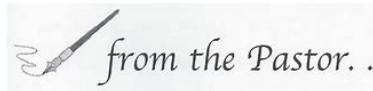


New Era Lutheran Church



August 2022 Newsletter

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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Thurs – 10 am - Noon
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Organist: Mary Maxson
Choir Director: Lavonne Schrum

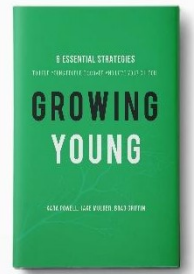
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each week
Newsletter Items due by the 20th of the
month

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Dear New Era,

It's no secret that congregations across the country are experiencing a decline in attendance. We see and feel this decline in our own congregation, especially with our younger families, youth, and children. As a way of discussing this crisis and possible opportunities with fellow Lutherans, the synod is hosting a book study on this topic.



The book is entitled "*Growing Young: 6 essential strategies to help young people discover and love your church*" by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin.

For this newsletter edition, I have a few reasons for sharing about this book. First, I want to show how our synod is taking a proactive approach to widespread church decline. Through this book study, the synod is not only recommending a practical and helpful book but is also giving us an opportunity to discuss the book and our experiences in various contexts. I also share this book as an invitation to further discuss this topic and how we might implement some of the book's suggestions.

Growing Young is the product of research conducted by the Fuller Youth Institute, whose mission is to "equip young people with the faith they need." (p.27). Over the past 12 years, they've researched over 250

congregations across the United States who connect well with youth and young adults (15–29-year-olds). This includes larger churches in metropolitan and suburban areas, smaller congregations in small town and rural communities, and everything in between. They researched congregations that encompassed 17 denominations, including ELCA Lutheran.

In the research conducted by Fuller Youth Institute, they found that these congregations are creating an environment in which youth and young adults feel seen, heard, valued, and known. They are growing young as many congregations have grown numerically and many more have seen spiritual, emotional, and missional growth among all ages of members. The researchers found that as congregations commit to practices that engage young people, the entire congregation benefits as vitality and energy increases in the congregation. The encouraging and exciting news for us is that these qualities can be incorporated into our smaller, rural congregation.

As the book explains, the research found six core commitments that have been the most effective for congregations to grow young and connect with younger people. These six qualities are:

1. Invest in and empower younger people to hold leadership positions. Grant them authority over parts of the congregation.
2. Empathize with this age group. Get to know them and what's important to them.
3. Work on your own faith and be willing to share about your faith and relationship with Jesus.

4. Fuel a warm community. Warm, genuine, welcoming hospitality goes a long way.
5. Prioritize young people and families into the budget and ministry of the congregation.
6. Be the best neighbors. Model how to "neighbor well locally and globally" and empower young people to do so in their own context (p.43).

These are commitments we can make together as a congregation if we chose to intentionally engage them. New Era is well versed in showing genuine hospitality. We are already supporting confirmation aged students as they attend camp in the summer. We already have Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, and confirmation class. And still, there is room to keep growing.

A key is to be intentional and make these commitments a priority. Congregations who were successful found that the turning point was when youth and young adults became a greater priority. These commitments aren't a guarantee or a quick fix, but a best practice model. Even if congregations found they did not grow numerically, they found that those who engaged this process benefited as they experienced new vitality- both in the congregation and in their own faith journey.

This may go without saying, but churches need young people and young people need churches. Engaging in these commitments is work we need to do and get to do together. All of us, as the Body of Christ, have a role to play. This commitment needs to be owned by the congregation and not only the minister. Giving these commitments a try means trying one new thing at a time, taking risks with change, and having patience as the

Holy Spirit plants seeds and helps those seeds grow through our intentions and effort.

God is on the move in and through New Era. The Holy Spirit is leading us into another year of ministry together and it is a joy and honor to discern with you how the Spirit is leading us. This could be a new focus on youth and young adults, or it could be with a different focus. If anyone would like to have a further conversation about this book and how New Era might implement some of the book's ideas, please let me know.

With prayers and gratitude for each of you,

†Pastor Kirsten†



Beginning in August, I will be in a training and mentorship program for rural ministry pastors. This training is through Grand View University. Please see this letter for more information:

July 15, 2022

Happy middle of July from Grand View University and The Moses Project.



We are pleased to have your pastor participate in our 2022-2023 Moses Project Cohort. The mission of The Moses Project is to give rural ELCA pastors a vision of ministry that will help them thrive in congregational leadership and in turn, enhance the vitality of the congregations they serve.

What does participation in the Moses Project look like for your pastor? The Moses Project runs ten months, has 20 participants from eight Midwestern states, and is cost free thanks to a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment. The program includes three onsite retreats: one in August, January, and May. Your pastor will also engage in mentoring, small group connections, and monthly common readings. This professional development program provides pastors critical support, promotes

innovative strategies, and engages them in ongoing learning and opportunities for renewal. Thank you for supporting your pastor as they participate in this program. We ask you continue to pray for your pastor as well as for The Moses Project. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @GVMOSESPROJECT. You can also check out our Resource Page at <https://www.mosesproject.org/>.

As a university of the ELCA, Grand View offers other opportunities for you and your congregational members to engage with the school.

For Grand View Students, **Campus Ministry** serves them in many ways. Chapel is held once a week with different guest speakers often featured; there are also multiple Bible study groups, prayer groups, and evening worship offerings. Lutheran students are eligible for scholarships. Luther Memorial Church, at the center of campus, recently completed extensive renovations. If you have questions, please contact the Sr. Campus Pastor, Rev. Dr. Russell Lackey at rlackey@grandview.edu.

The NEXUS High School Youth Theology Institute is a weeklong summer program designed to immerse high school students in Christian community while helping them think about a possible vocation in church ministry. Teaching is led by Grand View's theology faculty and college age mentors help the students put their faith into practice. For more information, please contact Nexus Director, Kate Faas at kfaas@grandview.edu or visit <https://www.grandview.edu/academics/other-programs/nexus> to apply for the free program.

We are humbled by the ways in which God is working through these programs. Thank you again for your partnership with The Moses Project.

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Trisha Wheelock
Program Director, The Moses Project
Rev. Dr. Russell Lackey
Program Manager, The Moses Project



The Southeast Iowa synod is hosting a celebration with our companion synod in Tanzania. Please see details below. Pastor Kirsten will be attending to learn more about what it means for congregations to partner with this companion synod in Tanzania. If you would like to join her, please let her know.

Celebrating and Renewing our Companion Synod relationship

Join with others interested in companion congregation/synod relations to celebrate and renew our companion synod relationship with Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)

Saturday, August 20
10:00 am - 2:00 pm (lunch provided)
Bethesda Lutheran Church - Ames
Please RSVP by Monday, August 15

We will celebrate and renew our Companion Synod Relationship with the Pare Diocese and congregations in the Mwanga Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and plan for our shared mission together with our partners in the ELCA and ELCT

Anyone in the Southeastern Iowa Synod who are either passionate about or curious about our companion synod relationships with the Pare Diocese and congregations in the Mwanga Diocese is welcome to attend. Congregations with relationships with congregations in Tanzania or projects underway in partnership with ministries in the dioceses are encouraged to send participants if possible.



Remember in Prayer

All missionaries serving abroad, Bill & Rhonda Bendt, Julie Leacox, Terry Hampton, Mary Dickinson, Alice Hermann, June Weber, Troy Davis, Linda Meador, Catherine Dittmer, Emogene Sorgenfrey, loved ones of James Batchelor, and loved ones who are in need of prayer support.

AUGUST

Ushers –Dick & Carolyn Leach

Alter Guild – McDaniels;

Communion Asst. – Dick & Carolyn Leach

Readers

Flowers

Aug 7

Aug 14 Shirley Petersen

Aug 21

Aug 28

Dan & Shirley
Petersen for 50th WA
Betty McMahon

Fellowship Hostesses

Aug 7 Vicki Hampton, Josiah Anderson

Aug 14 Jan Lichtenwald, Nancy Henke

Aug 21 Shirley Petersen, Carolyn Leach

Aug 28 Potluck after Worship w/Voices of Peace

A memorial service for Marvin Leach will be held at 10 am Saturday, August 27, at New Era Lutheran Church with burial following at Memorial Park.

After burial, there will be a luncheon at the home of Becky Bettis, 2678 Tom Sawyer Rd, Muscatine.

Marvin Leach passed away on May 6 in Palm Coast, FL.



Birthdays

5 – Deanna Timm
 5 – Keith Batteau
 8 – Abbi Lee
 9 – Robert Gladwell
 10 – Brent Ford-Gladwell
 10 – Kathryn Harland
 12 – Nancy Henke
 16 – Rebecca Gladwell
 Dotson
 17 – Kelley Harland
 19 – Larry Irwin
 21 – Richard Leach
 24 – Carol Stalkfleet
 30 – Beth Young
 31 – Janie Swails

Anniversaries

4 – Neil & Chris Wulf
 14 – Ken & Shirley McDaniel
 14 – Paul & Ann Mayes
 19 – Dan & Shirley Petersen
 21 – Craig & Linda Schneider
 27 – Robert & Betty McMahon
 30 – Travis & Angela Wulf

"To say it was a beautiful day would not begin to explain it. It was that day when the end of summer intersects perfectly with the start of fall."—Ann Patchett

* * *

"Life is for service."—Fred Rogers

* * *

"Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep."—Scott Adams

* * *

"Aging is not 'lost youth' but a new stage of opportunity and strength."—Betty Friedan

Come listen to the music ministry of



Voices of Peace

Southern Gospel Music Ministry

Voices of Peace, a Southern Gospel group, from Potter, WI, will be at

New Era Lutheran Church
 Sunday, August 28, 2022,
 10:30 a.m. during worship

A love offering will be taken to support their ministry.

A potluck will be held after worship. A sign-up sheet for salads, vegetables, desserts will be available at the back of the church. Meat will be furnished.

The group: Bud McAtee, from Brillion, lead guitar, lead vocal harmony, his wife Carolyn McAtee, lead and harmony vocal, Ruth Franz, from Manitowoc, on keyboard, Mike Brown, from Chilton, bass vocal. On occasion, Don Olson, from Crivitz, rhythm guitar and his wife Elaine Olson, on sound check and product table.

Over the past 2 decades, God has blessed them with a medley of opportunities to share the gospel through music at numerous church denominations, concerts, and Gospel Fests throughout the Midwest as well as a mission outreach in Alaska, local nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and County Fairs. They host one of the biggest Gospel Fests in the State of Wisconsin, which is held the third Friday and following Saturday in August, at the Hilbert Civic Park in Hilbert, WI. Don't miss this concert.



www.voicesofpeacemusic.net

Bud & Carolyn McAtee, Ruth Franz, Mike Brown, Don Olson (Elaine Olson)

Heavenly envoys

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.—Ralph Waldo Emerson



Summer — time to stand and stare

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
—"Leisure," W.H. Davies

A living mystery

In *Walking on Water*, Madeleine L'Engle quotes Emmanuel Suhard, a French cardinal in the Catholic Church during the 1940s: "To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist."

What would it look like in your life to be "a living mystery" — to live in a way that wouldn't

make sense if not for God's existence? What risks might you take for the sake of wholeness and justice in the world? To what lengths might you go to serve a neighbor? What fears might no longer fill your heart and rule your mind? Will you see Jesus in people who are poor, be surprised to find him revealed amid suffering? What "fruits" might you allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate in you — generosity, patience, self-control? What grace will you show to others because you have experienced God's love so powerfully? All of which makes sense only because God exists!

The water of life



Christ is like a river that is continually flowing. There are always fresh supplies of water coming from the fountainhead, so that a man may live by it and be supplied with water all his life. So Christ is an ever-flowing fountain; he is continually supplying his people, and the fountain is not spent. They who live upon Christ may have fresh supplies from him for all eternity; they may have an increase of blessedness that is new [and] never will come to an end.—Jonathan Edwards

Come, my Way

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a way as gives us breath;
Such a truth as ends all strife,
Such a life as killeth death.
Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a light as shows a feast,
Such a feast as mends in length,
Such a strength as makes his guest.
Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a joy as none can move,
Such a love as none can part,
Such a heart as joys in love.
—George Herbert

Can't pray? First rest!

Weariness can seriously hamper our attempts to pray, says Bonnie Gray, author of *Whispers of Rest*. "We are a generation who doesn't know how to express our souls to God, even though we drive ourselves exhausted, doing for Jesus." The solution, she says, is to stop and rest. The stressed-out, despairing prophet in 1 Kings 19 is a prime example. "God knew Elijah needed physical rejuvenation first — in order to hear his gentle voice, whispering in a gentle breeze," Gray notes. Guarding against the depletion of spiritual, physical and emotional resources can improve our ability to hear God's voice, too. "When you find it's hard to pray, don't be afraid," says Gray. "You're standing at the very cusp of who God longs to connect with. The real you. Take the time to rest. You're worth it."

Issue an invitation!

When I enter that beautiful city
And the saints all around me appear,
I hope that someone will tell me:
It was you who invited me here.
—Carrie K. Butcher

God among the rubble

The nonprofit World Central Kitchen provides fresh meals for communities in need following natural disasters or during humanitarian crises. After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, WCK fed millions of people in the country and refugees at border crossings.

When I feel discouraged by tragic news and ask where God is, I'm reminded that God shows up precisely in people such as the WCK teams. They are God's hands serving healthy food to people fleeing home. They are God's heart and arms welcoming those in need to be nourished. Often in the Bible God shows up around meals: Sarah and Abraham host the Lord in the form

of three visitors; God rains manna from heaven for the Israelites; an angel provides food for exhausted Elijah; Jesus eats with "tax collectors and sinners" and feeds crowds with a few loaves and fish. Supremely, Jesus gives to all the meal of Holy Communion, the bread and wine that are his very body and blood. In our broken world, God is among the rubble, among the helpers, among us.—Heidi Hyland Mann

The power of love

Only in love can I find you, my God. In love the gates of my soul spring open, allowing me to breathe a new air of freedom and forget my own petty self. In love my whole being streams forth out of the rigid confines of narrowness and anxious self-assertion, which make me a prisoner of my own poverty emptiness. In love all the powers of my soul flow out toward you, wanting never more to return, but to lose themselves completely in you, since by your love you are the inmost center of my heart, closer to me than I am to myself.--Karl Rahner, *Encounters With Silence*

New seat, new perspective

In older sitcoms, family members, especially parents, each had their own chair in the living room. No one else sat there. If its "owner" wasn't present, the on-set chair remained empty. Church can be like that too, with people claiming the same seat week after week. Our view of the service and of fellow worshipers is familiar and comfortable.

Recently, our family was "bumped" back a bit, which felt surprisingly different at first. But we interacted just the same with the service. As a bonus, I talked with different people. And after church we stayed to visit a bit longer.

I'm glad church seats don't have nameplates. And I'm thankful that God nudges me out of my comfort zone from time to time, giving me a new perspective.—Janna Firestone

Bible Quiz



A few Bible books have only one chapter. Which of the following is not among them?

- A. Obadiah
- B. Philemon
- C. 1 John
- D. 2 John
- E. 3 John
- F. Jude

Answer: C

Safe and secure

The Resurrection is an exploding flare announcing to all sincere seekers that it is safe to believe. Safe to believe in ultimate justice. Safe to believe in eternal bodies. Safe to believe in heaven as our estate and the earth as its porch. Safe to believe in a time where questions won't keep us awake and pain won't keep us down. Safe to believe in open graves and endless days and genuine praise. ... Because of the Resurrection, everything changes. Death changes. It used to be the end; now it is the beginning.—Max Lucado, *When Christ Comes*

Nuptial LOLs

When Outreach magazine asked pastors for their most embarrassing mistakes during wedding ceremonies, the responses took the cake. Hundreds of clergy 'fessed up about dropping rings, using the wrong names and even driving to the wrong venue. Have a laugh at these "I do" don'ts!

- I asked the groom if he promised to leave his wife and cleave to all others. Before I could correct it, he said, "I do."
- Due to a bulletin typo, the Bible reading from 1 John was listed as John 4:16-19. In those verses, Jesus tells the woman at the well, "...for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband."
- I accidentally read, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and money and be united to his wife."
- While praying, I meant to say, "Lord, please bless this marriage." The word *message* started to come out instead, and I tried to stop it. Unfortunately, the result was "Lord, please bless this mess."
- I asked the groom, "Do you take this wedded woman to be your wife?"



Christian symbol

RAM—This Old Testament symbol of Christ represents him as the leader of the "herd," as well as a sacrifice for people's sins. Jesus' sacrificial death is foretold in Genesis 22, when God instructed Abraham to kill his only son, Isaac. But God provided a ram to take Isaac's place, just as he provided Jesus, God's only Son, to take our place on the cross.

Puzzle!

Search for and circle all the bold words from Psalm 18:2, which reminds us where we find our strength.

The **LORD** is **MY ROCK**, my **FORTRESS** and my **DELIVERER**; my **GOD** is my rock, in whom I **TAKE REFUGE**. **HE** is my **SHIELD** and the **HORN** of my **SALVATION**, my **STRONGHOLD**.

S T R O N G H O L D T S
O L O B K I E Y E J S A
R E F U G E I Y N T V L
R O G H A R L Q R A Y V
S X C T T I M T K K M A
H O R N C E Y R A E D T
I G F V L O L K E N S I
E N F O R T R E S S G O
L T U R G Q A C K J Q N
D C D E L I V E R E R E
K Y U X O C N O O Y Q S
X H X A R K L R C N H Y
G O D T D K A D K U D X

GOD ROCKS!



Fruit or false



Spotting true fruits can be tricky. Thankfully, it's much easier to spot the fruit of the Spirit.



Directions: Determine whether each item is a fruit or vegetable and circle the correct letter. Then insert the letters in order below to complete the verses.

	Fruit	Vegetable		Fruit	Vegetable
Apple	V	P	Pepper	O	U
Carrot	E	O	Spinach	R	S
Tomato	Y	R	Watermelon	H	P
Grape	C	F	Broccoli	G	N
Eggplant	T	D	Pumpkin	T	Y
Celery	I	N	Pear	F	C
Banana	K	M	Asparagus	L	R
Cucumber	N	W			


But the fruit of the Spirit is lo_e, j_ _ , pea_e,
pa_ie_ce, _ind_ess, go_dne_s,
fait_ful_ess, gen_leness, sel_-cont_ol.

GALATIANS 5:22-23, ESV

Answer: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

August 2022

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1 Pastor Kirsten @ Moses Project Training in Des Moines	2	3	4	5	6
7 10:30 am - Sunday Worship	8	9 9 am - Sewing group meet at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome. 6 pm - Council Meeting 	10 9:00 am - Care & Concern- Meet @ McDonald's	11	12	13 Pastor Kirsten on vacation (August 10-14)
14 Pastor Kirsten -- vacation 10:30 am - Sunday Worship	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 * 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Bishop Current Officiating	22	23	24	25	26	27 10 am - Funeral Service for Marvin Leach
28 10:30 am - Sunday Worship with "Voices of Peace" Potluck following	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	* Sunday, Aug 21 - Nikki Kurz playing piano				