

**First Lutheran Church,
Newton IA**

2017

February

First Epistle

From the Pastor...

The topic of patriotism has been on my mind a lot lately. Are we patriots? What does that look like? Along with patriotism comes the idea of allegiance. Who holds our ultimate allegiance? Who deserves our allegiance? Can it be spread across multiple groups or entities? As followers of Christ, our allegiance must first be toward our Lord Jesus the Christ and to the region he governs. As such, we respond with loyalty to the Christ in matters of importance to the Christ. Jesus' agenda becomes our own agenda.

In Philippians 3:20, the apostle Paul reminds us that "our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Our regional identity is rooted in heaven from which Christ will come. For two years I lived in Japan, but I was not a citizen of Japan. Instead, I was an ex-patriot. My citizenship was from a place where I did not reside. We reside in the United States, but our ultimate citizenship is in heaven. Our allegiance is to Christ who is from heaven. While we must be aware of the rules of the land, we are ultimately beholden not to the rules of the land in which we reside, but the land of our citizenship.

While living in Japan I often felt isolated and separated from the United States and the place I recognized as home. Many people today have felt isolated and separated from what they identify as home. Many others currently feel isolated and separated from what they identify as home. How does this affect us as followers of Christ? When Jesus arrived on the scene to begin his public ministry according to Mark, he proclaimed, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mark 1:15) The kingdom of God is another term for heaven; they are the same thing. Jesus is proclaiming to us that the place of our citizenship has actually moved to us; it has come near. The isolation we may fear does not exist for our home has come to us. This sounds ludicrous. The idea of the United States—and specifically Iowa—somehow moving to the other side of the planet to exist with me while I resided in Japan is ridiculous. How would that be done? What would it look like? And yet, this is precisely what Jesus, our Lord and our Savior, is proclaiming. No wonder he continued with "Repent, and believe in the good news." Repent means to change your perspective, to change how you look at the world around you (Not simply where you look, but *how* you look at the world.) By doing so, we can see what seemed impossible moments before. We are not disconnected from our place of allegiance for our home has come to us. This is what Jesus means, in part, when he reminds us that where two or three are gathered in Jesus' name, he is there. (Matthew 18:20)

What does it mean to gather in Jesus' name? And what does it mean to be surrounded by God's kingdom no matter where we are? And toward that end, what precisely are the rules we are beholden to as citizens of heaven? We see this fleshed out simply in Micah 6:8—"what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" To do justice, that is, to fight for what others around you need, to ensure others get what they need—not what they want, but what they need. To love kindness, that is, to pay attention to the experiences of suffering from others, and receive others empathy and compassion toward you with a grateful and thankful heart. To walk humbly, that is, to move about your world without shining the bright lights of fame and importance upon yourself. And to do all these things with God. Do all these things recognizing that the power to do them comes from our Creator and that God is our authority, that God holds our allegiance.

Sunday Worship
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Fellowship
10:30 a.m.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday
9:00-Noon
or by appointment

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Sunday Potluck in February Is on the 5th!

We are back to our regular First Sunday potluck schedule. So please come and join us for warm food and fellowship during the cold weather. Hope to see you there!

Bad Weather Policy

First Lutheran follows the lead of the Newton School District during the week. If school is closed or closes early, then church is closed and activities cancelled.

On Sunday, if there is significant snow, ice or wind chill, cancellations will be reported on KCCI-TV, WHO-TV or KCOB-radio. We will also try to have a note on the Facebook page.

Stay safe and keep warm!

Please remember, if you are having trouble hearing: Listening devices are available. Please ask an usher.



Food Pantry
Donations Needed

The Food Pantry would like us to emphasize a specific item each month. Remember, you may bring any item you wish, but spreading this among the contributing congregations keeps a steady supply of their most basic needs coming each month. **For the month of February, peanut butter and jelly have been requested.** There is a basket in the narthex for all food pantry items.

Thank you for being so generous.

Chancel Flowers

Feb. 5— Bob Floss
Feb. 12—
Feb. 19—
Feb. 26—

Fellowship

Feb. 5— Souper Potluck
Feb. 12—
Feb. 19—
Feb. 26—

Please sign up to provide flowers and fellowship.

In the end, we who are followers of Christ are citizens of God's kingdom—dual citizenship, in this regard, is not possible. As citizens of God's kingdom our allegiance is to our Lord and our Savior Jesus the Christ. We cannot hold any other ultimate allegiances. And out of that allegiance, we are driven to fight for the needs of those around us.

As we move forward into the prevailing uncertainty of our future, we will find comfort in remembering where and in whom our loyalty lies. And by remembering, we will find a clear direction forward—not toward ease or safety, but into the hands of our Creator who will always walk with us.

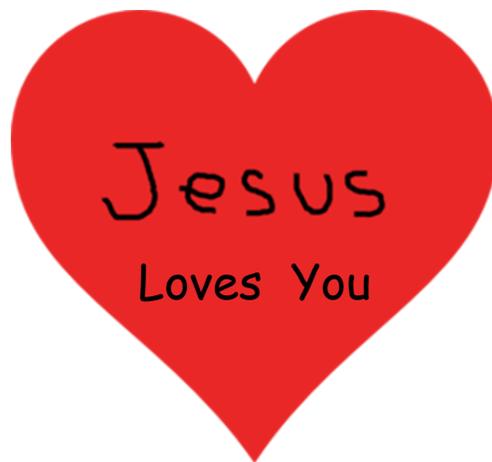
Peace,
Pastor Zach



- | | | | |
|------|-----------------|------|---------------------|
| 2/4 | Marlys Amundsen | 2/14 | Andrew Lammey |
| 2/5 | Art Greve | 2/15 | Jayne Goos |
| 2/10 | Jane Johnson | 2/16 | Elaine Elliott |
| | Cole Smith | 2/23 | Bryan Friedman |
| 2/11 | Bev Russell | 2/27 | Alex Anderson |
| 2/12 | Ing Benskin | | Bethany Baumgartner |
| | Katie Cantu | | Evelyn George |
| | Sarah Grunig | | Ashlyn Karsten |

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:16



Wednesday Night Community Dinners:

THANK YOU to the people that helped with our Wednesday Night Community Dinner this past month! Our next Wednesday Night Community Dinner will be on February 22nd at the Methodist Church. The menu for the month is posted in the narthex on the main bulletin-board. Help Jesus feed the hungry!

Thrivent Update

Action Teams replace Jasper County Thrivent Chapter

I wanted to let everyone know about recent changes in the Thrivent Chapter system. At the end of December the Jasper County Chapter of Thrivent ended. While the Chapter did many worthwhile projects over many years, change is inevitable and this change opens the door for all current Thrivent members to initiate their own projects. These individually initiated efforts are called "Action Teams". It starts with an idea powered by your passion. Bring a team together to make an immediate impact on a cause you care about. Thrivent will answer questions you might have and help get you started. Just call [800-847-4836](tel:800-847-4836) and say "Thrivent Action Teams". It's very easy to do an Action Team! Think about an unmet need in our church or community and consider how you could help address the need. Apply to lead a volunteer team in a one-time fundraiser, service activity or educational event that can be completed within 90 days. Once your project is approved, you'll receive a Thrivent Action Kit including a promotional banner, invitations and thank-you cards, Thrivent Action Team T-shirts and a \$250 Community Impact Card (VISA) that you can use as seed money to purchase project supplies and create promotional materials. Several Action Teams have been completed by Thrivent members at First Lutheran Church in recent weeks. Duane Quanbeck, Betty or Craig Peterson would be glad to help you get started on an Action Team if you would like. Let us know if you want to discuss this opportunity to address unmet needs in our community.

2016 Choice Dollars Expire on March 31, 2017, or "Use it or Lose it"

The Thrivent Choice® program lets eligible members recommend where some of Thrivent Financial's charitable outreach funds go by directing Choice Dollars. At First Lutheran some of these Thrivent members have found that they can direct Choice Dollars and that this is a great way to make a difference in our church! There are two easy options for directing Choice Dollars: online at www.Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or by calling [800-847-4836](tel:800-847-4836) and saying "Thrivent Choice" at the prompt. According to my calculations for the year 2016, a total of \$2,074 has been given to First Lutheran Church through Thrivent members who have directed their Choice Dollars to First Lutheran. While not everyone who has Thrivent products meet the guidelines to have Choice Dollars to designate, many do. According to my research there are over 40 Thrivent members who attend our church who have Choice Dollars they could allocate. So if you are a Thrivent member, I encourage you to check to see if you may have funds that Thrivent has set aside for you to give to a charity or Church of your choice. In 2016 we used Choice Dollars to purchase the defibrillator and provide a training event on its use. Please consider choosing First Lutheran for your Choice Dollar allocation.

News from Zinga!

While Paula and Denny are in the US busy spreading the word about the Children's Hospital at Zinga, the work continues in Tanzania. Medical Director Dr. Jesse Kitundu reports that a container of donated hospital furniture arrived in January, and that the X-ray building is completed. The state-of-the-art digital X-ray machine donated by Rotary clubs is on its way. More patients are being seen, and the hospital no longer requires subsidies from IHP-US to pay for medications and equipment maintenance. (Donations of these items are, of course, still welcome!)

Dr. Bon (Bonaventura Mezezele, the doctor-in-charge) and head nurse Miriam Muso have also been busy treating patients. An eight-month-old baby was brought in with an abscess around her neck. It was drained and dressed, and after five days of antibiotics, she had fully recovered. A 50-year-old man came to the outpatient clinic with a wound that would not heal. After two months of nursing care, the wound is now ready for a skin graft.

General contractor Selemani Shabani (Sele) reports that The Mary Ellen Kitundu Memorial Birthing Center (MEK MBC) roof is being installed, starting the last week of January. Once that is done, they can start finishing the interior walls. He and his crew are also working on another round house for volunteers to stay in, and an area where volunteers will eat.

Things are happening! A final message from Dr. Jesse Kitundu: From the bottom of my heart I say again, "ASANTENI SANA SANA." [Thank you all very, very much.]

Thank you all again for keeping Paula, Denny, and everyone at the Children's Hospital at Zinga in your prayers.

For the Zinga Mission group,
Marie Quanbeck

Prayer Corner

We pray for our families, friends and church family. Thank you Lord that you love us so much that you gave us your son Jesus, to be with us always. You have given us this month to focus on love, both your love for us and this world and our love for you and this world. Help us to remember that love is a verb and to be intentional in how we give you thanks by showing your love through what we do in this world. When we pray, when we invite, when we help, when we visit and comfort, when we play and encourage, we are doing your work. We continue to pray for our congregation, our leaders, our community and our world. Amen.

Happy Valentine's Day from LSI!

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

Lutheran Services in Iowa's (LSI) mission is about love: responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. We give thanks for all the ministry partners of both individuals and congregations who help share this love for Iowa children, families, and adults!

We see this love in newly adopted children and their families, in teens who learn to trade self-harm for self-worth, in refugee farmers who share their love of the land with the Des Moines community, in struggling parents who learn positive ways to build love and trust with their children and in so many other moments of hope every day. Thank you for the love you share and create through LSI.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Building Brighter Futures (LSI)

Learning new things can always be difficult. Especially when you're learning to be a first-time parent.

Sarah's first son, Mark, was a happy baby. But as he grew into his toddler years, Sarah was unsure how to handle his behavioral changes. When he started acting out at home, she felt herself growing more frustrated.

Sarah knew she needed help. That's when she turned to LSI's Parents as Teachers program.

Parents as Teachers provides free and voluntary parent education and support for families in Boone and Story County, with children up to age 5. The program was with Sarah every step of the way, providing home visits, introducing her to community support groups, and teaching her how to adjust to Mark's developmental stages.

"With help from Parents as Teachers, I learned his behavior was just a phase, and they told me it was normal," Sarah says. "Before, I thought there was a problem with me, or that I wasn't a good parent."

Mark, now 3, entered preschool last fall, and Sarah is proud to see how much progress he has made. He's meeting new friends and at home, he's become the best big brother to his baby sister, Hannah.

Learning how to handle Mark's developmental stages has made Sarah more confident in raising Hannah. She knows what to expect as Hannah grows up, and she's ready to face each day and create the brightest future for her children.

"Parents as Teachers helped me so much with my parenting," Sarah says. "The program is the best thing I have."



February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 <i>9:30 Worship 11:00 Potluck</i>	6 <i>5:00 Bible Study</i>	7	8 <i>6:30 Confirmation</i>	9 <i>Good Cheer 6:00 Council</i>	10	11
12 <i>9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship</i>	13 <i>5:00 Bible Study 7:00 Hannah</i>	14	15 <i>9:00 Lois 1:00 Martha 6:30 Confirmation</i>	16 <i>7:00 Eunice</i>	17	18
19 <i>9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Council Retreat</i>	20 <i>5:00 Bible Study Newsletter articles due</i>	21	22 <i>5:30 Community Dinner 6:30 Confirmation</i>	23	24	25
26 <i>9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship Reick baptisms</i>	27 <i>5:00 Bible Study</i>	28 <i>9:00 Dorcas</i>				

February Serving Schedule

Sunday 9:30am	Acolyte	Council on Duty	Greeters	Lector	Ushers	PA
February 5th	Thomas Hodnett	David Goos	Pat & Steve Putz	Marlys Amundsen	Dave Troen, Dirk Amundsen, Alex Anderson	Evelyn George
February 12th	Blake Baumgartner	Judy Monroe	Baumgartner's	Bethany Baumgartner	Lee Swenson, Aaron Barthol- mey, Den- nis Porter	Duane Quanbeck
February 19th	Leo Friedman, Isaac Friedman	Ken Odland	Carolyn & Stan Kirchhoff	Marie Quanbeck	Bob Floss, Stan Kirchhoff	David Goos
February 26th	Anna VanDam, Mae VanDam	Pat Foote		Jane Odland	Gary Johnson, Jim Lammey,	Deb Rose

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