



New Era Lutheran Church

February 2022 Newsletter

Pastor Kirsten Lee
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New Era Lutheran Church
3455 New Era Road
Muscatine, IA 52761
Sunday School: 9:30 am (Sept-May)
Worship Services: 10:30 am

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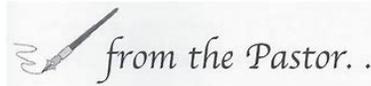
Building Rental –

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Bulletin - Items due by Wednesday night
each week
Newsletter Items due by the 20th of the
month

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or [https://www.facebook.com/
NewEraLutheranChurch](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)



Friends in Christ,

How are you? Now, how are you really? If you're feeling tired, weary, angry, or just plain "blah", you're not alone. Winter is typically the time when sadness, discouragement, and loneliness increase. Depression also increases as the days are shorter and it's harder to get outside and be with friends and family. I am also reminded, weekly, how many people are feeling burn out, exhaustion, and despair because of the continued pandemic.

So, how are you caring for yourself this winter? In our Mid-Western culture, there can be a tendency to minimize our feelings and suppress any pain or anger. Our immediate response when asked how we are, is often a version of "good", "fine". Sometimes, we need to be reminded that when we name our anger, sadness, and frustration, we are trusting God and our community with our honest needs and inviting the community to do the same.

In Christ, God makes space for us to experience a full range of emotions. Jesus wept, yelled, and showed frustration. When the crowds of followers became too

much for Jesus, he would retreat and spend time along with God in prayer. God created us as whole human beings with our physical bodies, our emotions, and our faith all connected. God cares for our full-selves and wants us to care for our whole being too. What might be ways we can express our lament in healthy ways that don't cause someone else harm?

One way is through looking at the book of Psalms in the Bible. The Psalms are written as a poem or prayer and out of 150 of them, 50 are psalms of lament. They speak to the discouragement, the bitterness, the loneliness that we all experience at times in our life. They give us space to be honest with God and perhaps say to God *I am angry with you, and I do not like what is happening.*

Take for example, Psalm 13:

*"Long enough, God—you've ignored me long enough.
I've looked at the back of your head long enough.
Long enough I've carried this ton of trouble,
lived with a stomach full of pain.
Long enough my arrogant enemies have looked down their noses at me.*

*Take a good look at me, God, my God; I want to look life in the eye,
So no enemy can get the best of me or laugh when I fall on my face.
I've thrown myself headlong into your arms—
I'm celebrating your rescue.
I'm singing at the top of my lungs, I'm so full of answered prayers"* (from The Message).

In Psalms of lament, we hear of a God who urges us to name our needs. We hear prayers for help and prayers to experience God in a new way. We also hear promises of

hope. There is expression of trust that is based on how God has cared for God's people in the past. We can trust God because God has faithfully led and sustained God's children since the time of creation. Lastly, there are praises, reminding us that even in our deepest pain, God's grace and love are made known.

Perhaps, writing your own Psalm of lament might be way to pray and express some anger. What words would you include? What complaints would you name, and could there be some trust spoken as well? Perhaps recalling a time when God's hope was shown to you?

I also invite you to speak with me. Your time with me is kept confidential and together we can discuss additional ways to ask for what you need and express how you're feeling. If we decide you need someone beyond your pastor, I can help you find the person you need.

God leads you through, always journeying ahead of you and right next to you. God gives us help and hope in real ways that can be seen, felt, and heard. When life gets overwhelming, when we get busy, stressed, our discouraged, we lose sight of God's presence. Thanks be to God who embraces us as we are, hears our prayers however they sound, and shows us the way forward.

With prayer for you,

Pastor Kirsten



Remember in Prayer

Betty McMahon, Troy Davis, William Humphrey, Catherine Dittmer, Lois Thornburg, Randy Meador, Amy Wilson, June Weber, Emogene Sorgenfrey, the Nichols Family and all missionaries in Zambia, and loved ones who are in need of prayer support.



Birthdays

- 9 – Terry Hampton
- 13 – Jack Hull
- 14 – Aaron Turner
- 18 – Paislee Bear
- 21 – Emogene Sorgenfrey
- 21 – Grant Leacox
- 21 – Sue Kirk
- 22 – Gloria Batteau

Anniversaries

- 10 – Kris & Robert Gladwell

*May the good Lord continue to shower you with happiness, good fortune, prosperity and good health all the days of your life.
Happy Birthday and Anniversary!*

February

Ushers – Dan & Shirley Peterse;

Alter Guild – Ann Mayes; Communion Asst - ??

Readers

Flowers

- | | | |
|--------|------------------|---------------|
| Feb 6 | Joyce Rudbeck | Joyce Rudbeck |
| Feb 13 | Ann Mayes | |
| Feb 20 | Shirley Petersen | Lynn Bendt |
| Feb 27 | Paul Mayes | |

Fellowship Hostesses

- | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| Feb 6 | Vicki Hampton, Shirley McDaniel |
| Feb 13 | Lynne Leacox, Janet Kindler |
| Feb 20 | Carolyn Leach, Ann Mayes |
| Feb 27 | Becki Petersen |

Special dates

- Black History Month — Feb 1-28
- Groundhog Day — Feb 2
- Valentine's Day — Feb 14
- Presidents' Day — Feb 21
- Transfiguration Sunday — Feb 27



For any of you ladies that are interested, I will be showing a DVD called "Classical Stretch" on Monday mornings at 9:30am in the Fellowship hall. The DVD was created by Miranda Desmond-White (former ballerina that is now 72). She mainly focuses on strengthening and stretching your muscles. The workout is great for balance and back pain. Eric and I have been following her for years on PBS and ended up buying her DVDs.

I would recommend bringing a yoga mat although most of her exercises are NOT on the floor. Please check with your doctor if this exercise class would be acceptable for you.

Call me with any questions 563-333-4007
Thanks, Lynne

**New Era Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2021**

The council meeting was called to order at 6 pm. Attending were Pastor Kirsten, Adam, Dick, Josiah, Eric, and Vicki. Devotions by Josiah reciting Josiah 6:6. Our meeting was rescheduled to December 13 because of the conflict of Advent on December 14 at 6 pm.

Treasurer's Report

A brief treasurer's report was given not having a printout of past month activities because the computer was unavailable.

Committee Reports

Care & Concern – Gloria was absent. Vicki reported that visits will be made to folks we can see at care facilities and homebound. Holiday bags and cards will be delivered to the members.

Property – Dick reported the fire inspector came out to inspect. Bad batteries were replaced, a new mailbox put out, and furnace filters replaced.

A discussion was held about the dirt work, grading and putting down of gravel by Ellsworth Exc. The initial work of grading had a very sharp dip and difficult for some cars to drive through. Suggestion to contact Ellsworth to grade for easier passage before making final payment

Worship and Music – Because of Covid increasing, a discussion about wearing a mask and posting notice on the church door was thought to be the right thing to do, with possible guests coming for Christmas Eve Candle Light Service at 7 pm.

December 26 service will be a lay service with pastor on vacation; with Mary away, Beth will be playing.

Stewardship – Council members on the spending committee reported on projects; some were completed like clearing north of the gym and church, removing tree down on small shed, Ellsworth Esc. dirt work on road for drainage away from gym, and broken storm windows.

On December 5, the church members held a meeting to vote on other projects that required their vote because of the expense of the project. Bids were received a couple weeks ahead with a member turning in a bid after others opened. Council member Vicki asked council if this is the legal and proper way to handle this bid with making the point of possible legal problems from the others putting in bids. Council member Vicki asked about speaking with an attorney for legal advice and keeping New Era Church safe from ramification. No motion was made.

As of January 2022, a new list of projects will be requested from church members. The church members may make suggestions and thoughts in writing. No names necessary on suggestions. Council member Adam suggested a structural engineering be contacted to have a professional opinion on needs and condition of our buildings.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Hampton



Faith's role in love

In *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*, Christian author Sheila Walsh looks at the all-encompassing love that Jesus expects of his followers. He commands us to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, ESV).

But we can't love that way without faith, Walsh writes. "I'm not living by faith if I have an answer to everything. If I understand everything God does or doesn't do, then all I need to love him with is my mind. We're called to love him with more." That "more," she explains, involves these paradoxes: "We love with all our heart, even when it's broken. We love with our soul, even when our humanity

wrestles against our situation. We love with our strength, even when it's almost gone. We love with our mind, even when we don't understand."

Even if God's purposes and plans don't make sense here on earth, we can heed this advice from the great preacher Charles Spurgeon: "When we cannot trace [God's] hand, we must trust his heart."

"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?"—John Wesley

* * *

"We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another, until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard as well as our voices."

—Richard Nixon

* * *

"Light trumps darkness, every time. You stick a candle into the dark, but you can't stick the dark into the light."—Jodi Picoult

* * *

"Always be kinder than you feel."

—Unknown

* * *

"If the earth is forgiveness school, family is your postdoctoral fellowship."—Anne Lamott

God of love — for, with and in us

An ancient heresy — that the God of the Old Testament was a God of judgment and wrath, while the God of the New Testament is a God of grace and love — still persists a bit. Yet God is the same God, with the same characteristics, throughout time. Way back in Genesis 3, God graciously sewed garments to clothe humans, although they had disobeyed him. And even in

the Gospels, God's anger was evident through Jesus' response to temple moneychangers cheating the poor.

God always works for life and goodness in all things. Sometimes people misunderstand God's ways; sometimes God, like a human parent, uses "tough love." Mick Brooks writes: "The Old Testament is God for us, the time of Christ is God with us, and the age of the Holy Spirit is God in us" (*Every Day With Jesus*, Sept/Oct 2020). That may be a bit simplistic, but it's a good reminder that while God's ways of interacting with us vary, he — the God of Love — does not.

Beyond candy hearts and roses



The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as "Dr. Love" for writing about the topic, said, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine's Day is as good a reminder as any.

Great escapes

The goal of authentic Christianity is a love [that] escapes from a closed circle of spiritual self-indulgence, or even self-improvement, to become absorbed in the love of God and other [people].—Richard Lovelace

The gift of animals

When God made the animals and gave them to the first human being in the Garden of Eden, though they weren't *precisely* the companion Adam needed, not all was lost. According to Genesis 2, God gave Adam the privilege of naming them all, and when you name something or someone, you bond with that being in a special way. Ever since creation, humans and animals have been connected — often for good purposes, though sometimes not; as the saying goes, "It's complicated."

But on the positive side, Trisha McCagh, a renowned animal communicator, writes: "Animals are the bridge between us and the beauty of all that is natural. They show us what's missing in our lives, and how to love ourselves more completely and unconditionally. They connect us back to who we are and to the purpose of why we're here."

I would say animals also show us how to love other people, nonhuman beings and the earth more completely and unconditionally. And they call our attention to God's creativity. Praise God for the gift of the vast variety of animals with whom we share this planet!

—Heidi Hyland Mann

No regrets!

If you've ever regretted a big purchase and wondered if you could return it, you're familiar with the nagging feeling of buyer's remorse. Thankfully, our Redeemer never experienced that. As a church sign proclaims, "When Jesus bought you, he never had buyer's remorse. And he never will!" To Jesus, the payment of suffering and death was well worth the payoff. "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2, NIV).

The right words for victory in Jesus

My mom tells a story of me as a preschooler, swinging in our backyard and singing loudly (and off key, I'm sure): "Oh victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He *socked* me and *bopped* me with his redeeming blood." Though that isn't an example of how to effectively share Jesus with your neighbors, the mistaken words might contain a nugget of truth.

In 1939, a stroke partially paralyzed hymn writer Eugene Bartlett. Bedridden and unable to perform anymore, he penned his final, most beloved song, "Victory in Jesus." The actual lyrics read: "O victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He *sought* me and *bought* me with his redeeming blood."

It's beautiful to realize that Jesus did indeed seek me out and pay the ultimate price for me. But sometimes I forget — and that's when he "socks me" and "bops me." Jesus loves me too much to let life's chaos and struggles distract me from him and what he's done. Let's all remember to celebrate our victory in Jesus!—
Janna Firestone

Puzzle!

Answer each statement (based on Matthew's gospel) True or False by circling the letter in the correct column. (For example, the first statement is false, so circle the N.) Then write each circled letter on the appropriately numbered line below to discover why Jesus died.

Puzzle!

Answer each statement (based on Matthew's gospel)
True or False by circling the letter in the correct column.
Then write each circled letter on the appropriately
numbered line below to discover why Jesus died.

| | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Jesus healed Peter's wife <i>(Matthew 8:14).</i> | E | (N) |
| 2. Jesus fed the 5,000 with two loaves and five fish <i>(14:17).</i> | R | A |
| 3. At Jesus' Transfiguration, Peter saw Jonah and Elijah <i>(17:3).</i> | M | S |
| 4. The rich, young ruler decided not to follow Jesus <i>(19:22).</i> | T | C |
| 5. Jesus said the temple had become a "den of robbers" <i>(21:13).</i> | I | G |
| 6. Famines and earthquakes are signs of the end of the age <i>(24:7).</i> | V | D |
| 7. Jesus tells a story of the six wise and six foolish maidens <i>(25:1-13).</i> | F | A |
| 8. Judas betrayed Jesus with a secret handshake <i>(26:48).</i> | P | L |
| 9. The Roman governor Polonius interrogated Jesus <i>(27:11-14).</i> | W | O |
| | | N |
| 3 2 8 6 7 4 5 9 1 | | |

ANSWER: N, A, S, T, I, V, A, L, O; SALVATION

against him. But after three surgeries and numerous setbacks, Bowen is now an active 11-year-old who raises awareness about congenital heart disease. He's also a budding Christian musician, following in the footsteps of his dad, Matt (formerly with Sanctus Real). The Hammitts use Bowen's story to offer hope amid adversity — "a message the world really needs right now." The documentary *Bowen's Heart* features this tagline: "Is it worth giving your heart to something that can break it?" Absolutely, say his loved ones, who describe Bowen and his life as incredible blessings from God.

For Matt Hammitt, Proverbs 13:12 is now a favorite Bible verse. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick," it reads, "but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life" (NIV).

Biblical love notes

The following compliments from the Song of Solomon may not go over well on Valentine's Day: "I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots" (1:9). "Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead" (4:1). "Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing" (4:2). "Your neck is like the tower of David, built in courses" (4:4). "[Your] eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set" (5:12). "Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat" (7:2).

On the other hand, how about this one: "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (4:7).

Hope-filled hearts

When Bowen Hammitt was born with essentially half a heart, the odds were stacked

Bible Quiz

In the book of Revelation, who or what is “prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband”?



- A. The church
- B. The Spirit
- C. Mary Magdalene
- D. The new Jerusalem
- E.

Answer: D (See Revelation 21:2.)

A prayer to our omnipotent God

Remind us, O God, that you are above us, watching over us as a good shepherd. You can see what we cannot see. Remind us that you are below us, ready to lift us up in our weakest moments. Remind us that you are behind us, to give us encouragement when we feel like giving up. Remind us that you are in front of us, calling us to move forward in faith, even when we can't see how things will work out. Remind us that you are beside us, holding our hands, no matter what we're going through. Remind us that you are within us, closer than each breath we take.

Jesus, thank you for being Emmanuel, God-with-us, and for not abandoning us. Thank you for sending us your Holy Spirit, who comes alongside to help us, even when no one else can. As we remember you, O God, strengthen our hope and restore the joy of our salvation. Amen.—Malcolm Marler, adapted

Honor thy teachers

When President Eisenhower invited James Michener to a White House dinner, the bestselling author replied: “Dear Mr. President, I received your invitation three days after I had agreed to speak a few words at a dinner

honoring the wonderful high school teacher who taught me how to write. I know you will not miss me at your dinner, but she might at hers.” Instead of taking offense, Eisenhower answered: “In his lifetime, a man lives under 15 or 16 presidents. But a really fine teacher comes into his life but rarely.”

Fine teachers are indeed worth cherishing, whether they hold classes in churches or public schools, on Sundays or on weekdays. Let us honor and appreciate all teachers, all year long. Thank you for preparing lessons with care, for going above and beyond to meet each student's needs, and for sparking curiosity about God and everything he created. You're a blessing!



Christian symbol

VALLEY—Valleys symbolize life's dark or low points; for example, Psalm 23:4 refers to “the valley of the shadow of

death” (ESV). But valleys also symbolize people who find God's favor because they're lowly and meek. As a result, valleys can be places of blessing. God lifts his people out of despair and rewards their faithfulness. He also promises to “level” conditions by raising up valleys and bringing down mountains (see Isaiah 40:4).



Peach Cobbler

Lynn Bendt

2 qts sliced peaches or 2 29-oz cans (drain and save juice)

Place peaches in 9" x 13" pan. Sprinkle with 2 T tapioca and then sprinkle with a dry butter Pecan Cake Mix.

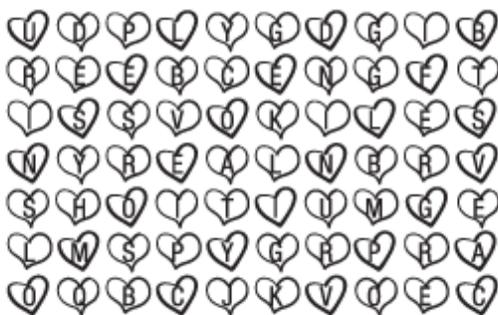
Melt 1 ½ sticks of butter and add ¾ C of peach juice. Pour over cake mix trying to cover all. Add ¾ C chopped pecans. Bake at 350°F, 30 to 45 minutes until toothpick comes out clean.



The heart of a friend

Big-hearted friendliness comes from generously serving others.

Directions: Start with the first D and move according to the arrows beneath the blanks. Then fill in the letters to complete 1 Peter 4:8-10.



Above all, love each other D , because love
 over a multitude of . Offer
 to one another without
 . Each of you should use whatever
 you have received to others, as faithful
 stewards of God's in its various forms.

1 PETER 4:8-10, NIV

Answer: deeply, covers, sins, hospitality, grumbling, gift, serve, grace

Friendship SOUP

Make jars of Italian barley soup to share love and warmth with friends.



What you need:

- 1 cup pearly barley
- ½ cup sundried tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp dry minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp dry minced onion
- 1 veggie bouillon cube
- Glass pint jars with lids
- Cardstock
- Scissors
- Pen

What you do:

1. In order, layer the first five ingredients into the jar.
2. Trace the outline of the lid onto cardstock. Cut out.
3. On the card, write these directions: Remove wrapper from bouillon cube. Add contents of jar to saucepan. Add 4 cups water and a can of diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce to low. Simmer about 20 minutes, until barley is tender. Serve with parmesan cheese.
4. Place the card atop the lid. Screw on the canning ring to keep it in place.

February 2022



| January '22 | | | | | | | March '22 | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--------|----------|
| 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 GROUNDHOG DAY Bible Study 6:30 pm @ Gloria Dei | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 * | 7 9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox | 8 9 am - Sewing group meets at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome. 6 pm - Council Meeting | 9 9:00 am - Care & Concern meet at McDonald's Bible Study 6:30 pm @ Gloria Dei | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 * | 14 9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox | 15 | 16 Bible Study 6:30 pm @ Gloria Dei | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 * | 21 9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox | 22 | 23 Bible Study 6:30 pm @ Gloria Dei | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 * TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY | 28 9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | *Every Sunday: 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship Service | | Black History Month - Feb 1-28 | | |