

New Era Lutheran Church



JULY 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:

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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](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)

Contact Pastor for emergency care:
Pastor Aleese Kenitzer,
Shepherd of the Cross, 563-264-0784



Prayer for July 4th

The following lines are from a long prayer, "That America Fulfil the Promise of Its Founding," by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan. Though written in 1945, it rings true yet today. (Full text at <https://tinyurl.com/nhc8747x>.)

O God, who is Liberator and Redeemer, Lawgiver and Judge, ...

May America remain loyal to the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and extend their application to ever-widening areas of life.

Keep out of our life all manner of oppression, persecution, and unjust discrimination; save us from religious, racial and class conflicts; may our country be a haven of refuge to the victims of injustice and misrule.

Instruct us in the art of living together, of reconciling differences of opinion and averting clashes of interest, of helping one another to achieve a harmonious and abundant life ...

That the Star-Spangled Banner, the symbol of our American democracy, may ever wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. Amen.



Remember in Prayer

Peggy Schnekel, Connie Schnekel, Judy Shook. Nolan Stevenson, Kimberly Miller, Beverly Heden, Stuart Schmitt, Wayne Everhart, Dana Devey, Kim Dierickx, Jack Hull, Jerry Lichtenwald, Janet & Tom Kindler, Ryan Gladwell and Alexandria Brush and Emory Ann Gladwell, Emogene Sorgenfrey, and all who are in need of prayer support.



Worship Attendants

Ushers – Eric & Lynne Leacox

Alter Guild – Becki Petersen

*Communion Asst. – Gloria Batteau,
Viola Hubbs-Shenkle*

Readers

Flowers

7/2 Lynne Leacox
7/9 Ann Mayes
7/16 Ann Mayes
7/23
7/30

Ann Mayes
Ann Mayes

Fellowship Hostesses

7/2 Lynne Leacox
7/9
7/16 Janet Lichtenwald, Janie Swails
7/23
7/30

The gladdest thing of all



Turn around and believe that the good news that we are loved is better than we ever dared hope, and that to believe in that good news, to live out of it and toward it, to be in love with that good news, is of all glad things in this world the gladdest thing of all. Amen, and come Lord Jesus.—Frederick Buechner, *The Clown in the Belfry*

July Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Anniversaries

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 – Claysha O’Neill | 7 – Justin & Erika Wulf |
| 2 – Chad Johnson | 15 – Terry & Vicki Hampton |
| 5 – Betty McMahon | 18 – Rob & Dianna Burger |
| 8 – Carissa Johnson | |
| 10 – Haley Batteau | |
| 12 – Nikki Kurz | |
| 15 – Olivia Sturgeon | |
| 17 – Shirley Allchin | |
| 20 – Jackelyn Batteau | |
| 23 – Vi Levetzow | |
| 26 – Kari Thoren | |
| 28 – Vicki Hampton | |

New Era Lutheran Church Council Meeting – June 13, 2023

The New Era Church Council meet on Tuesday, June 13, 2023. Present were Dick Leach, Adam Turner, Vicki Hampton, and Becki Petersen. Absent were Eric Leacox and Joan Dietrich. Devotions were led by Adam. Eric Leacox will have devotions in July.

Minutes from the May meeting had been emailed out previously and were to be read before the meeting. Adam moved to approve the May minutes. Dick seconded. Motion voted on and passed.

Treasurers Report – Eric had the yearly report for 2022 ready for council to look over. Lots of time was spent by those present to review his report. Adam moved to approve the report. Vicki seconded it. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

Care and Concern – Vicki reported that the committee continues to send cards and do some visiting.

Property – Dick reported new shingles on the ridge of the gym will be replaced and the dead tree behind the parsonage will be cut down. Dick and granddaughter Hannah Bettis painted and caulked around the window at the top of the ramp near the church entrance. More

outside painting will be done in the future. The floors will be waxed the week of June 19.

Worship & Music – A joint service at Shepherd of the Cross was held on June 11. All went well. Another joint service will be held at New Era on July 16, at 9:00 am. A combined choir from both churches is planned to sing at the July service. Both services are being led by Pastor Aleece Kinitzer of S of the C.

Stewardship/Fellowship/Outreach – No charity sewing was held this month because tables and chairs were put away in preparation of having the floors waxed.

Youth – Vacation Bible School will be held 9 am – 12:30 pm on Saturday, July 8. They will present a program during the church service on July 9.

Old Business – The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 25, after the church service. A potluck will follow with chicken provided. The sermon will be a video of a sermon by the Bishop Current.

New Business – A possible interim is in the works yet this summer. Stay tuned. Also, churches in Muscatine have been asked to sell pie to RAGBRAI riders as they pass through Muscatine at the end of July. No decision has been made whether to participate or not.

Adam moved to adjourn meeting. Dick seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully,

Becki Petersen
President



Prayer brings heaven to earth

When you received Jesus as your Savior, you began to live in two homes — earth and heaven. You were born the first time into your earthly family. Now

you have been born again into the family of God. You are a citizen of both worlds. Your new heavenly home is the biggest one. It is God's home. It is yours because you are united to Jesus, and heaven is where he lives.

But we don't need to wait until we die to visit heaven. Prayer is the airline to our heavenly homeland. We walk heaven's streets and view its wonders each time we fellowship with the Lord.—Ben Jennings

Finding freedom

What does freedom look like to you?

In *GraceLaced*, Ruth Chou Simons lists examples such as running unhindered, viewing a mountaintop overlook and enjoying iced tea with lemon. Because our good, creative God made us each different, our descriptions of freedom vary too. I think of deep breaths, an unhurried pace, genuine smiles, lack of regrets and deep belly laughs.

I love to laugh. Recently, during a demanding season of family celebrations, hardships and surprises, I realized I was laughing less. I felt bound to the next task on my long to-do list, but even good efficiency can shackle our spirits.

A good laugh — beyond a quick chuckle — offers many physical and emotional benefits. According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter relieves stress and pain, boosts the immune system and stimulates organs and endorphins. So today I'm determined to laugh loudly and joyfully while remembering my freedom in Christ.

—Janna Firestone

"Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained."

—Helen Keller

"You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."

—Woodrow Wilson

"Instructions for living a life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it."—Mary Oliver

"Don't tell me the sky's the limit when there are footprints on the moon."—Paul Brandt

God's got you

In Roman 4 Paul writes: "If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ... For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace" (v. 14, 16, NRSV). Here and elsewhere, Paul firmly explains that we are saved through God's grace, or unconditional love, made known most profoundly in Jesus Christ. But this passage raises a question: If belief (trust, faith) reckons us as righteous before God, what if we don't trust, can't believe, have lost all faith?

Pastor Martin Luther (1483-1546) assures us that even this is a gift of God: "I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead *the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith*" (*The Small Catechism*; emphasis added). Later in Romans, Paul declares that when we feel so lost (unbelieving, lacking in faith) that

we don't even know how to pray, the "Spirit himself intercedes for us" (8:26, NIV). Rest assured, dear one: God's got you.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

Living as poetry of God

For Christians, the Scriptures are our first source of guidance for how to live, and within them, Jesus is primary. But God speaks through nonbiblical voices too: preachers and teachers not found in the Bible, and even literature that isn't directly Christian. God, who used King Cyrus of Persia to free the exiled Israelites, can use *anyone* to call us to right living. Take, for example, Walt Whitman's description of life as poetry when we live certain ways, and God as "the greatest poet":

"This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the [vulnerable], devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, ... and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency. ... The known universe has one complete lover and that is the greatest poet. ... His love above all love has leisure and expanse." (From the preface to *Leaves of Grass*, 1855)

It's a miracle!

I believe in miracles. While I believe in the possibility, under God, of any kind of miracle, I am committed especially to the miracle of the changed life. When a human being goes from despair to hope, when a lost soul comes home, or when a mean and destructive person becomes kind and fruitful, the greatest of all miracles has occurred.—J. Ellsworth Kalas



Bible Quiz

In what land and at what age did Moses die?

- A. The land of Israel; 100 years old
- B. The land of Canaan; 70 years old
- C. The land of Moab; 120 years old
- D. The land of Judah; 102 years old

Answer: C (See Deuteronomy 34:5, 7.)

Turn your platform into an altar

Having a platform — or an avenue to communicate with lots of people — can be useful to share important messages, as long as we don't focus on our number of followers and pageviews. A platform also may tempt us to think we're the gift being offered; instead, I like to picture an altar. It's a place of offering and humility, where we give sacrificially through the reach God provides.

- Use these reminders to view your platform as an altar:
- Strive to obey and trust God, who calls and strengthens you.
- Be a good steward of God's gifts and messages, caring for the people you're reaching.
- Avoid comparisons with others, looking to God alone for validation and approval.

Through Abraham's willingness to surrender his only son, the Old Testament patriarch modeled how a platform can become an altar. So did Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, who became the ultimate sacrifice to pay our debt. As his New Testament followers, it's our privilege to

invite others into this paradoxical kingdom, to give of ourselves as a living sacrifice.—Monica Wilkinson

Puzzle!

Jesus instructs us to give and serve. What does Proverbs 3:27 (NIV) tell us *not* to do? To find out, cross out all the following letters. Then write the remaining letters in order on the spaces below.

Puzzle!

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B J K Q X Z

B W J I T J H Q H O B L Z D G B O O K

D K F Q R O M T B H J O B S Q E X Z T

O K X W J H O B M I Z T I J S D Q K U

E W X B H E Q N I T K I S I Z N Y O U

R P J Z O W B E Q R T O A X C Z T X J

DO NOT _____

PROVERBS 3:27, NIV

Answer: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Proverbs 3:27, NIV

An abundance of gifts

In 2022, people set some amazing Guinness World Records. A Nebraska man paddled more than 37 miles in a hollowed-out pumpkin boat. A Vermont teen wearing 4-inch heels walked more than 600 feet across a tightrope. And an Oregon man found and alphabetized all 26 letters in a can of alphabet soup in 2 minutes and 8.6 seconds. (The toughest part, he says, is distinguishing subtle differences between letters such as M and W.)

Your talents might not earn you any world records, but they certainly can grow faith and change lives. Whether you're good at teaching, singing, writing, cooking or accounting, the church can put those skills to productive use. Romans 12 lists many more qualities you may not realize are spiritual gifts: graciousness, serving, generosity, acts of mercy, loving and honoring others, extending hospitality, rejoicing and weeping with people, making peace.

You might not be able to outperform the alphabet soup record. But God abundantly blesses each of us to "outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10, ESV) and in sharing his love.—Stephanie Martin

Welcomed back to the fold

When her beloved dogs "returned home from an adventure smelling of eau de skunk parfum," Pastor Joanna Loucky-Ramsey refused to let them in the house. Instead, she cleaned and cared for them outside, slowly reintroducing them to "full participation in family life" once the stink eased.

"The odor left by the skunk could serve as a metaphor for our sin or for the sin others

perpetrate against us," she writes. "As much as God loves us, he hates the sin that hides the lovely fragrance of the image of God within each of us. God wants to welcome each of us into his family and into the heavenly home he has prepared for us, but we need to be 'deodorized' from the eau de sin parfum that would mar the entire experience of being in God's fragrant presence."

Loucky-Ramsey continues: "Just as our dogs needed our help to get rid of the smell of skunk, we need God's help to purge us from the offense of sin that permeates our nature and masks who God created us to be. That's what Jesus accomplished by his death and resurrection: to make us new and whole." —adapted from *The Wired Word*

Keep trying

In *The God Who Stays*, contemporary Christian musician Matthew West writes about the pandemic's fear-filled early days. After his concert tour was abruptly canceled in March 2020, he rode to an airport "feeling utterly hopeless about a world that was spinning out of control."

Then Arthur, his ride-share driver, began singing along to the radio — and the song happened to be West's "The God Who Stays." West joined in, jokingly asking how he sounded. "Not so good," Arthur replied, not knowing West's identity. "You keep trying."

The driver shared how those lyrics uplifted him during life's difficulties, and West later recalled that conversation during lockdown, while wondering where God was. The musician realized he had "settled for a socially distant relationship with the One who is nearer than I dare to believe, closer than the air I breathe." But West pictured "God running toward me

with open arms like the prodigal's father," and he resolved to keep trying — and to grow closer to the God who always stays.

DOLPHIN — Because dolphins often swim alongside ships, they've been used to symbolize Christ's presence, guiding people through earthly life and into eternal life. Although they're mammals, dolphins have been depicted as the fish that swallowed Jonah. Jesus compared his three days inside the tomb to Jonah's three days inside the fish, so dolphins also came to symbolize resurrection.



PUZZLE

SEPARATION FROM SIN

David praises God for his love and compassion.
What does God do for people who fear him?

Directions: Using each grid pattern marked below, find the word that appears in all three of those squares. Write the words in the spaces below to complete Psalm 103:12, NIV.

FROM	North	at the
as is	from	EAST
can	far	from

is	do	the
South	far	and
AS	EAST	as

WEST	far	THE
and	West	be
East	WEST	AS

... so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

PSALM 103:12, NIV

Answer: As far as the east is from the west

Sprinkle and split

A sprinkle of pepper and a dab of soap illustrate a big concept from God's Word.







What you need:

- Shallow dish
- Water
- Black ground pepper
- Toothpick
- Dish soap
- Bible

What you do:

1. With the dish on a table, fill it halfway with water. Don't jiggle the dish.
2. Sprinkle pepper on the water.
3. Dab the toothpick into a drop of soap. Then touch its tip to the center of the water and observe.
4. Read Psalm 103:8-12.
How does this experiment illustrate God's forgiveness?
5. Explain the science behind this experiment: The soap disturbs the water's surface tension. The soap molecules don't want to interact with the water. This repels the water molecules from the soap, causing the floating pepper to also move to the sides.

JULY 2023

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