muddy prints of small sandals were still on my hearth. I let them be. I wanted them to remain as long as possible so I would not forget how very rich I am.

(From Pulpit Helps Magazine, May 1992)

First Lutheran is a member of these organizations that offer service to our members...

The Pastoral Counseling Center at Miami Valley Hospital, offering reduced rate counseling service to our members. Call 937-208-6606.

Graceworks Lutheran Services, offering a variety of services to member congregations and individuals. Call 937-436-6888.

Non Congregational Meetings at First:

Alcoholics Anon	Monday, 7:30-8:30pm
Caring Place	Thursday, 6:00pm
Narcotics Anon	Friday, 7:00-8:30pm