



October 2019

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH The PULSEBEAT

"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."

—Soren Kierkegaard, Journals IV

Thoughts on the Future

These are unboxing days. Every day, it seems Colleen, Analiese, and I are opening up and unpacking yet another box. Boxes of books, boxes of dishes, boxes of art, boxes of tools—boxes and boxes and boxes. And what do we find? Our past, our family story pours out of these boxes, one thing at a time.

Like objects in every story, many of the things are mundane and some are full of meaning. This knife, mundane, just a tool from a hardware store. But that knife, well that knife is memory manifest; a gift from my father on my tenth birthday. Its value no longer the blade, but the story it evokes. At the same time each packed item, valuable or not, is real and must be touched, handled, pondered, and then placed in its new place in our home. The mug-of-pencils for the desk gets the same physical treatment and mental processing as the inherited Swedish crystal from grandma. Each item, mundane or meaningful gets to be, in the same way, unwrapped, held, considered and then...placed. And the pattern repeats, over and over and over for everything in our home. From paperclips to paintings, everything gets the same consideration.

At the same time, everything is not the same. The spare paperclip is not as emotionally rich, as valuable as the painting which was the original art for our wedding invitations. The mahogany bookcase which fit so wonderfully in our living room in the last house is now relegated to the guest room. Its shelves used to be graced with the family photo albums and treasured music collection, but now they hold the *Idiots Guide to Accounting* and *Great Bike Rides of Massachusetts*. Things are not the same as they once were. We live in a new home, in a new city, and things that once fit there no longer necessarily fit here. We look back to understand but must live forward into a new story.

Moving to a new home and unpacking is an exercise in self-awareness and understanding. This is where Kierkegaard's quote comes into play. Every touch of every object of my life opens some door, however small, into my old story. It is all "backwards." At the very same moment, however, the future presents itself. The future is forever unfolding forward. Every item touched provokes a question that must be answered. A decision must be made...about the future. Where will this go? On which wall will it hang? Into which drawer will it go? Upstairs? Inside? Give it away or send to the dump? Every unpacked object elicits a question. Every answer points forward into the future, a future not yet understood.

I have been here with you at First just one month. I am new here and there is a great deal of unpacking yet to do. There are stories and customs, habits and practices, ministries and old opportunities which need to be opened and unpacked. I want to hear the stories. I want to take holy time to look backward with you so I can understand the meaning of each paperclip and possibility, each treasure and tragedy and triumph. I want to understand the meaning of First. I am also looking forward to being here, with you, for the questions. Where does this go now? What shall we do with that? Is this still useful? Is it time to move this out front or into the back room, or is it time for a visit to the divine dump?

This is a new day. This city is not what it once was. It is becoming new again. The Church locally and nationally is not what it once was. It is becoming new again. Things are not the same. What once fit here may not fit there. God has a future for us that we do not yet understand. What we do understand is that God is here, God is now, God is life. And life is lived forward. I am so excited to be here with you in these days of new life. We understand backwards, but we become fully alive when we are moving forward. I am excited to be here with you as God's unfolding future shapes First Lutheran.

Peace, Pastor Kurt



Mark Your Calendar

Pastor Kurt's Installation service is scheduled for Sunday, October 20.

Church Email Addresses

Pastor Kurt: pastorkurt@firstlutheransd.org;

Hannah/Church Office: administrator@firstlutheransd.org



Council Update: Beginning Where We Are

by Carol J. Schultz, Council Secretary

T.S. Eliot wrote, "And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."

When I became Council Secretary in 2017, I began writing these monthly updates. Since then, we've experienced a number of beginnings, each preceded by an ending. Pr. Wilk Miller left First Lutheran in mid-2016, and Pr. Larry Koger joined us as interim pastor shortly after. Then Pr. Larry died suddenly in December 2016, and Pr. Darryl Kozak became our interim pastor for more than two years. When Pr. Darryl left in March 2019 for a settled call, Pr. Rich Ajer came to First Lutheran as interim pastor. Now Pr. Rich has left for another interim call, and Pr. Kurt Christenson has become our settled pastor. In addition to these pastoral transitions, the sudden death of our Director of Music, Jared Jacobsen, presents an abrupt ending that calls for an as-yet-unknown beginning with another musician. In the midst of these many endings, First Lutheran and its Council have faithfully made a beginning from wherever we found ourselves. The Council met on Sept. 17, 2019, to consider these matters.

Devotion. Pr. Kurt opened the September Council meeting with a meditation from the Gospel of John reflecting on the initial days of Jesus' ministry.

Financial Report. After eight months, First Lutheran's actual revenues are \$63,550 less than actual expenses. (Remember, the adopted budget anticipated a \$50,000 deficit for twelve months.) Although we are fortunate to have sufficient reserves to sustain operations and payroll for the present, they are finite. Keeping a tight rein on expenses has helped First Lutheran's bottom line, and the current mortgage will be paid off in October 2019. However, belt-tightening and mortgage satisfaction will produce only temporary relief because we have been deferring necessary maintenance projects that need to be done.

Council Seats. At the end of 2019, several Council seats will be open, and the congregation will elect members to fill those seats at its annual meeting in December. Please consider prayerfully whether you could serve and, if you're not asked, let any Council member know if you are interested. Council members are volunteers who serve three-year terms. They meet monthly to ensure fulfillment of the church's mission and provide legal accountability for its operations. And Council members whose schedules allow meet for dinner and fellowship before each meeting.

Budgeting and Stewardship. The Council will propose the 2020 budget to the congregation on Dec. 8, 2019, and expects to make copies available two to three weeks in advance to any members who want to review it. During Sundays in October, First Lutheran members will hear from several members about the meaning of stewardship in their lives and will receive a pledge card on which they can submit an amount they plan to contribute. Pledging gives the Council valuable information for preparing the next year's budget.

Upcoming Events. Mark your calendars now for these events.

- Oct. 20 (Sunday) – At 2:00 p.m., Bishop Andy Taylor will preside at a special service at First Lutheran to install Pr. Kurt Christenson as pastor.
- Dec. 1 (Sunday) – Fair Trade Fair between worship services at First Lutheran.
- Dec. 8 (Sunday) – Annual congregation meeting between worship services at First Lutheran to vote on the 2020 budget, elect Council members, and adopt updates to the Constitution recently approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

As you can see, Council members handle a wide variety of leadership and operational matters. Representing the interests of our fellow congregation members is a privilege and a responsibility we take seriously. We invite you to share your questions, concerns, or appreciation with any Council member.

2019 Council Officers:

President: Dick Krueger

Vice President: Frank DeLouise

Secretary: Carol Schultz

Treasurer: Kem Taylor

Financial Secretary: Anke Hartung

Council Members:

Kara Oien, Melinda Person, Marjorie Wahlsten, and Susan White.

God's Peace to you all,

Your 2019 Council



Lutheran World Relief School Kits Project

A few interested church members have talked about the LWR School Kit Project for several years, and we decided this year was the time to introduce this project at FLC. For six weeks during August and September, we took a leap of faith and launched this new campaign, keeping our fingers crossed that it might generate some interest in our congregation. We were hoping to be able to assemble a few backpacks full of essential supplies to help children—and in some cases, adults—continue learning in the face of serious obstacles.

But we underestimated the outpouring of love and concern that this project would stir in the hearts of our FLC family. For weeks, envelopes of donations were placed in the offering plates at both services. A few notebooks, a handful of pens and pencils, bags of completed sets, and more than one hand trolley bringing boxes of completed kits...they all found their way to the little table we set up in the lobby.



Sunday School students & friends assembling kits

From purchasing additional rulers or scissors to finish up kits, to bringing extra boxes to pack the kits for shipping, and even providing the willing hands to do the work, any wishes we made known were granted. We asked, and you came through beyond our greatest expectations. We went from wondering if we could possibly gather 100 kits, to raising our hopes to 150 kits, to ending up with 215 completed school kits, an accomplishment beyond our most optimistic goal. Our boxes of kits will now be trucked to the LWR warehouse in St. Paul, MN, for distribution where most needed around the world.

Thanks to the many people who either sponsored school kits or contributed supplies to complete or to pack them, and to our Sunday School children and others who helped to assemble them. Together our actions affirm that we believe education is one of the strongest tools a community has for breaking the cycle of poverty, and that learning leads to a better life for all children, their families and their entire communities.

—Pat Hendrickson and Mary Krueger



Pastor Kurt blessing the completed and boxed kits on September 15

The Door that Changed the World

On October 31, 1517—the Eve of All Saints day—Dr. Martin Luther posted a collection of discussion propositions (theses) on a university church door at the University of Wittenberg. Luther, a professor at the young university, posted the list for academic and theological discussion voicing objection to the Church's abuse of selling certificates (indulgences) to forgive sins for the living and the dead. The 95 Theses sparked a reformation movement that changed the religious, political, social, linguistic, and cultural landscape of Europe and the world.

Wittenberg University and the adjacent Castle Church have endured the ravages of history and impact of various wars over the centuries. The church has undergone numerous re-buildings, repairs, and refurbishments, with the most recent conducted in 2013-2016 in preparation for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. The university grounds now house a Protestant theological seminary, conference center, research library for Reformation studies, and visitors' area. The historic Wittenberg Castle Church, a World Heritage Site, contains the tombs of Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and various 14th-16th century German nobility, including Frederick the Wise—the regional ruler who whisked Luther off into hiding at Wartburg Castle, where he translated the Bible into German. The Castle Church and visitors' center are open daily and host a variety of public worship services or special music concerts. Information in German and English is on the Castle Church website at www.schlosskirch-wittenberg.de



Richard Phillips in front of 95 Theses Memorial Door



Book Group Notes

October selection: *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman

Meeting time: Thursday, Oct. 17, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Meeting place: Community room at Susan White's condo building

Host: Mary Claire

Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. [Publisher's notes]



Every book prompts lively discussion and produces wide-ranging opinions. Unlike some book groups, you're welcome even if you didn't finish the book. And like many book groups, the host brings light refreshments and wine. If you need directions, let Susan White or Mary Claire know. Hope to see you there!

Stewardship

I hope you are as excited as your council is for the future of First Lutheran Church. Please join us in welcoming back those that may have been on hiatus while we waited for Pastor Kurt to arrive. Spread the good news, give them a call. It is remarkable, or is it, how strong the community of members has remained in our interim. It says a lot about us—beg your pardon, Pastor Kurt.

This month our church friends and family will share their stories of how they have been Thankful, Persistent, and Humbled by First and its ministries. Join them in celebrating and supporting First Lutheran Church of Downtown San Diego.

Survivors of Torture International Tour

A group from First Lutheran will be visiting the office of Survivors of Torture International, a non-profit organization here in Old Town that our church has supported, for a one-hour tour and information about their program and the people they serve, on Tuesday, Oct. 15 at 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in joining us, please email Bill Radatz at ratzb@me.com to register and receive directions.

Jared Jacobsen Memorial Fund

We have created a Jared Jacobsen Memorial Fund. Money donated to this fund will be used for the music program here at First Lutheran, especially repairs to the organ and piano.

If you would like to contribute to this fund, you may put either cash or checks in the offering plate—just be sure to clearly mark that it is for the Jared Jacobsen Memorial Fund. If you would prefer to contribute electronically, please contact the church office.

Lunch Bunch

The FLC Lunch Bunch met on October 1 and barely had time to eat—there was so much to talk about! We especially heard about British hiking and Serengeti bouncing.

Be sure to put Lunch Bunch on your calendar for next month—Tuesday, November 5.

For more information, please contact Billie Thompson: thomsonbilliek@gmail.com

October Birthdays

1: Martha DeMers

11: Peter Kim

16: Monica Paul

23: Noah Miller

6: Kara Oien

11: Stephen Munroe

17: Ruthann Maxwell

27: John Davis

8: Russ Hoxie

14: Nance Lovell

18: Hudson Altenburg

27: Jessica Grumm-Friedrich

8: Daniel Thomas

15: Daniel Diepholz

18: Mahary Berhan

29: Gerard Yablonsky

10: Carol McGrath

16: Frank DeLouise Jr.

19: Marie Ruth

30: Bill Bengtson

10: Darren Street

16: Sylvia Herman

22: Troy Hanson



TACO Corner

Great News! All of us at TACO want to say, "Thank you" to everyone who donated during our Second Annual No-Show Gala. As of today, our preliminary results indicate that we have raised **more than \$35,000!** And donations continue to come in. We will update this information as that happens.



Thank you to everyone who made it possible to reach our Challenge goal as well. Two very generous donors had challenged us to reach the first \$10,000 by providing a match. We're happy to say that we met that and beyond!

Maybe you feel like the event passed you by and you didn't have a chance to donate... Don't worry you still can. After all, it is a No-Show event so as long as you didn't show you can still donate! Just put no-show in the memo line or as a note if you donate online.

Simon's Walk: A Volunteer Care-Giving Program

Simon's Walk is a team of trained and supervised volunteers who may provide care and companionship, emotional and/or spiritual support, and participation in clients's memorials. Being alone is one of the most devastating facets of dying—no one desires to die alone. Simon's Walk is designed to build relationships, share the burdens of dying, and offer our time and selves.

We are looking to bring on board a new group of volunteers. Simon's Walk Volunteers will participate in a 30-hour training class. Volunteers will work with their client weekly and attend supervision meetings, along with a monthly continuing education training. We ask that you would prayerfully consider whether this might be a volunteer opportunity for you.

If you feel called by this unique ministry, please contact us:

Kim M. Walker, MHR
Going Home/Simon's Walk Coordinator
kwalker@tacosd.org
619.235.9445 ext. 105

Jim Lovell, MSW
TACO Director
jlovell@tacosd.org

Dinner and a Show!

TACO was blessed on the last Monday of the month, September 30, with a visit from the San Diego Street Choir. First Lutheran's own Joe DeMers is their musician. How wonderful to have these folks play and sing for our entire patio such inspirational music. It was delightful to see that many of our regular guests are a part of the choir and many other guests found themselves singing along from their tables.

As our Volunteer Coordinator, Brad Young put it, "Wow, what an evening!! The SD Street Choir AND a meal... There's something magical about a beautiful night, a gourmet meal, and beautiful music on the patio." <https://www.sandiegostreetchoir.org>





First Lutheran Worship Assistants – October & November

ALTAR GUILD

OCTOBER

9:00 a.m. Service

Marjorie Wahlsten

11:00 a.m. Service

Melinda Person

NOVEMBER

9:00 a.m. Service

Peggy Quintana

11:00 a.m. Service

Ruth Clayton

USHERS

OCTOBER

9:00 a.m. Service

Merv Rettenmund &
Kem Taylor

11:00 a.m. Service

Anke Hartung &
Ladonna Piper

NOVEMBER

9:00 a.m. Service

Tony & Peggy Quintana

11:00 a.m. Service

Marty Topp & Ruth Clayton

Date	Time	Assisting Minister	Lector	Greeters	Nursery Attendants	Flowers
October 6	9:00 11:00	Chuck Leib Mary Ann Horton	Dennis Arenas Joe Slevcove	John Hoff Slevcoves	Mary Krueger Hannah DeMers	Marjorie Wahlsten
October 13	9:00 11:00	Richard Phillips Beth Slevcove	T.J. Tallie Nancy Eckert	Margie Wahlsten Shelly Schreiber	Lee Kaercher Hannah DeMers	_____
October 20	9:00 11:00	Kathryn Kanaan Frank Jessie	Paul Engel Jim Lovell	Dennis Arenas & David Oakes Ruth Clayton	Billie Thompson Paul Engel	Ruth Clayton
October 27	9:00 11:00	Eric Sloniker Paul Finneseth	Marjorie Wahlsten Matthew Eckert	Sylvia Herman Elizabeth Connolly	Kathryn Kanaan Joe DeMers	_____
November 3	9:00 11:00	Frank Jessie Mary Ann Horton	Shaun Travers Joe Slevcove	Kathy Boeckelman Slevcoves	Kem Taylor Hannah DeMers	Kjonegaards
November 10	9:00 11:00	Jeremy Kaercher Beth Slevcove	Eric Sloniker Frank Jessie	Pat Hendrickson Marlene Garich	Dick Krueger Kathryn Kanaan	Marjorie Wahlsten
November 17	9:00 11:00	Nate Pratt Frank Jessie	Pat Hendrickson Elizabeth Connolly	Shaun Travers Shelly Schreiber	Mary Krueger Paul Engel	Melinda Person



October 2019 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 12 pm AI Anon	2 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	3 12 pm AI Anon	4 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	5
6 SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	7 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	8 12 pm AI Anon	9 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	10 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP 6:30 pm TACO Board Mtg	11 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	12
13 EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	14 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	15 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP 6:30 Church Council Mtg	16 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	17 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	18 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	19
20 NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality 2 pm Pr. Kurt's Installation	21 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	22 12 pm AI Anon	23 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	24 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	25 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	26
27 REFORMATION SUNDAY 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality 3 pm German Svc	28 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	29 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	30 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	31 12 pm AI Anon		

Monday evening clinics include acupuncture, medical, dental, and legal services.

The PULSEBEAT
is a publication of
First Lutheran Church
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Serving Downtown San Diego Since 1888
1420 Third Avenue
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First Lutheran Church
The Rev. Kurt Christenson, Pastor
Hannah DeMers, Church Administrator

First Lutheran Church
A *Reconciling in Christ* congregation since 1989
Deadline for next month's Pulsebeat is **the 15th, noon.**

The Pulsebeat
First Lutheran Church
1420 Third Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101-3193

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Sold Out!

Choir! Choir! Choir! forms impromptu choirs of strangers to learn songs and perform a concert together. In this participatory event, singers of all levels will unite on both sides of the US–Mexico border to sing with Choir! Choir! Choir! and celebrate the unique friendship, culture, and community we share in the border region of San Diego and Tijuana. There are few places on earth so scenic where people from two countries can gather at once to create beautiful music together. Although people will be divided by the physical border, music knows no boundaries and voices together will transcend barriers.

From the website:

We will accept participants until we hit the maximum capacity of 500 set by the state park. We appreciate your understanding.



Date & Time

Sunday, October 13, 2019
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. PDT

Location

Border Field State Park
1500 Monument Road
San Diego, California 92154

Lutheran Disaster Response

You may donate to Lutheran Disaster Relief through their website, <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response>, or you may give to the church and note that it is for Lutheran Disaster Relief, and the specific event, if desired (i.e. Tornadoes, flooding, etc.)



First Lutheran Church - the Heart of Christ in the Heart of the City