

# Lives That Really Matter

The leaves have fallen. The air is frosty. The melody of innumerable songbirds has mostly faded. The harsh stillness of winter has arrived. Early? Perhaps. Inevitable? Absolutely.

We are mere weeks away from Thanksgiving. Typically, time has a way of shoving the accelerator to the floor after Thanksgiving, causing us to careen toward Christmas and crash into the new year. I wonder if this year will be different. I wonder if our experience with COVID-19 has provided enough of a change to significantly alter our typical, fast-paced rat race of a holiday season. Will we slow down enough to begin to settle in to the frosty, silent, harsh stillness that has come to us already?

Will we breathe deeply and calmly remember the many blessings that remain with us, despite the reality that we have experienced so much loss? Will we take the time to name, out loud, the things we are thankful for? Will we give special attention to those things that really matter in our lives—our relationships? Will we choose to love others instead of insisting on one's own right-ness or one's own rights? Will we do the hard, sometimes painful work of building bridges that have been obliterated by selfishness, spite, politics, and the drama that comes with all of those?

How much we have changed already this year! I, for one, find myself less interested in stressing over gifts and shopping, and more interested in seeing people. Perhaps it is because I am still unsure what/how/if gatherings will take place. Perhaps it is because I have learned, as a direct consequence of COVID-19, that my social relationships are much more important than I ever thought they were. Perhaps it's because this is the year I buried my dad. Perhaps it is everything at the same time.

Stillness. Quiet. Bareness. Icy chill. All of these seeping into my bones to slow me down and bring calm; to bring me to a standstill and force me to ask the question, "What really matters here?"

Then, in the silence, God speaks, and the chaos is overcome. God speaks, and light shines in the darkness. God speaks, the earth melts and the stones sing for joy. God speaks, and the kingdoms of this world tremble. God speaks, and life springs forth from the death(s) that surround us.

The voice of the Lord sounds, "Be still, and know that I am God. Wake up, O sleepers! Wake up! Really, what is important right now?" Images of the faces of real human beings flash before my eyes; people who are made in the image of God; people who are sinners forgiven and redeemed by Christ; people with whom I need to be reconciled; people with the same fears, struggles, burdens that I have.

What really is important here? Breathe deeply and listen for the voice of the Lord to speak.

*Rev. D. J. Rasner*

**CHURCH**



**COUNCIL**

The church council met for its monthly meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

The opening discussion focused on the purchasing policy in place and the need for the policy. After a discussion of the current policy it was decided to table the matter and review the policy for possible changes.

The Finance committee reported that a grant from the Synod for Outreach had been applied for and we were awarded the grant and received a check for \$500.00. This grant will be used by the Technology committee to help fund much needed replacement equipment for our Sunday morning broadcasts. The council also approved increasing the current internet capacity to better stream the Sunday morning broadcasts as we now need to provide WIKB with a Facebook connection.

It was also discussed that help is needed to run the sound board on Sunday mornings. If you are willing to volunteer for this, please call the office. You do not need to be computer savvy. Training will be provided and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping bring the “Word” to those who cannot attend the service.

The property committee reported that the damaged garage door has been replaced and will be looking at replacing the second door. They also presented a “wish” list from the Men’s group and items will be reviewed as needed. It was also agreed to provide Plexiglass shields for the pulpit, lectern and soloist locations, to help protect from the spread of the Corona virus. Another bid for the roof replacement was received and we will be soliciting more.

The executive committee will be meeting to discuss the filling of the Administrative Assistant position. The discussion will center around the possibility of using volunteers or having a paid staff employee.

Jill Poulos has been volunteering her time to do this and has stated that she will “retire” from this position effective December 31<sup>st</sup>. Jill has spent countless hours over the past several months making sure that all of the things that needed to be done through the office have been done. We cannot thank Jill enough for her help and dedication. If you see Jill, give her a “virtual hug” and a thumbs up, just a way of saying THANKS.

“it’s always darkest before the dawn”, “there’s light at the end of the tunnel”, great sayings, however we read in Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Believe in Him,

Gale J Holm

Council President

## Stewardship

September continued to see income greater than expenses. While total income exceeded monthly expenses, income was down from the prior year by over \$3,000. We hope to see improvement with open services since our loose contributions are significantly down. The paperwork was completed for the forgiveness of the PPP loan. As yet, we have not received confirmation of the loan forgiveness.

May God bless you, as you have blessed us.

	Income	Debits	Net
September	\$7,378.78	\$6,174.48	\$1,204.30

## Technology

We are glad to report that Sunday service streaming has settled into a routine. Thanks Lynn!! Comments from all of you have been helpful, thanks! You may not know that our streaming all begins with FaceBook. It is critical that this connection is stable and robust. WIKB uses our FaceBook stream to broadcast on the radio. Your Council has listened to your requests and has agreed to build a broadcast system to video stream our services. This will require a bit of investment in both hardware and bandwidth. Our plan is to be able to video broadcast our Christmas Eve service. Stay tuned and let us know what you think.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

## FLC Men's Group

A small group of First Lutheran men has been meeting on the third Friday of the month. Our agendas focus mainly on outreach opportunities and capital investment options. Recently we reviewed some of the project options for our church. Among the men's group we attempted to put a priority to each. Many of them will require significant investment to accomplish and will need broad outreach beyond our regular congregation. The overwhelming project priority was to complete the sanctuary roof project. In the coming weeks you will be receiving more information on this project as we begin our "Buy a Bundle" campaign. Other projects listed for investment are: audio / visual upgrade, front doors, kitchen upgrade, stained glass repair, parking lot, handicap access, front sign straighten, digital signage and creative use of our surrounding property. This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather topics for discussion and feedback. Let us know your thoughts and pray about how you may wish to help. If any of these pique your interest, send us your thoughts. In the future we will put out a list of projects and allow you the opportunity to contribute in any way you are able.

Our call as Christians is to go out from our sanctuary. The Men's Group began discussions to portion some time and money to looking outward into the community. A few opportunities mentioned were: Bible Mission, Kinship, St Vincent de Paul, and become a "force in the community".

Blessings,

Curt



## *Happy Birthday*

November 1	Steven Pietila
November 2	Kylee Pollock
November 4	Josephine Holm
November 6	Summer Parent
November 6	Brooke Stine
November 8	Donald Wolf
November 9	Curtis Poulos
November 10	Mason Starkey
November 11	Carl Kallio
November 15	Pam Gasperini
November 25	Kadence Detterbeck
November 28	Alice Skrivanie
November 29	Jana Aho
November 29	Deborah Quarford
November 29	Debra Bloom

## *Happy Anniversary*

November 5 Kyle & Jenny Detterbeck

## With Heartfelt *Sympathy*

The family of Adeline Johnson

The family of Steve Skrivani

The family of James Wickman

The family of Ralph Salonen

The family of Esther Guzowski

The family of Dorothy Javoroski



## WELCA NEWS

On 10/12 Women of the ELCA met in the Fellowship Hall.

We've received notice that the shipment for Lutheran World Relief would occur this year.

Thanks to Helen and Jana for hauling 14 boxes of quilts, backpacks, and baby bundles to Iron Mountain.

We discussed ideas for using Thrivent Action Team cards. A lot of our usual activities haven't been possible due to COVID...but everyone was encouraged to think about what other things could be done. Hopefully we can share at our next meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00AM.

We put together a small cleaning crew to spruce up the church (oh those flies!). The Ladies met on Friday 10/16 to sweep, dust, wipe down window sills and railings. Great job and thanks.



Seated: Karen Kallio, Lynn Karvala, Clovis Capadagli

Standing left to right: Jo Holm, Jill Poulos, Joann Wedegartner, Marion Masnova, and Kay Barry



Remember on October 31st, before you go to bed, turn your clocks back one hour.

## Pasties anyone?????



Tom Karvala installing our new ovens. We are slowly getting ready for Pastymania 2021.

## Women's Bible Study

For anyone interested, I am starting a women's bible study as a weekly online Zoom. It would run on a weekday morning, likely Thursdays at 9 am. Start date not yet determined but thinking November 5th. In June, I joined a study with women from other denominations and the weekly meetings have enriched my life and deepened my relationships in our community with women I would not have ever spoken with to the depth that we do online. Online bible study anchors people together in a new and different, but needed way, and has helped me cope with the isolation of Covid. I feel many people are navigating waters without familiar navigation points these days, and this will only get harder in winter. This event is not an officially sanctioned event through First Lutheran, though Pastor DJ is aware of it and supports the idea.

We would start with the Book of Acts as I already have a series of scripted questions for each chapter. This would be a participatory study wherein participants would take turns reading aloud and then we would attempt together to answer the questions. Meetings would run approximately an hour, not longer than an hour and fifteen minutes. So, start at 9 and be done by 10:15 am.

If you are interested, please contact me at [jahlberg@fast-air.net](mailto:jahlberg@fast-air.net) and I will include your email address in the Zoom link that I will need to send out. If you don't have Zoom installed on your computer, you would need to download it at [Zoom.com](https://zoom.com)

If you have any questions, you could also give me a call at 906-265-9333.

God Bless and looking forward to seeing some of us online. - Donna Ahlberg

## Vision Quest: A Native American Perspective

Submitted by Joann Wedegartner

“This moment humanity is going through can now be seen as a portal and as a hole.

The decision to fall into the hole or go through the portal is up to you. If you repent of the problem and consume the news 24 hours a day, with little energy, nervous all the time, with pessimism, you will fall into the hole. But, if you take this opportunity to look at yourself, rethink life and death, take care of yourself and others, you will cross the portal.

Take care of your homes, take care of your body. Connect with your spiritual House.

When you are taking care of yourselves, you are taking care of everything else. Do not lose the spiritual dimension of this crisis, have the eagle aspect, that form above, and see the whole; see more broadly. There is a social demand in this crisis, but there is also a spiritual demand, The two go hand in hand, Without the social dimension, we fall into fanaticism. But without the spiritual dimension, we fall into pessimism and lack of meaning.

You were prepared to go through this crisis.

Take your toolbox and use all the tools available to you.

Learn about resistance of the Indigenous and African peoples: we have always been and continue to be exterminated. But we still haven't stopped singing, dancing, lighting a fire and having fun. Don't feel guilty about being happy during this difficult time. You do not help at all being sad and without energy. You help if good things emanate from the Universe now. It is through joy that one resists. Also, when the storm passes, each of you will be very important in the reconstruction of this new world. You need to be well and strong. And, for that, there is no other way than to maintain a beautiful, happy bright vibration. This has nothing to do with alienation. This is a resistance strategy. In shamanism, there is a rite of passage called *The Quest for Vision*. You spend a few days alone in the forest, without water, without food, without protection. When you cross this portal, you get a new vision of the world, because you have faced your fears, your difficulties...

This is what is asked of you: Allow your self to take advantage of this time to perform your vision seeking rituals, what would you want to build for you?

For now, this is what you can do: serenity in the storm. Calm down, pray every day. Establish a routine to meet the sacred every day... Good things emanate; what you emanate now is the most important thing. And sing, dance, resist through art, joy, faith and love.”

Resist—Be reborn



# November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10:00 Worship Rev. Jim Duehring		9:00 Quilter's				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
10:00 Worship Rev. Doug Johnson	11:00 WELCA	9:00 Quilter's 10:00 Finance  6:00 Council				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10:00 Worship Lori Ward Noisy Offering		9:00 Quilter's			8:30 Men's Group	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
10:00 Worship Donna Ahlberg		9:00 Quilter's				
29	30					
10:00 Worship Lance Crevier		9:00 Quilter's				

Interim Pastor, DJ Rasner  
Phone (906) 231-4905

Secretary, Jill Poulos  
Phone: 906-265-9518

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

**Come Join us!**



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
235 E GENESEE STREET IRON  
RIVER MI 49935