

New Era Lutheran Church



February 2023 Newsletter

New Era Lutheran Church

3455 New Era Road

Muscataine, IA 52761

Sunday School: 9:30 am (Sept-May)

Worship Services: 10:30 am

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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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The river of life

The Red River of the North, in the north-central U.S. and central Canada, takes countless twists and turns. A close-up aerial photo or map shows its frequent sideswipes and U-turns. One could cross the river several times without changing direction while hiking or biking along the border between Minnesota and North Dakota. You might wonder at points if it has completely turned back south — which raises another point: While most rivers flow south, the Red River flows north.

Sometimes life meanders, but that doesn't mean we're off course. Sometimes we seem to be going in the opposite direction of most people, but that doesn't mean we're not headed the right way. Sometimes it feels like it takes us a long time to make progress, but that doesn't mean we're not moving. We might just be taking in more of life's scenery! Follow your own unique trajectory, letting God, the creator of all rivers and all life, serve as the current that moves you ever onward.

**New Era Lutheran Church
Council Meeting – Tues., January 10, 2023**

Remember in Prayer

Dana Devey, Kim Dierickx, Jack Hull, Jerry Lichtenwald, Shawn Young, Janet & Tom Kindler, Ryan Gladwell and Alexandria Brush and Emory Ann Gladwell, Vicki Loving, Troy Davis, Catherine Dittmer, Emogene Sorgenfrey, and loved ones who are in need of prayer support.



Ushers – Gary & Becki Petersen

Alter Guild – Ann Mayes

Communion Asst. – Gary & Becki Petersen

Readers

Feb 5 Lynne Leacox
Feb 12 Ann Mayes
Feb 19 Dan Petersen
Feb 26 Paul Mayes

Flowers

Gloria Batteau

Fellowship Hostesses

Feb 5 Vicki Hampton
Feb 12 Carolyn Leach
Feb 19 Shirley McDaniel, Joyce Rudbeck
Feb 26 Ann Mayes, Shirley Petersen

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

President Becki Petersen called the council meeting to order. Joan Dietrich delivered devotions.

Present: Joan Dietrich, Eric Leacox, Vicki Hampton, Dick Leach, Becki Petersen

Next meeting is temporarily set for Tuesday, February 21, 2023. Eric will have devotions.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved as corrected. Eric made motion to accept the December minutes; Vicki seconded motion.

Treasurer's report was discussed. Adam made motion to approve treasurer's report; Dick seconded motion.

Care & Concern: Group will meet tomorrow (Wed., Jan 11). Last month bags were put together and distributed, took Pastor Kirsten to lunch and sent cards to homebound members. Pastor stopped to see Tom and Janet Kindler. Pastor would try to see Emogene. Dick stopped and visited with Bill Halling. Janice Lichtenwald was going to try to take Jerry to Steindler Clinic.

Property: Had one snow removal this season so far. Nelson Electric was in and said there were a few little issues in the attic. Couple of outlets need to be changed in church (by the Christmas tree and in back). LED light bulbs have been placed in the chandeliers. Baseboards in parsonage basement have been put back on walls and filter was changed. There is no salt in the water softener. There is a potential tenant interested in living in parsonage on a donation basis. Will know more later.

Eric replaced bulb in closet. Suggested not to buy new florescent lights but get LED lights.

Snow blower is located in the gym entrance. Gym entrance is packed full of items and needs to be removed for fire safety.

Stewardship/Fellowship/Outreach: Shirley Petersen provided the "Church Basement Ladies" play information. Our expenses for play rights, set making supplies, cast t-shirts, costumes and food for guests and cast was \$3,107.52. Deposits were \$11,280 with a profit of \$8,172.48 minus \$52 to

reimburse church treasury for food expenses. Total profit is \$8,120.48. This was divided three ways with each receiving \$2,706.82 for MCSA, New Era Lutheran Church, and Doctors Without Borders.

Worship & Music: Pastor Kirsten provided worship services for Epiphany and Lent. Pastor John Meyer will lead Worship the first Sundays in January, February, and March. Rev Dan Kuckuck will lead worship on Jan 15 and Rev Drew Nagle will lead worship Jan 22. Bill Turner contacted Pastor Susan Bantz from Grace Lutheran to have someone play the piano during worship on Jan. 15. Mentioned to Susan Bantz we were short a pastor for January 29. She said she would look into this but haven't heard back yet as of this meeting.

Youth: There are now six children in Sunday School.

Old Business: Jeremy Hice of Skyline Painting will start repair and painting on the Fellowship Building the week of February 7. Dick will give Becki a key to give to Jeremy. We can remove pictures and quilts off walls and move chairs out of hallway.

New Business: A written letter was received stating Loaves and Fishes has closed. Will look into other ways to assist the community.

Aleese Kenitzer, pastor at Shepherd of the Cross, is our contact for emergencies, etc.

Adam made motion to adjourn meeting; Vicki seconded motion.

Respectfully,

Joan Dietrich
Secretary



Marked by love

Through the centuries [people] have displayed many different symbols to show that they are Christians. They have worn crosses in the lapels of their coats, hung chains about their necks, even had special haircuts. Of course, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of this, if one feels it is [one's] calling. But there is a

much better sign, a universal mark that is to last through all the ages of the church until Jesus comes back. ...

Love — and the unity it attests to — is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father.—Francis Schaeffer

Going out of our way

In mid-2022, Mediterranean Shipping Company, a world leader in container transport, voluntarily changed its routes, on the advice of scientists, to protect large populations of blue whales off the Sri Lankan coast. Going out of its way 15 nautical miles has led to a whopping 95% drop in whale strikes.

Jesus counseled people to go out of their way for one another, especially for the vulnerable: "If anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." Further, "whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water ... will by no means lose his reward" (Matthew 5:40-41; 10:42, ESV).

Paul likewise urged his listeners to voluntarily give up eating meat, even if they didn't believe in and weren't challenged by the idols to which it had been sacrificed, for the sake of new believers with weaker faith (Romans 14).

Faith calls us to go out of our way for the sake of others; sometimes a wealthy corporation opts to do the same. God's hand is at work in both, protecting vulnerable humans and nonhumans alike.

"It is about as hard to absolve yourself of your own guilt as it is to sit in your own lap."

—Frederick Buechner

* * *

"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day."

—Sally Koch

* * *

"To love another person is to help them love God."—Søren Kierkegaard

* * *

"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."

—Indira Gandhi

me, and makes me go back from this platform utterly ashamed of my poor feeble words, and of the tongue which has uttered them, it is this subject. This love of Christ is the most amazing thing under heaven, if not in heaven itself.

—Charles Spurgeon

Love aces the test

Author Adele Calhoun describes life as "our 'open-book' test on love." How can we ace it? In *Invitations From God*, she points out that daily decisions are the make-or-break factors: "Day in and day out as we plan, work, produce, commute and relate, we make life-altering choices to either love or neglect others." For another study guide, reflect on St. Augustine's timeless words: "What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of [people]. That is what love looks like."

A daily prayer

Since God will be my end
Let him be my beginning,
So that I may now fully live
Instead of falling, straying, sinning.
—Angelus Silesius

Christian symbol



ECCE AGNUS DEI — Latin for "Behold, the Lamb of God," this is the phrase John the Baptist uses twice to point out Jesus to others (John 1:29, 36). It marks Jesus' Epiphany (manifestation, revelation) as the Anointed One (Christ, Messiah).

Lenten signals



Why should we observe Lent? This 40-day season of repentance and reflection that begins on Ash Wednesday has three important purposes. Lent helps us STOP, LOOK and LISTEN.

We observe Lent because it tells us to STOP and rest awhile — and to stop sinning. Lent tells us to LOOK inward for an honest self-examination, to look upward to see the cross of Jesus with healing and love, and to look forward to the hope of the Resurrection. And we observe Lent because it tells us to LISTEN — to the voice of God, the words of Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

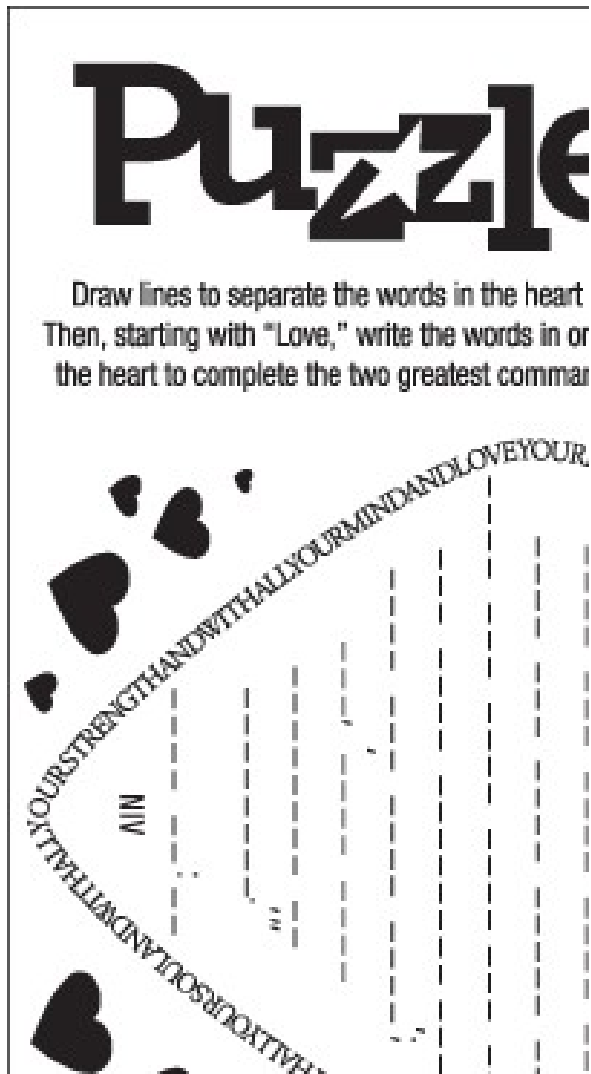
STOP, LOOK and LISTEN! These commands that are so crucial for travel safety are also important for our journey through Lent.

Amazing love

If there is one subject more than another upon which I wish ever to speak, it is the love of Christ; but if there is one which quite baffles

Puzzle!

Draw lines to separate the words in the heart outline. Then, starting with "Love," write the words in order inside the heart to complete the two greatest commandments.



Let's go bananas!

When the baseball team in Savannah, Georgia, got new owners in 2016, it also received a new name and identity — the Bananas! Adding pep to what often seemed a long, boring game, Jesse and Emily Cole offered a creative new experience, full of entertainment and spectacle. Players wear all-yellow uniforms (sometimes kilts), and the mascot is a banana named Split. Cheering on the team are the Banana Nanas

senior-citizen dancers and the Man-Nanas Dad Bod Cheering Squad. The entire organization sets out to bring hospitality and joy, sending people home thinking, "This was the best experience of my life!"

What if Christians, individually and as a community, fully embraced *our* new name and identity, sharing radical hospitality and profound joy with everyone? Jesus has bought us from our former owner, sin, and given us a new name: Beloved of God. This identity may seem silly to some, just as the Savannah Bananas raised eyebrows initially. But before long, the delighted fans were *going bananas* for them!

With the same wild abandon and big-hearted outreach, the church — with its much-greater message — can spread love and goodwill, and have fun doing it!

Don't lose the key

In *Walking on Water*, Madeleine L'Engle writes: "We have to be braver than we think we can be, because God is constantly calling us to be more than we are, to see through plastic sham to living, breathing reality, and to break down our defenses of self-protection in order to be free to receive and give love." That sounds inspiring, but the moment I stumble, exhausted or overwhelmed, these words no longer encourage. Instead, they read like the work is mine *alone*, and I'm not up for that.

Knowing some of L'Engle's writings on faith, I researched that quote. Turns out it had been chopped off at the knees. Her next words are the key: "With God, even a rich man can enter the narrow gate to heaven." *With God*.

I can't respond to God's call to be more than I am, grow in faith, serve my neighbor or "enter

the narrow gate to heaven” on my own. But “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26), and whatever Jesus calls me to do, *he* will equip me to do, walking with me all the way.—Heidi Hyland Mann



Fill in the blanks for three qualities Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, attributes to love: “Love is _____; love is _____. ... it keeps no record of _____.”

- A. challenging, important, the past
- B. childlike, innocent, injustice
- C. self-sacrificing, generous, finances
- D. patient, kind, wrongs

Answer: D (See 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, NIV.)

What’s in it for me?

Communion takes on new meaning for me when Jesus calls himself the bread of life. The day after feeding the 5,000, Jesus explains, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life” (John 6:54, NIV). Many people stop following him after that, finding the teaching too difficult. Maybe Jesus is challenging people who claim to be his disciples but are in it just for the miracles.

When I hear the Words of Institution, I ask myself if I’m a “What’s in it for me?” follower. Do I expect Jesus to merely impress me with answered prayers? Or do I trust him completely and serve him wholeheartedly? Am I like Peter, who, when asked whether I’ll leave too, replies, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (v. 68).—Julie Lee

From death to new life

After the inventor of the Frisbee died in 2002, family members honored his final wish: to have some of his ashes molded into a flying disk! The point, according to toy legend “Steady Ed” Headrick, was for his loved ones to have fun playing with him even after he had passed. “He lived for Frisbee,” said his widow, and now he lives on in one.

Thankfully, the ashes used on Ash Wednesday aren’t cremains. But they do have special significance. They’re often made by burning branches from the previous year’s Palm Sunday celebration. By tying together seasons, the practice of receiving ashes reminds us of cycles: sin, repentance and forgiveness, plus life, death and resurrection — Jesus’ as well as our own.

2022 Children's Christmas Program

Children o of the LIGHT

This craft celebrates that now we
light in the Lord (see Ephesians

What you need:

- A gallon zip-top plastic bag
- Permanent markers (dark colors)
- Black construction paper
- White cardstock
- Scissors

What you do:

1. Draw a self-portrait on the outside of the bag. Add details.
2. Insert the black paper and set the bag flat on a table. It should be tough to see your picture now.
3. On the white cardstock draw a picture of a flashlight with a long beam of light coming out. Color the flashlight but leave the beam white.



FEBRUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2  GROUNDHOG DAY	3
5 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	6	7	8 9 am - Care & Concern Meet @ McDonald's	9	10
12 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	13	14  HAPPY Valentine's DAY 6 pm  Church Council	15	16	17
19 *  Transfiguration Sunday	20  PRESIDENTS DAY	21 Mardi Gras	22  Ash Wednesday	23	24
26 9:30 - Sunday School	27	28			