



FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

142 North Date Street Mesa, Arizona 85201

Mission Moments

July 2022
Volume 17 Issue 7

Celebrating Seventy-four Years of God's Amazing Grace

In Response to the Good News of Jesus Christ:

Our Purpose...

Gathered to worship!
Sent to witness and serve!

Our Vision...

To become more diverse, creative, nurturing, and welcoming within our congregation and in the wider community.

Our Guiding Principles...

We will follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

We will read, teach, and preach God's Word faithfully.

We commit to prayer and worship as a way of life.

We invite people to know Jesus Christ.

Reconciling in Christ Welcoming Statement



"First Evangelical Lutheran Church/La Primera is committed

to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith, centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in faithfulness to the Gospel and our Lutheran heritage, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide programs, ministries, and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place. All are welcome here, including persons of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression."

Contact Us

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When I was a new nurse just out of school I had an elderly patient who seemed really depressed. She told me that her husband and most of her friends were gone and she didn't know why she was still around. She thought God had forgotten her. I told her that perhaps God had a job for her and that was why she was still around. I suggested that perhaps her job at that moment was to help me learn to be a better nurse.

I have been thinking a lot about her as I get older. What does God have for me to do that I am still here? Do you ever wonder what task God has for you? Is it just to have a kind word for the woman at the check out or to greet the visitor at church with a kind word?

And what about the congregation? We are getting older, but we are still here. We are talking about reaching out and trying to grow again, but in the meantime, I think maybe we should think about why we are here in the first place.

I heard a story once at a seminar on evangelism. The man was telling about why he was an Episcopalian. It wasn't about doctrine or even the liturgy. It was about welcoming.

He walked into an Episcopal church one Sunday years before feeling very lost and was met by an old man. The man said that his great grandfather had built the church and went into a long list of people in his family who had served God in that place but finished with a surprising statement. The man said that this whole long history had been so that he would be in that place, at that moment so that he would be there for the man who felt lost. He said the church was built for that one lost man.

This church was built for me when I feel lost and for you, but that it was built for the guy who walks in off the street looking for God is a slightly different take on evangelism that rings really true for me. Yes, we want to bring people in to grow our church but more we should realize that this church is there for them.

If a church is so clearly there for the lost then they will be found and know they are welcome.

How long will we be here as a congregation? I don't know. God knows. Perhaps we, like that elderly patient of mine should figure out what God wants us to be doing. Perhaps like the old man we should know that the church is here for us but even more for every person who walks in the door and needs to know the love of God.

At Synod Assembly we were given some tools to help us talk about our faith and I want to share them with you. We have been talking a lot about inviting so now perhaps we should talk about tools to do that.

I pray always for this congregation which is so good at feeding the hungry. May we also be good at feeding them on the Word of God.

Pastor Dana



OFFICE HOURS

Mondays through Wednesdays:
8:30AM-2:30PM

Staff

Dana Reardon, Pastor
Joy Petroff, Admin. Secretary

Congregational Officers

Sarah Shaw, President
Rhonda Schmidt, Vice President
Kathleen Rogers, Treasurer

Congregational Council

Corrine Cursi	Evan Rogers
Anmarie Dyslin	Kathleen Rogers
Diane Johnson	Connar Schmidt
Ellen Riske	Rhonda Schmidt

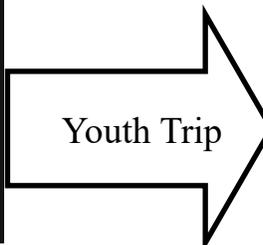


Sundays at 9:30 AM in the sanctuary or on Zoom

To join Zoom Worship

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89382528280?pwd=QURCdmlR Y0dmdDNQYWgrQXpmNkl6QT09>

Meeting ID: 893 8252 8280
Passcode: bible



Send-off prayer event

July 10 at 7 AM at Holy Trinity.



First Evangelical Lutheran Church

75th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, October 22, 2023



Change for Change Offering

on July 31 will support FELC Facilities Expense



zoom
Bible Studies

Wednesdays
4 PM MST

A Cup of Generosity

Pastor Dana Karen Reardon

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia, for during a severe ordeal of affliction their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the favor of partnering in this ministry to the saints. 2 Corinthians 8

Has all this inflation made you nervous and maybe made you think about pulling in and not being quite so generous so that you will have enough for yourself? I think that's only natural but often when we think about something being natural, it's really sin. By our own nature we don't tend to do good. But when the spirit gets a hold of us it can do great things through us.

I used this example of the churches of Macedonia because they were also going through a really tough time and could quite naturally have pulled in and said, "We need to take care of ourselves", but they didn't. They continued to give generously to the churches in Jerusalem who were being persecuted.

It takes a lot of faith to do this kind of giving. During the Great Depression the percentage of giving to charities was higher than almost any other time in American history which when I first read this surprised me because so many people were hurting. From what I know of human nature I would have expected giving to be greater when things were going well for most people but that is not the case. What that tells me is that God has moved people to give when there is need and to share not only of their abundance but of what little they have.

One of my favorite books, *The Soul of Money*, has a story about a woman in a small, poor church in Harlem saying, "Money is like water, some of us get a river and some of us get a trickle but whatever we get we pass it on." I'm not sure if I got the quote exactly right but I know this sentiment. Giving and receiving is what we do as followers of Christ.

If you are one of those people who has gotten nervous with the way things are in the economy right now you're not alone. I'm writing this because I find myself wanting to pull back and knowing that it is an act of faith to give when times are tough.

One of the things that inspired me was a homeless woman who uses our church as her address to get her mail. The other day she came in to pick up her mail and handed me \$20. She has recently started working and since life has been an up and down struggle for her I would expect her to hoard every penny not knowing how long the job would last. Instead she gave generously of what little she had and I know it was in part because this generous church has been here for her but I still believe it takes a nudging from God to give generously like that.

In comparison, however tight things get, I have an abundance and know that I can trust God to give me what I need if I continue to give not only to the church but to people in need. I thank God that I have witnesses from across the centuries and in my own neighborhood of what giving generously looks like so that I can continue to give gladly.

My prayer for all of us is that we will continue to trust that God will take care of us so that we can be faithful stewards and let our money run through our hands to the good purposes that God would have us give it. Amen



July 24 Town Hall at 10:30 AM to discuss entering into an Anchor model partnership with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chandler and answer any questions or concerns from the congregation in preparation for a vote on July 31.

July 31 Congregational Meeting at 10:30 AM - Congregational Vote

A Message from Council:

Greetings to all! In follow up to announcements regarding a possible partnership with Holy Trinity in an effort to grow our family here at First, the council is providing the following update:

The Grand Canyon Synod sent a representative to meet with us last fall and let us know about three potential options for smaller churches like us that are looking for options for our future:

1. Satellite - We would be absorbed by a larger church and become a satellite campus, a somewhat formal legal process.
2. Anchor - Team up with a larger church to duplicate programs that work and share pastoral leadership. Each church remains its own entity, can be a less formal process, while a written joint agreement is encouraged and opens up access to grants and other mission support.
3. Partnership - work with one or more churches to meet the unmet needs of the congregation (e.g. bible studies, youth ministry). This approach can be done informally or formally between two or more churches.

We already have a partnership (option 3) with Holy Trinity with our youth group (including Confirmation classes as needed) and we feel there is great potential for more partnership or even the Anchor model (option 2). This spring, council has continued to discuss what this could look like and have been drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to clearly identify the goals of Anchoring and what that would look like for both churches. The term 'accompaniment' is also used to indicate the kind of relationship we are working to build.

The council is excited to recommend we move forward with this process. To the end, we need to have open communication from one and all to help ensure we have a plan that is 100% supported by the congregation. As Pastor Dana's Interim appointment has been extended a second time, now out to September 30, 'kick off' would be October 1.

Here is what has been discussed:

- Pastoral Care provided by Pastor Chris, Pastor Bernie, and Luis with a rotating schedule to preach during Sunday worship. Worship time will continue to be at 9:30 AM. The music director and pastors from Holy Trinity will work with Joy, Marilyn, and Jose to prepare for Sunday worship services - no formatting changes are expected and each church will continue to create their own bulletin each week. Members of Holy Trinity will be encouraged to join us for worship to create a feeling of 'fullness' in the pews and also build relationships between members of both congregations.

- Youth group will continue to be led by Luis and First will continue to provide adult leadership to support this program. Currently Rhonda and Connor Schmidt provide adult leadership on our behalf.
- Holy Trinity will help First build programs that help meet the needs of the current congregation but also with the goal of growing our membership, this includes marketing assistance as well as visitor follow up and evangelism.
- No changes to the current budget is expected as the pastoral coverage will continue as budgeted and much of this work will be volunteer based or overlap already existing budgeted items within each church's budget. We anticipate applying for as many grants as are available to help grow added funds for any additional needs.

Each church will maintain its own staff and financial obligations/budgets.

Please reach out to a member of council if you have any questions, concerns or ideas as we would love to address these prior to the Town Hall on July 24 if possible.

Council Members:

Sarah Shaw, Rhonda Schmidt, Diane Johnson, Kathleen Rogers, Evan Rogers, Corrine Cursi, Ellen Riske, Ann Marie Dyslin, Connor Schmidt

Best,

Sarah Shaw

Council President



MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

As of 5/31/22	Actual 2022	Budget 2022	Actual 2021	Budget 2021
Offerings	\$65,192	\$47,583	\$55,671	\$49,125
Other Income	\$31,665	\$31,665	\$30,906	\$29,165
Total Income	\$96,857	\$79,248	\$86,907	\$78,290
Expenses	\$79,872	\$77,829	\$74,510	\$78,458
Inc. Less Exp.	\$16,985	\$1,419	\$12,067	\$-168

First Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes - June 19, 2022

Present: Corinne Cursi, Annemarie Dyslin, Diane Johnson, Ellen Riske, Evan Rogers, Kathleen Rogers, Connor Schmidt, Rhonda Schmidt, Sarah Shaw. Absent: Pr Dana

A. Opening Devotions/Prayer Evan opened the meeting with prayer at 11:00 AM

B. Review and Approval of Council Minutes for May 15, 2022, Kathleen moved to accept the May minutes. Rhonda seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

C. Reports

1. Treasurer's Report: Kathleen reports we are doing ok for now, but we have the roof expense coming up. See below.

2. Pastor Dana's Report: Absent, no report.
3. President's Report: Sarah will sign the interim extension letter for the pastor today and Kathleen will send to Synod office.
4. Report on Youth: Connor reports the upcoming youth events: June 16-19 - Father's Day camping trip, "Men in the Mountains", June 26 - Pool party, July 10 - 7 AM sendoff blessing for the California trip. They will leave at 9 AM. July 15 - Return from the retreat, July 17, 2022 - "Stockholder" report by the youth on the retreat, July 31 - Ice skating
5. Approval of Reports: Connor moved that all reports are accepted as given; Evan seconded. Council unanimously approved the reports.

D. Old Business

1. Church Constitution: No update
2. Mural: No update
3. Covid-19: No update
4. Post 'Interim' Brainstorm: No update
5. 2022 Goal for Visioning Strategy: No update
6. Anchor with Holy Trinity Proposal: Kathleen will re-send the reviewed and updated memorandum of understanding to the Council. Planned timeline: Updated MOU will be sent to Holy Trinity. July 17 - Holy Trinity representatives will meet with the FELC Council. July 24 - Congregational "Town hall" to answer questions from FELC members. July 31 - FELC congregational meeting and vote on MOU. August/September, if approved by the FELC congregation, the MOU will be transitioned and implemented. Connor and Ellen will form a team to communicate with a team from Holy Trinity; they will seek other interested members to join them.
7. Roof Repair: Kathleen reports that the roof repair quote from Camelback Roofing is \$42,000. This is for the roof on the east side of the church, not the sanctuary roof. This quote will be sent to the Endowment Committee for review. Annemarie reports that there are more holes in the steeple glass that need repair.
8. Other Old Business: None.

E. New Business

1. Security - Annemarie reports there has been miscommunication regarding opening and closing the church on Sunday. Sarah and Richard will be back-ups for Annemarie. Rhonda will put together a contact list for the Mesa police.
2. Food Bank: - Richard and Rhonda will not be available on Wednesday, July 13. Connor will show Annemarie how to run the food bank and she and her family will run it on that date.
3. Kairos Outside - Phoenix - From their website: Kairos Outside Phoenix is a local ministry that is part of Kairos Prison Ministry, a 501c3 charitable organization with the mission of introducing the transformative love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to incarcerated men, women, and youth, as well as their families, so that they may become loving and productive citizens of their communities. Our local ministry hosts weekend retreats and other events for women who have been impacted by incarceration, either their own imprisonment, or that of a family member or friend. Council has agreed to allow this group use the FELC campus. Kathleen will write an MOU for this group to use FELC from October 13 through October 16, 2022.
4. Other New Business: None.

F. Adjournment and Closing with the Lord's Prayer at 12:01 PM. Ellen moved to adjourn and Connor seconded. Upcoming Meetings: • July 17, 2022: next Council Meeting • July 24, 2022: Town Hall meeting regarding partnership with Holy Trinity • July 31, 2022: Congregational meeting to vote on partnership with Holy Trinity.