

DISCOVER FIRST

WHAT IF?

By The Rev. William O. Schwochow, *pastor*

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Many German families have used the name "Augustus"; I had a great uncle named August (when he or we were particularly non-august, the name was Uncle Gus. During my college years, a peer couldn't remember the name "Scott" so Scott became "Gus." That happened in the first week of college. After his passing, we honored Gus.

"August comes from the Latin word *augustus*, meaning "consecrated" or "venerable," which in turn is related to the Latin *augur*, meaning "consecrated by augury or "auspicious." In 8 B.C. the Roman Senate honored Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor, by changing the name of their month "Sextilis" to

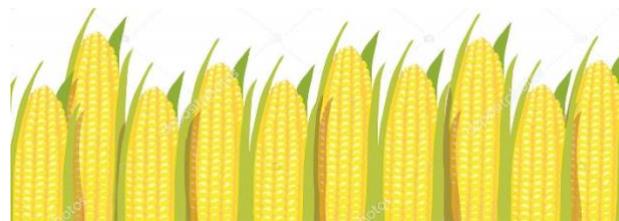
"Augustus." Middle English speakers inherited the name of the month of August, but it wasn't until the mid-1600s that "august" came to be used generically in English, more or less as "*augustus*" was in Latin, to refer to someone with imperial qualities." (Source: Merriam Webster)

Last month I shared the poem "What If" by Shel Silverstein. I have been reflecting on the pandemic and that poem. Imagine how quickly the COVID-19 virus has spread from person-to-person around the entire world. We are watching the spread of the contagion into the inner region of the country. Mercer County was the last county in the State of Ohio to register its first case just last week!

What if our ministry were to have that kind of imperial contagion. What if we were to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ just as actively, person by person, to spread across the globe. Similar to the outbreak, we could gather the world with God's love, mercy, and grace.

Or would that bother us and them, like wearing a mask?

Also during the month of August, the vegetables and flowering plants reach full bloom and begin to fruit. Just as the weeks of fresh corn wear down early in the month, in comes the tomato harvest. The more I pinch the blooms, more blooms appear. The plants are created to bloom, and bloom abundantly ... even when in a pinch.



Similarly, we have been created and called by God to thrive by giving witness to Jesus the Christ who redeemed us that we might continue to bloom (spread the good news) over and over again until the frost comes. In doing so, we fulfill God's purpose and our purpose as children of God.

For me, the question is whether or not we are blooming augustly. That is, how do we bloom continually to this community with imperial quality fit for the kingdom of heaven ... for the King?

My friends, the harvest is coming. Get blooming with out fail, even when life pinches you. The kingdom of heaven is near. Let anyone with ears, listen.

WHAT IF WE GOT IT ALL DONE?

By Barbara McKown, *volunteer secretary*

Gennell Benner, Adele Lerch and I continue to work on the congregational records for members trying to compile a comprehensive record of active, inactive and former members. This is a monumental undertaking and to date we have consolidated six sources of

information into two – active and inactive. The goal is to have every member who ever belonged to 1st documented and cataloged allowing 1st to determine the real number of active members.

WHAT IF IT DIDN'T HAPPEN?

By Barbara McKown, *volunteer secretary*

On July 20, 1844 while serving as pastor of the Xenia Lutheran Church, Pastor Lehman's wife Sarah Elizabeth died. That same year the Rev Ezra Keller (founder of Wittenberg College at Springfield) became the pastor of the church in Springfield allowing Pastor Lehman to concentrate on our church. Also, in 1844, the Miami Synod of the Lutheran Church was formed and Pastor Lehman became a member of it and he was ordained by the Miami Synod in 1845 (previously he had been merely licensed, but not ordained), In 1847, Pastor left Xenia and moved to Lancaster, Ohio. That same year with the urging of Rev. Keller, Solomon Ritz became pastor of the Xenia congregation and served there for until 1851. Pastor Ritz was a revivalist and favored the use of the English language in the churches, instead of German. At that time, the parish consisted

of our church, Mt. Zion (8 miles west of Xenia), Beaver Church (4 miles west), Aley and Union Church which were both 7 miles from Xenia. During the year 1848 under the direction of Pastor Ritz, a church building 40 X 55 feet was put under roof on West Main Street. Unfortunately, the wood for the inside burned, resulting in a \$300 debt. Rev. Ritz appealed for help through the Lutheran Observer, a well-known periodical in its day, to keep from having to sell the structure to pay for it. Apparently, it was saved, for on February 10, 1850, the church was dedicated (with a \$125.00 debt outstanding). The house of worship remained until 1974 when it was demolished by a devastating tornado. Solomon Ritz served as Pastor until he left for Ashland Ohio in 1851,

WHAT IF WE REFRESHED THE OFFICE?

By Doris Nagel, *worship/evangelism*

With all the work that has been done to streamline the office our new Administrative Associate the council felt it was time for a facelift as well. Donna Saraga and I are working on ideas to freshen the office. She and I met at the office on the 31st to discuss what we feel would brighten the office and make a

welcoming statement for anyone doing business or visiting the office. New paint and carpet cleaning are first on our agenda and we are not sure about what else will be part of the project. More to follow in next month's newsletter.

WHAT IF WE SING GENTLY?

By Lisa Szwec, *choir director*

During this time when it's unsafe to sing together in large groups, I sang with a "virtual choir" of 17,572 beautiful voices from 129 countries. After signing up and practicing the music, we each recorded and uploaded videos of ourselves singing our parts. From there, the editors did their magic. I was also # 4,113 out of 6,414 in my section. Everyone's contribution was used in the final production. To be honest, I have no idea where my video shows up, but that's okay. I made some new friends and I'll always cherish the experience of being part of this record-breaking chorus with such an evocative message.

Eric Whitacre, who pioneered the virtual choir concept a decade ago, composed the music and text of "Sing Gently" specifically for this time of social isolation and division. The video's motif resembles the Japanese art of Kintsugi – the mending of broken pottery with gold, which renders the piece stronger and more beautiful. Click here to listen to "Sing Gently" <https://youtu.be/InULYfJHKI0>

Although it's a secular piece, it resonates with me as a foretaste of the great choir to come, when all the saints of all times and all places return "Alleluias" in glorious song to the One who put that song in our hearts.

Indeed, by healing our brokenness with forgiveness and inclusion, we create a stronger, more beautiful humanity:

Sing Gently

May we sing together, always.

May our voice be soft.

May our singing be music for others
and may it keep others aloft.

Sing gently, always.

Sing gently as one.

May we stand together, always.

May our voice be strong.

May we hear the singing and

May we always sing along.

Sing gently, always.

Sing gently as one.

Oh yes, we cherish the gift of music. During worship on Sundays, while the soloist is singing, I can hear your voices too, singing softly. Like you, I look forward to when we can safely make music together in person, boldly! And what a day that will be! In the meanwhile, let us minister to one another and lift one another up, gently.

What if...

Let's Get Social!



Tell your friends to like us on Facebook

If you've been joining us on Facebook Live! On Sunday mornings then you're aware that we have a vibrant presence on Facebook. In addition to livestreamed worship we also share other content to enrich your Christian walk and worship in the home:

- Children's ministry videos (some produced Augsburg Fortress, some produced by our own members)
- Worship in the Home Series (ELCA)
- News from ELCA and Southern Ohio Synod
- Re-broadcasts of our livestream
- Re-broadcasts of Sunday worship preludes
- And much more!

Be sure to share our page [facebook.com/firstlutheranxenia](https://www.facebook.com/firstlutheranxenia)



YouTube

Subscribe to our YouTube channel

Did you know that we also have a YouTube channel? There, we archive our livestream broadcasts along with other content. We currently have about 60 subscribers. So if you haven't already, please subscribe to our channel so we reach our initial goal of 100.

Click here to subscribe: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX7WLGxxHk2MYQmD5RyL2uw>

(When we get to 100 subscribers, we can name a user-friendly URL, so tell your friends!)

WHAT IF WE GAVE?

FISH Sunday resumes Sunday, September 6



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 the first Sunday of the month.

The food pantry is again taking donations and a box will be placed by the door should be able to bring in any contributions.

Monetary donations are also accepted by placing your donation in an envelope marked "For Food Pantry" and place it in the notion receptacle as you enter the sanctuary. Thank you!



Talk with Barb Swinehart or Deb Baldwin about ways in which YOU can help serve others. Volunteer to help on Thursday evenings at The Caring Place. Need volunteers for all four weeks in August. If you can provide all or part of a meal please let Barb or Deb know. Also, all non-perishable individual packaged foods such as pudding cups, Jell-O cups, chips, cookies or serving cups with lids are being requested. thecaringplacexenia@gmail.com



We continue to collect items for the FVPC here in Xenia. The following items are needed and appreciated: soap, shampoo, conditioner, tooth brushes, 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.



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

WHAT IF WE READ TOGETHER?

By Adele Lerch

Books for the next three months:

August 25, 2020 – “A Pearl in a Storm” by Tori Murden McClure

September 29 2020 – “The Book Lover” by Maryann McFadden

October 27 2020 – “Can’t Wait to Get to Heaven” Fannie Flagg

WHAT IF SCHOOL REOPENS?

By Adele Lerch

There is a great need in Xenia for school supplies. Supplies can be dropped off at the church either on Sundays or at the church office. If you wish to just make a donation to school supplies I will gladly go shopping.

Checks can be made out to the church with a notation for school supplies. The supplies/donations need to be at the church by August 16th. A reminder - the tax exempt weekend for Ohio is August 7-9.

WHAT IF WE CHOOSE?

By Barbara McKown, *ad hoc personnel*

The Ad Hoc Personnel Committee, including Deb Baldwin, Suzy McGatha, the pastor, have reviewed 7 applications for the administrative associate position. Next week (beginning 09 August) we will be meeting three (3) candidates for the first time.

With availability, we expect the new administrative associate will begin Tuesday, 01 September.

Please keep the committee and the candidates in your prayers as we step forward toward a broader administry.

PRAYER CONCERNS

By The Rev. William O. Schwochow, *pastor*

Please remember the following family, fellows, and friends in your prayers.

For celebrating: For all those graduating, those with birthdays, and those with anniversaries

For community: Linda Blanton, Russ Kiser, Adele Lerch, Betty Peppo, Opal & Lee Snell, Bill & Barb Taylor, Vince Zappavigna; the socially distanced and all who are oppressed, stigmatized and traumatized; for communities struggling for justice.

For healing: Bobby Adkins, Ann & Dan Cammarn, Russ Kiser; John Paul Saraga, David Swinehart, Kathy Teague; Harold Warren; all those with COVID-19

For peace in transition: The Family and Friends of all those who have died by COVID-19

For ministry partners: The Caring Place, Bridges of Hope, Oesterlen Services for Youth, Southern Ohio Synod | ELCA

Prayer concerns may be posted for no more than three (3) weeks unless the concern changes.

Please inform us about updates and answered prayers, too!

Table Prayer for Summer

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it. (Ps. 24:1)

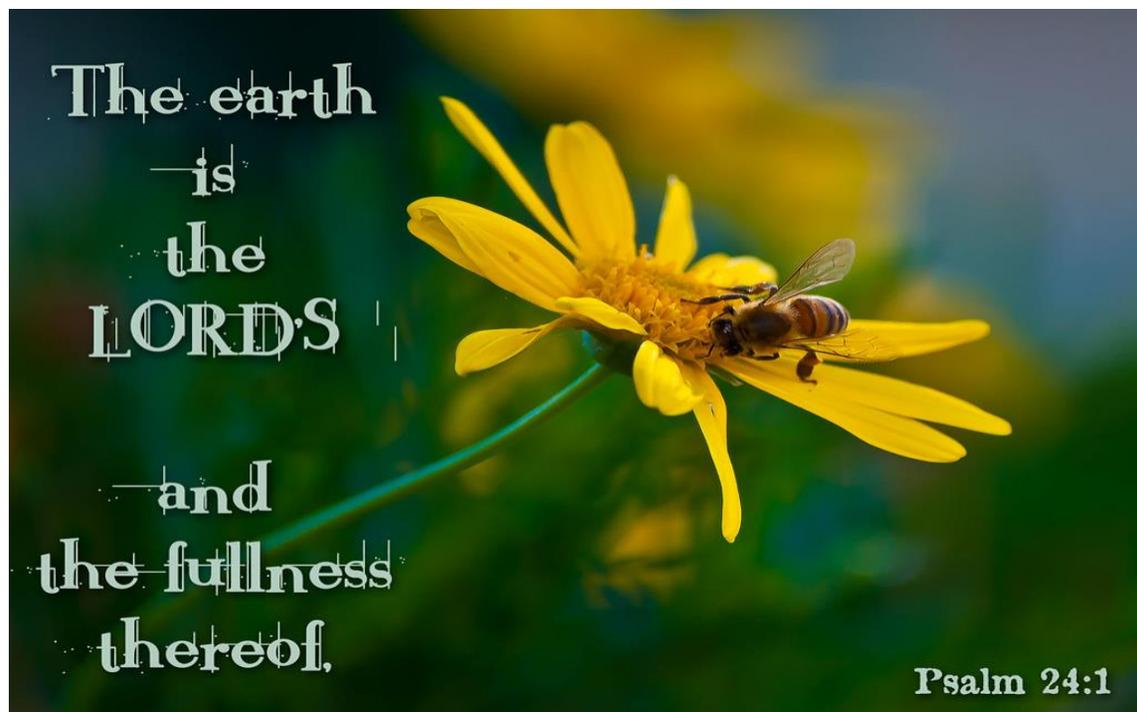
All here gathered, food from the land,
all is gift from your gracious hand.

Feed us today; feed all those who hunger;
teach us to feed one another.

We ask this in the name of the one who is our bread,
Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Source: BREAD FOR THE DAY 2020: Daily Bible Readings and Prayers.
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WORDS FOR WORSHIP
From the Revised Common Lectionary

Sunday, August 9

Lectionary 19

10th Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 19:9-18

Elijah on Mount Horeb

Psalm 85:8-13

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying (Ps.85:8)

Romans 10:5-15

The word of faith

Matthew 14:22-23

Jesus walking on the sea

Color: Green

Sunday, August 16

Lectionary 20

11th Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

A house of prayer for all people

Psalm 67

Let all the peoples praise you, O God. . (Ps. 67:3)

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

God's mercy to all, Jew and Gentile

Matthew 15[10-20] 21-28

The Canaanite woman's daughter is healed

Color: Green

Sunday, August 23

Lectionary 21

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 51:1-6

God's enduring salvation

Psalm 138

O Lord, your steadfast love endures. . (Ps.138:8)

Romans 12: 1-8

One body in Christ, with gifts that differ

Matthew 16:13-20

The profession of Peter's faith

Color: Green

Sunday, August 30

Lectionary 22

13th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 15:15-21

God fortifies the prophet

Psalm 26:1-8

Your love is before any eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. . (Ps.26:3)

Romans 12: 9-21

Live in harmony

Matthew 16: 21-28

The rebuke to Peter

Color: Green



Help Needed

- Volunteers are needed to prepare a meal to be served on a Thursday of your choice, 6-7:00 pm.
- Monetary donations as well as pre-packaged or individually wrapped food items are in need.



Every Thursday night The Caring Place offers a free meal to anyone desiring a meal. First Evangelical Lutheran Church hosts this service, which is supported by many other churches and individuals in Greene County & Xenia. The Caring Place has been giving back to the community for 25+ years and we would love your support in helping us continue this important program.



First Lutheran Church 287 West Main Street, Xenia, Ohio 45385

Contact Us: (937) 372 - 7421 |

thecaringplacexenia@gmail.com

@TheCaringPlace

www.firstlutheranofxenia.org

August 2020

Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thu. Fri. Sat.

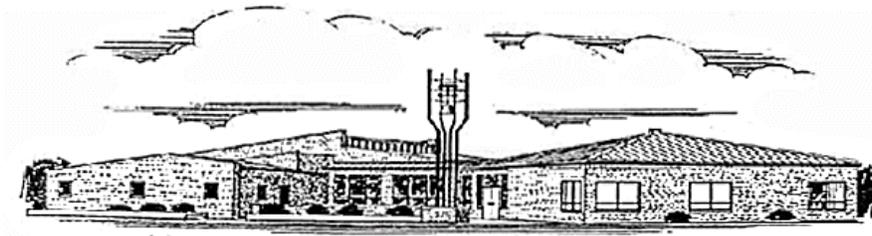
Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we worship, reach out, share the gospel, and serve.

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 Pentecost 9 09:30 Worship	3	4	5 Thomas Gullett	6 18:00 Caring Place	7 19:00 NA Mike McGatha Greg Warnock	8 Judy and Mike Williams
9 Pentecost 10 09:30 Worship	10 Barbara Swinehart Izabella Porter	11 Heather Gilliland	12	13 18:00 Caring Place Lynn Daugherty	14 Jordon Cross Taylor Daugherty	15 Mary, Mother of Our Lord Nancy Warnock
16 Pentecost 11 09:30 Worship <i>Last Day School Supplies</i>	17 Connie Robertson	18 Kelli & Mark Anderson 18:00 Council	19 Andy Cline	20 18:00 Caring Place	21 Karen & Todd Reichley Sterling Coleman	22 Jane and Clancy Cross
23 Amanca & Tony Heffner Keith Baldwin Pentecost 12 09:30 Worship	24 Betty Peppo	25 Carly Curtis Gene Fasbinder Jane Haney 18:00 Book Club	26 Connie/Todd Hansen	27 18:00 Caring Place (FCC) Elizabeth Reichley	28 19:00 NA	29
30 Pentecost 13 09:30 Worship	31					



First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

287 West Main Street Xenia, Ohio 45385 (937) 372-7421
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**Join us for Sunday Eucharist 9:30 a.m.
CARING PLACE 6:00 p.m. THURSDAYS**