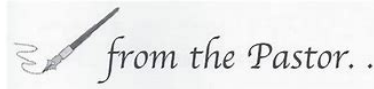


New Era Lutheran Church



June 2022 Newsletter

Pastor Kirsten Lee
405-248-0586



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

Contacts:

Joan Dietrich, Office Admin
Office: 563-263-5356
Office Hours: Tues & Wed – 10 am-2 pm
Thurs – 10 am - Noon
Email: neweralutheran@gmail.com

Organist: Mary Maxson
Choir Director: Lavonne Schrum

Building Rental: Gloria Batteau
Church, Fellowship Hall, Gym
Cell: 563-299-9622
Email: gfbatteau@gmail.com

Bulletin & Newsletter: Joan Dietrich
Cell: 563-299-4710
Email: neweralutheran@gmail.com
Bulletin - Items due by Wednesday night
each week
Newsletter Items due by the 20th of the
month

Check us out at www.neweralutheran.com
or [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)
[NewEraLutheranChurch](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)

Dear beloved ones,

For some time, I've been wanting to address mental health in a newsletter, but I wanted to be deliberate on the timing. During the past month, I have had multiple conversations with parishioners and have had many reminders that have all indicated to me that our mental wellbeing needs attention. So, for this month's edition, I want to share some insight on mental health that has been gained by both personal and professional experience, a place for support, and the promise of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mental health continues to have a stigma attached to it. While I believe we've made progress in addressing mental health, we still have progress to make in eliminating stigma associated with mental health or brain health. I believe we do this by recognizing the need to care for our whole bodies- especially our brains- and helping one another find space to heal.

Consider this: our vehicles and farm equipment cannot run with a damaged engine. The work it has been designed to do will not happen until the engine receives attention and care. So it is with our brains, which control our entire bodies. When our brain is hurting the rest of our body hurts as well and cannot function very well.

Try this: take a deep breath in and then exhale. Keep exhaling and breathing out as long as you can. Next exhale without taking a breath in. Do you notice a difference? To give of ourselves, we first need to care for ourselves.

There are messages that continue in our society that brain health doesn't matter and if we were stronger or had greater faith, we would be fine. (This is not true!) Some of us have grown up with these messages and find it's hard to change our beliefs. Finding a way to acknowledge the need to care for our minds is the first step. Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, suicide, and many more kinds of mental illness are real and can affect anyone regardless of age or gender.

I have both personal and professional experience with mental illnesses. I have learned to live with depression, anxiety, ADHD. I have family members who also have been diagnosed with a mental illness. I have also cared for and counseled many adults, youth, and children as they've reached out for support.

As we continue to live through the collective trauma of the pandemic and the many more personal traumatic experiences in our own lives, it is expected to feel sad, hopeless, angry, burned out. We have suffered many losses and many of us aren't sure how to cope or address the grief of these losses. So, we carry the grief inside of us as it weighs us down and contributes to feeling sad, hopeless, or angry. Grief has a way of coming out in ways we can't anticipate.

As your pastor, I want to offer a space that mental health concerns you have about yourself or a loved one. I do not hold any judgement for anyone seeking help- only compassion, empathy, and a desire to learn from and with you. Your experiences are unique to you. I don't intend to offer quick solutions. I want to listen to you and empower you to care for yourself. If you decide

you might benefit from mental health counseling, I can help you find the appropriate care.

Mental health does not get the attention it needs in our society. We find hope in our Savior who sees you and hears you. Demons of all kinds existed when Jesus walked on earth and these demons were reasons to exclude people and treat them as dirty and shameful. Your Lord dismissed these human-made boundaries and not only noticed people who suffered, but cared for them, touched them, and healed them. Christ's apostles who began the first churches continued this personal healing.

*"Because of the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."
(Luke 1:78-79)*

There are days and seasons of our lives when the promise in Luke doesn't seem real. Your pain and suffering are not the end of your chapter- God continues to create new life in you when you can experience glimpses of God's tender mercy. Having a mental illness or feeling sad, angry, or lonely does not mean you are weak or don't have enough faith- it means you are human with all the feelings and pain of being human.

Your Lord knows your pain and joins you in a way that is personal to you. Your Lord gives you people to show you glimpses of God's peace and merciful love. The promise of healing and new life is for you. I pray you can see and feel God's love in your life and if not, perhaps the many people in your life who care for you (including me) can offer a little help.

Peace be with you,
†Pastor Kirsten†



Remember in Prayer

Terry Hampton, Mary Dickinson, Bill & Rhonda Bendt, June Weber, Troy Davis, Linda Meador, Kenny McDaniel, Catherine Dittmer, Emogene Sorgenfrey, and loved ones who are in need of prayer support.

Sincere condolences to the family and friends of Marvin Leach who passed away. He is the brother of Dick Leach.



Birthdays

1 – Travis Wulf
3 – Joyce Rudbeck
5 – Adam Turner
6 – Eric Wulf
7 – Ada Kurz
10 – Chris Cole
15 – Shirley Petersen
20 – Lindsey Squires
22 – Viola Hobbs-Shankle
25 – Pastor Chris Lee
26 – Josiah Anderson
26 – Maureen Ruser
28 – Tonya Plowman

Anniversaries

12 – Jerry & Janice Lichtenwald
15 – Jack & Bev Hull
27 – Dick & Carolyn Leach

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!

JUNE

Ushers –??

Alter Guild – Shirley Petersen

Communion Asst. – ??

Readers

6/5 Eric Leacox
6/12 Dan Petersen
6/19 ??
6/26 ??

Flowers

??
??
Shirley Petersen
Carolyn Leach

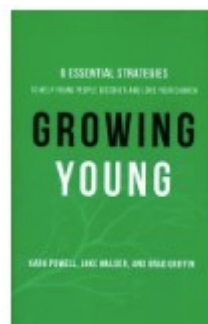
Fellowship Hostesses

6/5 Vicki Hampton, Ann Mayes
6/12 Shirley Petersen
6/19 Gloria Batteau, Viola Hubbs-Shankle
6/26 Cassidy Probasco, Carolyn Leach

**ANNUAL MEETING
WILL BE HELD
SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2022**

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 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>

A blessing for Fathers

(Adapted from a blessing received from <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/fathers-day-prayers>)

Heavenly Father,
We ask You to bless our earthly fathers
for the many times they reflected the love,
strength, generosity, wisdom and mercy that
you exemplify in your relationship with us.

We honor our fathers for putting our needs
above their own convenience and comfort;
for teaching us to show courage and
determination in the face of adversity;
for challenging us to move beyond self-limiting
boundaries;
for modeling the qualities that would turn us
into responsible, principled, caring adults.

Where there is pain, grant peace and healing.
Give us the grace to extend the same
forgiveness that you offer us all.
Help us to resist the urge to stay stuck in past
bitterness, instead moving forward with
humility and peace of heart.

We ask for your blessing to be upon all who
long to be a father but are stuck waiting and
grieving. Give them the joy of your love for
them and the hope that in you all things are
possible.
Help them trust that they are enough and are
deeply valued in our congregations and
communities.

We ask your blessing on those men who served
as father figures in our lives.
May the love and selflessness they showed us
be returned to them in all their relationships,
and help them to know that their influence
has changed us for the better.

Give new and future fathers the guidance they
need to raise loving children,
grounded in a love for God and other people.

We pray that our fathers who have passed into
the next life have been welcomed into Your
loving embrace, and that our family will one
day be reunited in your heavenly kingdom.

Amen.

Sharing God's kingdom

When Jesus, in the Nazareth synagogue, read
from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good
news" (Luke 4:18) and declared the prophecy
fulfilled, "all spoke well of him" (v. 22). But
when he then said God's favor was not *just* for
Israel, they grew angry. How quickly we can
change our minds about leaders — sometimes

in the span of a short sermon! Yet Jesus simply meant that God's grace is so plentiful we can share it without fearing that if others benefit, we won't.

It's been said you can't share light without some falling on your own path. Ministers can't baptize new followers of Christ without getting wet themselves. And neither will any of us miss out on the kingdom of God if we opt to share it with others — both in and beyond our community, people similar to and different from us.

What is Jesus challenging us to do right now? If it's something that benefits others, we'd do well to peel off from the angry mob (vv. 28-29) and think again. Perhaps not just a human being but the Spirit of the Lord is announcing good news in our hearing today.
—Heidi Hyland Mann

Celebrating the church's birthday



On Pentecost, we remember when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' disciples. As they gathered in Jerusalem 10 days after Jesus' ascension, they saw tongues of fire, heard

rushing wind and began speaking in many languages. Because the disciples could then share the good news with all the pilgrims assembled for the Pentecost festival, the occasion marks the birthday of the Christian church. That day alone, about 3,000 people devoted their lives to Christ.

Like the Holy Spirit, Pentecost is important and relevant today. As theologian Henri Nouwen writes, "Without Pentecost the Christ-event —

the life, death and resurrection of Jesus — remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now."

The church hive



Bees live in a cooperative way described as "eusociality," or good relations. Each bee contributes a specific skill to the colony, synchronizing its efforts for the benefit of all. Likewise, a church's health depends on all members fulfilling their responsibility to the organism as a whole. Descriptions of hive life mirror Paul's words about the body of Christ, with members having different gifts "but the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4).

According to R.S. Beal Jr., who was both a pastor and a zoology professor, a beehive is the perfect "living illustration of how to walk in unity." He wrote, "Those of us who have believed in Jesus belong to one another just as much as we belong to Christ. We cannot live independently of one another anymore than we can live independently of Christ. Like the bees, we must learn to practice the sacrifice, labor, sharing, and submission of love that together we 'may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ'" (Ephesians 4:15, KJV). How are you using your own spiritual gifts to build up your church "hive"?

Parents are stewards

Striving to raise happy, well-rounded children isn't wrong "unless those successes become the goal," writes Jeffrey Reed in *ParentLife* magazine. For Christians, he says, the driving force of parenting should be helping kids follow God's path.

"What if we parented as if we were temporary stewards of the greatest containers of godly potential?" Reed asks. "What if our goal for our children was to continually seek God's guidance on what it is that he wants for them and to help them pursue that goal on a daily basis?" He concludes: "In a hundred years, nothing we do will matter apart from the impact we've made in God's kingdom on earth. Perhaps your children will be that legacy."

That's Father!

Now I think of all achievements 'tis the least
To perpetuate the species; it is done
By the insect and the serpent, and the beast.
But the man who keeps his body, and his
thought,

Worth bestowing on an offspring love-begot,
Then the highest earthly glory he has won,
When in pride a grown-up daughter or a son
Says "That's Father."

—from "Father," by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Seeking and finding

St. Ambrose (A.D. 340-397) was an influential figure in the early church. As bishop of Milan, he fought pagan influences. As a writer, he's credited with sermons, poems and innovative Christian hymns. And, according to tradition, he also converted and baptized St. Augustine.

One beloved prayer from St. Ambrose reads:
"Lord, teach me to seek you, and reveal
yourself to me when I seek you. For I cannot
seek you unless you first teach me, nor find you
unless you first reveal yourself to me. Let me
seek you in longing and long for you in
seeking. Let me find you in love, and love you
in finding."

"The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises."—Leo Buscaglia

* * *

"Kindness and consideration of somebody besides yourself ... keeps you feeling young."—Betty White

* * *

*"The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close."—
Unknown*

* * *

*"Courage is fueled by the motivation to take the first step into the unknown."
—Cheryl Nielsen*

Grateful people are joyful people

In a 2013 TED Talk, David Steindl-Rast says many people think happiness leads to gratefulness. "Think again," he says. "Is it really the happy people that are grateful? We all know ... people who have everything it [takes] to be happy, and they are not happy, because they want something else or they want more of the same. And we all know people who have lots of misfortune [yet] are deeply happy. ... Why? Because they are grateful. So it is not happiness that makes us grateful. It's gratefulness that makes us happy."

We must be cautious: Depression is a real illness, and therapy or medicine may be necessary to help us feel "happy" and enjoy life again. Also, "joy" is perhaps a more fitting word

than “happiness”; happiness can be fleeting and superficial, while joy is heart-deep and abiding. In Jesus, even when we’re sad or struggling or fearful, we can have joy — the confidence that God holds us in his arms. And for that, we can be grateful. Indeed, Steindl-Rast concludes, “Grateful people are joyful people.”

In service of the Triune God

In *Eat This Book*, Eugene H. Peterson explains that the word *liturgy* comes not from church settings but community service. As applied to worship, liturgy maintains that “‘public-service’ quality — working for the community on behalf of or following orders from God.” Peterson writes, “As we worship God, revealed personally as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our Holy Scriptures, we are not doing something apart from or away from the non-Scripture-reading world; we do it for the world — bringing all creation and all history before God, presenting our bodies and all the beauties and needs of humankind before God in praise and intercession, penetrating and serving the world for whom Christ died in the strong name of the Trinity.”

A standup guy

During the pandemic, a Maryland man used “dad jokes” to lift neighbors’ spirits. Tom Schruben jotted down a joke-of-the-day on a curbside whiteboard. Hearing people chuckle and chat eased the isolation.

Schruben and his wife, Ann, became intentional about seeking joy after two of their children died. They vowed to “find happiness again” and share it. For Father’s Day last year, Schruben held a Bad Dad Joke contest, donating entry

fees to a local charity. Here are a few of his favorites:

- If two vegans get into an argument, is it still considered a beef?
- I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I’ll let you know.
- What do you call a bear with no teeth? A gummy bear.

Summertime splendor

One theme in Psalms is how nature reveals God’s glory. That’s especially evident during summer. “There is a signature of wisdom and power impressed on the works of God, which evidently distinguishes them from the feeble imitations of men,” writes John Newton. “Not only the splendor of the sun, but the glimmering light of the glowworm, proclaims his glory.”

That glory shines even brighter when we spend time in God’s Word. Thomas Merton writes, “By reading the scriptures I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The whole world is charged with the glory of God, and I feel fire and music under my feet.”



Bible Quiz

Jesus was known for using a certain type of speech in his teaching. What was it?

- A. soliloquy
- B. parable
- C. lecture
- D. riddle

Answer: B (See Mark 4:33-34.)

Puzzle!

Find the names of these fathers and sons from the Old Testament.



Note: A completed puzzle is in a file called puzzleb_0622 on this month's CD and on the website, www.NewsletterNewsletter.com.

Going the second mile

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he teaches, "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile" (Matthew 5:41, NRSV). Back then, Jews were subject to Roman rule and often compulsory service. Commoners could be forced to fetch water, carry baggage and perform other menial tasks. So Jesus suggests that rather than complying with gritted teeth and muttered curses, people offer to carry the pack a second mile as well.

These days, the second (or extra) mile denotes going beyond what's expected or required, whether in effort or kindness. In *Going the Second Mile*, Mel Blackaby describes the concept as "the difference between living as a good person and enjoying life as a child of God." He explains, "When you 'do your best' for someone, you go the first mile. When God does his best through you, you experience the second mile. This can happen only when you let Christ in you take over and empower you to accomplish what is impossible by your natural abilities. While others see you on the first mile, they see Christ on the second."
—adapted from *The Wired Word*



Christian symbol

SEED—The Bible often uses seeds as symbols of faith or God's Word. In the Old Testament, seeds also refer to offspring. Jesus said people who believe in him can perform mighty deeds with "faith the size of a mustard seed" (Luke 17:6, NRSV). Many of Jesus' teachings use seed imagery; for example, in the parable of the four soils, he said the seed, God's Word, can grow only when people hear it, "hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance" (Luke 8:15, NRSV).



Southeastern Iowa Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ~ Revelation 22.1-2

Dear partner in ministry,

This week the Southeastern Iowa Synod will gather in assembly – in person – for the first time since 2019. Gathered around Word and Sacrament we will indeed catch a glimpse, not unlike the glimpses we receive in each of our individual congregations of the synod gathered in worship each week, of this holy city as described in Revelation.

In the first few months of 2022, congregations of the synod have faithfully gathered to celebrate Epiphany, Lent, and now Easter. As Easter people firmly grounded in death and resurrection, we acknowledge that everyone experienced ups and downs, challenges and triumphs. With nearly half of the congregations in our synod in some sort of pastoral transition, there are many facing uncertainty about what the future holds for their local community of faith. Some congregations wonder when (and if) the numbers in worship will go up again, and many are wondering about volunteer burnout and how to be the church in this post-COVID age.

This image of the tree of life from Revelation is one of grace and promise, I think, for those of us wondering how on earth to faithfully move forward in ministry. Not every tree bears fruit *all the time*. Indeed, it seems that each tree takes its turn in God's holy city, allowing the others to rest and lie fallow in the off season. And, even if the tree is not in its fruit bearing state, we are reminded that even the leaves provide for the healing of the nations.

Whether your congregation is bearing fruit, or whether you are lying fallow, waiting for something to bloom, we remain firmly planted on the banks of the river of the water of life. Joined together in the waters of baptism, and to Christ's death and resurrection we truly are better together. We celebrate with those who bear fruit, and we wait and watch with those who have yet to blossom, all the while proclaiming God's forgiveness and grace for the healing of the nations.

The Office of the Bishop is thankful for you and for your faithfulness. We couldn't do our ministry alone, and we have each other to offer support, encouragement, and prayer as together we seek to bear fruit, to provide shade and healing, and to tell the world of God's saving forgiveness, grace, love, and reconciliation.

In Christ,

Pastor Erika Utthe
Director for Evangelical Mission
Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality

June 2022

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1  6:30 pm - Bible Study @ Gloria Dei	2	3	4
5 	6	7	8 9:00 am - Care & Concern- Meet @ McDonald's	9	10	11
12 	13	14  9 am - Sewing group meet at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome.  6 pm - Council Meeting	15  6:30 pm - Bible Study @ Gloria Dei	16	17	18
19 	20	21 	22  6:30 pm - Bible Study @ Gloria Dei	23	24	25
26 	27	28	29  6:30 pm - Bible Study @ Gloria Dei	30	1	2
3	4	Sunday Worship - every Sunday at 10:30 am Pastor Kirsten Lee - Out of town June 5-8th Joan Dietrich - Vacation - June 9- 27th				