New Era Lutheran Church



January 2023 Newsletter

New Era Lutheran Church 3455 New Era Road Muscatine, 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 & Choir Director: Mary Maxson

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Bulletin & Newsletter: Joan Dietrich

Cell: 563-299-4710 Email: <u>neweralutheran@gmail.com</u> 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/ NewEraLutheranChurch

from the Pastor. .

Dear New Era,

All I can say is thank you. Thank you for ...

- The care and attentiveness you gave to my whole family
- The grace upon grace, patience and forgiveness readily shown
- The conversation, laughter, and hugs
- Welcoming me into really difficult times and really happy celebrations
- Your dedication and devotion to Christ and keeping Christ at the heart of all we do.

I have thoroughly loved my time with you. I was drawn here because of a presence of the Holy Spirit that I felt when I came for my interview. That presence of the Holy Spirit has since been shown to me more times than I count. As we worship, both outside and in the sanctuary; as we worked on caring for the building; as I visited with people and met with the care and concern team; as we enjoyed fellowship together and washed dishes after----God moves through here and will lead this beautiful congregation into its next chapter.

The other day I looked through the New Era cookbook and enjoyed recognizing the names of the cooks. New Era has a legacy of love, care, resilience, and hospitality. I pray for God to continue to strengthen you and fill you with peace.

As I say farewell, I am including a signed contract that is between New Era and myself. Essentially, I am no longer your pastor and will not be able to act as your pastor. This is the hardest part of leaving for me, but I trust God to care for you and perhaps connect us again in the future.

I leave you with a beloved hymn. One that was shared with me from Mary on my last day and one you know well:

"Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day. Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do. Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see. God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love." (https://digitalsongsandhymns.com/songs/391 4)

God's richest blessings to each of you. I am incredibly grateful for New Era and will pray for you often.

With much love, Pastor Kírsten†





Southeastern Iowa Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God's work. Our hands.

A Covenant When a Call is Complete

For the Rostered Minister:

- The Rostered Minister continues to follow all provisions of the governing documents of the three expressions of this church, the policies and procedures for roster management, and the *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.
- The Rostered Minister is responsible for educating the congregation and community about the boundaries and expectations when a Rostered Minister accepts a new call or retires.
- The departure and/or retirement of the Rostered Minister signals the conclusion of providing pastoral actions for the congregation. These actions include, but are not limited to, officiating baptisms, weddings, or funerals. The Rostered Minister declines all invitations extended by congregation members.
- The Rostered Minister will not engage in the life of the congregation by attending worship or by pastoral visits to members in hospitals, care facilities, or homes unless under extraordinary circumstances as invited by the successor Rostered Minister(s) or directed by the synod bishop.
- The Rostered Minister and family will seek a new congregation to join, investing their talents, time, and finances in that new community of faith.
- The Rostered Minister and family are ethically bound not to engage in conversations and actions, whether critical or not, of congregational plans or the successor Rostered Minister(s). If the Rostered Minister has needed information, the successor Rostered Minister or a synod liaison initiates contact.
- The Rostered Minister refrains from engaging members of the congregation over social media platforms for at least one year and then only on matters unrelated to the congregation. It is recommended the Rostered Minister change accounts on platforms where posts can be followed by members of the congregation.
- The Rostered Minister declines invitations in the community of the congregation to provide

pastoral acts that are normally done by a clergy member under call in the community.

- The Rostered Minister declines invitations to gatherings of congregational members where the only relationship is Rostered Minister/member. Invitations from neighbors and dear friends should be accepted cautiously in the first year.
- The Rostered Minister speaks well of the congregation following the eighth commandment.
- The Rostered Minister seeks an accountability partner in maintaining the boundaries and expectations of a retired rostered minister.
- If the Rostered Minister is accepting a new call, the Rostered Minister does not invite members of the former congregation to visit the new setting.

For the Congregation:

The congregation remains focused on the mission of the congregation and call to follow Jesus.

- Congregation members follow the boundaries and expectations outlined by the departing Rostered Minister and synod.
- The congregation works with the synod office during the transition and call process.
- Congregation members do not ask the former Rostered Minister to conduct pastoral acts or pastoral visits and do not ask the successor Rostered Ministers to involve or invite the former Rostered Minister.
- Congregation members refrain from engaging the former Rostered Minister on social media platforms or following the Rostered Minister on their platforms for at least one year and then only cautiously in non-congregational conversation.
- Congregation members do not engage the former Rostered Minister in conversation about the congregation or successor Rostered Minister(s), whether critical or not.
- Any necessary contact with the former Rostered Minister regarding congregational business is done through the successor Rostered Minister(s) or synod liaison.
- Congregation members speak well of the former Rostered Minister and their ministry with the congregation.
- Congregation members refrain from inviting the departed or retired Rostered Minister to family events when they are doing so solely because

they were their Rostered Minister and not friend, family or neighbor.

• Congregation members refrain from inviting the former Rostered Minister to serve in a pastoral role in a community capacity when the role is typically reserved for an active clergy member of the community.



Remember in Prayer

Ronja Ren Marie Nichols, Jerry Lichtenwald, Shawn Young, Chuck Harland, Janet & Tom Kindler, Kayla Pfluger, Ryan Gladwell and Alexandria Brush and Emory Ann Gladwell, Porche Carle, Vicki Loving, Mary Dickinson, Troy Davis, Catherine Dittmer, Emogene Sorgenfrey, and loved ones who are in need of prayer support.

<u>January</u>

Ushers – McDaniel's Alter Guild – Becki Petersen Communion Asst. – Mayes'

	Readers	Flowers		
Jan 1	No Worship Service			
Jan 8	Ann Mayes	Poinsettias		
Jan 15		Poinsettias		
Jan 22				
Jan 29				

<u>Fellowship Hostesses</u>

- Jan 1 No Worship Service
- Jan 8 Shirley McDaniel, Shirley Petersen
- Jan 15 Becki Petersen, Jan Lichtenwald
- Jan 22 Ann Mayes
- Jan 29 Lynn Bendt, Janet Kindler

Birthdays

Anniversaries 6 – Adam & Kimberly Turner

- 1 Mary Maxson
- 5 Stephanie Anderson 7 Garrett & Beth Young
- 8 Jim Wittmer
- 23 Luke Probasco
- 25 Rob Burger

A big thank you to Care & Concern Committee for all the cards during this past year.

With much appreciation and Love, Gary and Maureen

New Era Lutheran Church Council Meeting – Tues., December 13, 2022

President Becki Petersen called the council meeting to order. Pastor Kirsten delivered devotions.

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

Next meeting will be January 10, 2023. Joan will have devotions.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's report was discussed. Eric explained treasurer's report. Hammar & Associates (payroll finance company) has merged with Centennial Tax & Accounting. Everything should remain the same. Joan made motion to approve treasurer's report; Dick seconded motion. Motion approved.

We need to ask Shirley Petersen (Fundraiser Account) regarding the profit made from the play. Joan will contact Shirley.

<u>Care & Concern</u>: Going to make visits on Wed., Dec. 14.

<u>Property</u>: Dick paid for garage door. In parsonage: Baseboards were removed and wall and baseboards cleaned of mold. Dick turned the temperature up in the parsonage the day before for the carpet cleaner was to clean; heater was working, but thermostat didn't work. Thermostat was replaced and carpet was cleaned.

Organ was tuned on Thursday, Dec. 15.

<u>Stewardship/Fellowship/Outreach</u>: The Boys Basketball team that used the gym last year asked to use it again. Dick will check to see if heaters are working in gym and see if bleachers need to be removed.

Council made motion to have Jeremy Hice Skyline Painting repair and paint walls and ceiling. Becki seconded motion. Approved unanimously. Joan will contact Jeremy and obtain date of service, work schedule, estimated time frame, etc.

Council requested a few more mouse traps be set. Bosch was contacted last month and said they would put a couple more live traps and sticky paper. Joan will pick up a few more mouse traps as there is evidence of their visits are becoming more in the kitchen.

Worship & Music: Pastor Kirsten is resigning from her call as pastor of Gloria Dei and New Era. This will be effective December 31, 2022. Letters were sent to members of the congregation.

Pastor Meyer will be officiating Sunday, January 8, February 5, and March 5. Pastor Dan Kuckuck, Asst. to Bishop at SE Iowa Synod will officiate Sunday, January 15. Becki will call three Lutheran pastors and ask if they would be our support pastors for the Interim.

Pastor indicated she would have the January/February Epiphany bulletin ready for Joan. Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call will be held Sunday, Dec. 18, after the Worship Service. Christmas Eve Service is at 7 pm. Christmas Day will be Lessons and Carols. No service on New Year's Day.

Need to contact Mary Maxson, Lynne Leacox, and Dan Petersen for call committee. Last site profile can be viewed online.

Exit papers were printed to look over and prepare for Pastor's exit. Exit interview will be Tuesday Dec 20 at 11 am with Pastor Dan Kuckuck via phone conference call Interim pastors are appointed by the Southeast Iowa Synod. Becki, Eric, and Joan will be included in phone conference. There is not a lot of available interim pastors. Eric will review the financial part of the exit.

Pastor went over some suggestions for supply pastors and worship/sermons.

<u>Youth</u>: The Children's Christmas Program will be Sunday, Dec. 18.

Old Business: NA

New Business: NA

Joan made motion to adjourn meeting; Vicki seconded motion.

Respectfully,

Joan Dietrich Secretary



On January 6 Christians celebrate Epiphany, when the Magi came to worship baby Jesus. Epiphany, which means an appearance or manifestation, symbolizes the first recognition of the Savior by non-Jews. Because Epiphany also is a reminder that Jesus came as the light of the whole world, its symbols include light, candles and a star.

How did the wise men know — and how do we know — that Jesus is the light of the world? As preacher George Buttrick said, "It would little avail to ask how we know. That would be like asking how we know that Beethoven's 'Hymn to Joy' is joyous. If a man were to say, 'It is not joyous to me,' he would not condemn the music; he would tell only his morbidness. There is no logic to establish an axiom, for an axiom is the basis of all logic; and the soul of Jesus has axiomatic truth. Jesus is light, and there is no proof for light except light itself."

Writing our life — with God's help

A journalist once said you can measure the quality of a piece of writing by the quality of what has been cut. No matter how beautiful or interesting a phrase or sentence is, the piece may be stronger without it.

Rabbi Evan Moffic applies this wisdom to life in general. Too often we refuse to let something — a habit, a memory, a process — go, even when it no longer serves us. Thinking of our life as a book, we can cut out, edit or rearrange some pages or sentences to reflect our new learnings and growth. This is not always easy, but we don't have to do it alone. "God is our 'editor-in-chief,'" says Moffic, "and we are part of God's story. [While] God ... gives us free will to decide what to write on the pages of our lives, ... God is always there for conversation and consultation. And God left us a great guidebook called the Bible. Its lessons make our writing shine with truth and beauty." With God's guidance, what will you "write" in the new year?

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, but by all means,

keep moving." —Martin Luther King Jr.

"Life, with its rules, its obligations, and its freedoms, is like a sonnet: 'You're given the form, but you have to write the sonnet yourself."

-Anna Quindlen, "An Appreciation," in A *Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle



Wisdom from MLK

I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical

realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil, and this can only be done through love. —Martin Luther King Jr.

Baptism is serious business!

Baptizing people into God's family has always been a ministry highlight for Pastor Stan Purdum. One Sunday, he had the privilege of welcoming three infants and two young boys to the baptismal font, along with all their parents. After baptizing the babies, Purdum turned toward the families with older children, who'd been instructed to have their boys step forward one at a time.

Immediately, the 3-year-old shouted, "Not me!" and bolted for the exit. His father caught the youngster and carried him back as the congregation chuckled. This time, Purdum wasted no time completing the sacrament.

"Maybe this young boy was not greatly wrong to try to duck baptism," he later pondered. "Far from being a harmless little ceremony, baptism begins a lifetime commitment to God, which over the long haul is no easy thing. It lays upon us the responsibility to live up to the vows we have made." How seriously do you take your baptismal vows?

Pursue Jesus — and your passions

If you struggle with making and keeping resolutions, you're not alone. It can be discouraging to focus on what you're doing "wrong" and all the difficult changes in store. Yet January offers great opportunities to listen to God's direction. After all, Jesus came to give us abundant life and wants us to pursue him. As you review the previous year, ask: What brought me joy? How did I grow? How did I help others? What did I do that no one else could have done? Whether your list includes spending time outside, mentoring or coaching young people or making crafts to give away or sell, continue doing what brings you joy. God gives us each unique gifts and circumstances, so live passionately for him this year! —Janna Firestone

Another year for God

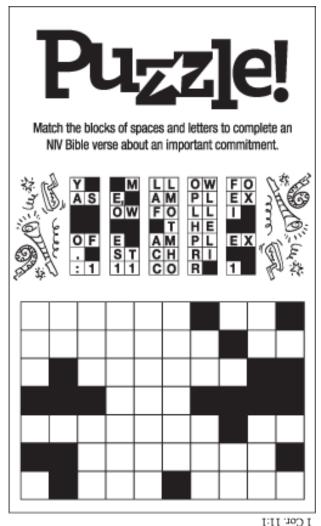
Another year is dawning; dear Father, let it be, in working or in waiting, another year with thee....

Another year of progress, another year of praise, another year of proving thy presence all the days.

Another year of service, of witness for thy love; another year of training for holier work above. Another year is dawning! Dear Father, let it be, on earth, or else in heaven, another year for thee. —Frances Ridley Havergal

Puzzle!

Match the blocks of spaces and letters to complete an NIV Bible verse about an important commitment.



Answer: Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

God's peaceable kingdom

Once in a while — too seldom, it seems, but often enough to give us hope — Isaiah's prophecy comes true: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together ... The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together" (Isaiah 11:6-7, NRSV).

In February 2022, a Minnesota photographer captured a rare event: a wolf and a deer lying feet from each other in the snow — and neither was eating the other! Occasionally we hear of Palestinians and Israelis partnering to teach peacemaking skills, a rally protester helping an injured counter-protester, a crime victim and perpetrator embracing. A divorced couple I know, deeply estranged, decided they could sit together at their son's high school graduation to demonstrate their love for him.

In a world sadly torn apart, glimpses of mending, tolerance and love are signs of God among us. Isaiah (11:6) declares what makes such goodness possible: "A little child shall lead them." We know this child as the babe of Bethlehem, Jesus.—Heidi Hyland Mann

Fresh starts

I suppose when we wake on January 1 the world will look the same. But there is a reminder of the Resurrection at the start of each new year, each new decade. That's why I also like sunrises, Mondays and new seasons. God seems to be saying, "With me you can always start afresh."—Ada Lum

Time for a spiritual assessment

"Hardly anything else reveals so well the fear and uncertainty among [people] as the length to which they will go to hide their true selves from each other and even from their own eyes," says A.W. Tozer. For insights into who we really are as Christians, the theologian proposes "rules for self-discovery." According to Tozer, "we may be known" by these seven things: what we want most, what we think about most, how we use our money, what we do with our leisure time, the company we enjoy, who and what we admire, and what we laugh at.

The "wise Christian" will find other tests, says Tozer, but these are a starting point to reveal if our desires and priorities conflict with God's will. "Our self-judgment is almost certain to be biased and imperfect," he adds, yet there's "every good reason for us to work along with the Holy Spirit in his benign effort to locate us spiritually in order that we may make such amendments as the circumstances demand."

Bible Quiz



How old was Abram when he followed God's call to leave Haran and travel to a new land?

A. 25

B. 50

C. 75

D. 100

Answer: C (See Genesis 12:4.)

Leave the light on

"We'll leave the light on for you," a motel chain once promised. In other words, they were expecting you and looking forward to your stay.

During the time of the high priest Eli, "the lamp of God had not yet gone out" (1 Samuel 3:3). Eli oversaw the tabernacle, so some people say this refers to an actual lamp. But the passage could have a deeper meaning. Although Eli had turned a blind eye to his sons' sins and neglected his duties, God knew that Eli could still be a divine instrument. God knew not to turn off Eli's light. God was expecting Eli to still shine brightly for him, and eventually Eli figured out that Samuel, his young charge, was hearing God's voice. So if your light seems dim or even burned out, be assured that your pilot light remains on! God has left the light on not just *for* you but also *in* you.—Julie Lee

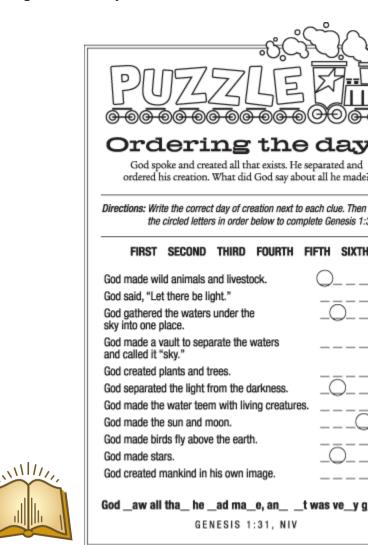
Fatherly goodness

In *Wrestling with an Angel*, Greg Lucas describes the challenges of parenting a son with special needs. Bathing, for example, is a dangerous, two-person job due to constant resistance. The struggle makes Lucas wonder how to "care for someone ... who opposes your very presence, even when that presence is necessary for his good."

Lucas admits he, too, has a disabling diagnosis — sin — and hates "being cleaned." But our gracious God "will not stand by when I am in need, even when I resist his compassion and care." His son's counterintuitive defiance reminds Lucas of the cross. On Calvary, "divine love overpowered my rebellion and forced upon me a process of cleansing redemption that I did not want to undergo." Even when we fight the process, our heavenly Father's unconditional love wins out.

Christian symbol

OPEN BOOK — A book symbolizes the Bible, the written Word of God. When shown open, a book represents truth or revelation. Apostles and saints are often pictured holding an open book, understood as the New Testament writings of the early Christian church.



ill that he had made, and it was very good.

sth, first, third, second, third, first, fifth, fourth, fifth, fourth, sixth;

TASTY CREATIONS

Make this yummy treat to remember what happened on each day of Creation.

What you need:

- 6 large pretzel rods
- Candy melts (white, chocolate and blue)
- Green sprinkles
- White or star-shaped sprinkles
- Fish crackers
- Animal crackers
 Adult help



What you do:

- With help, melt the three colors of candy melts in separate dishes. Microwave for 30 seconds at a time, stirring until soft.
- Decorate one pretzel for each day of Creation:
 - Dip half in white and half in chocolate to show light and darkness.
 - Dip half in white and half in blue to show separation of the atmosphere.
 - Dip half in chocolate, add green sprinkles and dip half in blue to show land, plants and water.
 - Dip in chocolate and add white or star sprinkles to show the stars.
 - Dip in blue and add fish crackers to show sea life.
 - Dip in chocolate and add animal crackers to show land animals.
- Share the Creation story and the snack – with a friend!

2022 Senior Dinner was held on Sunday, Nov 13 with Lynne and Eric hosting the meal and helpers!









JANUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 HAPPY New Year	2	3	4	5	6 EPIPHANY	7
8 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	9	10 MEE ING 6:00 PM	9 am - Care & Concern Meet @ McDonald's	12	13	14
9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	16 Martin Luther King Jr. –DAY–	17	18	19	20	21
9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	23	24	25	26	27	28
9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	30	31				
		December 202 S M T W Th 4 5 6 7 8 11 12 13 14 15 18 19 20 21 22 25 26 27 28 29	F Sa S M T 2 3 -	W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 8 9 10 11 15 16 17 18 22 23 24 25 0 0 0 0		