

First LUTHERAN



2025
Newsletter

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*The next
Property
meeting will be
August 6th
6:30 Pm.*



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

Doing What Matters:

I attended a workshop by the above title ten years ago; the ministry priorities uplifted were pretty much the same as I learned studying growing and vital congregations during my Seminary years. The starting point is to make an assessment of our congregation's strengths and resources and the unmet needs in the community we are located in.

Over the past two years I have learned about our congregation's priorities, strengths, and observed with you some unmet needs in Newton. While our priority to serve our community continues, we are not equipped to effectively respond to requests for rent, utilities, and food assistance. We refer people to the Salvation Army, the Jasper County Assistance office, and Discover Hope. These agencies/ministries are equipped to assess the needs, respond with appropriate assistance, and help people resolve the underlying causes. Efforts like our past clothing distributions are not as successful as in the past yet deferring to others to provide needed assistance feels rather hollow. So, the question has come before your church council of how to best support those ministries which are equipped and specialize for providing direct and effective assistance.

Last month I visited with Pastor Robbie Robinson, Pastor of New Creations church and Executive Director of Discover Hope 517 Ministry with the question on how might we support and partner with the work God is doing in our Newton community through them?

We are not equipped to support people in recovery – that is Pastor Robbie's wheelhouse and lived experience. And I am one who is glad to see that Discover Hope recovery ministry is established and providing for this need in our community. The facilities for the recovery program are established and providing these services.

Pastor Robbie told me something we don't like to think about: addiction is a hidden affliction in our community. It, *and the roots of poverty*, became more noticeable when Maytag operations ceased in newton and joblessness dissolved the façade which had obscured the suffering of affected families and individuals.

Pastor Robbie is Grateful for our Lord's redeeming and delivering himself from the brokenness of addiction which robbed him of the hope and life the Creator parent desires each person have and live out in flourishing community. In the church you grew up in and the community we presently make at First Lutheran we see and experience glimpses of the more perfect unity and compassion of God's kingdom displaying in a through our lives. But struggles are persistent in our communities.

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Since the COVID lockdowns and other hinderances to mutual vitality people have hungered for meaningful experiences of God's presence and activity in their lives and meeting the unmet needs hindering lives in the larger community.

I attribute the growth and vitality of the New Creations congregation to meeting this need interpersonally as well as meaningful service opportunities. It is an innate human desire to participate with others in making our world a better place. Churches are equipped to be and facilitate healthy vitality as we are the Body of Christ empowered with God's love. I am not suggesting we need to change to be like this church on 1st Avenue. I am saying we have that same light of Christ's love working in and among us, past and present. We are not equipped for the specialized ministry activities New Creations church and Discover Hope 517 provide. Yet there are opportunities for us to support and participate in and alongside this ministry. Providing and serving one of their scheduled community meals is one example. It also benefits us to observe what is working for expanding and building church community. I look forward to hearing from you where you see the light and vitality of God's kingdom working in and through First Lutheran, and opportunities to address needs in our community. As we are in various ways, including providing school and personal hygiene supplies our schools will distribute.

Pastor Ault

Saying good bye to Rocky & Maria DeRush

Even though Rocky & Maria joined First Lutheran just over two years ago, they've jumped right in and started volunteering. They have led book studies, joined the council, brought Stephen's Ministry back, taken food to the food pantry, helped with VBS, and so much more.

As they embark on a new chapter in Arizona, we want to express our sincere gratitude for their service and devotion to First Lutheran during your time here. We will miss them dearly and wish both of you all the best and Godspeed on this new adventure.



God's Work Our Hands

In September we will be participating in God's Work Our Hands Day. We will have both indoor and outdoor projects. Those who will be staying at the church will work on hygiene kits for Lutheran World Relief. These kits go to individuals- both adults and children- who have experienced a traumatic loss of their home. These kits are distributed world wide- including in Los Angeles during and following the fires. We will be collecting the following items during August:

- Light weight bath size towels
- Bath size bars of soap
- Adult size tooth brushes
- Sturdy combs
- Metal nail clippers

All these items need to be new- most will remain in their packaging. Details on how to package will be provided on God's Work Our Hands day.

News from Chihoni

Neighbors in Chihoni, Tanzania, are all abuzz about the new hospital construction. Some ask when it will open. Others volunteer to help. They are thrilled to know that they will be able to get quality healthcare close to home, and won't have to travel long distances in a country where travel can be difficult. There is a growing feeling of pride and hope in their community. You can feel the anticipation in conversations everywhere.

First Lutheran Church can share in their joy, because we have been supporting quality healthcare in Tanzania for decades, including this project.

Nurse Miriam Mugo is super excited to be able to resume her nursing duties. She believes in taking care of everyone. She wants to thank everyone who has supported this project. Your gifts don't just build walls; they are building trust, access to healthcare, and a new future for the community.



Nurse Miriam and foreman Richie stand on steel reinforcing bars for what will be the concrete second floor of the outpatient building.



Check out the homemade ladder and scaffolding. You don't see homemade varieties like this in America.



The place is a beehive of activity. Lots of work is required before the grand opening on September 17.

Choices in Mission

In August our Choices in Mission offering will benefit Neighbors Helping Neighbors. The ecumenical group provides laundry support for individuals and families living on the edge. Currently there are 135 individuals on the list- that includes families as well as single people.

We also collect school supplies to support the teachers who often purchase supplies out of their own monies for needy children. We are currently collecting back to school supplies and will distribute them to the teachers the week before school starts.

In October/November a hygiene supply collection will support the middle school, high school and West Academy hygiene closets.

2025 Stepping Out VBS



We had 19 kids come to Stepping Out in Faith Vacation Bible School! All week we learned about stories of feet in the Bible- Moses leading people through the desert; Joshua walking around the walls of Jericho following God's instruction, even when it seemed odd; Jesus healing the lame; the woman washing Jesus's feet with her hair, and then Jesus turning around and washing his disciples' feet; and how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! We've got an awful lot of folks with beautiful feet



in our community! So many thanks to Rachel Monroe, whose talents brought both art and science to the kids; Nicole Vitales for her help with preparation and invitation; Connie Lucas, who took charge of the registration table as well as helped in the kitchen with Janice Olson,

Evelyn George who created and led slides for us, as well as being a wonderful voice actor; Judy Monroe and Maria

DeRush who helped get kids where they needed to be; Talia Friedman and friends and Ashlyn Karsten who acted in our skit, creating their own sock and shoe puppets; Emily Cantu and Alex Breuer for helping me with music and leading kids; Corinne Coyle who taught the kids about mat-making, and Robyn Friedman, who helped organize our amazing friends from First Presbyterian-Val McKee who helped in the kitchen, Linda Gehling and her husband Steve, and Pastor Paul, who helped with storytelling and recess; Jane Repp, organizer of snacks; and some youth helpers. Not to mention all of you who helped by bringing socks, shoes, or



other supplies! If I've forgotten anybody, it's only because there were so many people who lent a hand.



Our sock drive yielded 116 brand-new pairs of socks that will be distributed through Tri-T later this year. We collected 176 1/2 pairs of shoes, expertly sorted by Evelyn George and Judy Monroe, which will be going to schools through Neighbors

Helping Neighbors, to women in Des Moines through Dress for Success, to the Well for recycling, and around the world through Soles for Souls.

Thank you all for stepping out in faith and helping make VBS a success!
Allison Bartholmey





Terri Hayden 08/02
 Maria DeRush 08/07
 Deborah Rose 08/07
 Thomas Hodnett 08/09
 Alexander Breuer 08/10
 Rachel Monroe 08/11
 Duane Quanbeck 08/17
 Arlene Dobesh 08/19
 Steven Putz 08/27
 Marilyn Gelinas 08/28
 Candy Thompson 08/28
 Elizabeth Coyle 08/29
 Nicole Vitales 08/29
 Marcelina Marvelli 08/30

*From everyone here at First Lutheran.
 We are incredibly thankful for Allison
 Bartholmey. Her leadership, time, and
 dedication to VBS has been invaluable over the
 past few years.
 Allison has done an amazing job. She has
 poured love and knowledge into not just our
 youth but the youth of our community.
 Thank You Allison!*

August's Monthly Mission is Neighbors Helping Neighbors Summer Project!

Summer 2025 Neighbors Helping Neighbors is again focusing on the vulnerable children in our community. We are collecting school supplies to give to the teachers, who find themselves providing those school supplies which many parents cannot afford to purchase. Teachers, and nurses, at all schools were contacted for suggestions of what they need most. We will divide donations among the schools and deliver the week of August 18, before students return.

Lists are here, or printed in the monthly newsletter, and occasional Friday news.

We can also accept cash donations and will do the shopping for you!

For the teachers *=most needed

pencils*
Kleenex*
poster board
index cards
post-its
expo markers*- black please, these run out by spring break, the more the better
binders*

glue sticks*
scissors
composition notebooks- these are the ones with the sewn in binding (requested by 6th grade science)
mints (for coughs, cough drops cannot be dispensed)
ear buds
pencil eraser tops
loose leaf paper
expo erasers
crayons
2 pocket folders- in solid colors
disinfecting wipes*
Sheet protectors
Highlighters
Binders
Sticky-notes

For the nurses

granola bars***
peppermints
life savers (sore throats)
bandages
ace bandages
bandaids- all sizes
kitchen sponges and ziploc bags (these make reusable ice packs)
refillable water bottles

Remember to check your drawers and other places for these items that you may have put away because you don't use them, the schools can!

Christian symbol

ALTAR — This central furnishing in a Christian worship space is usually large, with a solid front that may be decorated with symbols or words. The flat surface, often covered with a cloth, is where the Communion elements are prepared and placed, reminding us of Jesus' sacrifice as the Lamb of God. In some churches, the altar looks more like a table, with open legwork. We remember that Jesus invites us into fellowship with God now and to the heavenly banquet for eternity. We place offerings on the altar to symbolize our sacrificial response to God's redeeming love.





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August Choices in Mission—N.H.N School Supply Project

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Worship Service 9:00 am	4	5	6 Property Meeting 6:30PM	7 Dorcas 9:00 am	8	9
10 Worship Service 9:00 am	11	12	13	14	15 Last Day to drop off School Supplies for N.H.N. Drive.	16
17 Worship Service 9:00 am	18	19	20 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	21	22	23
24 Backpack Blessing During Worship Service Worship Service 9:00 am	25 Happy First Day of School!	26	27	28	29	30
31 Outdoor Worship Service w/UCC on the Lawn 10:30 am Potluck to follow.						

Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor Hoover's Hours:
Monday & Tuesday
9:00Am- - 12:00 pm

Meetings with Pastor Hoover by Appointment.

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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**Watch Past and Live
services !**

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**New Summer
Sunday Morning
Worship
9:00am.
Coffee Hour
10:00am**

GOD USES
every
SMALL ACT
of love
FOR LARGER
PURPOSES.