

## It's a tough question

Where do I see God? Isn't that the question we as people of faith are constantly asking ourselves? To my knowledge there have been no clouds parting, no heavenly voice booming, and no mysterious God-men appearing as of late. So, where is God?

### *Can it be that painful?*

I know a young man who is reeling from the suicide of his mentor, and all of a sudden that question is no longer an interesting theological musing for a newsletter article but a very real question. Where is God? "I don't understand," he says, "I want answers, but I don't think I'll get 'em." And he is right. The answers will not come. There is no way of explaining why his friend committed suicide. No amount of logical understanding can be applied to make sense of what has taken place. 'Why did this happen' cannot be answered.

However, he begins to formulate an answer to the other very real question that has surfaced for him, 'Where is God?' "I don't know, but I think there are times when God sends people into our lives to help, even if it is just someone to talk to. *Yname* has been really helpful. I've been talking to her a lot," he says as he reflects with thanksgiving on the people he has interacted with for the few days after receiving the news. Hmm, God sends people into our lives—do you think that might be true?

### *Can it be that joyful?*

I was running with a young man recently and the same question was asked except under completely different circumstances: where is God? We were talking about the special relationship that had developed between him and a young lady, and without asking the question directly, he began to answer it as he reflected on this budding relationship. Where is God? "I think God sends us people in our lives who accept you for who you are and don't try to change you. She is like that. She accepts me for who I am, and because of that I want to be a better person," he says with a voice that is as glowing as his eyes as he speaks of she whom he loves.

God puts people in our lives who do not judge us, and somehow that leads to our transformation, our willingness to be transformed. Hmm, do you think God would work that way, that God would use ordinary people who are just as broken and just as flawed to bring about God's best desires for you?

### *Can it be that simple?*

The clouds do not need to part for God to be here. Do not expect your roof to be ripped open after you pray and you look up and see the Lord staring at you ready with a response. Do not look for God's voice to come to you as a ray of light shines around you. That is the stuff of Hollywood.

You can expect to see, if you have eyes to see, the presence of the Lord with you in the people God places in your life. You can expect to hear, if you have ears to hear, the voice of God speaking through the love of those right in your midst. You can also expect to hear the voice of God in the cries of God's people where there is injustice. You can expect to know, if you have a mind to perceive, the ways God shows up in your life to bring you comfort when you need comfort, peace when you need peace, love when you need love, community when you need to be around others, solitude when you need to be alone, challenge when you need to grow, and grace when you need forgiveness and a fresh start.

You can count on the Lord to show up through the simple things like a routine job that keeps you thinking about something else for a moment, a smile from someone at the store, a simple, "How are you doing? I notice you seem a bit off today," that simply tells you that you are noticed.

Where is God? In Matthew's gospel, the angel appears to Joseph and gives Jesus the name, "Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." God is here, Emmanuel. He shall never leave you nor forsake you. He will go to the ends of the earth to find you. He will travel through all time and space to envelope you in His embrace. He will cross every distance, physical and social, to let you know that you are not alone. He will prevail over every pandemic to bring life where there is death. In fact, He will stop at nothing to bring you life, even going through death itself to defeat its power over you. Emmanuel, God is with us, and he is called Christ Jesus.

Pr. D. J. Rasner



The church council met for its monthly meeting Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>.

The council welcomed members of the congregation who spoke on reopening of the church and the importance of gathering together. Gathering safely was discussed and those who spoke felt we had provided a safe environment during our last opening period. The council thanked the guests for their comments and concerns and appreciated their input. After the discussion, the council voted to enter into executive session to continue its meeting.

The reopening of the church for services was discussed and weighing the input from the guest's comments, it was decided to hold a special council meeting on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> not on the 29<sup>th</sup> as previously scheduled. This allows for a two-week period after the Labor Day holiday and several weeks after opening of the local schools. The council thought these time frames would be a good barometer to revisit the local Covid numbers and help in the decision-making process. We ask that you hold us in your prayers, that we are guided by the Holy Spirit to make decisions for the good of the church and the glory of God.

The property committee reported that repairs to the garage had been successfully completed and a new overhead door is on order. One bid has been received to replace the church roof and we are waiting for a couple more. The ovens received from the school have been moved to the fellowship hall and an inspection from the local Health Inspector revealed that we will be in compliance with minimal changes to our kitchen. Hopefully the smell of fresh baked pasties wouldn't be too far off in our future.

The Technology committee reported that they are working on improving the Sunday morning broadcasts and will be bringing in an expert to evaluate our equipment and procedures and make recommendations for improvement.

As we move into the next season, enjoy the fall colors and thank God for the beauty He has surrounded us with.

Take care and God bless,

Gale J. Holm

Council President

## Stewardship

The month of August was the first month without a full time pastor. As a result, income exceeded expenses for the first time in a few months. While we had a positive income for the month, income was actually down from the prior year August by \$1,400. Most of this deficit, as we have seen in previous months, is due to loose offering and special events. Our PPP loan through the 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank and the Small Business Association has been a great help.

God told Abraham, in Genesis 12, to leave his home and trust God to guide him to a new land. "And I will make of you a great nation... so that you will be a blessing." Maybe God hasn't made us a new nation, but He has blessed us in so many ways. Like Abraham, God tells us with blessings comes the obligation to be a blessing. Find a way, however large or small to be a blessing. "Blessed to be a blessing..."

May God bless you, as you have blessed us.

Curt

Treasurer

*In all things*  
**GIVE** *thanks!*



	Income	Debits	Net
<b>August</b>	\$9,326.51	\$5,139.82	\$4,186.69

## Technology

I wish I could report that streaming our worship services has run to expectations. Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case. We are still trying to build a stable system to bring our worship service to you both on the radio and through the internet. For the next few weeks, we will simplify the feed and reduce the risk of any outages. We have had a number of discussions with local experts about how we can build a more robust broadcast which will allow you to both see and hear the worship service. At this time when worship in our sanctuary is restricted, we are hoping to provide a better broadcast worship experience.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



## *Happy Birthday*

Ken Maki	1
Tristan Nelson	1
Robert Busakowski	3
Judi Hemeleski	4
Megan Quayle	4
Jeannie Cyphers	6
Sharon Dedo	10
Sara Shlert	12
James Garavet	15
Dale Holm	17
Gale Holm	17
Jensen Detterbeck	21
Donna Sheldon	22
Janet Nocerini	22
JoAnn Wedegartner	24
Heather Bennett	25

**WELCA** meets the second Monday of the month in the Luther Room. All women are welcome!

Next meeting: October 12th

## *Happy Anniversary*

Lowell and Carol Tresseder 24



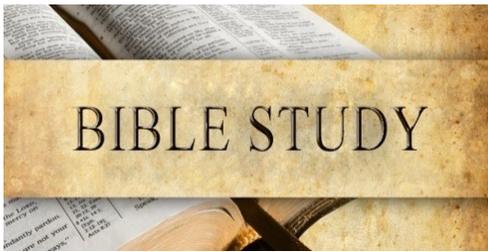
The family of George W. Peterson  
The family of Adeline Johnson



**The Men's Group** meets the third Friday of the month. All members and their guests are invited.

Next meeting: October 16th





## Bible Study

We have not forgotten our Bible Study group. Pastor DJ is working on a way that we can all meet and get back in the swing of things. Stay tuned for more information.



## Smile for the day



A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

'Mama, look what I found,' the boy called out.

'What have you got there, dear?'

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!'

Have a great day!

## Help us Update your Contact Information

Here at First Lutheran, we currently have 26 current members with no contact information. This is an effort to better connect and communicate with our members. As we are trying to clean up our database, please let us know if you have moved, changed telephone numbers, or new email addresses. Also, birthdays and anniversaries are important too. So often I get messages that I forgot your birthday. Usually, I don't have that information...yes 26 of you have no birthdays! So, if you were missed this year, please send me a message via email at:

secretary@firstlutheranironriver.com  
or send me a text message :  
217-855-4956.

Please leave name and information if you have made any changes in the last three years. Please don't assume I have it.  
Thank you!



## Noisy Offering

Noisy offering is going to our facility improvement fund. This fund was set up to maintain the buildings and grounds. Our immediate need is a new roof on the main church building. Next will be our parking lot.



Please join First Lutheran in wishing these young athletes a safe and fun year as they represent the West Iron County Wykons and First Lutheran in their sports.

Football: Blake Pietila  
Kyle Carlson



Tennis: Katarina Hemeleski  
Livea Mazurek



Volleyball: Seanna Stine  
Madelynn Anderson



**GOOD LUCK WYKONS!**

## Fall Repair Day

During the last week of August, several men of our congregation met to make a few repairs to the parsonage garage. It sustained a lot of snow damage this year. The parsonage garage has now been cleaned, thank you Tom and crew, and a new garage door was purchased. Damage was also done to the walls which required the walls to be reinforced. Rain dampened the day of repairs, but will be rescheduled when the new door comes in.



We have been very lucky this summer with several members stepping up to enhance our worship service with your beautiful talents. Thank you to Sara, Karen, Morgan, Curt, Helen, Andy and Pastor DJ. You make our service truly memorable. It has left me in tears more than once. Thank you!  
If you would like to help, please contact Sara at 906-448-9028.

## WELCA

On 9/14 Women of the ELCA met in the Fellowship Hall. Before we began our agenda, those in attendance expressed their frustration with the church still closed. After some discussion, we decided to list the comments and forward to council

Moving on with our agenda: We agreed to donate \$50.00 to Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp.

We've received notice that the shipment of quilts, backpacks, baby bundles to Lutheran World Relief has been delayed. We are waiting to here if another date will be set. Otherwise, we'll have to store the boxes and send next year.

In response to our outreach for a new "cheer" person to send members birthday and anniversary cards, Jo Holm has volunteered to take on this position. Thank you, Jo!

We ended our meeting by sending cards of cheer to our members in care centers and home bound. They are in our prayers and wish them well.

Next WELCA meeting is October 12<sup>th</sup> at 11:00AM in the Fellowship Hall.



# October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				01	02	03
04 10:00 Service	05	06 9:00 Quilters	07	08	09	10
11 10:00 Service		12 11:00 WELCA		13 9:00 Quilters 10:00 Finance 6:00 Council		
18 10:00 Service Noisy Offering	19	20 9:00 Quilters	21	22	23 	24
25 10:00 Service		26		27 9:00 Quilters		
						

Broadcast WIKB 99.1 FM  
Webcast: [www.WIKB.com](http://www.WIKB.com)  
[Firstlutheranironriver.com](mailto:Firstlutheranironriver.com)

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*Sowing seeds of grace; growing faith in Christ*

**First Lutheran Church**



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