

FIRST
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Pastor Mark Holmes

pastor@newtonfirstlutheran.org

515-321-4882

President

Jim Lammey

JimLammey78@gmail.com

641-792-0802

Secretary

Lynette Birkenholz

lbirke@mchsi.com

641-521-8666

Co-Treasurers

David Goos

goos2104@iowatelecom.net

641-792-8818

Corinne Coyle

corinnecoyle9@gmail.com

515-669-2983

Administrative Assistant

Nicole Vitales

office@newtonfirstlutheran.org

832-580-7451

Office Hours

Monday—Friday

8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

1:00—5:00 p.m.

or by appointment



Page 1

From Pastor Mark Holmes

**A YEAR LIKE NO
OTHER!**

Unbelievable!

Who could have guessed we could suffer through a pandemic and have to move worship services online? Who could have guessed that we would get hit with a derecho and literally have the top blown off? Who could have guessed that our biggest frustration would be our inability to talk to, and shake hands with, and hug tight, those we enjoyed seeing on Sunday mornings? It's so easy to feel hopeless in situations such as these!

But you know what? God has not abandoned us and He is still on the throne! Look and see the many ways God has allowed us to think creatively and outside the box to **continue to accomplish** great things in His name!

Worship has moved online and in print form so that all the people of God might continue to hear His Word and share in His Supper. As we become acquainted with new technology, our worship services get better each week; and we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity. The good news is that, because it is pre-recorded, you may "go to church" at any time on any day! We are actually getting more viewers on-line than we were getting in the pews! God has provided new and exciting ways to reach a larger audience; and we plan to continue this on-line worship after we return to our sanctuary. I want to personally thank Jane Johnson and David Goos for **volunteering** their time and energy to make those services possible. Their

unique gifts have allowed us to provide a meaningful worship experience each and every week!

Our beautiful building seems to be in a constant state of repair. The derecho essentially destroyed our tile roof. The shrink-wrap that covered the roof initially was ripped apart and we had some rain damage inside. Thanks to the Property committee and other volunteers for reacting so quickly to protect the organ and other items from significant damage!

Finally, thanks to each of you for continuing to support the ministries of First Lutheran Church. Your financial support has allowed us to keep ahead of our expenses. If you haven't had the opportunity to give, or if you've fallen behind, feel free to

We would like your voice to be heard.

If you have any suggestions for the council and about the church in general, please send or email them to me here in the office. I will make sure that they get to the council A.S.A.P.



Melt crayons to show how the body of Christ works together.



What you need:

- Crayons
- Metal baking sheet
- Adult help
- Metal gingerbread man cookie cutter

What you do:

1. Remove labels and break crayons into 1-inch pieces.
2. Scatter pieces on the baking sheet, about two layers thick.
3. Bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees until melted. Allow to cool 15 minutes.
4. When melted crayons are the consistency of playdough, press the cookie cutter through them (while still on pan).
5. Cool the pan in freezer for 15 minutes until crayons are hardened.
6. Remove from pan and break apart the shapes.

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drop a check in the mail or drop it off at the church office. We will continue to be faithful stewards of the gifts that you share.

I look forward with great anticipation to all that 2021 has in store for us! Keep the faith, because very soon, we will gather together once

again! Living in God's Amazing Grace!

Pastor Mark Holmes

Attention Heads of all Committees!

All annual reports are due to be turned in to the office no later than January 3rd. Please make sure to get them in so that they can be included in the Annual report to go out to the congregation!

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 months of Dec. & Jan.

Canned Soup, Crackers, Peanut butter, and Jelly

have been requested.

Please take all donations directly to the Salvation army Mon-Fri 8 am—4 pm

Thank you for being so generous.

From the Service Committee

The COVID pandemic has caused so much chaos in so many people's lives. Even if your life has only been inconvenienced, others lives have been turned upside down! Please consider sharing with our neighbors in need in any of the following ways.

goodgifts.elca.org/

by-price Select the amount you can give, or the animal you wish to purchase. Save a copy of your receipt and send to the church office- Choices in Mission will match your gift. Please consider this opportunity before the end of 2020.

In December every year the Service Committee has supported a Choices in Mission with God's Global Barnyard. That tradition continues, though it looks a little different. If you can contribute a small or large amount to the ELCA God's Global Barnyard visit <https://>

During the COVID-19 pandemic so many of our fellow Newtonians have lost hours at work, or lost jobs. All across Iowa and the nation food insecurity, defined as not consistently having enough food, has doubled. Until jobs return, food insecurity will continue to grow. Our neighbors, including the elderly and children, are hungry.

For the past several years we have worked together as the First Lutheran Family to Bury the Alter between Epiphany and the beginning of Lent. And we're going to do it again! Even though we will not be at the church, we can still bury the alter!! There are several ways you can help- 1- bring food items. Details coming soon about how to deliver food to the church. 2- send money. This is an option for anyone, snow birds included here! Send, or drop money in the church mail slot, for Bury the Alter and someone from the service committee will



do the shopping for you. Watch the worship service each week as the pile of food grows to cover the altar.

Thank you!!
Monroes, Sandquists and
Petersons
The Service Committee

Thank you to everyone who collected food in a Giving Thanks box and delivered it on December 6. We filled up Duane Quanbeck's pickup! The Peterson's wrote a Thrivent Action Plan and purchased 100 pounds of hamburger to go along with all that food. Fareway wrapped that in 1 pound packages!! This food helped fill the Christmas boxes

distributed by the Salvation Army.

We had a small group who gathered to sing Christmas Carols in the courtyard. Raising our voices together in song, staying socially distanced outside, felt so very welcome!

The Service Committee

Zinga News! A Thank-You Note

The generosity of First Lutheran members comes through again, and the bus we were raising money to help purchase has now been obtained. Here's the note the church received from Paula and Denny Lofstrom. (The note has also been posted on the First Lutheran Facebook page.)

Nov. 28, 2020
Dear First Evangelical Lutheran,
Your incredibly generous gift of \$11,284.00 has enabled IHP to purchase a bus for the St. John's University School of Nursing in Dodoma. Thank you!

This is a 2005 refurbished bus directly from Japan. It will need new tires and a luggage carrier on top. The bus will be used to transport nursing students to other hospitals around Tanzania to do their practicum. It will also be used to go to smaller villages to do health exams and medical education outreach.

Thank you!

A 21-day-old baby girl was brought to our clinic, the victim of poor nursing practice. She'd received a BCG vaccination (prevents tuberculosis), but in the shoulder rather than

the thigh, and without good, sterile techniques. She was feverish and crying, and obviously in pain. The abscess was drained, and the baby received antibiotic drops. She relaxed, nursed her mom, and went to sleep.

We wish you a safe and blessed Christmas. Blessings and gratitude,

Paula & Denny



THANK YOU to the people that help with our Wednesday Night Community Dinners!



Community Meal

Wednesday Night Community Dinners are at the Methodist Church and our next meals are on the December 30th & January 27th. Please come and help as many hands make for light work. Come help Jesus feed the hungry.



Ava Sumpter 12/01
 Blake Baumgartner 12/02
 Cailyn Grabe 12/03
 Darcy Van Dam 12/06
 Suzanne Von Seggern 12/07
 Barbara Wilcox 12/08
 Vicki Porter 12/12
 Jim McVey 12/14
 Lynette Marvelli 12/16
 Cora Dellamuth 12/26
 Thomas Hayden 12/26
 Robert Sandquist 12/26
 Craig Peterson 12/27
 Mae Van Dam 12/30



Julie Trusler 01/03
 Jorgen Rose 01/07
 Mark Monroe 01/08
 Francis Togba 01/10
 Richard Klopping 01/16
 Ronald Klopping 01/16
 Ramona Cooper 01/19
 Lauryn Grabe 01/21
 Garrett Cantu 01/25
 Ruth Sharp 01/28
 Lee Swenson 01/31



"Because he works from home. That's why we never see God in person."

No Annual Congregation Meeting or 2021

The church council has decided to not hold the 2021 Annual meeting. We will be sending out a 2021 Annual report as usual. We will be emailing it to everyone in Mid January. For the people who receive our newsletters, and weekly at home worship bulletin via USPS you will receive your Annual report through the USPS.

I just want to give a big "thank you" to whomever is responsible for my weekly letters from the church.

I started receiving these letters on March 22nd. Since I don't have a computer or Facebook where I can watch the weekly service, the letters have been a real blessing.

Every Sunday morning, I get my letter and a cup of coffee and have my own private church service. These letters have helped to keep a connection with my church. I have saved every one of them.

I feel blessed to still be independent and able to get out, and to have a loving family. When I need help all I have to do is call and they are there. I guess the roles are reversed now. I am like the "child" and they are like the "mother". And what a wonderful "mother" they are.

Thank you again for the letters and for being a wonderful church family.

God bless, take care and stay safe.

Blessings,

Barb Birkenholtz

P.S. I have discovered after many years, that God uses even the bad things in life for good. We just have to wait and see what His plan is. One thing I can see already is how people have come together during this pandemic to love and care for one another. I am sure there is still more to come.



Who the shepherds really represent?

As you prepare for Christmas, and put out your Nativity, do you ever stop to think about who the shepherds really represent? God sent this amazing message to the Shepherds- the lowest of the low. The outcasts who lived outside, in the country. The people others took pains to cross the street to avoid passing. The ones who no one made eye contact with.

If God sent his angels to earth this year with this amazing story, they would not be coming and knocking on our doors. They would be going to the tent cities to the homeless. They would find people under bridges. They would be visiting one and two bedroom apartments sheltering 2 and 3 families.

The story of the shepherds prepares us to listen to how radical

God and Jesus were 2000 years ago. Take time to listen in this coming year. Think about who the stories are about. And how you, and First Lutheran, can be radical and show God's amazing love to everyone.

From the Trouble I've Seen reading group.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Neighbors Helping Neighbors is not able to host a clothing give away this year. But we still want to help our neighbors. Most of the clients who came to the clothing give aways in past years were in need of new socks and underwear. One woman, after receiving her 3 pairs of new underwear, commented that she could not remember the last time she owned a brand new pair of underwear. Many children go to school without socks, or wear the same pair every day. This is one area we can still help! In cooperation with the Salvation Army, which will assist with distribution, we will be able to provide brand new socks and underwear for our neighbors. Many of

our church partners have helped in the past through collecting new socks and underwear. If God is calling you to assist with this ministry this year, please send a check to Neighbors Helping Neighbors, First Lutheran Church, 309 E 3rd St N. Or drop it in the mail slot beside the office door. Any amount will be helpful! Even if you just put a dollar in an envelope and drop it off it will help provide new socks and underwear for someone in need.

If you have questions about how you can help, please call Judy Monroe, 792-4950.



Church Council Meeting Review :

Council met by Zoom on Nov 12th. On line services will be continued based on advice from Synod, CDC guideline, and Medical Professionals. Families will be lighting the Advent candles and will be planning some special music.

The general meeting will be held by Zoom on Dec 6th at 10:30. The two items on the agenda will be voting for two council members and adopting the budget for 2021. Project Outreach is being covered by Jane, Marie, and Lynette. Between them, they are contacting the 22 family groups that do not have access for Facebook services/and or have written information send to them. They will continue to keep in touch with them while

we have on-line services. The Harvest Supper was a success and with the \$100 that was remaining, Council decided to buy 10 - \$10 gift card (from Fareway,etc) to be available for those in need. The cards are left in the office and Pastor passes them out. Bryan headed up the Time and Talent survey and that information will be sent out by email/mail. Corinne shared from the Service Committee that an Advent Calendar of giving was sent out. The plan is to return the items to the church on Dec 6th. Property Committee reported that the pilot lights were re-lit by Duane and Stan (for the Harvest Supper preparation). Duane also added shelving in the old boiler room. He also changed out a different pump to help regulate the

water temperature. The brickwork was completed on the Educational unit. The roof tiles are ordered and a roof group was here Nov 6th to take care of part of the roof. The lower part of the front doors at the south entrance were covered with vinyl coating (to cover up the cloudiness). A Roomba was purchased and installed by Duane for the sanctuary – to help clean under the pews. Marie reported on International Health Partners and how great it was to receive a \$5000 match for the Zinga bus (total of \$11,284). The bus will enable nurses to help with their practicums. The next Council meeting will be Dec. 10th. If anyone has suggestions/ concerns, please contact any of the Council members. (They are listed

Bible Quiz



In the story of the Magi, what word is used to give a sense of Jesus' age when the wise men visited? What does it tell us?

- A. "baby"; Jesus was still a newborn in a manger
- B. "child"; when the wise men visited, Jesus had grown past infancy
- C. "youth"; Jesus was probably between 10 and 14
- D. No word is used to suggest Jesus' age at the time of the wise men's visit.

As you prepare for Christmas, and put out your Nativity, do you ever stop to think about who the shepherds really represent? God sent this amazing message to the Shepherds- the lowest of the low. The outcasts who lived outside, in the country. The people others took pains to cross the street to avoid passing. The ones who no one made eye contact with.

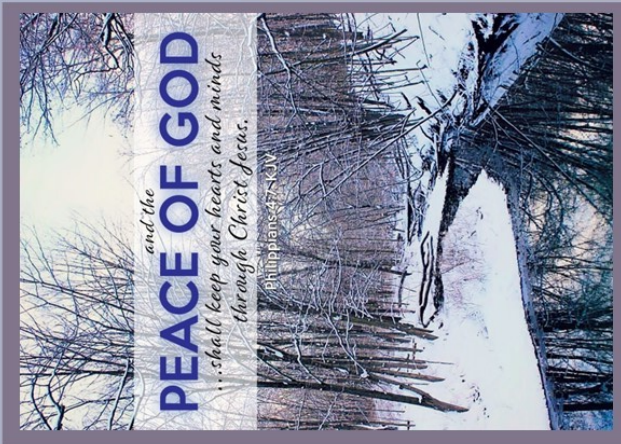
If God sent his angels to earth this year with this amazing story, they would not be coming and knocking on our doors. They would be going to the tent cities to the homeless. They would find people under bridges. They would be visiting one and two bedroom apartments sheltering 2 and 3 families.

The story of the shepherds prepares us to listen to how radical God and Jesus were 2000 years ago. Take time to listen in this coming year. Think about who the stories are about. And how you, and First Lutheran, can be radical and show God's amazing love to everyone.

From the Trouble I've Seen reading group



Next Meeting
Wednesday
January 6th
at 6:30!



January 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:30 a.m. Online worship	4	5	6 Property Meeting 6:30 pm	7 Happy Birthday Jorgen Rose	8 Happy Birthday Mark Monroe	9
Happy Birthday Julie Trusler						
10 Bury the Altar drop off. 9:30 a.m. 10:30am Online - Noon worship	11	12	13	14 Council Meeting 6:30 pm	15	16 Happy Birthday Richard & Ronald Klopping
17 Bury the Altar drop off. 9:30 a.m. 10:30am Online - Noon worship						
24 Bury the Altar drop off. 9:30 a.m. 10:30am Online - Noon worship	18	19	20	21	22	23
25 Happy Birthday Garrett Cantu						
26	27	28	29	30		
31 Bury the Altar drop off. 9:30 a.m. 10:30am Online - Noon worship						
Happy Birthday Lee Swenson						

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

309 East Third Street North
Newton, Iowa
50208
office@newtonfirstlutheran.org

Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:30 am—12:30 pm
Pastor's Office Hours
by appointment

**Monthly mission for:
January & February**
Bury the Altar.
Drop off will be every
Sunday Jan. 10th-Feb 14th.
At the east entrance.
10:30am -12:00pm
We will be accepting
Non-perishable food items and
monetary donations that will be
matched.

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309 EAST THIRD STREET NORTH
NEWTON, IOWA
50208

FIRST
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Watch Past and Live
services !**

newtonfirstlutheran.org
&
(on Facebook at)
First Lutheran Church-
Newton

Phone: 641-792-3934

E-mail:

firstoffice@newtonfirstlutheran.org



**Thank you to all of our
2021 Church Council members .**

Jim Lamme

Corinne Coyle

Jane Johnson

Bryan Friedman

Kay Hess

Eric Jordan