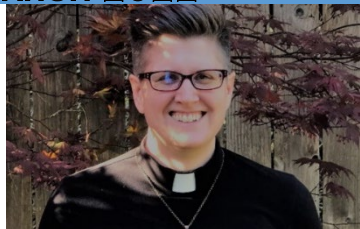


NEWS FROM THE PEWS

MARCH 2022



Message from Pastor Kristi

Greetings, Fir-Conway Lutheran family!

Looking at the upcoming months on the giant wall calendar, I see life springing forth like the daffodils outside my window! I remember so well 2 years ago, celebrating my birthday with my sister, then having one last “modified” service at Burlington Lutheran as their intern, and then the State went into “Lockdown”. During those first few weeks, many pastors, including myself thought it would be a 40-day Lenten journey, with us returning to “Normal” worship by Easter. Then each week, the pandemic got worse, more restrictions came, and more deaths came. We may not be at the end, however, there is hope! Hope that we can envision what and how our worship going forward looks like. Adding in those elements of communion and passing the peace we so missed.

I am excited that the Governor has lifted masking mandates which will take effect March 12th. I want to ensure everyone that it is okay to practice the level of comfortability towards either masking or unmasking. We want to continue to be able to greet friends and family we haven’t seen since “Lockdown” began.

With the restrictions lifting, we will begin Fellowship Hour once we get Coffee Hour Assistants to start running it. We will start taking communion once again at the communion rail starting March 27th, please consider signing up for a Communion Assistant. Tuesday at noon starting March 8th, Lenten Study, bring your lunch the first Tuesday. I am thinking about making it potluck style on the 15th. Copies of the devotional are still available for those who would like one. Kathy and I are happy to mail them out, just drop a note! Starting March 16th, we will be hosting Soup Suppers and Holden Evening Prayer at 6:00 p.m., if you want to join for only the Holden Evening prayer that will be at 6:45 p.m.

Last Sunday we felt comfortable enough not to have the fans in the windows and only the two door up front open.

Other wonderful news! We are demolishing our existing elevator on March 8th in preparation for the arrival of our new one! Fingers and toes crossed, along with ongoing prayers, we might have an operational elevator by Easter Sunday! Thank you to the prayers and for those who’ve donated towards the replacing of the elevator. We are planning on hosting an “Informational Stop” during the Tulip Festival in April! We will be running booths to sell homemade goodies, magnets, cards, and tulips! Anything other items you would like to sell please contact the Front Office and we will connect you with our festival committee. All sales goes towards offsetting the elevator cost.

March 13th is Day Light Savings! Make sure before going to bed Saturday night to “Spring” your clocks forward!

Our Sunday School activity for March will be building Easter cards for our members! The bags will be available starting Sunday March 13th.

This month, we are welcoming Jeff Cohan and the Salish Sea Early Music Festival to our Sanctuary! March 20th at 1:30p.m., come back and listen to the artist and music selected for this concert. I will have flyers available in the Narthex and attach them to the weekly mailing. The next opportunity will be April 20th at 7 p.m.

Thank you for all your prayers, for my family and for all those who call Fir-Conway Lutheran Church home! It’s a wonderful place to call home and I feel continually privileged to be able to serve in this historic community. I’m excited as we blossom and bloom! Blessings, Pastor Kristi

The Spirit is a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA. It is intended for synod members, congregations & organizations. They are encouraged to reproduce these articles in their own monthly organizational publications.



One) I don't know my family history very well. Looking in the mirror, I assume that at some point my ancestors came from northern Europe. I do know that the famous frontiersman Daniel Boone is my 13th great-uncle (his sister, Sarah Boone, was my 13th great grandmother). The story is that Grandma Sarah ran off with a peddler and the Boone family disowned her. I have been tempted to take one of those DNA tests just to narrow down the areas in Europe where my ancestors historically lived but I haven't done it yet.

Two) I am intrigued with the new field that sociologists, therapists, and scientists are exploring: epigenetics. This scientific field postulates that just as physical characteristics are passed down, so are times of trauma and loss. A growing body of research suggests that trauma (like starvation, war, a pandemic, etc.) can be passed from one generation to the next. (This is much more complex than I can write about here and it is not a definitive thing. Some scientists dispute these findings or think more research needs to be done. It is, however, intriguing.)

As I reflect on these two thoughts, I am caught with the idea that we all come from something, from somewhere, from someone. We all carry the DNA of our ancestors. We see this when we look at one another – the differences in height or hair color or the length of one's second toe all show differences in DNA. But it is more than that. We also carry the cultures of our ancestors – the ways that we see the world, the ways we celebrate, the ways we grieve, the ways we worship, and so much more. And, perhaps, if we follow recent science, we are all also carrying the trauma that are foremothers and forefathers lived through. It is a part of us – perhaps more deeply embedded than we can understand.

Now, I am not a sociologist or a scientist or a therapist or a doctor. What I am is a pastor. And so, I will speak from that perspective. First, I am amazed how God formed each of us for resiliency and for community. All of us – a jumble of cells, a jumble of our ancestors' DNA – all of us beloved children of God, uniquely and carefully made. Second, I am struck that we are broken. We are carrying scars – individually, historically, and as community. We desperately need healing. We desperately need each other. We desperately need Jesus.

In other words, we are both saint and sinner – individually and collectively. So, how do we move forward? How do we, individually and as community, heal?

Fundamentally, we need to acknowledge our own brokenness. Healing comes when we acknowledge our own pain and our own complicity in the pain of others. Healing comes when we see each other's pain. Healing comes when we admit that we have – knowingly or unknowingly – added to someone else's pain. Healing comes when together we confess our sin, receive forgiveness, and step forward into new life in God's Spirit together.

While it might seem easier, we cannot expect that this healing will take place immediately. And perhaps this is a good thing. For healing and growth go hand in hand. As therapist and author Resmaa Menakem writes, "In today's America, we tend to think of healing as something binary: either we're broken, or we're healed from that brokenness. But that's not how healing operates, and it's almost never how human growth works. More often, healing and growth take place on a continuum, with innumerable points between utter brokenness and total health." *My Grandmother's Hands: Radicalized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*.

During this Lenten time, may we all enter into a time of reflection, contemplation, confession, and ultimately, healing. May we live into God's Spirit of true peace.

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I've been thinking about words and language again – an occupational hazard for an English teacher, I guess. My current ponderings revolve around the words *bless* and *blessing*. Despite having a pretty good idea about the definitions of those words, when reading scripture, I often feel that God is telling me that they don't actually mean what I think they mean. Merriam-Webster defines *bless* as "to confer prosperity or happiness upon," and *blessing* as "a thing conducive to happiness or welfare," and yet in Luke 6:22-23 we are told, "Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me." (The Message) That doesn't sound like something conducive to happiness! And I think of Mary, told by the angel Gabriel that she has found favor with God (Luke 1:30) and who sings that from now on all generations will call her blessed. How blessed did she appear to her contemporaries – a young, unwed mother who gave birth in a stable, had to flee into exile, and whose son consorted with the lowest members of society and was put to death on a cross. That doesn't look too prosperous or happy. It seems that blessings by human standards might sometimes look different than blessings by God's.

I was strongly reminded of that recently upon the death of a young friend of mine. He was, in so many ways, blessed in the conventional sense of the word. Intellectually gifted, a talented musician, a poet, a generous spirit. Blessed, as well, with family and friends who loved and supported him. He had just completed medical school and was embarking on his residency when he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer – in the middle of a pandemic. Immediately after this diagnosis, it became clear that he, at least, did not see this as the curse so many of the rest of us did. In an early statement on his CaringBridge site, he noted, "The cancer will certainly be life-limiting; however, I ultimately hope to complete my training as a resident physician. Even in these few weeks, the lessons I've learned about death, disease, and illness are unlike anything I could have ever hoped to learn during my medical education. I hope to have the chance to share that in a meaningful way." He began to keep a blog to record his experiences and learnings and his medical team now wants to use what he learned as part of a study to find better treatments for those suffering from this form of cancer. Truly, he was wise beyond his twenty-seven years and blessed, even with cancer, to be a blessing to others. Although raised in the church, Dylan considered himself spiritual rather than religious. I don't know what he'd think of my sharing his story in this way, but I hope it inspires you, as it has me, to try not to limit blessings to those things that seem good from a human standpoint, but to be open to the ways in which even painful, hard, and sad things can enrich our lives. I end with one of the final entries from his blog:

"By almost every emotional or spiritual measure, cancer has enriched my life at only the cost of a relatively unknown future. To be cured would be a miracle, but I would change nothing that has happened." -Dylan, 12/5/2021

Here are a few things I or the Synod Council have been up to:

- Executive Committee met on February 10. We had a presentation regarding the LiVE program, approved roster actions, and received reports. I would encourage any congregation looking for learning opportunities for their lay leaders to consider joining the LiVE Project.
- Synod Council members serve as synod representatives at a variety of congregational events throughout the synod – call meetings, installations, ordinations among others. I recently attended a call meeting via Zoom at Gloria Dei, Lynwood.

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Want an Easy Way to Donate to FCLC While Shopping?

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from customers' eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organizations they select. The minimum amount a charitable organization must accrue to receive a quarterly donation is \$5.00. The same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com are available on AmazonSmile. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Your selection will be remembered, and then every eligible purchase you make through **AmazonSmile** will result in a donation. You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile.

Here's how to sign up for AmazonSmile

1. Visit smile.amazon.com
2. Sign in with your **Amazon.com** credentials
3. Choose a **charitable organization** to receive donations, or search for the charity of your choice
4. Select your charity: **Fir-Conway Lutheran Church**

Church Council Minutes

February 2022 Fir-Conway Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

6:32 pm call to order

Those present: Jon Glastra, Renee Bowzer, Dave Reep, Diane Olsen, Lori Walser, Kelly Leifer, Kelly McKnight, Judy Bekker, Jean Linde

Reflection/Opening Prayer:

A reading from 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 in NRSV, the Orthodox Study Bible, and NLT

Approval of Agenda: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes from January 12, 2022 meeting, which were previously submitted electronically, unanimously.

Treasurer's report: Dave Reep gave the updated report with a few highlights and questions answered:

- \$8688.00 total giving for the month of January, which was below our proposed

budget of \$11,480

- \$3590.00 was the direct deposit for January
- Concern about the utilities bills for the parsonage. Jon will contact Kathy about a breakdown of the bills. It should not be as high as \$1090.28, since it is vacant and the temp is set to 55 degrees. The total was \$3400 for the church and parsonage for the month of January and that is not acceptable.
- Clarification of the Admin salary of 249.70 for the month of January, which covered only a couple days. Dave explained and clarified the situation.

Pastors Report: Pastor was not able to attend Committee Reports:

Christian Education: no representation

Evangelism Committee:

Lydia Ladies Aid: Jean Linde thanked Renee Bowzer and others for providing cookies etc throughout last year, for the few activities or functions we were able to host.

Property and Management: Since Kelly Leifer is new to the council, Jon brought him up to speed on a couple items (thank you Jon), referring to the year end summary:

- Replaced fan on the furnace
- All lighting changed
- Olympic Elevator, signed contract, received deposit, and they will let us know when they are dropping the car and weights
- Replaced fill valve in men's room toilet
- Air filters for furnace at Church and parsonage Stewardship/Finance:

Kelly McKnight shared a few updates

- There will be a Temple talk each month
- We want to make sure we continue to be transparent and communicate with the congregation about everything that is going on
 - Jon thanked Kelly for all her legwork in researching the parsonage rental, the land use, and fielding all the calls.

Worship & Music: Judy Bekker shared recent discussions revolving:

- Ash Wednesday, mid week services a possibility during Lent, and we will have a conversation about the soup/supper option.
- Discussion around Holy Week, chorale practice beginning tomorrow

Congregational Liaison: Diane Olsen is excited to be back on council and encourages the congregation to reach out with things to celebrate and things of concern.

Old Business:

- Parsonage update given by Kelly McKnight:
 - Dahls Electric came over and did a complete oversee and made sure that

it was safe.

- We now have a contract with Windermere to handle the parsonage rental. Michael Borthwick is our agent and he will be the point person for communication. Windermere will manage the tenants and all communication for a 10% commission. We are hoping to rent the parsonage for \$1800, which would hopefully net \$1600. Yard work was discussed. We are hopeful that we can get it rented out for March.
 - Kelly fielded many questions after the annual congregational meeting in reference to the property lines, parcel location, the 3 acres
- Auditing of Financial Books-there will be no further discussion.
 - Mailbox-tabled until next time
 - Boy Scouts-they are currently meeting at Conway School
 - Norwegian Bible -tabled until next month
 - Salish Sea Music Festival-Jeff Cohen will be performing on Sunday 3/20 Wednesday 4/20 Wednesday 5/4
 - Fireproof filing cabinet-we have been gifted a unit and need to arrange pickup in Everett
 - Consulting attorney regarding FCLC legal liability regarding cemetery issue-nothing definite has been set as of yet, we have a couple attorneys interested in this situation, but no timeline is available.

New Business:

- Updating Church Directory (online and printing copies)
- Updating Church Website: Renee, Carolyn and Pastor have researched, found a user friendly company and decided to go with Tithe-ly.
- Renee asked the council to proofread the annual congregational meeting minutes and give her feedback or any corrections.

Renee motioned for adjournment, it was seconded and unanimously passed.

We closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted Lori Walser

FCLC Secretary

Friendship House Donations Needed

Reflecting the heart of God by feeding, sheltering, clothing, and healing those in need since 1986.

Friendship House continues to serve meals to our area's most vulnerable. Fir-Conway Lutheran Church provides dinner on the second Sunday of every month. Volunteers are needed to prepare and serve. Please contact Matt Mathison @ 303-350-7482 with dates most convenient for you and whether you would like to prepare or serve.

This Outreach activity depends on donations. Donations can be dropped off at church Monday through Thursday from 9-3. If you prefer not to shop, cash donations can be made and the shopping will be done for you!

We feed around 100 so the following items are needed:

10 Family size frozen dinner lasagna

5 loaves of garlic bread

2 gallons of milk

2 large bags of green salad 1 quart of ranch dressing 6 dozen cookies

Thank you for your continued generosity

Upcoming Events

3/8-4/5 Lenten Bible Study following the book “Grace Unbounded” at noon, bring a dish to share starting 3/15

3/9 Council at 6:30 p.m.

3/13 and 3/27 Confirmation After Church

3/20 at 1:30 p.m. Salish Sea Early Music Festival.

3/16-4/6 Soup Suppers and Holden Evening Prayer at 6 p.m.

3/27 Fellowship Hour begins again after church. Please consider signing up to help host.

4/1-4/30 Tulip Festival Farmers Market, Friday-Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., please sign up to help host a booth. We will be selling baked goods, Tulips, Magnets and Cards, along with giving tours of our Sanctuary. All money raised will go towards offsetting the cost of our Elevator replacement.

4/14 Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m.

4/16 Easter Egg Hunt at Conway Elementary School, please bring small individually wrapped candies to help fill the Easter Eggs. Candy donations will began 3/13

4/17 Sunrise Easter Service at Fir-Conway Lutheran Cemetery at 7 a.m., regular Service at church at 10 a.m., bring your lilies and tulips to share.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 Office 10am - Worship Confirmation at 11:30-1p.m.	28 Office Timecards to	1 First Day of Office	2 Office 9am - Ash Wednesday Ends at 5p.m.	3 Office	4	5 Office
6 Office 10am - Worship	7 Office Pastor Kristi's Birthday	8 Office Lenten Study at noon Bring your lunch	9 Office 6pm - Stewardship 6:30pm - Council	10 Office	11	12 Sunday School Event - Pick up Supplies on Sunday
13 Office 10am - Worship 11am - Evangelism 2:30pm - Friendship house	14 Office	15 Office Lenten Study at noon Bring disk to share.	16 Office Soup Supper @ 6pm. Holden Evening Prayer 6:45pm.	17 Office St. Patrick's Day	18 Office Pastor Kristi out of town	19
20 Office 10am - Worship 1:30pm - Sallish Sea Early Music Festival.	21 Office	22 Office Lenten Study Potluck	23 Office Soup Supper @ 6pm. Holden Evening @ 6:45pm	24 Office	25	26
27 Office	28 Office Mutual Ministry @ 2:30p.m.	29 Office Lenten Study - Potluck	30 Office Soup Supper @ 6pm Holden Evening @ 6:45pm	31 Office	1	2