

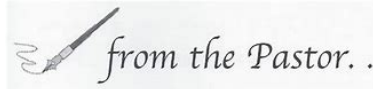
# New Era Lutheran Church



## July 2022 Newsletter

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**Pastor Kirsten Lee**  
405-248-0586



**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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each week  
Newsletter Items due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the  
month

**Check us out at** [www.neweralutheran.com](http://www.neweralutheran.com)  
or [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)  
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A Pastoral message on the overturning of Roe Vs. Wade  
July 2022

In light of the recent Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, I feel it is important to offer a pastoral message as we consider how Christ calls us to live and lead in times such as these. Our faith influences our cultural perspective, and any current cultural events influence our faith. Our religious beliefs aren't separated from our political or societal views. Therefore, I want to help us consider how our faith influences our views on abortion and how we live by our faith now that safe and legal abortions are not accessible in many states. Above all else, I want to express my support for anyone needing to discuss this further, anyone who is hurting because of this Supreme Court decision, or anyone who needs help in accessing healthcare.

You may or may not know that the ELCA has several social statements on a wide array of topics in our society. The social statement entitled *Abortion* is grounded in the conviction that "Christians are united in Christ through faith with both the freedom and obligation to engage in serious moral deliberation." As ELCA social teaching it draws upon this community's faith tradition that understands God's life-giving purposes as pressing "beyond the usual 'pro-life' versus 'pro-choice' language."

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Abortion>). This recent Supreme Court ruling may not impact your life at this moment, but Christ calls us to engage the needs in our society as we seek to care for our neighbors who are hurting.

One of the aspects of the ELCA that I strongly appreciate is the space we allow for different views and perspectives. We celebrate the diversity within the Body of Christ. We seek unity in God's mission, but not uniformity. As the social statement notes,

*"The topic of abortion [...] involves powerful feelings that are based on different life experiences and interpretations of Christian faith and life in the world. If we are to take our differences seriously, we must learn how to talk about them in ways that do justice to our diversity." (pg.2)*

This social statement holds in tension the deep conviction to protect life as well as the complex situations that contribute toward the need for an abortion. As Christians, we believe all human beings are created in God's image and all human beings have intrinsic value, worth, and dignity in all phases of development. Out of the deepest value for all life, the social statement names the concern with how common induced abortions have become in our country but makes a claim that abortion should be legal. "Laws should be enacted and enforced justly for the preservation and enhancement of life and should avoid unduly encumbering or endangering the lives of women" (p. 9). Now that abortions are no longer guaranteed to be legal or safe, there are drastic consequences for teens and women who have an unexpected pregnancy.

Years ago, I worked as the Director of Pregnancy and Adoption at Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City. It was my role to offer the options of either parenting or placing the baby for adoption, and then guide the teen girl or woman through the process. Because the agency was Catholic, we were not allowed to discuss abortion as an option. Ironically, it was through my time working with these teens and women that I gained helpful insight into the reasons abortions are considered. I learned that there are many health-related reasons and many socioeconomic reasons that lead to the decision to abort the fetus. I also learned that while the legal arguments continue, society is overlooking the physical and mental health of the women who face unhealthy pregnancies while living under systemic poverty.

Our country faces a new framework in which we are called to serve and lead by love. Christ calls us to learn more about this complex topic and how we can support and advocate for all who are impacted by this change: women who are facing an unexpected pregnancy and their loved ones; pregnancy centers and reproductive centers who care for women. If we are to value life in all stages, we need to advocate for improved education, improved healthcare and childcare, and equitable resources for low-income parents and children. This Supreme Court decision must not end the conversation but be an opportunity to grow in understanding and love.

Lastly, I would like to share some guidance from our Presiding Bishop, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. In a recent letter to the ELCA, she offered her own pastoral message regarding this Supreme Court decision which can be accessed on the ELCA website. This is her closing paragraph:

"Finally, I wish to remind everyone that this church supports peaceful means of expression within a diverse society. Peaceful protest is a crucial element of civic engagement; violent protest is not, and this church reproves it. Likewise, this church is on record against hate speech. Let us be instruments for peace where there is none. Let us listen to one another. Let us serve the needs of neighbors in all the complexities life presents. God calls us to be *for* others, just as God in Christ is for us." (<https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8158>)

†Pastor Kirsten†



#### **Remember in Prayer**

Sturgeon family during a missionary trip, Terry Hampton, Mary Dickinson, Alice Hermann, June Weber, Troy Davis, Linda Meador, Kenny McDaniel, Catherine Dittmer, Emogene Sorgenfrey and loved ones who are in need of prayer support.

## **JULY**

Ushers –Ann Mayes (7/3, 10, & 17); ?? (7/24 & 31)

Alter Guild – ??; Communion Asst. – ??

#### **Readers**

July 3 Shirley Petersen  
July 10 Ann Mayes  
July 17 Paul Mayes  
July 24  
July 31

#### **Flowers**

Ann Mayes  
Shirley Petersen

#### **Fellowship Hostesses**

July 3 Becki Petersen, Vicki Hampton  
July 10 Betty McMahon, Jan Lichtenwald  
July 17 Carolyn Leach, Shirley McDaniel  
July 24 Janet Kindler, Joyce Rudbeck  
July 31 Gloria Batteau, Viola Hubbs-Shankle



#### **Birthdays**

1 – Claysha O'Neill  
2 – Chad Johnson  
5 – Betty McMahon  
8 – Carrissa Johnson  
10 – Haley Batteau  
12 – Chris Markham  
12 – Nikki Kurz  
15 – Olivia Sturgeon  
17 – Shirley Allchin  
20 – Jackelyn Batteau  
23 – Vi Levetzow  
26 – Kari Thoren  
28 – Vicki Hampton

#### **Anniversaries**

7 – Justin & Erika Wulf  
15 – Terry & Vicki Hampton  
18 – Rob & Dianna Burger

*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 Happy Anniversary!*



*This July marks the two-year anniversary of my call to serve as your pastor. I am very grateful for the congregation of New Era. As I continue to learn how to serve two congregations, you have shown patience, grace, and forgiveness. You welcome people into worship and our life together with ease and genuine hospitality. I am delighted and honored to serve as your pastor. I am eager to see how the Spirit will lead and guide us in this coming year as we*

*continue to provide worship, education, fellowship, ministry, and outreach in meaningful ways. Having a pastor who is with you on a part time basis is challenging, but New Era continues to show initiative and excellent team work. Please help keep me accountable. If I am overlooking anyone or anything, please bring this to my attention. Pastoral care is my priority and I do not want anyone to be overlooked. I recall the letter Paul wrote to the Colossians in chapter 1:*

*"<sup>3</sup>In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup>for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.*

*<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup>so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God."*

*New Era, please know I pray for you and thank God for you.*

*†Pastor Kirsten†*

this book on zoom every Tuesday evening at 7 pm, beginning June 14th. If you would like help getting a copy of the book, please let Pastor Kirsten know. A description of the book is below. Let Pastor Kirsten know if you're interested and she will get you a copy of the reading schedule.



"In a culture chock-full of dwindling congregations, in large part due to an increasing number of disengaged young people, how can your church pursue and cultivate a vibrant future? Kara

Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin offer a strategy any church can use to involve and retain teenagers and young adults in *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*.

Based on groundbreaking research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* profiles innovative churches that are growing--spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically--by engaging 15-to-29-year-olds, offering readers both research and practical ideas for engaging and retaining the young people you have, attracting their unchurched peers, and harnessing the next generation's vitality and passion for Christ. Powell, Mulder, and Griffin demonstrate for pastors and ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage younger generations in a way that breathes vitality, life, and energy into the whole church."

<https://www.christianbook.com/growing-essential-strategies-people-discover-church>

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## **Join a synod-wide book club**

Join other ELCA Lutherans across the synod as we read together the book, "Growing Young". Join a discussion of



## Liberty through surrender

***To non-believers, talk of finding freedom through complete dependence on Jesus must sound foolish. How can surrendering your desires, time, heart — indeed, your entire life — lead to anything but bondage?***

The answer is evident in Jesus' own life and ministry, writes Michael Card in *Immanuel: Reflections on the Life of Christ*. In a twist on Julius Caesar's motto "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came, I saw, I conquered"), "Jesus lived by the motto, 'I came, I saw, I surrendered,'" Card notes. "By living out this unorthodox pronouncement, Jesus demonstrated that what the world regards as power is really impotence. True victory is only through surrender."

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote this prayer of surrender that's still relevant today: "Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess, Thou hast given me: I surrender it all to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more. Amen."

## Oxygen for ministry

Flight attendants instruct airplane passengers that if oxygen masks are needed, we should secure our own before assisting someone else. Why? If we aren't getting enough oxygen ourselves, we can't help another person for long.

The Holy Spirit empowers Christians for ministry — the work of loving and caring for our neighbors and God's creation. But if we



aren't Spirit-fueled on an ongoing basis, we will soon lack capacity to serve. This may manifest as burnout, cynicism, exhaustion or even lack of faith. So how to ensure we're breathing in the Spirit's energy and guidance instead of poor-quality "air"?

By taking part in corporate worship regularly, immersing ourselves in the Scriptures (devotional reading and Bible study), praying "continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIV) and spending time with Christian friends and mentors. Opening ourselves to the Spirit in these ways allows the Breath of God to flow into us, which in turn empowers us to reach out to others in love.—Heidi Hyland Mann

*"In the cause of freedom we have to battle for the rights of people with whom we do not agree. ... If we do not defend their rights, we endanger our own."*—Harry Truman

\* \* \*

*"A life without love is like a year without summer."*—Swedish proverb

\* \* \*

*"What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity."*—Joseph Addison

## The soul as soil



Gardeners who've dealt with inhospitable conditions can relate especially well to Jesus' parable of the sower. Drought, invasive critters and thorny weeds often seem to conspire against growers' efforts. Yet when seeds fall on "good

soil," the crop yield is abundant — up to a hundred times what was sown (Matthew 13:8).

That parable emphasizes the need for hearts to be receptive to God's Word. But it's also a reminder to plant Scripture persistently. Just as soil and weather conditions change, so may someone's attitude toward following Jesus. Pastor J. Ellsworth Kalas writes, "Whenever we serve as witnesses to the faith, we must do so with all earnestness, because one doesn't know the season in which the soul currently abides. That uninterested, distracted or unresponsive person may be nearer the Kingdom than we — or they — realize." Kalas adds, "We dare not give up on anyone at any time — including ourselves."

## Freedom

Each one of us is born most free  
And we alone can choose  
To do what God would have us do,  
To use what God would use.

Or we are also free to seek  
The proud and selfish way —  
A life where other gods come first  
To reign and hold full sway.

But when we follow where Christ leads,  
We find that freedom's place  
Is really in God's will for us,  
And we have chosen GRACE!  
—Peggy Ferrell, Prayers and Poems

## The power of kindness

No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another. Good example is followed. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that

kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves.—Amelia Earhart

## A prayer for strength

God of inexhaustible strength and limitless energy, our refuge, strength and very present help in trouble: When even youth faint in weariness and the young fall exhausted, help us wait patiently for you to come to renew our strength, so that we will mount up with wings to soar like eagles, riding on the undercurrents of the wind of your Spirit.

You who need no slumber nor sleep, by your Holy Spirit's power keep us from all evil, safe in Jesus' nail-scarred hands. Help us never weary as we run after you and never faint as we walk in Christ's footsteps, now and forevermore.  
Amen.

## Dual citizenship

For Christianity and democracy to work, both need responsible citizens. Consider what happens to a republic when its citizens won't run for public office, won't vote, won't work for the common good, duck paying taxes and mistreat others. Now consider what happens when Christians won't volunteer at the church, won't give, won't practice their faith, won't love their neighbors. Both our country and our faith need sincere practitioners. Nationally, we need a citizenry committed to making the ideals of liberty the practices of life in America. Christianity needs followers of Jesus committed to making the ideals of God's kingdom the practices of daily life.

This is not an either-or situation. Christians everywhere are citizens of two countries, one on earth and one in eternity. The kingdom of God is not yet fully come, but it's already in effect. Our two citizenships can neither be fully united nor fully separated. We cannot withdraw

from the world and pretend we are somehow dwelling only in the kingdom of God now; nor can we simply embrace the world and assume earthly governments fulfill God's will. Those are extremes, and they are unbiblical.—from a sermon by Stan Purdum

## The ministry of quilting and of mending hearts

To sew is to pray. ... We mend ... turn things inside out and set things right. We salvage what we can of human garments and piece the rest into blankets. Sometimes our stitches stutter and slow. ... Other times the tension in the stitches might be too tight because of tears, but only we know what emotion went into the making.—Louise Erdrich, *Four Souls*

## Hooray for VBS!

For many churches, vacation Bible school is a summer highlight. The event leads to lasting memories and changed hearts. It also sparks laughter. Maybe you've seen VBS humor online, such as the quote, "I'm tired, I mean like ... vacation Bible school kind of tired!" Another post reads, "You know you're obsessed with VBS when ... you're excited about cardboard on the side of the road." And anyone with an earworm at week's end can relate to this meme: "My parents hid my VBS CD. It's for the best."

For hungry young learners, snacks make an especially big impression. One excited preschooler shared that she enjoyed "juice and Billy Graham crackers" at VBS. Another boy raved about the first day, saying, "We heard stories and drew pictures. Then we went to play, and when we came inside, God had juice and cookies waiting for us!"

## Bible Quiz



In Luke 15 Jesus tells three parables. Which of the following is not one of them?

- A. The Parable of the Lost Sheep
- B. The Parable of the Lost Son
- C. The Parable of the Lost Pearl
- D. The Parable of the Lost Coin

Answer: C (See Luke 15:1-32.)

## Soul care through studying

Summer isn't often associated with studying, but it can be an ideal time to dive into God's Word. Just keep in mind: Studying the Bible involves more than merely reading the words. The process begins with a humble spirit to not only gain information but to let Scripture transform you.

I've heard about various practices for Bible study. Some people set aside a special place, with multiple concordances and commentaries at their fingertips. I thrive on a bit more variety. Comparing a couple of Bible translations and paraphrases proves helpful for my studies.

Renovaré, Richard Foster's institute that aims to help people become more like Jesus, advises: "It is vital to study not only books but also those things around us such as nature, relationships, events and cultural values." What are the most meaningful ways for you to study God's Word?—Janna Firestone

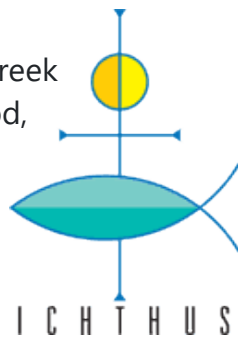
# All we need to know

When a loved one dies, we have questions: What caused the death? When will the funeral be? What form will our grief take? Some deaths also bring spiritual questions: Where was God? Is our loved one with God now?


Paul shared deep thoughts about death with the believers at Corinth. His complex ideas might raise further questions, but here's the key: We don't need to understand everything right away — not all of Paul's theology, or everything about God or all the practical matters around a loved one's death. Here, from 1 Corinthians 15 (NRSV), is what we do know: "Christ has been raised from the dead" (v. 20) — death doesn't have the final say. "All will be made alive in Christ" (v. 22) — a loving promise God offers to all. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (v. 26) — in the end, Jesus will destroy all sickness, pain, sorrow, war, poverty, oppression and even death itself. We are in God's loving hands. That's all we need to know.—Heidi Hyland Mann

## Christian symbol

**FISH**—The first letters in the Greek phrase "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" spell ICHTHUS, or fish. Early Christians used the sign to convey their faith and avoid persecution. In the gospels, fish are part of several miracles. They also represent people who need to be "caught" for Christ. Today, a fish bumper sticker is a popular indicator of Christian faith.






# PUZZLE



## Beyond number

God is all-knowing, and his thoughts toward us are beyond number.

*Directions: Solve the addition problems and use the code to complete Psalm 139:17-18, NIV.*

sum = 13	outnumber = 16	awake = 17	thoughts = 18	rest = 19	count = 21	sand = 22	precious = 23
How _____ to me are your _____, God!							
<div><div>How _____ is the _____ of them!</div><div>Were I to _____ them,</div><div>they would _____ the grains of _____</div><div>when I _____, I am still with you.</div></div> <div></div>							

PSALM 139:17-18, NIV

Answer: precious, thoughts, vast, sum, count, outnumber, sand, awake



# SANDY SCENES

Make a scene with this fun summer craft you can create outdoors.



## What you need:

- Play sand
- Spoons
- Empty jars
- Powdered tempera paint
- Cardstock paper and pencil
- Craft glue
- Paintbrush

## What you do:

1. Pour a few tablespoons of sand into empty jars. (You need one jar for every color of paint you make.)
2. Add a small amount of powdered paint to the sand and then mix. Experiment with the amount, using more paint to create deeper colors.
3. Lightly sketch a design on cardstock.
4. Working in one small section at a time, paint an even layer of craft glue on the paper.
5. Use a spoon to sprinkle colored sand atop the glue. Tilt the paper so extra sand falls off. Repeat to complete the entire design.
6. Let dry on a flat surface before displaying upright.

# Puzzle!

Solve this cryptogram puzzle, using the clues R=I and M=T, to complete Psalm 111:10, NIV.

# Puzzle!

Solve this cryptogram puzzle, using the clues R=I and M=T, to complete Psalm 111:10, NIV.

MYL CLOQ ZC MYL  
PZQN RV MYL  
H L D R F F R F D Z C G R V N Z U ;  
O P P G Y Z C Z P P Z G  
Y R V B Q L T L B M V  
Y O K L D Z Z N  
J F N L Q V M O F N R F D  
M Z Y R U H L P Z F D V  
L M L Q F O P B Q O R V L

PSALM 111:10, NIV

Answer: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. Psalm 111:10, NIV

# July 2022

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
				Pastor - vacation - June 30-July 2		
3  10:30 am - Sunday Worsip	4 	5	6	7	8	9
	Pastor - vacation - July 4-7					
10  10:30 am - Sunday Worsip	11	12  9 am – Sewing group meet at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome.	13  9:00 am - Care & Concern- Meet @ McDonald's	14	15	16
17  10:30 am - Sunday Worsip	18	19	20  Pastor - vacation	21	22	23
24  10:30 am - Sunday Worsip  Pastor - away	25	26	27	28	29	30  9 am-1 pm
31  10:30 am - Sunday Worsip	1	<b>VBS</b> at New Era July 30th 9 am to 1 pm Theme: Living Water Contact Lynne Leacox with questions 563-333-4007				