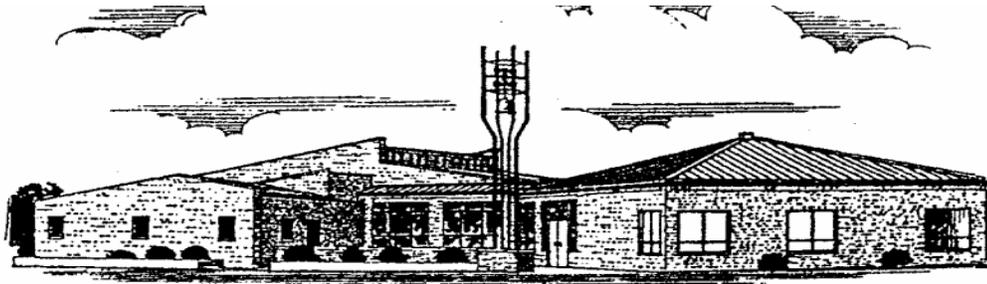


DISCOVER FIRST



Empowered by the Holy Spirit, We Worship Reach Out,
Share the Gospel and Serve

October 2018

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
287 West Main Street, Xenia, OH 45385
372-7421

Interim Pastor Tim Swanson

E-Mail Address: firstluthxenia@sbcglobal.net

Web Site: <http://www.firstlutheranxenia.org>

Worship with us on Sunday morning at 9:30am
Children's Sunday School at 9:25am
Adult Sunday School at 11:00am
Church Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:00am-2:00pm



"The Truth Will Make You Free"
John 8:32

This month is Reformation Sunday of which John 8:32 is a key phrase within the Gospel reading. We read this within the context of our American culture as the home of "free" and therefore to preserve the freedom of all. Yet, as Christians, it is Truth that makes us free. Christ is Truth. It is Christ who alone truly makes us free.

The founding fathers lifted up freedom meaning liberty and justice and the pursuit of happiness to set our nation apart from tyranny, that is, suppression. The pursuit of happiness meant that everyone has the opportunity to pursue a career and a life in freedom from bondage. This was the aim of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Yet the founding fathers knew it needed a religious base to keep freedom from lapsing into a "do what you want" understanding; that is, we still have a moral responsibility that checks greed, avarice etc. With the separation of church and state, every religion is to have equal footing. The state is to stay out of running the church affairs not the church to stay out of political affairs that would provide that moral base (Jefferson wanted the separation because the church of England, that is, Anglican was the state religion of Virginia in which the taxes supported that particular church while others had to fend for themselves). So, freedom is seen as giving all respective bodies equal opportunities to practice their religion.

This understanding of freedom, however, becomes a Law. When we speak of the Truth or Christ sets us free, we are referring to the Gospel. The question becomes, "how do we keep the Gospel from becoming another Law?" Christ is not another Law giver. He is Truth. Yet laws put limitations on freedom because freedom cannot be an absolute. We cannot do whatever we want? The Law is to protect freedom but at the same time it can be manipulated by "sinful" intentions. Justice can be reduced to manipulating the law in order to win. The justice we proclaim is lost when the needs of the weak, powerless and poor are trampled by those who have power. In this case, freedom and the pursuit of it becomes unjust.

As Lutherans, we confess in the Gospel and we do not reduce it to another Law. The Laws of Moses have become subservient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Decisions are not made by what the laws say so much as how the Gospel brings us to make decisions. Absolute freedom leads to death to which the law cannot save us. It is a reliance on the Truth, that is, Jesus Christ that sets us free. To be free in this way, our understanding of human beings (selfish intentions) and lifestyles must die in order that God can continue to act in our lives to free us in Christ through the resurrection in order to be a new creation set within this old creation.

In American Protestantism, of which our founding fathers were predominate, the Law was used to improve the human conditions until one could attain to a state of perfection; the puritan reformed goal was growth in holiness and perfection (sanctification) in order to create a kingdom of God here on

Earth (A City built on a Hill) which separates being justified by faith from sanctification. When we separate these two (Justification, being saved and sanctification, do good works) the emphasis fall on human efforts exemplified in being successful. For the puritans, to be successful was to be favored by God. Ultimately, it has the need to be free to be able to pursue happiness. This is a reliance on human good works not the work of God. Once God (justification) is separated from doing good works we lose all moral grounds of human responsibilities ((stewardship) toward God and toward creation. So, we dig and dump and pollute and destroy in the name of progress and success because it is within our rights (freedom) to do so. This is not true freedom but the pathway to death.

Luther did not separate God's actions (justification; being justified in Christ) with our growth in works (sanctification); we are saved by God for good works. In is what God does to us, for us and through us. We must die "in" Christ to rise "with" Christ to be little Christs "in the world" today. This is a daily exercise (Luther's Small Catechism). This is a radical death that leads to resurrection which is God's act of renewal. This is the Truth of the Gospel that makes us free to be people of God. We are free to live fully a life of God in this world. It is the freedom of our actions without thought of whether it is within 'my' own interest to do so that reflects God's works with this world. We are to act first and then reflect on it; not reflect on it and then act. We are free in Christ to act in this fashion because we are justified by Grace alone and not by our works, that, we act in faith that God forgives. It is our freedom in Christ that causes us to act without a "what's in it for me mentality.

It is a Sacramental Life in Christ. It is gift; a gift from God that frees us from death where we "humbly" acknowledge our Life in Christ. It frees us to live under all conditions of this world. We cannot build the kingdom of God in this world too racked by sin nor are we to want to escape from this world but to live a full life in Christ knowing that the Truth of the Gospel has set us free to be people of God both loved and redeemed by him and wanting at the same time to serve God through the good we can offer as thanksgiving. The earth is sacred and we know it should be treated as such as a creation of God; for Luther reminds us in the first article of the creed, "God has created me and all that exists". We and creation belong to God of which we declare Christ as Lord of creation who sets us free to live full and obedient lives within it.

For November: This is a Lutheran understanding of Evangelism and being evangelistic and why we need to make our witness to Christ our ultimate goal and therefore top priority in ministry. We are called to bear witness to the Gospel that alone can set us free.

Pastor Tim

Adult Bible Study With Pastor Tim Thursdays at 3:00pm and 7:00pm

We began in August and continue on September 6th and 13th through October, November and December. Conversations regarding our Faith questions will be discussed.

Thursdays, October 4th through November 15th. The Theme of Resurrection, Heaven, Creation and a New Creation within Scripture.

The Fifth Session will fall on All Saints Day, November 1st, when we celebrate the Communion of Saints, we will be at the moment of beginning to explore this theme as being the body of Christ in the World: Incarnation and Resurrection; Word and Sacrament; Worship-Mission-Evangelism; Vocation in light of Resurrection.

The Sixth Session will center on Pastoral Issues regarding Death and Dying; Grief and Celebration, etc. A full outline will be given later.



Thursdays, November 29th through December 20th Advent Themes and Worship
You are invited and urged to attend our Strategic Planning Workshop!

Our Evangelism Committee is working on setting up the annual **Strategic Planning Workshop** on Saturday, November 10th, 9:30am to 12:30pm. Donuts, bagels, and beverages will be served. As in years past all members of First Lutheran are encouraged to attend. The format will be streamlined this year with just three major topics:

(1) Inreach: ministry that supports our church community,

(2) Outreach: ministry that supports our external local community and beyond, and

(3) Church Vitality: an assessment of our capability to support and expand ministries. In past years, as new projects were discussed, volunteers were solicited to help start and move new efforts along.

This year we just want to gather ideas, share concerns, and make an assessment of what projects we could reasonably move forward.

Volunteering for assignments is not expected as an outcome of your attendance at the meeting. Please see Ron Taylor, Doris Nagel, Linda Blanton, Lisa Szweg or Ellen Taylor for further information.



FISH Sunday October 7th

Since 1994 the first Sunday of each month has been designated as FISH Sunday here at First Lutheran. Please bring an item or two to church on **Sunday, October 7th** and place in the FISH Food Basket. Any items you bring in are greatly appreciated. (Monetary donations are also accepted you can use one of the pew envelopes and mark "For Food Pantry.")
Thank you! Our first Sunday of the month contributions to the FISH Pantry are greatly appreciated.

Our first Sunday of the month food donation continues to collect food for the **Xenia Hunger Backpack Cuisine Program**. (For October we've been asked to bring in 3.5oz nonrefrigerated puddings OR gold fish or animal cracker snack packs.) Our donations are always appreciated. This is an ongoing addition to our FISH Sunday requests for food for the Food Pantry. Please place your donations into the box in the narthex marked for the Backpack Cuisine Program.

Requested items include:

Pop top can microwave 7.5oz single serve

Chef Boyardee pasta

pop top cans of tuna 3oz

individual oatmeal box of single servings

squeezable jam/jelly 20oz

cans of vegetables 8.5 oz

gold fish and animal cracker snack packs

Cheesy Mac 2-3 oz single servings

Non-refrigerated puddings 3.5oz

Dinty Moore beef stew 7.5oz

10 pack fruit juices 5-8 oz

pop top cans of fruit 8-9 oz

pop top cans of chicken 4.5 oz

cereal bars & granola bars box of single serve

peanut butter 18 oz containers

October 7, 2018
Congregational Meeting

The Church Council has scheduled a congregational meeting for **Sunday, October 7, 2018** after the worship service. The sole purpose of the meeting is to discuss the desire to ensure a continuity of leadership in the congregation as we begin the call process. The current proposal is to suspend the portion of paragraph C11.02 of our constitution that prohibits a member from serving as president of the council and congregation for more than two years. This suspension is to be effective for a one year period of time.

During announcements at worship on September 23rd a concern was raised about the legality of this action and the council is looking into this to ensure that any action we take is both appropriate and legal.



SPICE OF LIFE - October 23rd

Mark your calendar we will be meeting at Noon on Tuesday, October 23rd. All seniors in the congregation, 55 and older, are invited to attend these gatherings for friendship, fellowship and food.

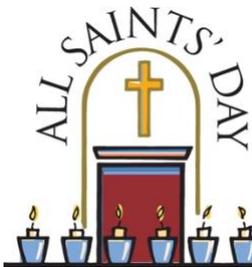
Julie & Neil Hoelle are "in charge" this month. The menu will be announced through the Sunday bulletin. You are invited to bring veggies or dessert.



FIRST AND FRIENDS BOOK CLUB, Tuesday, October 30th, 6-7:30pm

Book to read for October: "Memoirs of a Geisha" by Arthur Golden

Questions? Concerns? See **Adele Lerch**. Don't forget to bring a friend! We do want the name of our book club to really represent who we are – First Lutheran along with our friends! Be ready for a fun and lively discussion!



Remember the Saints

On **All Saints Sunday, November 4th**, we will again remember the saints who have gone before us and have entered eternal rest and glory with the Lord. If you have a departed loved one you wish remembered in the Prayer of the Church that day, please call or e-mail the church office or drop us a note **before Thursday, November 1st**.



LEND A HAND Opportunity for **VOLUNTEERS**...Have you ever thought about serving the congregation as a **LECTOR** or as an **USHER** or as a **BREAD FAMILY** OR maybe as an **ASSISTING MINISTER**? If so, please contact one of the following individuals to volunteer or to find out more information about sharing your talents with the congregation. Or call the church office, 372-7421 for more information.

Assisting Minister

and Bread Families Linda Blanton

Ushers Russ Kiser

Lectors Hoa Pham



Have you ever wondered who changes the light bulbs, takes out the trash, does general fix-up and clean-up around the church and many other numerous things? Well, that would be the **First Maintainers!**

If you are a retired man and have a couple of hours that you would like to share on Tuesday mornings (9:00am-noon) you are invited to join the group. Give us a call in the church office, 372-7421, with any questions you may have.

Outreach Opportunities through the Congregation...



Volunteer to help on Thursday evenings at **The Caring Place**. Talk with **Barb Swinehart**, or **Deb Baldwin** about ways in which YOU can help serve others.



We continue to collect the items for the **Family Violence Protection Center** here in Xenia. The following items are needed and appreciated: soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant, lotion, combs & brushes, razors (like Bic), envelopes, lined writing tablets, pens & pencils, paperback books,



The Cub Scout Pack being sponsored by First Lutheran **will be meeting every Tuesday night here at the church from 6:30-8:00pm**. Cub Scouting is for boys **and** girls in grades kindergarten through 5th grade. Any questions can be directed to **Rick McClelland**.



BIBLE STUDY

Bring a simple brown bag lunch with you. We meet for an hour from noon to 1pm at the church every Thursday. **BRING A FRIEND!** You don't need any special Bible knowledge. This is an informal, fun, and inspirational discussion time that will lift your spirits and give you new insights into your faith. Upper Room devotional booklets will be provided at no cost to all participants. Our topics are different every week so ANYTIME is the right time to come! Questions? Contact Facilitator Adele Lerch or call the church office, 372-7421.

Mark Your Calendar for a



CHRISTMAS Progressive Dinner

Saturday, December 15th



Children's Sunday School class meets at 9:25am in the downstairs Sunday School room with the "Deep Blue One Room Sunday School" series.

Adult Sunday School Class



The Adult Class meets 11:00am until Noon each Sunday morning. We will be exploring what is perhaps the most familiar and beloved of the prophetic writings, Isaiah 40-55. In addition to examining the several poems in this section of Isaiah, we will also assess the prophet's impact on his own time and his relevance for us today. The class is led by Dr. James Will. Come join the conversation

News in the Parish....

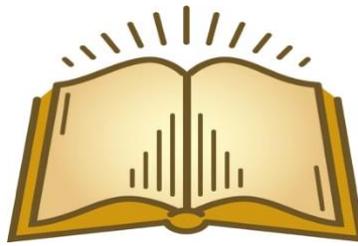


Please keep the following members in your prayers:

First Lutheran Disciples: Lee Snell, John Saraga, Judy Williams, Meredith Skeens, Linda Blanton, Jean Akers, Betty Peppo, Barb Taylor and Kathy Teague



Please keep our homebound members in your prayers: Dottie Ripp, Marge Lovett & John Paul Saraga



SUNDAY SCRIPTURES DURING OCTOBER

October 7th (20th Sunday in Pentecost)

Genesis 2:18-24
 Psalm 8
 Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12
 Mark 10:2-16

October 14th (21st Sunday in Pentecost)

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15
 Psalm 90:12-17
 Hebrews 4:12-16
 Mark 10:17-31

October 21st (22nd Sunday in Pentecost)

Isaiah 53:4-12
 Psalm 91:9-16
 Hebrews 5:1-10
 Mark 10:35-45

October 28th (Reformation Sunday)

Jeremiah 31:31-34
 Psalm 46
 Romans 3:19-28
 John 8:31-36

First Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund

The fiscal year for First Lutheran Church's Endowment Fund ended June 30th. The fund this past year (Praise God!) did well and earned \$17,865 which the Endowment Fund Committee (with Church Council's approval) distributed to the following ministries or organizations:

<u>Ministry or Organization</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Tecumseh Council Boy Scouts of America	\$1,000
Bridges of Hope Homeless Shelter (2 requests)	\$5,000
Living Well Clinic	\$2,000
GDQ at Teach Beyond	\$1,000
BAKASHANA in Zambia.org	\$1,000
ELCA World Hunger	\$1,000
Lutheran World Relief	\$1,000
Lutheran Disaster Response	\$1,865
Amazing Grace Day Camp	\$2,000
Oesterlen Services for Youth, Inc.	\$1,000
In His Name Ministries	<u>\$1,000</u>
Total	\$17,865

Opportunities in the Community....

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greene County Schneider House of Hope "Empty Bowl" Dinner and Silent Auction Friday, October 12th, 5-8:00pm @ Faith Community United Methodist Church 100 Country Club Drive, Xenia
 Dinner includes soup, bread, dessert, and a beverage (All proceeds will be donated to IHN/Schneider House)

Handmade ceramic bowl and dinner: \$25.00 Dinner only: \$20.00 Children under 5: Free
 Reservations with payments can be made at IHN or mailed to 124 S. Detroit St, Xenia, Ohio. Payments can also be made the night of the event at the door.

Bridges of Hope is a nonprofit organization that focuses on serving Greene County's local homeless population. Since its founding in 2016 BOH has been striving to meet a vast community need. According to the shelter administrator, prior to opening the shelter doors in December 2017, Greene County did not have a homeless shelter for single men or women. Financial contributions are always appreciated and also volunteers willing to provide a meal. At the present time there is a need for:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| + gym shoes for men and women | + new men's boxers | + new ladies' underwear |
| + local fast food \$5 gift cards | + large backpacks | + jeans for men and women |
| + flip-flops/shower shoes | + hoodies | + sweatpants/loose fitting pants/thermal underwear for men and women |

Donations may be dropped off between 2 and 7pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1087 W. Second Street or call 708-8053 with questions.

"Pass It On" a Household Goods Ministry at Westminster Presbyterian is available to our congregation. They match up donors with clients needing furniture, baby items, household items and appliances. Call to give items or to request items. Any items that you can donate will be greatly appreciated and you will make a big difference in someone else's life.

Larger items needed include: stoves, washers, dryers, refrigerators, beds, dressers, couches, chairs, lamps, tables w/chairs and end tables. Call Marlene Elliott, 971-1676, for more information. If you have a truck and would like to volunteer to transport items that have been donated to clients, please call Marlene.

Xenia FISH Pantry is in need of volunteers. Positions include: data entry, helping folks choose food, and setting up shopping carts. If you would like to volunteer call 372-8441. The FISH Pantry is located at 541 Ledbetter Road.

"Share 1 to 1 Clothes Closet" is located at Christ Episcopal Church. They are open 11am-2pm each Tuesday. There is a designated room in their Parish House with clothes and shoes available for those needy members of the community. If you have items of clothing or pairs of shoes you no longer need please stop by Christ Episcopal (63 E. Church St) and drop off your items.