What’s Inside:
A pastor’s pen and 2 reprinted articles about stewardship
Invitations to our annual hay ride and holiday bazaar
Where our food donations are going in October
2 View from the Pew articles
And more!
In a few short weeks on Sunday October 27 our congregation will be holding a special meeting to vote on a new welcoming statement.

Now, some of you may be wondering why we need a welcoming statement in the first place and this is a good question.

I mean, we have a mission statement and we’re a very welcoming congregation so why the need for a formalized welcoming statement?

Well the truth is that all churches think they are welcoming, but too often what they mean is that they are welcoming only if you believe and act exactly the same way as them.

But the truth is, people come looking for a church for a lot of different reasons and, what’s more, people also stay away from churches because, right or wrong, they think they will be judged or looked down upon.

Now, there is really no way that is 100% effective in making a person feel welcome and just voting on a statement is not going to solve everything.

But one thing it will do is allow us to claim and proudly proclaim to our community that we are a Reconciling in Christ Congregation.

That we are a congregation made up of members who understand that we are all broken and in need in of God’s saving grace.

That we are a congregation willing to struggle together with and in our differences.

And that we are a congregation who actively wishes to let all people, and especially the LGBTQ community, know that in our sanctuary and within our midst they are being invited to hear Christ’s Good News.

Because we all need the opportunity to hear the hope and promise Christ came to bring to all people.

Now, from my conversations with members it appears that vast majority of people are on board with moving forward with becoming a Reconciling in Christ Congregation and this gives me great comfort.

But I also know that this decision is probably not unanimous, that some of you may have some concerns, and that there may even be a sense of fear involved. Especially the fear of taking an active stand by planting a rainbow flag out on our front lawn for all the world to see.

And while I am sure that we may receive some backlash from strangers who see our stance of wanting to be more welcoming, more affirming, and more inclusive of all people as wrong or even a threat to them this should not deter us from doing what we know in our hearts is right thing to do.

So please make it a point to stand up for justice and stand up for the right thing by planning to attend church on October 27, which just so happens to be Reformation Sunday, to affirm with confidence the following new welcoming statement.

“In Christ, we worship and grow in faith-and growing in faith as community, we reach out to serve. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we celebrate our diversity of age, ability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, and citizenship.”

Blessing, Pastor Durk
View From the Pew

By Bruce Lindquist

Week of September 1, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 23

Your views are invited – and encouraged -- Any and all members of our congregation are invited to express their thoughts in this space, at any time, and are encouraged to do so! That includes church stories from the past, short items, long items, humorous anecdotes, funny lines or stories, serious topics, concerns, updates on present and former members, anything that has some sort of church connection or inspirational or uplifting message, in, the “Spirit of Christ.”

You may submit one sentence, or use the whole column space, if necessary. Your opinions are important, and your friends and fellow members are interested in your thoughts. Simply email or present a hard copy of your comments to me, and I will include them here in this twice-a-month space at a future date. And please, don’t feel as though you are not able to express yourself adequately – my experience has been just the opposite. Time and time again, the best and most readable writings are those that simply come from the heart!

A gentle hug -- This week, Renee Compo has been kind enough to present a few of her thoughts on those of us experiencing the inevitable advanced aging process.

“As I have struggled with loss in my own life, it has also reminded me of the losses in the lives of our senior citizens. Have you ever thought about this? Seniors are losing friends, health, family and mobility. Being unable to get in the car and go is a HUGE change in their lives. Being dependent on others for basic needs is a different process.

“As a friend said to me, ‘I first have to get used to being in a different body,’ as her health dramatically changed. One thing that does not change is God’s love for each of us. Think of a senior citizen, pray for a senior, talk to a senior, and hug a senior – gently.”

A senior shoutout -- Speaking of seniors, I happened to be in the area of the Leinenkugel’s Bandshell at the State Fair Thursday, when they were honoring outstanding senior citizens from across Minnesota. I couldn’t help but think of our own congregation, and how much we rely on our mature members to get things done.

From committees such as Mission and Social Action to Worship and Music, and from Children, Youth and Family to Fellowship, and of course the Pastor and Council, Day Camp, Altar Guild, Parish Nurse and Properties, and everything in between, almost too numerous to mention, being 55-plus and serving is the norm, not the exception.

I think the dollar value of our volunteers, young or old, translates into a church that works. But like Chamber of Commerce groups in small towns across the Midwest are fond of repeating, “If you are not growing, you are slipping behind,” the same could be said for churches like ours. Pastor has also repeated that mantra in subtle and not so subtle ways, and it bears repeating if we are to survive.

To our seniors, especially, whether it’s State Fair recognition time or not, your service here is appreciated, but you don’t need me to tell you that.

Sharing the bounty -- Thanks to our terrific GTG (Green Thumb Group) for transforming our fertile strip of land on the west side into a bountiful harvest again this season! And thanks for spreading the produce around to many of us in the congregation!

“The most wasted of all days is the one without laughter.” e e cummings.

Have a Blessed – and humor-filled -- week.
Social Action Calendar –
October to December 2019

October 2019
12  Shelter Breakfast 6:30 to 8:30am

November 2019
8   Shelter Supper 6:00 to 8:30pm

December 2019
14  Shelter Breakfast 6:30 to 8:30am
19  SAVE THE DATE for the 2019 Homeless Memorial March and Service

Our Saviours Shelter breakfast –
October 12th
On Saturday, October 12th, Spirit of Christ will serve breakfast at the shelter. The menu is French toast, bacon, sausage, juice, fruit, and milk. We serve breakfast at 7am and leave church between 6:15 and 6:30am. If you would like to join us for serving or make a donation of coffee or tea, talk to Mark or Carolee at church, email c-cohe@umn.edu or call 952-935-5608 to learn more.

Our Saviours Annual Benefit 2019 –
Change is Gonna Come
Date: October 24, 2019
Time: 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Location: American Swedish Institute
Address: 2600 Park Avenue, Minneapolis 55407

Our Saviour’s Community Services invites you to join us for a celebratory evening supporting the work of our programs – Our Saviour’s Housing and the English Learning Center.

Join us as we gather in community to stay energized, focused, and hopeful for a more just and equitable future. English language education un-locks doors to success for our newest immigrant and refugee neighbors. Housing is a basic human right no one should be denied. And while there’s still much work to be done, we know that when we work together, CHANGE IS GONNA COME!

Go to: https://oscs-mn.org/change/ to register!

Teaming Up for Teens Update
Thank you to everyone who participated in SOC Spirit Day service projects. Because of your engagement and energy, we were able to finish 3 fleece blankets and 144 bags filled with personal hygiene items that will be delivered to the SLP TreeHouse for distribution to youth in need. And as usual, the potluck was wonderful because we have such great cooks in our midst!

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October Food Collection
Food donations for October will be directed to STEP. Please think about adding a few extra items to your cart for your neighbors who use the emergency food shelf when you shop for your own family. As always, STEP can use cereal, canned meats, soups, chili, baking supplies, canned fruits and vegetables. Leave your donations at the table in the narthex and they will be delivered to STEP at the end of October!

Get involved with Social Action!
The Social Action team (aka SOC SAC) welcomes everyone in the congregation to join us to plan and organize mission and social action events. This could be an ongoing activity or a one-time commitment. Talk to anyone on the Social Action Team: (Mark or Carolee Cohen, Wendi Harmsen, Pat Latvala, Deb Schmitz, Joanne Stone or Jeanne Worm) if you want to help!
### Calendar – October 2019

#### Tuesday, October 1
- 6:00pm CYF committee meeting

#### Sunday, October 6
- 11:00am Worship
- 12:00pm Fellowship

#### Thursday, October 10
- 7:00pm Church Council

#### Saturday, October 12
- 6:15am Shelter Breakfast

#### Sunday, October 13
- 11:00am Worship
- 12:00pm Fellowship
- 2:00pm Hay Ride (meet at Bunker Park Stables)

#### Thursday, October 17
- 1:00pm Active Adults (potluck and program)
- 6:00pm Men’s Group
- 7:00pm Prayer Shawl group(youth room)

#### Sunday, October 20
- 11:00am Worship
- 12:00pm Fellowship

#### Sunday, October 27
- Congregational vote
  - 11:00am Worship
  - 12:00pm Fellowship

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#### Weekly

**Monday**
- 7:00pm Boy Scouts  
  (Fellowship Hall)

**Tuesday**
- 5:30pm Women's AA  
  (Green Room)

**Thursday**
- 7:00am Grace in the Park bible study  
  (at Knollwood Panera)

**Friday**
- 7:00am N A
- 7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)
Worship Assistants this month

**Sunday, October 6th**
Lector: Lowell Brandt
Ushers: Team 6 (Lowell and Linda Brandt, Greg and Karen Flatten)
Powerpoint Operator: Dina Strachota
Money Counters: Bruce Strachota, Dick Brammer

**Sunday, October 13th**
Lector: Lowell Brandt
Ushers: Team 7 (Leroy Murray, Anne Kraft, Dick and Nancy Brammer)
Powerpoint Operator: Mark Cohen
Money Counters: volunteers needed

**Sunday, October 20th**
Lector: Kristi White
Ushers: Team 8 (Renee Compo, Marcee Larsen, Deb Schmitz, Jeanne Worm)
Powerpoint Operator: Bret Hanson
Money Counters: volunteers needed

**Sunday, October 27th**
Lector: Kristi White
Ushers: Team 9 (Mark and Carolee Cohen, Bruce and Dina Strachota, Harding Hanson)
Powerpoint Operator: LeRoy Murray
Money Counters: volunteers needed

**Volunteers Needed**

**Money counters:** we are in need of two people each Sunday to count the offering after church. The only rule is that the two people cannot be married to one another. If you’d like to sign up for a Sunday or two, please see the sign up sheet on the counter in the office.

**Fellowship:** we are looking for volunteers to set up, provide, and clean up fellowship after church. This includes making coffee, bringing and serving treats, and cleaning up. The sign up sheet is in the back of the sanctuary if you are interested.
**Sunday School 2019-20 At Spirit Of Christ**

**Every Sunday** – 10:45 Join us in the nursery for a Story about God, crafts and fellowship together before church.

**Monthly** – Family Kit sent to you with devotionals, games, and prayer ideas.

**Three Sundays** – Worship helpers where the children will partner with Pastor Durk and share their gifts during the church service.
- **Oct. 27** – Reformation Sunday
- **December 8th** – Christmas Story
- **April 5th** – Palm Sunday

*Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.* *Joshua 1:9*

**Annual Holiday Bazzar**

Saturday, November 23rd, 2019
9:00am – 3:00pm in the Fellowship Hall

Featuring homemade and creative crafts, quilts, jewelry, knit, felted and crocheted items, baked goods, jams, jellies and popular vendors such as Norwex, Thirty-One Gifts, Tupperware, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Sarang Soaps, Color Street Nails and more.

Cinnamon Rolls and coffee available at 9:00am.
Renee’s Famous Chili, Hot Dogs and chips available at 11:00am

For more information, contact Nikki at infosoccommunity@gmail.com or Call 952-929-6465

**Annual Hay Ride**

Please join us at our annual hayride Sunday Oct 13th at Bunker Park Stables at 2 pm. This has been a yearly, intergenerational tradition for many years and a good way to meet your fellow worshipers. We have a bonfire after with hotdogs and s’mores. Most of the time we have had exceptional weather. The cost will be $9 per person. You will pay at the time of the ride.

We are also asking for donations of hotdogs, buns, marshmallows, Hershey bars, chips and water. If it is cold we will have hot chocolate. There’s a sign up sheet to attend and to bring food at the back of the sanctuary. Please make sure you let us know if you are joining us as we need an accurate count so we know what we will need for the wagon.

This is a great way to celebrate the beauty of God’s world in the fall!
If you have any questions, please contact Renee or Nikki.
Stewardship News Teaching Stewardship at a Young Age

Posted by Center for Stewardship Leaders on Tuesday, January 23, 2018 7:00 AM

Stewardship doesn’t magically begin at age 18, or when one begins one’s first job, or upon graduation from college. In fact, in today’s post from Tammy Wilkinson, we find many ways stewardship can be embraced from early childhood onwards. I don’t remember the first time I thought about giving in church, and I think that’s Tammy’s point. It was in the air my first congregation breathed, and that foundation has helped form me into a steward today. I hope you, too, will do your part and help raise up the next generation of stewardship leaders for the present and future church.

Yours truly, Adam Copeland, Center for Stewardship Leaders

Reprinted Stewardship Article by Tammy Wilkinson

“Why do we give?” asked a 9-year-old girl. It’s a question that Sunday School teachers, youth directors, and parents struggle to know how to answer. The quick answer is, “Because we are supposed to give, and God likes it.” However, that answer only pacifies the questioner and doesn’t really address the question in a way that teaches the true nature of why we give.

Teaching to give at a young age helps start children and youth on a path of giving that has the potential to last a lifetime. Certainly, at the young age of two or three, they will not fully understand nor appreciate the reasons why we give. Over time, through conversations, modeling, and practicing stewardship, children and youth gain a better understanding of why stewardship is important and how it impacts them spiritually as well.

What is important in teaching children and youth about stewardship is that it is a gift that we give and that God values our gifts. As Craig Nessan has put it, “Tithing ought never be imposed as a requirement.”

The telling of the Creation Story helps to model stewardship well. God has abundantly blessed us with this earth on which to live. As “stewards” of creation, it is our job to respect the earth and take care of it, as it is God’s to begin with. Children and youth often understand this analogy well, as they are already exposed to the concepts of caring for creation. However, there are many other ways to teach and model stewardship through the offering of money, time, prayer, and worship -- just to name a few.

Four Ways to Teach

Money: Perhaps the easiest way to teach stewardship is through the modeling of giving. The passing of the offering plate gives children both a tactile and visual experience of learning stewardship. The trend in church giving has shifted for many members to online giving. Although this makes practical sense, I would argue that it is too easy, even for adults. By physically placing the offering into the plate, givers have a deeper sense of what it means to give. Just as a child or youth witnesses their parents give, they too may feel more compelled to give. If electronic giving is desired, parents can speak to their children about that practice as well. Many congregations provide cards or wooden coins to place in the offering plate that represent electronic, automated giving.

Time: Sharing one’s gifts, time, and talents are excellent ways to practice stewardship. In some situations, there are people who financially are not able to offer monetary forms of giving, but are able to give of themselves. This particularly resonates with youth. Oftentimes they do not have the means to give, but the offering of service in worship or helping around the
church provides validation to their giving.

**Prayer:** On the same lines of non-monetary giving, prayer offers another option for stewardship. What is special and unique about prayer is that anyone can offer prayer. Prayer can be offered through music, voice, silent prayers, and meditations.

**Worship:** According to David Gambrell, “Worship itself is a gracious gift of God -- the gift of being able to gather in God’s presence, to hear again the gospel of Jesus Christ, to share in communion of the Holy Spirit, and to be sent to love and serve the Lord in daily life.” This too is another form of stewardship in which all people can participate and that pleases God. It not only becomes a gift for ourselves, but for God as well.

Teaching stewardship takes time, practice, and modeling for many families. It’s important to take note that starting with small practices and explanations, at any age, is more beneficial than avoiding stewardship practices altogether. As children age, they begin to grasp why we give and personalize their own giving. As with adults, stewardship is something very personal between the giver and God. It is in the giving of time, money, prayer and worship that we receive God’s unconditional love.

Tammy Wilkinson is an M.Div. student at Luther Seminary and has been working in Children’s, Youth, and Family Ministries for over 15 years. She has a master’s degree in Communications with an emphasis on Family Communication.
Earlier this month, I put out a call (which still stands!) to have members submit comments, thoughts or anecdotes about experiences or thoughts on church life, or perhaps a few lines of inspiration, of ANY length!

This week, active members Nancy and Dick Brammer’s wonderfully rich and varied story recounts some highlights of their family’s time here at First/SOC.

Our Church Journey -- By Nancy Brammer -- Our journey to First Lutheran probably began for all the wrong reasons. With two young kids, crazy work schedules and Dick’s one-weekend-a-month Army Reserve commitment, we needed convenience! We traded a 10-mile commute, to the church I had grown up in, in Richfield, for a one-half mile drive up Minnetonka Boulevard.

From that first Sunday, when we were enthusiastically welcomed by Dave Ekberg and Bill Aagaard, our journey began (and who could say “no” to those guys?!) We have both served on various committees, often multiple times. Dick recalls, as treasurer, having the privilege of paying off First Lutheran’s mortgage. He remembers when he FINALLY convinced Pastor Gronneberg, that we absolutely needed to rent a big spotlight for the Sunday School Christmas pageant.

Over 30 years ago, Dick built a manger for another Christmas program. It was constructed from left-over paneling from a recent family room addition. Every few years, it makes a reappearance . . . and we have a good laugh!

My memories seem to revolve around the kitchen, Worship and Music committees and Sunday School Christmas programs. Great friendships have developed in the church kitchen, along with those hotdishes, jello salads, dirty dishes and pots of coffee. I am grateful for each one! (And how DID Cleo Ekberg get those dish towels so white!?)