Greetings, Fir-Conway Lutheran family!

***A message from Pastor Kristi***

News from the Pews

April 2022

 **Fir-Conway Lutheran Church** Established 1888

The speed at which the clock is set makes the days spin forth to burst into yet another month. April is a month where new life is seen in abundance. Chicks are hatching, calves are being born, crops are being planted, and tulips are starting to blossom. At Fir-Conway Lutheran, signs of new life are popping up with new opportunities to serve and share God’s love with those who visit our parking lot and building.

Entering the final weeks of lent, I am mindful not to get caught up in all the events happening and overextend myself which can happen. I am excited about the Fundraising event, to offset the cost of replacing our Elevator, and we are beginning a “Go Fund Me” page, to help raise money to repair our Sanctuary ceiling. The event will be throughout the month of April in correlation to the Tulip Festival happening on the Island. It has the potential to be an amazing event, allowing visitors to see the need we have to repair and maintain our building for the ministries we serve within the valley and beyond.

 Hosting opportunities for people to experience the beauty and historical setting we are fortunate to worship in each Sunday. The richness of history and gifts of those who came before us, breathing life into this community and church. I remain honored to serve in such an amazing setting.

While we welcome the Spring and all the opportunities to gather together in service and the events happening throughout April, I encourage each of you to practice self-care. Remaining mindful that we live in a very busy world that will keep pulling us in multiple directions and increased obligations.

I encourage you to not only practice this throughout Lent but each day when we feel overwhelmed by all the World is throwing at us. To step boldly into the grace freely given to us, and look for God, who is still with us each and every moment of the day. Carrying us when we are not able to walk any further.

In the month of April, we continue to meet in person, adding back communion at the communion rail and in May, Fellowship hour. We have also launched a new website that can be accessed at [www.firconwaylutheran.org](http://www.firconwaylutheran.org) It has many new features that were not available on the old site. People can access the latest Sermon and stay up to date on upcoming events!

In May, we are starting the updating of a “Picture” Directory! You can email or mail in your latest photo, or you can sign up for your picture to be taken at the church by my good friend Harvey Smith. There will be no sitting fee or cost to you. I would love to see all your smiling faces!

Check out our calendar of upcoming events and opportunities to serve.

 Blessings, Pastor Kristi

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**From the Bishop:** One of the things I love about living in the Pacific Northwest is the abundance of life. In January, the grass is green. In February, plants are blooming. In March, little flowers are pushing through soil. In April, color bursts out everywhere. To me, these signs of life are miracles.

And don’t we need some of these signs right now? I mean, there are so many places where it feels like ongoing winter - the discord and acrimony amongst families, churches, peoples, and nations. As I write this article Russia is invading Ukraine. Perhaps when you read this article, things will be different but at this moment there is bombing and shooting and fear and death. And entrenched crises continue: houselessness, racism, ableism, unjust governments, and so much more. Individually, many are experiencing physical and mental illness, fatigue, and exclusion. I remember a quote from C.S. Lewis’ book *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* where one of the characters says, “It is winter in Narnia, and has been for ever so long … always winter, but never Christmas.”

It has been a long winter … perhaps even two years of winter. Pain and sorrow and death feel very close. There is grief, there is anger, there is exhaustion, and there is sadness.

And yet … And yet …

Gardens are full of seeds. Farmers are tilling the soil. Tulips are blooming. Rhododendrons are on their way. We see signs around us that winter is ending and the Bringer of Spring is coming.

As I travel through this synod, I see signs of new life and new hope. I see resolve and new partnerships. While there are challenges that we are all facing, while there is much work to do individually and together, I sense new possibilities.

When I meet with councils and other leaders in congregations, I am delighted that we are having good, strong, sometimes difficult conversations about things that matter. In our best moments, we are not as concerned about smaller difficulties but instead, as people of faith, we are leaning into what it means to love God and love neighbor in this time and in this place. I thank God for the opportunity for conversation, listening, and moving on the Breath of God’s Spirit.

The truth is, alone - we cannot create life, alone - we cannot change systems, alone - we cannot move winter into spring. But *through Christ*, through the One who died for this world and who is raised into new life, we can.

And so, as it is written in Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians:

*We do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.* 2 Corinthians 16-18

We are promised that through this time, through world events, through whatever is next, Jesus is with us. And even more than that, we are promised that there is something amazing beyond all measure - more than we can know or even imagine. It is difficult to sometimes comprehend this promise – especially when we look at the destruction and pain and devastation in this world – and yet … and yet … we cling to the promise. As people of faith, we pray and whisper and shout it out – that through Christ’s death and resurrection all things that create death will be gone. Period. Full. Stop.

And because of knowing and trusting this promise, we are then called, as beloved children of God, to see, appreciate, and tend to the small plants entrusted to us – knowing that we also are plants, also seeds, also soil, called to live into and share this new life with and for others.

May this Easter spring forth with new life for you. May you feel the hope given through Jesus. And may together we shout, “Happy Easter! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!”

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

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“How many hats do you have?” My mother-in-law had been watching a show about millinery and not only had she decided to start wearing hats to church, but she also wanted me to join her. This, of course, would require that I had some church appropriate hats. It turns out that I have a LOT of hats, but almost all of them are highly utilitarian outdoor hats – rain hats, winter ski caps, broad brimmed sun hats, baseball caps. Unlike my daughter, who has a full wardrobe of cute everyday hats, I’m just not much of an indoor, fashionable hat wearer. Aside from one rain hat that works okay indoors and a fancy Easter bonnet, I just didn’t have many hats to wear.

At least not literal ones.

Metaphorical hats, on the other hand, well, those I have plenty of. I have my teacher hat, my parent hat, my spouse hat, my congregation member hat, my synod vice president hat – the list goes on and on. Sometimes I forget which hat I have on. I often tell the story of my middle school son telling me, after he came to me distraught about missing an incentive due to a misunderstanding of the late work policy, and I told him if he had turned the work in on time in the first place, he wouldn’t have had an issue, that right then he needed me to be his *mother* and not a *teacher*. Wrong hat! When you wear a lot of different hats, you have to pay attention to which one is on your head!

Sometimes, it is a good idea to do an inventory and figure out which hats, literal and metaphorical, still fit and which need to be repurposed or given away. One of the main items of business at this year’s Synod Assembly are elections for synod council members and officers. Those of us who have terms ending have had to do a little of this discernment. Many of the individuals who are eligible for a second term have decided that those hats do not suit them anymore and they are ready to pass them along to new wearers. In a bit of a mixed metaphor, I have decided to throw my VP hat back into the ring and see what happens. Maybe I will get it back or maybe someone else will claim it who will wear it better – I’m open to whatever the Spirit has in mind. These are the open positions, many of them for lay leaders:

* Vice President – a four-year term and must be filled by a layperson
* Secretary – a four-year term. May be filled by a layperson or a rostered minister
* 1 Rostered Minister – a three-year term, either roster (Word and Sacrament or Word and Service)
* 1 Lay woman – a three-year term
* 2 Lay men, one of whom shall be person of color or primary language other than English – a three-year term

We want our council to be representative of the diversity of the synod and I would like to encourage you, especially if you are a young adult or a member of the BIPOC, LGBTQ, or other underrepresented communities to check your metaphorical wardrobe and see if you have room for one of these snazzy synod leadership hats. More information about these roles and the nomination form can be found on the synod website: <https://lutheransnw.org/synod-assembly>

Oh, and I went out and bought a new indoor hat to wear to church. My mother-in-law and I are gonna be stylin’!

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

* Executive Committee met on March 10. Among other actions, we reviewed the proposed budgets for 2022-23 and 2023-24 and approved funding for a synod coaching coordinator.
* Synod Council met on March 19. Our agenda included several items regarding Synod Assembly and continued intercultural development.

Kay Edgerton, Vice President

NW Washington Synod/ELCA

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**Church Council Minutes**

March 2022 Fir-Conway Lutheran Church Council

Meeting Minutes

6:45 pm call to order

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

Approval of Agenda: Renee motioned to approve the minutes, it was seconded and passed unanimously

Approval of Minutes from February 2022 meeting, Diane motioned to accept, Jon seconded and it passed unanimously

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

* Month of February was optimistic, especially with a generous member sharing a large contribution to our church.
* With the exception of the February church parsonage and church utilities being inaccurate, Renee moved to pass the budget, Matt seconded and the budget passed unanimously.
* Still some concern about the utilities bills for the parsonage, but we are expecting a refund from PSE reflecting their overestimation of the parsonage usage.

Pastors Report: Pastor shared her report for March, reflecting on the 2 years of the initial “lockdown”, and what that entailed, to the beauty of the daffodils blooming around the church, showing that new life is here. She is trying a new approach with the confirmation students, modified a monopoly game and transformed it into a Confirmation boardgame. The students will be challenged with questions and clues from the Old Testament and Small Catechism.

She has appreciated the many visits she had this month, whether it be by phone, in person or dropping by the church office.

Pastor encourages and welcomes any ideas for service projects for our confirmation students.

Committee Reports:

 Christian Education: Renee is working with Pastor and the Easter Cards will be available this Sunday. The Community Easter Egg Hunt is a go for Saturday April 16th. We reserved the playground at Conway, the flyer has been submitted for approval, and the Church waiver has been completed.

Evangelism Committee: Matt shared that we are averaging about 70 people served between Friendship House and Skagit First Step Center. He has enough supplies for about 3 months.

Coffee hour begins May 1st.

Lydia Ladies Aid: Jean Linde shared that Ladies Aid is going to be a informational stop during Tulip Time. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, every weekend in April from 9-3 the booth will be open.

There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers for:

* set up booth, information person
* Baked goods water in ice chests
* tours of sanctuary take down of booth

Please help us provide this great opportunity for all the visitors to our area.

Property and Management: Kelly shared the following:

New exterior lights, called “dusk to dawn”, were installed.

Demo has begun on the elevator, and there will be a couple work parties coming up to prepare the shaft for our new elevator. Anticipated ship date for the elevator will be after June 2,2022.

Crew has come in and pruned the trees at the parsonage

Cleaning crew will be at the parsonage soon.

Stewardship/Finance: Kelly McKnight was unable to attend

Worship & Music: Judy Bekker shared:

Hymns have been chosen through the 24th of April

Lent Soup Suppers on the 16th, 23rd 30th and April 6th

 6:00 soup supper 6:45 Service (the 23rd, 30th and April 6th will be Holden Evening Prayer service.

Maundy Thursday at 7:00

Congregational Liaison: Diane Olsen shared there is no updates

Old Business:

* Parsonage update given via Kelly McKnights notes and detailed discussion. We reviewed the list of applicants and are moving forward with possible tenants.
* Mailbox-We want to buy a locking mailbox to be installed at the current site. We want to reinforce the structure as well.
* Norwegian Bible-It has been refurbished, returned and is beautiful.
* Fireproof filing cabinet-we need to arrange pickup. Judy will re-connect with Kelly McKnight to plan
* Consulting attorney regarding FCLC legal liability regarding cemetery issue- No updates
* Tulip Festival see above
* Go Fund Me-Renee shared the background of this idea and wanted to get the information out to help with the restoration fund. We would like to move forward with this fundraiser and our goal is 100K. Renee will put a rough draft together to share with the congregation and the public.
* Grace grants-applications from the Synod are open and Pastor will apply for some funding to help with live streaming church services.

New Business:

* Updating Church Directory
	+ May 8th and May 22nd for picture taking
	+ Harvey Smith will take the preschool pictures,
	+ $25 for digital pictures, with an option to order prints
	+ Unanimously approved by council
* Updating Church Website: Goal is to have the website up and running by end of March, with April being “go date”
* Lutheran World Relief- Eastern Europe Crisis Response

 shall be presented to the congregation on March 13th and March 20th by Special offering.

Jon motioned for, Judy seconded, motion carried unanimously.

We closed the meeting with the Lord’s Prayer

Respectfully submitted

Lori Walser

FCLC Secretary

Upcoming Events

I am excited to announce that we have launched our new Website! The address is the same as the old one, but easier to update and add too. With this update, we are getting rid of additional cost of having a professional work on it for us!

4/12 is our last “Grace Unbounded” Study at noon.

4/6 is our last Wednesday night, Soup Supper and Holden Evening Prayer at 6 p.m., if you haven’t had a chance, please join us.

4/7-4/9 Pastor Kristi will be at the Pacific Northwest Robotics Districts in Cheney. She will be available by phone and email.

4/10 Palm Sunday

4/13 Church Council at 6:30 p.m.

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

4/14 Soup Supper at 6 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m.

4/15 Good Friday Service at Faith Lutheran in North Marysville at 7 p.m. This will be a joint service with the Lutheran Churches in North Snohomish County.

4/16 Fir-Conway Lutheran Church Easter Egg Hunt at Conway Elementary School, please let Renee know if you are able to help with this event!

4/16 Conway Old Timer AA meeting at 6p.m.

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 to place up on the Altar, blossoming flowers, and tulips to share in the wire cross.

4/20 Salish Sea Early Music Festival at 7 p.m.

4/25-27th Pastor Kristi will be out of the office for the Bishop’s Convocation.

5/8 Please sign up to have your picture taken for the new picture directory we are hoping to have. I would love to see what all of you look like, without your mask. Many of you have grown up and added to your families since the last picture directory. My wonderful friend, and fellow Lutheran, Harvey Smith from Edmonds, Washington. Is donating his time and money, to come take our pictures. He will be available Sunday May 8th and May 22nd from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. to take your picture. He is great with kids, and there is no cost to you to come sit. If you would like to purchase a picture it will be about $18. The printed directory, in color, will not cost members anything. It is a gift from Fir-Conway Lutheran.

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