

# The Contact

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH — NORFOLK

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VOL. XXXV

APRIL 2021

NO. 4

## Support and Collaboration

**A**s I write this article, I have completed my second week at First Lutheran. The question I am most often asked is “What are you going to be doing?”

In the book of Exodus, we see Moses in action, leading God’s people on their journey to the Promised Land. During his time with the Children of Israel, Moses had to experience “on-the-job” training. There were no webinars, or conferences or workshops on leadership.

### **Two lessons Moses learned was the value of collaboration and the necessity of ministry support.**

Exodus 17 introduces us to Moses’ learning about the necessity of ministry support. The battle was about to begin between the Amalekites and the Children of Israel. Moses told Joshua, that he would be on top of the hill overlooking the battle holding the staff of God in his hand. Joshua did what Moses had instructed, and Moses went to the top of the hill to raise his hands, which by the way caused Israel to have success in the battle.

But Moses became tired and lowered his hands, which caused the other side to have success in the battle. Moses’ hands got tired. So, Aaron and Hur, one on each side, held up Moses hands, which caused his hands to remain steady and Joshua defeated the Amalekites.

### **Support in ministry is necessary.**

Exodus 18 introduces us to Moses who is getting advice from his father-in-law Jethro. Moses was trying to be all things to all people and do everything for the Children of Israel. Jethro cautions him about “burn-out: and reminds him that he can not do this, lead God’s people, by himself. He needs to surround himself with individuals who love God, are competent, and who have integrity. Moses also needs to allow them to help him provide direction as they make their way to the Promised Land. The ultimate result, Moses will have the strength to do whatever God commands and the Children of Israel will flourish.

### **The value of collaboration.**

When I was asked to consider serving here at First Lutheran, my question to Pastor Cathy was, “What can I do to assist you which will enable you to further shepherd God’s people?”

So, what are some of my responsibilities here at First Lutheran? In a part time capacity, I will provide ministry support in ways that will allow Pastor Cathy and I to collaborate on those responsibilities that would free up her time and energy to dedicate to the overall shepherding of the flock here at First Lutheran.

And what does that look like? Well, it includes:

- Assist in updating the Constitution and By-laws for FLC to be in accordance with the ELCA and the Virginia Synod.
- To evaluate and update Congregational policies and procedures with the goal of developing a policy and procedure manual.
- Engage in and assess the faith formation ministries of FLC to offer guidance on future staffing, ministry needs and/or alternative models.
- Assist with weekly Bible studies, fellowship time and liaison with Adult Ministry, Learning and Youth.
- Participate in the life of the church through the pastoral ministries.

So, what am I going to be doing? Support and Collaboration, that’s my mission.

Blessings,

Pastor Phyl



We invite you to enter into the holy mysteries of our faith, the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, during the Great Three Days (the Triduum):

- **Maundy Thursday, April 1st**
- **Good Friday, April 2nd**
- **Easter Sunday, April 4th**

We are joining Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in recorded services for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, which will be made available at 7:00 pm on both YouTube and Facebook. Watch for the link in Life Together during Holy Week.

On Easter Sunday we will join in festival worship on Facebook Live at 10:00. This service will include Holy Communion, and we invite you to have close by both bread and either grape juice or wine.

The flowering cross will also be set up in the courtyard on Saturday, April 3rd, if you wish to come and decorate the cross in preparation for our Easter celebrations.

## Stewardship

Dear First Family,

I grew up in a family that didn't talk much about money. I saw the envelope on the table each week to be taken with us to church, but for the life of me, I cannot tell you if it included \$1 or \$1,000. We never talked about it.

So I learned from my family to give each week, but I didn't learn what to give. Fortunately, people have mentored me.

When my husband and I were on internship, an oral surgeon who was part of our internship congregation generously removed my wisdom teeth pro bono. He did not have to do that, but it was his way of caring for us during a time when our own finances were very tight. He taught me to be mindful of how I can use my gifts to benefit others whose circumstances might not be so abundant.

In my first call, I met Lois and Paul, salt-of-the-earth people who worked hard on their family farm, observed the Sabbath with more faithfulness than I had ever encountered, who celebrated our annual Harvest Festival with as much enthusiasm as one would any high liturgical festival, and who taught me the value of firstfruits giving. They set aside their gift to the church first, trusting that all of their other needs would be taken care of.

And then there was Martha, a widow who depended on food stamps and Meals-On-Wheels to ensure she had food on the table. But she had been saving a little bit along and along, and when she handed me \$100, she said it was to help the youth go

to camp, because she believed it to be an important experience for growing their faith in God. She taught me that everyone can be generous.

Recently, I was told by a member that they were going to donate their stimulus check to the congregation because, "even though the extra money would be nice, I don't really need it. I have enough. A lot of people are hurting these days, and I want you to use this to make a difference." This person reminds me that our giving has real-life impact on people's lives.

I'm surrounded by generous people who continue to teach me how to be generous. My husband is another such person, who has insisted throughout our marriage that we gradually increase our giving, first to reach a tithe, and now to grow beyond that by a percentage each year. It has been long and hard; we have had many lean years where our giving was less than we would have wished but it was what we could do. Today, we give at about 15% and are continuing to grow in our generosity as we continue to trust God's faithfulness to us.

We are all at different places in our generosity journey. We are surrounded by people who can teach us the joy of generosity, of giving in ways that make a difference to the extent that we are able and to which God calls us. I look forward to hearing more of your stories of generosity as we walk this generosity journey together.

In Christ,

Pastor Mims

# NEST Wrap-up

*For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me...Matthew 25:35*

First Lutheran Church was blessed to provide our NEST week of shelter and hospitality 2/17 - 2/23 thanks to the generosity of First Presbyterian Church in Ghent. First Presbyterian provided their facility, sanitation and dedicated support staff for the entire NEST season and we were immensely grateful. In addition, the NEST faith community supported First Lutheran by providing four evening meals and volunteers for overnight duties. We served an average of 51 guests each night. First Lutheran logged over 700 volunteer hours providing hot evening and breakfast meals, snacks, take away lunches, a warm and safe sleeping area, and sorting and “shopping” from donated clothing and hygiene items for our guests while they remained in their pods. In addition, we were able to provide 25 hot take away dinner meals each night to the guests we were unable to shelter and sadly had to turn away.

Especially in the time of this pandemic, Merrie Jo and I were truly thankful for the support for this project from First Lutheran members and community friends of First Lutheran. The prayers lifted up for our NEST guests and volunteers were felt and deeply

appreciated. We want to especially thank Barbara Ross and Al Pedersen who shopped for our food and supplies. We thank Susan Posey and Tim Schilke who arrived bright and early each morning to cook a delicious hot breakfast served at 5:30 am! Finally, we thank our evening meal captains, Lynn Utecht, Tina Dulong, and First Lutheran Youth headed by Joy Kelly and their teams.

While our experience this year was unique, challenging and ultimately filled with joy, it is not sustainable. The pandemic has forced even more people into homelessness. We continue to work with the NEST faith community, the city of Norfolk and the Community Service Board to secure a permanent facility with support services. Until that becomes a reality, we give thanks, along with all the volunteers, for the opportunity to provide hospitality, support and friendship to those seeking shelter and the overwhelming blessing our guests were to us.

Merrie Jo Milner and Gail Plauka  
NEST co-chairs

## “Troubling the Waters”

Our concern as FLC members who have taken the class offered by our church, “Troubling the Waters,” is that we recognize and embrace our prophetic mission as a Christian congregation. It is a biblical mission, with roots going back to the Hebrew prophets some eight centuries before Christ. Their prophetic mission was to proclaim the justice and mercy of God. They held their national leaders accountable by lifting up the plight of the poor, the marginalized and excluded. They were willing to risk their lives in speaking truth to power.

Our primary mission, of course, is to lift up Jesus Christ by becoming his followers, proclaiming and living our faith in him. But the fact is, Jesus himself embodied and proclaimed the message of the prophets. He lifted up both the justice and the love of God, living a life that both challenged the powerful and embraced the poor and excluded ones. Thus it is no surprise that we who bear the name of Christian carry a particular responsibility to seek justice in all of life’s relationships, wherever prejudice and discrimination are crippling and destroying lives.

In American society, it is racial discrimination that is particularly widespread and destructive. What can WE do about it? That is a many-layered question, prompting a variety of answers. But when it comes to personal actions that are helpful, here are some starters (courtesy of the Southern Poverty Law Center):

- Speak up when you hear slurs and biased speech
- Seek out opportunities to interact with people who are different from you
- Make your voice heard when media outlets promote stereotypes
- Look inside yourself for hidden biases

This last point is a reminder that the capacity for self-examination and self-criticism are essential to the ethical life, and certainly to the lives of Christians.





*Pilgrimage to* M I N N E A P O L I S

## Pilgrimage to Minneapolis Challenge Update: 10 participants, \$500 raised

**W**hy in the world is the skyline of Minneapolis showing up in First Lutheran emails? Because 15 months and 1,300 miles from now, our youth will experience a life-changing event there: the 2022 ELCA National Youth Gathering! A whopping 29 youth in our church are eligible to attend, and our job is to help get them there. The hugs at NYG are free, but the travel expenses are not, so here is your challenge, First Lutheran Church—join the Pilgrimage!

You can participate as a pilgrim (it's not just for youth); donate online; or pledge your ongoing prayers now and your financial support for when you are able, by the mile and with a maximum as needed. Any amount will move the youth closer to their goal of \$10,000 by July 4. At this moment, pilgrims are on the move, and relay teams are forming! So far, six youth and four adults have joined various events from the 10 current options in the challenge:

Matthew Thompson  
— Love Thy Neighbor Challenge

Wil Thompson  
— Love Thy Neighbor Challenge

Team Moberlotas, Meghan Velotas, captain  
— The First Leg: Norfolk to Richmond

Kathryn Bonheur  
— Peddle to the Mettle [sic] Biking Challenge

Steve Velotas  
— The First Leg: Norfolk to Richmond

Team Moberlotas 2, Jackie Velotas, captain  
— Love Thy Neighbor Challenge

Julie Moberly  
— Love Thy Neighbor Challenge; Be Still/Stretch Yourself Prayer & Yoga Challenge

Cho Cho Williams  
— Land of Clear Blue Water Paddle Sports Challenge

Hope McGhee  
— Zoom, Zoom, Zoom Youth Events Challenge; Love Thy Neighbor Challenge

Kat Foster  
— Love Thy Neighbor Challenge

To participate, go the race website (<https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Norfolk/FLYPilgrimage>), click Sign Up, and then follow the directions.

To join a relay team, go to the race website (<https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Norfolk/FLYPilgrimage>), click Relay Teams, choose the team you want to join, and then contact the captain for the password. To start your own team, click Relay Teams, and then on the Relay Team page click Create a Relay Team (upper right hand corner).

To donate to the churchwide effort to support our young people preparing for their journey to the 2022 National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Norfolk/FLYPilgrimage> and click on Donate. To donate or pledge per mile for a particular pilgrim, search for the name of the participant and then click Donate or go to the bottom of the screen and click in the Donation Pledges box on “click here.”

For more information, contact Julie Moberly at [Moberly.Velotas@gmail.com](mailto:Moberly.Velotas@gmail.com) (use Pilgrimage Question for the subject) or (757) 285-9779.

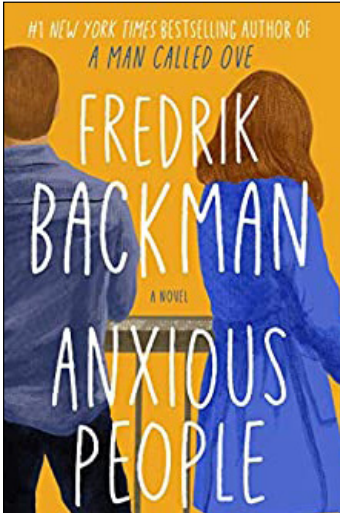
# April 2021

Office Hours: 9 AM—4 PM Monday-Thursday, 9 AM -1 PM Friday  
 Men's Bible Study: 7 AM, Wednesdays, IHOP, 114 E. 21st, Norfolk, VA 23517  
 Women's Bible Study: 2 PM Tuesdays online, please contact Pastor Mims for more information.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 Easter Sunday 10 AM Worship Online	5 Easter Monday Church Office Closed	6 2 PM Women's Bible Study 6 PM Dinner Ministry 7 PM Martha Circle	7 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry 7 PM Learning Committee	8 7 PM Fellowship Hour via Zoom	9 7 PM Worship Pastor Mims' Day Off	10
11 8:30 AM Children's Sunday School 10 AM Worship Online 11 AM Confirmation Class 3 PM High School Sunday School	12	13 2 PM Women's Bible Study 6 PM Dinner Ministry	14 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry	15 5:30 PM Laundry Love 6:30 PM Christians United for Social Change 7 PM Fellowship Hour via Zoom Contact Deadline	16	17
18 Stewardship Sunday 8:30 AM Children's Sunday School 10 AM Worship Online 11 AM Confirmation Class 12 PM Youth Committee	19	20 2 PM Women's Bible Study 6 PM Dinner Ministry	21 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry	22 7 PM Fellowship Hour via Zoom Contact Deadline	23	24 Time TBD—Youth Bike Ride through Great Dismal Swamp
25 8:30 AM Children's Sunday School 10 AM Worship Online 11 AM Confirmation Class 3 PM High School Sunday School	26	27 2 PM Women's Bible Study 6 PM Dinner Ministry	28 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry	29 7 PM Fellowship Hour via Zoom	30	

# Connect with Others

## FLC Book Discussion Group



*Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman is the Book Discussion book for May 2nd. A poignant, charming novel about a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious strangers who find they have more in common than they ever imagined. Humorous, compassionate, and wise, *Anxious People* is an ingeniously constructed story

about the enduring power of friendship, forgiveness, and hope—the things that save us, even in the most anxious of times.

There are so many parts of this book to talk about. Grab this book and join us at 6:30 on May 2nd. Contact Betty Jean Meyer for the Zoom link for the meeting.

Reminder: The book for April 11 is *The Body: A Guide for Occupants* by Bill Bryson. Top of Form

## Looking Ahead: The Call Committee

The Call Committee will be nominated by the congregation council. The Call Committee will be 5-6 members that represent different demographics in the congregation. (For example, the Call Committee could be comprised of a Youth representative, a representative for families with young children, a representative for young adults and college students, a representative for retired or older adults, a representative for middle age adults, and a Call Committee Chairperson.) The Chairperson of the Call Committee will be determined and voted on by the committee members.

Council's goal is to have a Call Committee identified for nomination at the April meeting of the Congregation Council and the congregation will approve the Call Committee members after Council. The Call Committee will meet with the Synod Call Process representative as soon as possible to walk through the Call Process. They will be installed in a service on a date 'to be determined'.

## April Birthdays

1 Apr Tommy Silsdorf	7 Apr Henry Hund	12 Apr Matthew Butcher	19 Apr Clark Elverum	23 Apr Kirsten Kelly
2 Apr Jeff Humphreys	7 Apr Suzanne Sackel	13 Apr Judy Cobb	19 Apr Charlie Foster	25 Apr Megan Bishop
3 Apr Mary Bissey	8 Apr Santiago Jersild	13 Apr Susan Stones, LCSW	20 Apr Shelagh Humphreys	25 Apr Ashley Scott
3 Apr Barbara Pohlig	8 Apr Charles Poston	13 Apr Emily Weeks	20 Apr Debbi Waitzer	28 Apr Melissa Sikorski
4 Apr Alvene Buckley	9 Apr Georgia Alexander	15 Apr Jane Fuller	21 Apr Sharon Kneisley	29 Apr Bobby Alexander
4 Apr Sean Buckley	9 Apr Pamela Hiner	15 Apr Alison Stanfield	21 Apr Dick Temple	30 Apr Carter Alexander
4 Apr Betty Petersen	10 Apr Julie Damman	16 Apr Lori Seaman	22 Apr Robert Green	
4 Apr Sophia Smith	11 Apr Bob Braaten	16 Apr Carl Spangler	22 Apr Jim Mason	
6 Apr Marion Ingersoll	11 Apr Alyssa Kaplan	18 Apr Mary Zelasko	23 Apr Mason Fox	

## Blood Drive

Thank you for your help in supporting our recent Red Cross Blood Drive.

With your help, we provided 32 critically needed units of blood during a time when donations are being negatively impacted nationally by health fears. That is up 40% from last year!

These donations will help over 90 patients in need.

THANK YOU for your Acts of Service to our community and beyond!

## Ministry Site Profile Meetings

An important first step prior to calling a new rostered minister for our congregation is to answer the question “As First Lutheran Church, what is God leading us to do in the world and in our community?” We have begun this process by sending each household a survey which each confirmed member was invited to complete. Thank you to the 100 members who have sent in your thoughts.

## Congregation Council Summary

At our March meeting held March 01, 2021 via Zoom, the Congregation Council

- Devotion by Christina O’Neill – Abundance (Creating a Culture of Generosity)
- Prayer by Pastor Mims
- Introduction of the new Interim Associate Pastor - Rev. Dr. Phyllis Milton
- Tuesday Night Dinner Ministry Campaign is fully funded, and contributions are still being received
- Discussion on the First Lutheran Church landscaping proposal is due April 01, 2021
- Brief update on the MIF loan for the Organ Restoration and Water Infiltration projects
- Discussed the next step in the selling of the Killam property
- Discussed security lighting for the Colley Avenue side of the church
- Discussed the Call Committee Nominees and Potential Candidates
- Discussed and Reviewed the COVID-19 metrics and delaying in-person services
- Announced the date of the Stewardship Meeting, March 14, 2021
- Announced the date of Stewardship Sunday, April 18, 2021
- Approved the Consent Agendas for January, February, and March
- 2020 Annual Reports are due NOW from Council Members
- Encouraging participation in the Ministry Site Profile small group meetings
- Encouraging ongoing conversations about the BLM banner (with those that may approve or oppose the displaying of the BLM banner)
- Encouraging participation in Troubling the Waters
- Shared blessings, prayer concerns and prayer partners

The Congregation Council normally meets at 7 PM on the first Monday of each month. The meeting is open to the congregation.

# Connect with Word and Body

## Prayer Concerns for April

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

### Give joyful thanksgiving

...For the congregation, pastors, lay leaders, volunteers, and staff here at FLC.

...For the sight to see the beauty of this world.

...For those administering the COVID vaccine, for healthcare workers, and all who provide essential services.

### Help us

...Share your love and mercy with our neighbors, friends, and family.

...To lift up our congregation that we, your people, may encourage others to follow your call.

...Give hope, comfort, and strength to the families and friends of those murdered in Atlanta.

### Pray for

...Healing and comfort for James A. Wiele (**Randall Wiele**) following his surgery

...Peace and comfort to the family and friends of Joe Nagy

...Peace and comfort to the family and friends of Bob Bain on his passing

...Healing and comfort for Kathy & Dennis who are currently hospitalized

...All children who have been separated from their parents that they be safe & protected until reunited with their family.

...Justice for the victims of racial oppression & violence

...All who have COVID and for careful management of the pandemic and vaccination process.

...Those who are dying, that they are secure in knowing that God loves them & will welcome them into everlasting life.

...People fleeing dire humanitarian situations for a better life.

...The sick, that they are comforted and the despairing, that they receive hope.

...Those struggling with addiction and mental health issues.

...Those mourning the death of loved ones.

...For all who cry out to God in any need.

**Margaret Ackley, Alvene Buckley, Don Buckley, Lucian Clare, Judy Cobb, Roger Fuller, Joelle Griffith (mother of Paula Barwick), Valerie & Jim Harvey, Marion Ingersoll, Joann Klotz, Kelley Minschke, Lorna Moss, Bill Newlon, David Perron, Betty Phillips, Fay Rogner, Julia Siik, Shirley Skees, Nancy Smith, Deb Thompson, Annie, Betty Lou, Bill, Dave, David, Deb, Frederick Geyser & family, Gayle & Annie, Gert, Heather & Kevin, Jake, Jim Ilardi, Jimmy, Joe Peterson, Katrina, Margaret, Mark, Michael, Myra, Norma Katlas, Ralph, Rema, Richard Brown, Jr. (father of Rick Brown), Rob, Rocko, Tom & Andrea**

### Those dealing with cancer

Alissa (friend of **Dorothy Shaffer**), Bob, James Collier, Iris Corbin, Dave Guelcher (father of Beth Zaletski), Jenn, David Kelly, Vickie Mack, Mark, Phil, Ralph Munsey, Rob, Sandy, Andie Seagraves, Gerald Stover, Dallas Williams, Jess WineKing

### Military and their families:

All military personnel around the world.

**Fox family, Austin Davidson, Kyle Hefner, Dan Kelly, Bobby Masters, Nick Masters, Ted Peterson, Brian Becker, Amy Hardbower, Nicolette Huntley, Tim Kelly, Ian Logan, Kelly Mackenzie, John Marfield, Nikki Parkman**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

— **Amen.**

## Readings for April

### April 4th – Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Mark 16:1-8

### April 11th

Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 133

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

### April 18th

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

### April 25th

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18



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