



# New Era Lutheran Church

## July 2021 Newsletter

**Pastor Kirsten Lee**  
405-248-0586

**New Era Lutheran Church**  
3455 New Era Road  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
Sunday School: 9:30 am  
Worship Services: 10:30 am

**Contacts:**

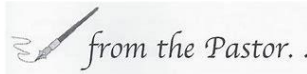
Joan Dietrich, Office Admin  
Office: 563-263-5356  
Office Hours: Tues & Wed – 10 am-2 pm  
Thurs – 10 am - Noon  
Email: [neweralutheran@gmail.com](mailto:neweralutheran@gmail.com)

**Organist: Mary Maxson**  
**Choir Director: Lavonne Schrum**

**Building Rental –**  
**Gloria Batteau**  
Church, Fellowship Hall, Gym  
Cell: 563-299-9622  
Email: [gfbatteau@gmail.com](mailto:gfbatteau@gmail.com)

**Bulletin & Newsletter– Joan Dietrich**  
Cell: 563-299-4710  
Email: [neweralutheran@gmail.com](mailto:neweralutheran@gmail.com)  
Bulletin - Items due by Thursday night  
Each week  
Newsletter Items due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the  
Month

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### Recap of Synod Assembly, 2021

The 34<sup>th</sup> annual synod assembly of the southeastern Iowa synod met online May 21<sup>st</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each year, congregations and partner ministries gather to make important decisions that impact our life together as an ELCA congregation. This year, 270 voting members gathered, which consisted of 53% lay leaders and 47% rostered ministers (pastors & deacons). This was our first synod assembly with Bishop Amy Current, our new Bishop. We are grateful for Shirley Petersen who attended this year as the New Era representative.

At this synod assembly, we were blessed to have three dynamic and influential leaders share their experiences on racial reconciliation. We began our time together by hearing from a group called Just Move, which

consists of Joe Davis, who is black, and David Scherer, who is white.

Shirley writes this about the group Just Move, “Together they share by using music, poetry, and storytelling to inspire people into deeper conversations about race and culture(justmoveculture.com). They raised the question, “How do we show that all are welcome?” We need to be aware of our racism and remove barriers. God’s table has room for all of us, everybody eats, everybody drinks, and we must be flexible and show unity. We’re all in this together and we trust Jesus will be with us all the time. God’s joy is for everyone!”

These two men name the courage and faithfulness it takes to honestly discuss racism and how to be antiracist. Taking the first step is scary and uncertain, but they demonstrated that as the Body of Christ, we can take these first steps together.

We were also blessed to have Rev. Carmelo Santos, Director for Theological Diversity and Ecumenical Interreligious Engagement in the ELCA. He presented “a way of hearing, seeing, and teaching” through the lens of baptism. Again, to share Shirley’s perspective, Rev. Santos “challenges us to stand with indigenous people. He acknowledged the 14,000 Meskwaki people who own 8,000 acres in Iowa and asked us if we knew who originally lived on the land where we currently live.

The synod business included two resolutions. “Child Protection” encourages members of this synod to develop protection

policies, read and study the Social Statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection. The other resolution, “Housing and Welcoming Refugee Children”, renews the ELCA’s commitment to welcome refugees and encourages members of the synod to engage with state and faith organizations that welcome refugee children to Iowa. Lastly, the assembly voted to increase the minimum payment to supply pastors from \$150 to \$200, with an additional \$50 for any extra services.

New Era’s former pastor, Dirk Stadlander, was installed as the pastor of Free Indeed, a congregation within the walls of Anamosa State penitentiary, which currently includes nearly one thousand men.

The next synod assembly will be May 20-21, 2022, in Coralville. Shirley Petersen shares her gratitude for allowing her to be our congregation’s representative. And we share our gratitude for Shirley’s participation and excellent summary of the assembly. Any questions regarding the assembly can be directed to Pastor Kirsten or Shirley Petersen.

With prayers for grace and peace to each of you,

Pastor Kirsten



Birthdays

- 1 - Claysha O'Neill
- 2 - Chad Johnson
- 5 - Betty McMahon
- 8 - Carissa Johnson
- 10 - Haley Batteau
- 12 - Chris Markham
- 12 - Nikki Kurz
- 15 - Olivia Sturgeon
- 17 - Shirley Allchin
- 20 - Jackelyn Batteau
- 23 - Vi Levetzow
- 24 - Jerry Geoghegan
- 26 - Kari Thoren
- 28 - Vicki Hampton

Anniversaries

- 7 - Justin & Erika Wulf
- 15 - Terry & Vicki Hampton
- 18 - Rob & Diana Burger

*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 Anniversary!*

**Special dates**

- Canada Day, July 1, 2021
- U.S. Independence Day, July 4, 2021



*Betty McMahon, Alice Hermann, Birdie Wade, Kellijayne Rudbeck, Bill Halling, Myra Davis, Jay Schackle, Pat Behan, John & Susan Hartung, Catherine Dittmer, Family & loved ones who are in need of prayer support.*



*A special thank you to all that sent sympathy cards, took time to let us know you were*

*praying for us during the loss of our brother/father (LeRoy Kemper). Your words helped us get through this time of grief. Thanks to all who helped with preparing and serving the luncheon after the funeral service. A special thanks to Mike Hermann for helping me set up tables in the social hall. It's amazing how the Lord sent you at the time I was trying to figure out when and how I was going to get those tables set up. Thank you, Pastor, Kirsten, for your support and preparing the funeral service. Our family was very comforted by your words and prayers.*

*From the family of LeRoy Kemper*



**New Era Lutheran Church  
Council Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2021**

The council meeting was called to order at 6 pm. Attending were Pastor Kirsten, Gloria, Josiah, Eric, Dick, Janice, Ann, and Vicki.

Devotions were giving by Eric – a reading from "Pilgrim Passage," written in 1678.

Last month's meeting minutes were read and approved.

Treasurers Report: Eric gave a report on the review of 2020 and current month finances and expenses.

## Committee Reports

Care & Concern: Gloria reported visiting members is now allowed in facilities. They visited Emogene Sorgenfrey and Phyllis Beck, calling on Bill Halling and Larry Irwin.

Property Report: Dick reported on clean-up day, light bulbs were replaced, repaired cross and put in the base. A bee specialist, Ed St. John, came to look at the bees. Other calls were made and waiting to hear back.

Stewardship/Fellowship/Outreach: Sturgeon family will be mailing out a letter to members to update information on their mission plans.

Old Business: Restrictions during Covid -19 are beginning to be removed and allowing worship to return with some normalcy as members and public receive vaccines. Pews will open allowing more seating. Singing will be allowed. Communion continues in pews for the time being; wearing a mask is optional.

### New Business:

Pastor will be on vacation June 28 to July 5.

VBS – Vacation Bible School is July 10, 9 am – 3 pm at Wild Cat Den.

Voices of Peace will be at New Era on Sunday, August 29.

Next council meeting is Tuesday, August 3 at 6 pm.

Pastor closed with prayer.

Respectfully,  
Vicki Hampton, Secretary



## **A gentle answer**

As it does this year, July 4 fell on Sunday in 1937. While Pastor Eldred Johnston led worship that morning in Paulding, Ohio, local kids set off firecrackers nearby (restrictions were rare back then). Realizing he needed to act, the pastor slipped outside during a hymn and found the revelers.

But instead of scolding or shouting, Johnston stayed calm. "I used to enjoy shooting fireworks too," he said, adding that he knew it was a fun way to celebrate. "But many in this town are gathered in worship, and the noise is very distracting. All I'm asking is that you wait until church services are over — about noon — and then shoot firecrackers all you want." The pastor smiled at each youth and returned to church.

Recounting that experience in *Liberty* magazine, Johnston said he half-expected to hear defiant explosions. Instead, the kids waited respectfully until worship was over. When conflicts loom, may we heed that example — and this advice from Proverbs: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (15:1, NIV).

## The flavor of the gospel

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?" (Matthew 5:13, NLT). These words from Jesus might seem strange to us — *can* salt lose its flavor? But in New Testament times, most of the salt used as seasoning, preservative, medicinal aid and more came from the Dead Sea, where impurities often compromised its usefulness, especially its flavor.

Jesus urges his disciples — including us — to not let the flavor of the gospel be suppressed in our lives. What might do this? Teachings that treat patriotism, prosperity or any other value as equal to Jesus; the tendency to elevate one nation, church denomination, theological understanding or religious tradition above all others; such intense focus on the laws of ancient Israel that we neglect the superseding grace of God. But neither should we force the gospel on people, like overpowering their food by dumping in too much salt at once.

As followers of Jesus, we're the salt of the earth. Let us use his good news to *gently* season others' lives with service and love.

*"Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible."*

—Corrie ten Boom

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*"That the birds of worry and care fly over your head, this you cannot change, but that they build nests in your hair, this you can prevent."* —Chinese proverb

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*"A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."*—Martin

Luther

## Friendly signposts



we  
are

We need friends. Friends guide us, care for us, confront us in love, console us in times of pain. Although we speak of "making friends,"

friends cannot be made. Friends are free gifts from God. But God gives us the friends we need when we need them if we fully trust in God's love.

Friends cannot replace God. They have limitations and weaknesses like we have. Their love is never faultless, never complete. But in their limitations they can be signposts on our journey towards the unlimited and unconditional love of God. Let's enjoy the friends whom God has sent on our way.—Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*





## In God's hands

In *Keep a Quiet Heart*, Christian missionary Elisabeth Elliot ponders the faith implications of fretting about days to come. "Today is mine; tomorrow is none of my business," she writes. "If I peer anxiously into the fog of the future, I will strain my spiritual eyes so that I will not see clearly what is required of me now."

And what's the alternative? Instead of dwelling on times to come, which we can't change anyway, Elliot recommends: "Leave it all in the hands that were wounded for you."

## Giving our best

Have you noticed that family tension tends to ratchet up as summer progresses? As you may have found during quarantine, bickering often escalates as siblings and parents spend more unstructured time together.

To be honest, I add to the problem sometimes. After I expend energy at work, navigate all our schedules and try to serve my friends and community, little of my "best" is left by day's end. My family often gets the leftovers — literally and figuratively.

In "Be King," Christian musician Brian Morykon sings about the struggles of expressing love, even to relatives: "Be gentle to your brother/ Jesus will show you how./ Choose to bless your enemies/ even those that live in your house."

Our Savior sets an example by always loving me and always giving his best. That knowledge can help me flip things around and find ways to give my best, not my leftovers, to the people in my house.  
—Janna Firestone

## Completely devoted

Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of true devotion to Jesus is the service we do for him. It is easier to serve than to pour out our lives completely for him. The goal of the call of God is his satisfaction, not simply that we should do something *for* him. We are not sent to do battle for God, but to be used by God in his battles. Are we more devoted to service than we are to Jesus Christ himself?—  
Oswald Chambers

## The sounds of summer

When on a summer's morn I wake,  
And open my two eyes,  
Out to the clear, born-singing rills  
My bird-like spirit flies,

To hear the Blackbird, Cuckoo, Thrush,  
Or any bird in song;  
And common leaves that hum all day,  
Without a throat or tongue.

And when Time strikes the hour for sleep,  
Back in my room alone,  
My heart has many a sweet bird's song —  
And one that's all my own.


—W.H. Davies

# Puzzle!

Complete this Bible passage by adding the missing vowels.

**Puzzle!**

Complete this Bible passage by adding the missing vowels.



Th\_r\_for\_

\_\_s G\_d's ch\_s\_n p\_\_pl\_

h\_ly \_\_nd d\_\_rly l\_v\_d, cl\_th\_

y\_\_rs lv\_s w\_th c\_mp\_ss\_\_n,

k\_ndn\_ss, h\_m\_l\_ty, g\_ntl\_n\_ss

\_\_nd p\_t\_\_nc\_. B\_\_r w\_th

\_\_ch \_\_th\_r \_\_nd f\_rg\_v\_\_n\_

\_\_n\_th\_r \_\_f \_\_ny \_\_f y\_\_ h\_s \_\_

gr\_\_v\_nc\_\_ \_\_g\_\_nst s\_m\_\_n\_.

F\_rg\_v\_\_s th\_ L\_rd f\_rg\_v\_\_y\_\_.


C\_l\_ss\_\_ns 3:12-13, N\_V

Answer: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:12-13, NIV

?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ?

An unnamed relative of Paul obstructed a conspiracy to kill the apostle. What was this rescuer's relation to Paul?

- A. nephew
- B. niece
- C. brother
- D. sister



Answer: A (See Acts 23:12-22, esp. v. 16.)

## Reach the sun

The quickest way for anyone to reach the sun and the light of day is not to run west, chasing after the setting sun, but to head east, plunging into the darkness until one comes to the sunrise. ... Walk into the darkness rather than try to outrun it.

—Gerald Sittser, *A Grace Disguised*

## Living out scripture

When Texas suffered an uncharacteristic winter storm in February, one couple's act of kindness toward a stranger demonstrated the power of living by the Golden Rule.

Chelsea Timmons, a grocery store delivery driver, got stuck in the ice-covered driveway of customers Doug Condon and Nina Richardson. Because towing companies were inundated, the couple invited her to stay with them — which she ended up doing for five nights! The three shared meals and conversation, and Chelsea baked them a cake and befriended

their dogs. In short, Nina and Doug say, she became “part of the family.”

“Do to others what you would have them do to you,” says Jesus (Matthew 7:12, NIV). Doug echoes Jesus closely when he explains one reason behind their actions: “We have daughters, and we hope if they were ever in a situation like this that there would be someone who would open their house and help them.”

Perhaps Doug and Nina also experienced the delight of another Bible verse: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2, ESV).  
—Heidi Hyland Mann

## Saved from sinking

For Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympian of all time, fame and gold medals weren't enough to shore up a drowning self-esteem. The U.S. swimmer, who faced legal trouble and ended up in rehab, contemplated suicide during the prime of his sports career. “I thought the world would just be better off without me,” Phelps told ESPN.

Then a friend, NFL star Ray Lewis, sent Phelps a copy of Rick Warren's bestseller *The Purpose Driven Life*. The book made such an impact on Phelps that he read excerpts aloud to fellow rehab-clinic patients, who dubbed him Preacher Mike. “It's turned me into believing there is a power greater than myself, and there is a purpose for me on this planet,” Phelps says.

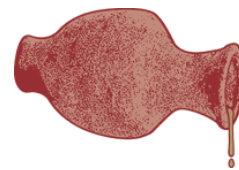
“It helped me when I was in a place where I needed the most help.” The swimmer's message to Lewis? By extending a hand and sharing the gospel's message of hope, “You saved my life.”

## Hope defined

Hoping does not mean doing nothing. .... It means going about our assigned tasks, confident that God will provide the meaning and the conclusions. It is not compelled to work away at keeping up appearances with a bogus spirituality. It is the opposite of desperate and panicky manipulations, of scurrying and worrying.

And hoping is not dreaming. It is not spinning an illusion or fantasy to protect us from our boredom or our pain. It means a confident, alert expectation that God will do what he said he will do. It is imagination put in the harness of faith. It is a willingness to let God do it his way and in his time. It is the opposite of making plans that we demand that God put into effect, telling him both how and when to do it.

—Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*



## Christian symbol

**OIL**—In the Old Testament, oil symbolized consecration to God. The

temple altar and king's heads were anointed with oil to set them apart as holy. In the New Testament, oil often represented the Holy Spirit. Jesus and his followers were anointed for their ministries (see Luke 4:18 and Acts 10:38).



From our Congregation!

Phyllis Beck is enjoying making crafts at Sunny Brook in Muscatine.



Phyllis and her perfect purple book hedgehog!

**PUZZLE**

**As sweet as honey**

Honey is both a sweetener and a medicine.   
How can our words be used in the same ways?

*Directions: Use the hexagon key to fill in the missing vowels and complete Proverbs 16:24, NIV.*

Gr c s w r d h n c o m b,  
s w e e t t o t h e s o o l  
o n d h o l o n g   
t o t h e b o n s.

**PROVERBS 16:24, NIV**

Answer: Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Proverbs 16:24, NIV

**A SWEET TREAT**

Make this refreshing treat on a hot summer day.

**What you need:**

- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- ¼ cup granola or cereal

**What you do:**

1. On a baking sheet covered with parchment paper, spread yogurt in a thin layer, about ½-inch thick.
2. Drizzle honey evenly over yogurt. Sprinkle granola (or cereal) on top.
3. Freeze about 30 minutes, or until firm.
4. Crack frozen yogurt into pieces and peel away paper. Enjoy!



## The Daily Grind

*What are you looking forward to living in Ames?*

### Cash:

I am excited to live near some of our closest friends.

### Olivia:

I am looking forward to our kids entering a really healthy school district this Fall.

### Judah:

I just hope my new school has chrome-books.

### Everlea:

Are there flowers there? Yes, flowers.

### Selah:

New house, momma, new house.

## Update Your Giving

Go to [frontersusa.org/donate](http://frontersusa.org/donate) or call 1-800-462-8436

Our worker id is: 008871

## Greetings Saints!

As many of you know our family has been in a season of transition from the time we left NE Africa in March until now. It has been a time of prayer, fasting, renewal, and asking the Lord for our family's next step. After much weighing, we have come to a decision.

It is with bittersweet hearts, we have decided to remain stateside. We will continue with our company part-time in the mobilization field. This means we will meet with potential field workers to encourage them on their journey; we will also do 1 to 2 overseas trips a year to our previous nation and other countries in this part of the world.

Cash has been offered an engineering position in Ames, Iowa. This is where our family will move to in mid-July or August. Olivia will be staying home with the children as we eagerly expect baby boy in October. Judah will start 2nd grade this Fall, Everlea will be in preschool, and Selah and Baby will be home with momma.

### The Big Question: Why are you not returning to the field?

When we evaluated and prayed through our family's calling overseas, we realized the unrelenting, cross-cultural stress of longterm work was hurting our family's thriving. However, our hearts long to be in North Africa, and only the Lord knows how tear-soaked our pillows have been at the thought of not returning full time. We feel that remaining in the part-time realm with short-term trips is a way our family can be Christ-like and fulfill His calling over our life.

### Second Big Question: What does this mean for your support team?

To remain part-time with our company, we must still be on monthly support. If all of our support team members left our team, we wouldn't have enough to take two overseas trips a year. However, if all of our team members remained with us, we would have too much funding. We would ask that you prayerfully deliberate with the Lord and ask Him if you feel called to support us in mobilization ministry, reduce your giving, or replace your support to an alternate ministry.

Lastly, we leave you with these two verses from Psalm 91 which have brought us great comfort and peace in a time of indecision. *"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"*







Blessings and Peace, Cash, Olivia, Judah, Everlea, Selah, and Baby Boy



# July 2021



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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1 <b>Bible Study</b>  6 pm@ Gloria Dei	2	3
4  10:30 am - Worship Service	5	6  9 am - Sewing group meets at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome	7	8 <b>Bible Study</b>  6 pm@ Gloria Dei	9	10  9 am - 3 pm
11 10:30 am - Worship Service	12	13 10 am - Care & Concern @ Fellowship Hall	14 <b>Bible Study</b>  6 pm@ Gloria Dei	15	16	17
18 10:30 am - Worship Service	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 10:30 am - Worship Service	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	Pastor Kirsten Lee - Vacation - June 28 - July 5				
		Joan - Vacation - June 23 - July 16				