

**First Lutheran Church  
92 W. Walnut Street  
Washington, PA 15301**



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ICH-THUS  
Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior**

### **Pastoral Perspectives for July 2021**

**Grace and peace to you from God the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.**

**In Canada the summer months of July and August are considered a time when people go away for vacation and many go to the cabin for long periods of time. This means that the attendance at church drops dramatically in the summer months. When vacations are over and September rolls around all the programs start back up once more, yet in the Lutheran church we do not celebrate our first feast day until October 31st Reformation Day.**

**During the pandemic, and for two consecutive Easters, churches in Canada have remained closed to stop the spread of the virus; this has been enforced by the local and federal governments. Like the USA, there is a separation of church and state but this has fallen by the wayside and pastors have been fined, arrested and even jailed for opening up their churches and leading worship! Some churches already owe up to \$100,000 in fines for worshipping and yes the police will enter the church and stop the service! This has shown me that the freedoms that Canada have historically fought for, defended and bled for no longer exist and England and the rest of the UK are no different in their attacks upon the church!**

**As an immigrant, and now a permanent resident here for 7 years, I can clearly see that the United States of America is the last bastion of Christianity in the western world! Canada is lost and few have the courage to stand firm in the faith! But you may be asking what about Europe? Well, the pandemic also shut down all of Europe and the police, from the UK to Italy, enforced the shutdown in the same manner so that the churches remain closed during the year of Covid 19. What about the heart of the Reformation and where it all began in Germany?**

**Recently I watched a video that gave me a lot of insight on the church in Germany:**

- 55% of Germans are Christians (65 % in the USA)**
- 23 million Roman Catholics (70,412,021 in the USA)**

- 21 million Protestants (141,000,000 in the USA).
- Population of Germany is around 83.02 million and America comes in at around 328.2 million.

Sadly, though the report revealed that 300,000 Germans are leaving the church every year (2.7 million leave annually in the USA). This is due to the abuse now exposed in the Roman Catholic churches (similar to situation in PA) and due to the church tax imposed on those who belong to a church. The church tax in Germany ensures that you will be baptized, confirmed, married and buried by the church (whether you attend or not) and you must belong to a church in order to be employed by the church.

The eastern part of Germany is the most non-religious part of the country as  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population doesn't worship because they were under the DDR and Russian occupation after WW2. With communism one had to worship the state and not God; any other faith was seen as a threat to the state and to enforce their ideals belonging to a faith would result in the end of your education and drastically affect your employment opportunities. In the former Czechoslovakia anyone gathering in groups of more than 3 people (St. Matthew 18:20) in public could be arrested by the police!

Interestingly enough in Saxony—where Frederick the Wise protected Martin Luther, where the first Lutheran church was built in Torgau and where Luther was a pastor and studied in Wittenberg —were all in the eastern part of Germany after World War 2. The East was under Russian occupation until the wall fell in November 9th, 1989 and amazingly, and ironically, this communist rule was defeated by peaceful protests of gathering, singing hymns, candle light services and prayers which began in the churches in Eastern Germany! Thanks be to God!

Returning to the beginning of this newsletter when summer arrives the attendance goes down here in the North America as people vacation but in Germany the Roman Catholic Church only averages 10 percent of weekly attendance and this is a church that has been present since the Holy Roman Empire!

The news is even worse for the Protestants as only 3 percent attend worship weekly (USA weekly attendance 33-58% depending on denomination)! Like many churches they too are bursting at the pews on Christmas Eve and Easter but few are faithful worshippers the rest of the year. How can the churches remain open with such poor numbers?

The answer is because of a church tax and the government support of 570 million Euros annually and 11 billion Euros in taxes; the clergy are paid by the state and not by the congregations so they are not dependent upon their salary reflecting the numbers in the pews. The clergy are, simply put, state employees!

The churches in Germany though run highly successful schools, daycares, nurseries, hospitals, nursing homes and international Christian support around the world. Their curriculum at school includes classes for both Christian churches in the schools (Catholic & Protestant)! What I found most interesting is that after the state government it is the church that is the largest employer in Germany!

So, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, we can see that although the church has suffered through this pandemic like many other countries around the world have; it is America that stands alone faithful in worshipping God and remains the last beacon of hope in the western world. May God continue to give us the strength to fight the good fight of sharing the Good News at work, at play and yes even on our vacations (as I did while in St. Pete's Florida where I met a nurse from the South who said to me, "if I never see you again upon this earth I will see you again in heaven"). Looking forward to seeing you all back here at First Lutheran a lot sooner than in heaven! September 5th at the 11 am service with Holy Communion and coffee hour to follow in the month where all our programs will start back up.

Blessings on your vacations and enjoy the beauty of God's creation!

Your servant in Christ Jesus

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

"So long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Good night"

This catchy little song was made famous by the movie "The Sound of Music" in 1965; it was longest running film in my hometown as it played in the same movie theatre for over a year!

*"There's a sad sort of clanking, from the clock in the hall, and the bells in the steeple too."*

I think these words capture how many of us feel at the retirement of Bobbi as our music director. For the last two years she has been a joyful refreshing change for the church! Like many that decide to retire Bobbi will remain busy with composing music and babysitting as well as travelling and enjoying life and, the best news of all is that she offered to be on our substitute organist list!

We, at the First Lutheran, wish her all the best in her future retirement and pray that she has an amazing trip to Bonny Scotland in the future! Our President, after hearing the news of Bobbi's retirement, posted on the FLC website that we were looking for a new music director and although gifted and talented musicians for the church are becoming harder and harder to find a response came quickly through an email-thanks be to God!

I would like to welcome Mrs. Kristina Schuerle as our new music director. She is a familiar face to me as her husband Bob is also a volunteer firefighter with me at South Strabane FD. Kimberly and I were honoured during the covid shut down to be present at the baptism of their son Owen at St. Hilary RC in Washington Pa.

Kristina comes to us with experience in leading worship music in the Roman Catholic and Methodist church so I know the transition to the similar service of the Lutheran church will have her feeling comfortable in no time at all. She will be taking over the services here at the beginning of August and will be shadowing Bobbi throughout the month of July.

First Lutheran will have a farewell and thank you coffee hour Sunday July 25th after the service. Please join and thank Bobbi for all her hard work and dedication to First Lutheran and at the same time welcome Kristina to our church family.

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

## Mission Trip to Pensacola Florida

October 17-23, 2021

Mission District says we are encouraging people to plan on finding ways to travel down to Florida on Sunday so we can begin work on Monday morning.

The cost of the trip will be \$150, which will cover the cost for all food for the week.

We will be staying at St. Paul Lutheran Church, so please bring an air mattress, cot, or any means to sleep on while there.

Transportation will be on your own.

Please return registration by September 1<sup>st</sup>, with a deposit of \$100.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Pr. Matthew Vatalare at [rev.vatalare@gmail.com](mailto:rev.vatalare@gmail.com) or Pr. Joyce Dix-Weiers at [jadwltsg@aol.com](mailto:jadwltsg@aol.com)

Please register at <https://forms.gle/CxP78LpMK5LBGRV8>

## **Important Dates to Remember at First Lutheran Church**

**June 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Services change to 10 am summer service time**

**July 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Yard Sale at the church from 9 am – 3 pm**

**(donations still being accepted)**

**August 15<sup>th</sup>**

**FLC annual picnic (after service of the Word) at the new  
South Strabane Community Park at 750 Floral Hill Drive,  
Washington PA 15301**

**September 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Services return to the 11 am service time**

## How to log on to watch the First Lutheran Church services online

It is best to use Google Chrome for watching the services online.

### 1) **Type in First Lutheran Church Washington PA**

This will bring you to the info on FLC where you have options of 1) call 2) Directions 3) Save 4) Website

### 2) **Click on to the WEBSITE image/word**

This will take to the First Lutheran Church website and you will see the sanctuary and the words COME WORSHIP

3) Above the image and the words you will see in white and in grey lettering on the left hand side FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH on the left hand side. On the Right hand side you will see three horizontal lines. **Click on the three lines**

4) This will bring to several options 1) Home, 2) Our Church, 3) Our Worship, 4) Newsletters, 5) Ministry, 6) Contact, **7) Church News**

### 5) **Click on the Church News**

6) This will take you to the **NEWS & EVENTS** page. There you will see the date and the year with information for example **January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021** Third Sunday after Epiphany.....

### 7) **Click on the blue letters READ MORE**

Underneath you will the face book website <https://www.facebook.com/First-Lutheran-Church-Washington-PA-10011923642143>

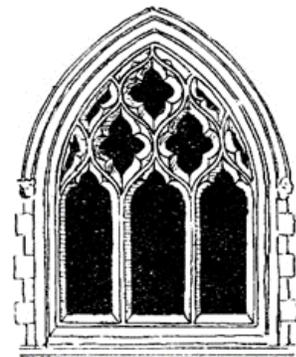
8) **Click on the face book website** This will bring you to an image of the outside of the front of First Lutheran Church.

9) **Scroll down and underneath the picture you will see an image of the sanctuary with the symbol of a triangle (play button) in the middle of the picture.**

10) **Click on the play** button and the service will start to play.

First Lutheran Church Family,

Summer is finally here! I hope you have been keeping cool. As of this writing, the plasterers have been working on the wall in our balcony. I can't wait to see how nice it looks when they are finished. Balcony work done... check, now on to the next project! The masonry work has been completed on that wall, so there will be no more leaks. George is diligently working on getting estimates for us to continue to repair the other water damage we have in our sanctuary.



July is the last month we will be blessed with having Bobbie Heastings as our organist. I will be sad to see her leave. August will be our first Sunday with our new organist, Kristina. I am excited that we have found someone who is eager to play for our Sunday Services.



As you enjoy the warm sunny weather, don't forget to send in your weekly donations. Our monthly bills and repairs don't stop for a summer vacation (unfortunately). We will be getting back to full swing in the fall with all of our activities and classes and need your support, both with your weekly offering and with you volunteering to help. We will be starting our youth group again and need volunteers to help Pastor Grewe with coordinating the activities, food, and helpers. We will need a few Sunday School teachers for the fall also. Please contact the church office if you are willing to help with these activities or with anything else. Pastor can tell you what we need help with.



Blessings,

Jennifer Black, FLC Council President

## July Fundraising Update

Blessings to all of you and prayers you are all staying healthy and well.

**Popcorn Sale:** The popcorn you ordered for this fundraiser will be available on Sunday July 11<sup>th</sup>. If you cannot make it to church that day, I will deliver it to your home. Thank you for your support to this fundraiser!

**Church Yard Sale July 10<sup>th</sup>:** I'm excited about the upcoming church yard sale. If you have something to donate to the yard sale, please bring it to the church. Thanks to Linda Coleman for organizing this yard sale and thank you so much for your continued support.

**Painting Event Moved to the fall:** We are excited to plan another fun painting event sometime this fall. We had to move the event we planned for June/July to the fall to accommodate family schedules. Be on the lookout for more news about this event in upcoming newsletters.

**Gift Card Tree Raffle:** We will have a Gift Card Tree that we will raffle off at the Church Picnic in August. Right now, we have over \$250 worth of gift cards on the tree and we expect even more. We are selling raffle tickets for this Gift Card Tree at \$5 a piece or 3 tickets for \$10. Please let me or Kimberly Grewe know if you are interested in selling tickets outside of the church. This is a great way to raise more dollars for our roof fund!

**Church Picnic Chinese Auction:** We will have a Chinese auction at the church picnic. We need your donations of baskets of goodies for this auction to make this auction successful. Contact me if you have any questions and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of a basket donation!

Thank you for continued support. If you have any questions, please email me at [heather.quedenfeld@comcast.net](mailto:heather.quedenfeld@comcast.net) or call/text me at 724-263-3253.

Heather Q ☐

**YARD SALE  
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SATURDAY, JULY 10,2021  
9 AM – 3PM**

Donated items can be placed in the church social room near or on the stage. **NO CLOTHES PLEASE**

The following is the schedule for set-up. It will take volunteers to make this fundraiser a success. Volunteers set your own schedule, **All hands are welcome!!!!**

**SUNDAY, JULY 4**

After coffee hour we will arrange tables for the sale.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 9AM - ?**

Display items for sale!

**FRIDAY JULY 9, 6PM – 7PM**

We will accept final donations.

**SATURDAY, JULY 10, 7AM – 3PM**

Weather permitting some tables will be displayed on the church lawn. This will take place from 7-9AM.

Questions: Linda Coleman 724-225-8011

Heather Quedenfield 724-263-3253

## CHURCH PICNIC

DATE: AUGUST 15 2021

TIME: RIGHT AFTER CHURCH SERVICE

PLACE: COMMUNITY PARK MAIN PAVILION

LOCATION: 750 FLORAL HILL DRIVE IN SOUTH STRABANE, WASHINGTON

FUN \*\*\* FELLOWSHIP \*\*\* GAMES \*\*\* PRIZES\*\*\*

For those who have been watching the church services on-line and would want to attend, please call the church office. Kathleen will mark you down and the side dish you would like to bring. We would love to see you.

SIGN UP SHEET WILL BE PLACED ON BULLETIN BOARD OUTSIDE OF CHURCH LOUNGE

This is a brand new pavilion with restrooms and a fully equipped kitchen.

Any questions on location, feel free to call me. Kim Luketich 724-222-4610

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### WNALC —July 2021

The WNALC July Circle meeting will be held on Thursday, July 29 at noon in the lounge. Leader is Linda Coleman and Hostesses are Sonie Rea and Billie Sue Serbak.

Remember the Yard Sale on July 10. Come and see what we might have that you need. Hope to see you there.

God Bless

Sonie Rea

## ETHIOPIA UPDATE

May 1, 2021

As COVID cases decrease in the US and people start returning to a new normal, COVID-19 continues to increase in Ethiopia. Hospitals are full, oxygen supplies are at desperate levels and people are afraid. At the same time families are suffering because of a lack of work. Vaccines are nowhere in sight and case numbers continue to climb. During this season, family sponsorships have become a lifeline to families in need. Embracing Hope's support of basic needs, education, employment supports and spiritual counseling have been a safety net to families who otherwise would not be making it.

Because of ethnic conflicts in different parts of the country, there has been a recent influx of families arriving in Kore. These families (mostly mothers and children) have lost everything. They lost their homes, animals and in many cases family members as well. The EH Crisis Relief fund has allowed local staff to mobilize quickly to start meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of these families in need. You make a difference in the lives of these internally displaced families.

We continue to thank you for your support and please join us in praying for the Peace of Christ to be known throughout Ethiopia.

### July Lay Readers

- 4 Sonie Rea
- 11 Nella Matthews
- 18 George Salvucci
- 25 Peter Kostanich

### July Altar Flowers

- 4 Betty DeGiovani
- 11 Allen Zimmerman
- 18 Quedenfeld's
- 25 Sonie Rea

### July Acolytes

- 4 Elijah Clark, Lillah Clark, and Cole Johnson
- 11 Maria Sobocinski
- 18 Heidi Walsh
- 25 Brice, Collin, and Lyndsay Berry

### July Ushers

- 4 J. Hoffer, C. Krcil, R. Williams
- 11 S. Ringer, D. Schmidt, Z. Mason, M. Verderber
- 18 T. Bernhart, E. Goga, R. Johnson, J. Ulanich
- 25 N. Bassi, R. Phillips, J. Sakerka, D. Wheeler

### July Counters—Alternate, Kimberly Luketich

- 4 L. Coleman and D. Schmidt
- 11 H. Quedenfeld and L. Sten
- 18 J. Black and S. Rea
- 25 C. Group and V. Group

### July Altar Team

Kimberly Luketich

## JULY BIRTHDAYS

2 Kenneth Schrader

3 Trisha Thompson

4 Kenneth Carl, Jr.

6 Laura Ringer

13 Melvina Behrens

14 Douglas Scheffel

16 Matthew Serbak

19 Isabella Mazzotti

20 Melinda West-Emerich

Eric Schrader

22 R. Douglas West

26 Robert Phillips

Chiquita Pearson

Dr. Matthew Houston

27 Candice Caddies

29 Joanne Reck