



**First Lutheran Church,  
Newton IA**

**2017**

## **First Epistle**

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From the Pastor...

I'll be heading out for a backpacking trip to the Smoky Mountains in a few weeks. A friend and I are doing a short 50 –mile section of the Appalachian Trail. It will be an incredible adventure!

Vacations are always fun to look forward to... and certainly the time away can be rejuvenating... but it's always good to come home again. It's always good to b back with family.

I think the same thing can be said about our church family. Whether you've been gone a week, a month, or even more—we miss you when you can't be with us and we look forward to your return. I hope you always find it good to come home again!

Maybe you've been gone a while and you think it might be awkward to come back to church. It's kind of like my cousin and I when we finally get together after a long separation. There are a few awkward moments, to be sure. But you know what? We're family... and we get past it.

It's the same with our family at First Lutheran. If someone has been gone awhile, bu they take a chance and come back to church, there might be a few awkward moments at first... but we're family! It's nothing that a handshake or a hug won't cure! Nothing would please us more than to have ALL the family back together again!

Incredible things are happening at First Lutheran! God I leading us into a bold, exciting future! You don't want to miss out! It's always good to come home again! We'll be looking for you... and we hope you'll join us!

Living in Gods Amazing Grace!  
Pastor Mark

**Sunday Worship**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Sunday Fellowship**  
**10:30 a.m.**

# First Evangelical Lutheran Church

309 E. 3rd St. N.,  
Newton, IA 50208  
Phone: 641-792-3934  
Fax: 641-792-3937

Email:  
office@newtonfirstlutheran.org  
[www.newtonfirstlutheran.org](http://www.newtonfirstlutheran.org)

**Pastor Mark Holmes**  
pastor@newtonfirstlutheran.org  
515-321-4882

**President**  
Terri Hayden  
terrihayden63@gmail.com  
641-831-5555

**Vice President**  
Judy Monroe  
mmonroe@pcpartner.net  
641-792-4950

**Secretary**  
Deb Rose  
deborah.rose65@gmail.com  
641-521-6415

**Treasurer**  
David Goos  
goos2104@iowatelecom.net  
641-792-8818

**Administrative Assistant**  
Kellie Kramer  
office@newtonfirstlutheran.org  
641-792-3934

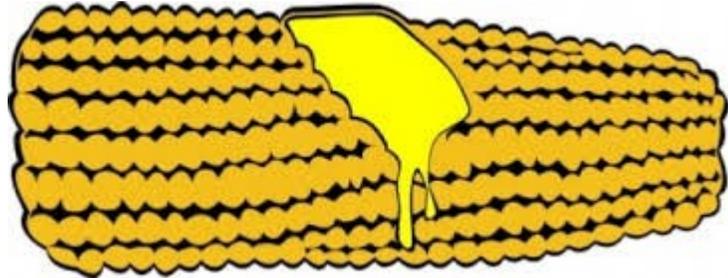
## Pastor's Office Hours

Wednesday  
1:00—5:00 p.m.  
or by appointment

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### First Sunday Potluck on hold over the summer!

Due to busy summer schedules we will take a break from our gatherings in July and August and resume with the school year in September. Enjoy your summer and we will see you in church! **Also keep watching for Corn Boil information later this month!**



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 July, instant potatoes and powdered milk have been requested.** There is a basket in the narthex for all food pantry items.

Thank you for being so generous.

### Chancel Flowers

July 2—  
July 9— Trusler  
July 16—  
July 23—  
July 30—

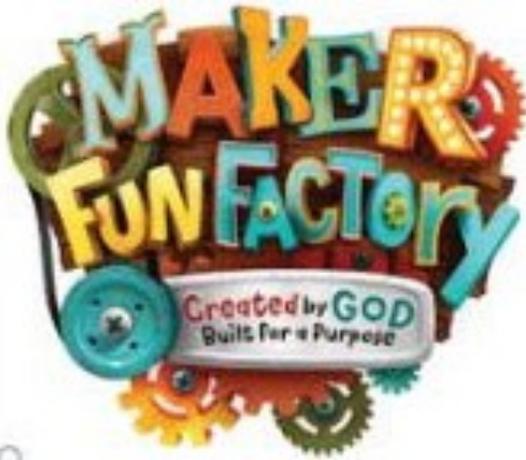
### Fellowship

July 2—  
July 9— Trusler  
July 16—  
July 23—  
July 30—

**Please sign up to provide flowers and fellowship.**



- |      |                 |      |                  |
|------|-----------------|------|------------------|
| 7/4  | Steve Hodnett   | 7/22 | Ben Caldwell     |
|      | Carson Sumpter  |      | Emily Forsyth    |
| 7/6  | Leo Friedman    |      | Anna VanDam      |
| 7/7  | Steven Benskin  | 7/23 | Madeline Allen   |
| 7/8  | Talia Friedman  | 7/27 | Todd Lucas       |
|      | Victoria Jordan | 7/29 | Ken Odland       |
|      | Lonnie Portner  | 7/30 | Dean Birkenholtz |
| 7/13 | Barb Anderson   |      | Joey Lammey      |
| 7/16 | Teri Allen      | 7/31 | Jeremy Sumpter   |



### Vacation Bible School

**Thank you** thank you to all who participated or volunteered time or energy or supplies or money for Vacation Bible School 6/12-6/16. It was a "Maker Fun Factory" week of fun and fellowship and learning more about how God the Maker is present in our lives. These were the daily catch phrases of the week: God made you! (Wow God!); God is for you! (Wow God!); God is always with you! (Wow God!); God will always love you! (Wow God!); God made you for a reason! (Wow God!). The kids donated enough school supplies to overflow a large laundry basket

and the combined total of donated funds from the week and the combined church service was \$345! This money was donated to the Newton PTA "Open Your Heart Fund" to fund varied needs of children in Newton schools as identified by guidance counselors and nurses. This is a wonderful combined mission that we share with United Presbyterian and First Presbyterian churches and we thank you for your support!



### Wednesday Night Community Dinners:

**THANK YOU** to the people that help with our Wednesday Night Community Dinners! Wednesday Night Community Dinners will take a break over the summer and resume back at the Methodist Church on the last Wednesday in August. **Please keep the hungry in your prayers, donate to the food pantry and drop off fresh garden produce at the Salvation Army.**

## All Are Welcome

At First Lutheran we often include the phrase “all are welcome” on our sign out front of the church, or in our Sunday bulletins. When we use this phrase what exactly do we mean? I believe we mean more people are welcome than just those who look like us, think like us, and have the same heritage and background we do. Today many mainstream churches are experiencing declining membership because people are not going to church for the same reasons. Going to church simply because it's the right thing to do and it's our moral responsibility is no longer driving attendance. People go to church today to be fed by the Holy Spirit and to have a meaningful impact on their community and the world. Being missional means reaching out to others, looking out and not just in.

The ELCA has a history of being open to those of different racial backgrounds, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. While some within the church do not necessarily agree with this, our society as a whole is a reflection of the changes in these attitudes. True love does not know the difference between sexual orientation or race. Loving someone is a commitment, it is the way we treat them, communicate with them, and honor them. While it is true the Old Testament is filled with law, the New Testament is filled with the good news of God's love for us in the Gospel. It is interesting to note some websites list over 600 laws that are found in the Old Testament. Many of these laws by today's standards seem quite silly. A couple of hundred years ago only men were allowed to be members of the church, and only they could be counsel members, or pastors. Ironically if we were to step back in time the vast majority of the women who lived during this period agreed with those laws.

A couple of years ago we had a black couple and their children coming to our church, Henry and Korlu Saye. I believe they felt welcome in our church and their regular attendance was a reflection of this. While they ended up moving away, it showed we can be welcoming to those different from us.

It is up to you and I to welcome all who enter the church, for this is God's house and not ours. It is also important to remember that each person enters the church with their own expectations of the personal space and freedom to worship that they would like to have. Not everyone who comes to our church may want to join in fellowship time or sit and talk about the stories of the week. Their relationship is with God first, and while we are a community of faith we must accept the fact that not everyone will act like we do. Our role is not to judge but rather to accept people as they are and encourage them to have a strong relationship with God.

The following paragraph is from the South Carolina Synod website. I found it while reading an article which was on their site. I think it states very clearly what we want to be at First Lutheran.

*Continued on next page*

*All Are Welcome continued*

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person — questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

All are welcome!

David Goos

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## **The Shack**

This summer First Lutheran is hosting a Book Club and Movie from June through August based on *The Shack* by Wm. Paul Young. You can get your copy of the New York Times bestseller in the Narthex when you sign up. The group will meet to discuss the book on the last Wednesdays of the month, June 28th and July 26th, at 6:30 p.m. and will watch the movie together in August. Please add this to your summer reading list and come join us!

**Happy is the nation  
whose God is the Lord,  
Psalm 33:12**



## First Lutheran's History of Mission

While some members of First Lutheran Church are familiar with the story of Henry Obersteller, a long time member of the Church, there are many who are not. Henry's story starts when he was just 7 years old and was living in a small German town with his father, mother, and siblings. They lived an average life until Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, just miles from where his family lived. "We could hear the shells going off. We couldn't see the border but we saw a lot of troops moving in", said Henry. While the scope of the war was difficult to understand, it did not stop Hitler from expanding his territory and using propaganda. Often times people who spoke against Hitler would go missing or were imprisoned.

Henry's father was forced to work in the ammunition factory. The family would only get to see him two weeks each year when he had personal leave. When he was just 14 years old Henry was drafted into the German army. This while not pleasant was better than being put in prison which is what happened to many of his friends. When the war came to an end he was put into a prisoner of war camp by Allied forces since he was serving in the German army. The camp was located in the Russian wilderness and conditions were poor to say the least, often they would go days getting only a single potato to eat. Eventually because of his young age he was released and was able to return to his home in Germany.

After the war Henry tried to rebuild his life but it was very difficult because he was living in East Germany which was being run by the communists. "I wasn't oppressed, but times were very difficult and there were no opportunities to make a better life", said Henry. He finally decided that he was going to make a break for west Germany. In 1949, he made his break for the border. When he got there there was a wide canal of water that was very deep. He had to swim a cross. After climbing out the first person he ran into was a policeman who was on guard. At that point he thought he was in trouble because many had been arrested once they escaped or had been put in prison. Fortunately for him the policeman told him of a little house where he could get clothes and food and he sent him on his way. A few months later, now in West Germany, Henry saw an article in the newspaper stating that people who have been displaced by the war would be potentially eligible to get a visa to go to the United States.

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### **Prayer Corner**

We pray for our families, friends and church family. 'Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord' Psalm 33:12 Lord, July is the month we celebrate our nation. We use this time also to build relationships and memories with our family, friends and community. We celebrate this time of warm weather and the special gifts of summer. Here at First Lutheran we celebrate our local agriculture heritage with a Corn Boil that we invite others to come and enjoy with us. Lord encourage us to receive with welcome all who would enjoy the food and fellowship. We continue to pray for our congregation, our leaders, our community and our world. Amen.

## World War II POW



Photo courtesy Henry Obersteller

Heinrich "Henry" Obersteller (far right) arrives at the train station in Newton in 1956. Obersteller, who was sponsored by the First Lutheran Church in Newton was greeted by Glen Engle, Delbert Farland and Dutch Kingma, all deceased. The photo of Obersteller's arrival from Germany ran in the *Newton Daily News* in 1956.

### **First Lutheran's History of Mission *continued***

Henry applied for a Visa and was accepted, however he needed to have a sponsor in the United States in order to go. The Lutheran World Foundation sponsored him and Henry planned it for his trip to the US. He ended up being directly sponsored by First Lutheran Church and he arrived in Newton in 1956. The Church covered the cost of his transportation and helped relocate him in Newton when he arrived. They also assisted in finding him work and helping him acclimate to an English-speaking community. "Newton was just the luck of the draw", he said. "It could have been Alabama, Louisiana, or Texas." Shortly after arriving in Newton, he was introduced to Mary Selbher through friends at church. In 1960 the couple married and have lived south west of Newton since that time.

As we pray for God's guidance in the missional activities we should be undertaking today we are thankful for the actions the Church has taken in the past to positively impact the lives of others. Now you know the rest of the story.

## July LSI Update

God's work. Our hands.

As a social ministry organization of the ELCA, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) is so thankful for your partnership in ministry! Thanks to you, we're able to provide education for young parents and empowerment to some of Iowa's most vulnerable children and families. This month, we would like to give special thanks for those of you who have made LSI a focus of a "God's work. Our hands." project.

This project is part of the anniversary celebration of the ELCA, and it's a way to reach out to your communities and build a stronger Iowa. This year September 10th is the date when congregations are encouraged to participate in a project for "God's work. Our hands." This is a perfect opportunity to do good deeds or raise money as a church body for a nonprofit like LSI.

We thank you for your witness of God's love and your service! If you are interested in supporting those served by LSI and would like to know more about current needs, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at [deborah.whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:deborah.whitford@LSIowa.org).

### Coping through creativity

Therapy can be a great way for kids, adults, and families to overcome past trauma. But for some, it takes a little extra innovation and creativity to find a therapeutic technique that can help them thrive.

Sherry, an LSI therapist, struggled to find a technique that worked for several children she saw each week. They didn't want to open up to her. They said "no" to participating in any activities or conversations. That's when she turned to her "workbooks," which focus on a child's love of drawing and coloring.

"It's really about connecting with the kids where they're at," Sherry says. "They get to express their feelings through something that might be more comfortable than talking about them."

For instance, Sherry asked one child to draw what the word "love," meant to her. The child drew a picture of a child and parent hugging and through that, Sherry learned the child wanted love and support from her parent at home.

Sherry says the technique has been a breakthrough for several of the kids, and they're becoming more and more comfortable talking in each session.

"This book is something that's theirs," Sherry says. "They can look back through their images and see the progress they've made and how far they've come."



# July 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship	3 5:00 Bible Study	4 <i>Independence Day</i> Office Closed	5 6:30 Property		7	8
9 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship	10 5:00 Bible Study 7:00 Hannah	11	12	13 Good Cheer 6:00 Council	14	15
16 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship	17 5:00 Bible Study <b>Newsletter articles due</b>	18	19 1:00 Martha		21	22
23 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship	24 5:00 Bible Study	25 9:00 Dorcas	26 6:30 Book Study <i>The Shack</i>	27	28	29
30 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship						

## July Serving Schedule

July 2nd	Blake Baumgartner	Al Orsund	Pat & Steve Putz	Marie Quanbeck	Dirk Amundsen, Alex Anderson	David Goos
July 9th	Isaac and Leo Friedman	Julie Laube		Marlys Amundsen	Lee Swenson, Aaron Bartholmey, Dennis Porter	Matt Coyle
July 16th	Thomas Hodnett	Deb Rose		Dirk Amundsen	Bob Floss, Stan Kirchhoff	Duane Quanbeck
July 23rd	Lane Rose	Art Cooper			Gary Johnson, Jim Lammey,	
July 30th	Brock Jordan	Terri Hayden			Captains	

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