

“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

(1 Corinthians 12:26)

The article below was my “Pandemic Pulpit” message for Sunday, May 24, 2020. I’ve been doing these daily devotions since the COVID-19 shutdown began on March 17<sup>th</sup>. I post them on our church Facebook page and then Mary Ann Smith reposts them on our church webpage. Many of you have already read this. But in case some of you missed it, or if you would like to read it again, I wanted to use it for my June newsletter article. I think it really describes how I feel about the family of faith here at First Lutheran Church.

Pastor Bill

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Life is strange. We can go from great sorrow to great joy in a matter of days, or sometimes in a matter of just a few hours. I remember once when I conducted a funeral and a wedding on the same day. The wedding, of course, had been scheduled months ahead of time. It was on the calendar for three o’clock in the afternoon. The funeral came up unexpectedly, as funerals usually do.

The person who had passed away was a wonderful, faithful woman. She definitely wanted her funeral to be in the church. But the only day that all of the family could be there was on the Saturday of the wedding. So I talked to the wedding family, also wonderful members of the church, and I asked them if we could possibly do the funeral in the morning, at 10:00 a.m.

They were very accommodating, considering how important a day it was for their daughter. We managed to do the funeral without moving any of the wedding decorations and it worked out beautifully. After we went to the cemetery, we came back to the church fellowship hall for lunch.

While we were eating, the bride came out of the church library, where she had been getting dressed. She had to pass through the fellowship hall on her way to the sanctuary for the pre-wedding photos. As she walked through the funeral luncheon, the people who were there for the funeral began to applaud.

The two families, wedding and funeral, knew each other very well. So there were greetings and hugs and tears all rolled into one. It was one of the most heartwarming things that I’ve ever seen in my years of ministry. Someone from the funeral group asked me, “How do you make the transition from the sadness of a funeral to the joy of a wedding in one day?” I said, “I don’t know. I just know that I love both of these families. So I’m going to grieve with one group and celebrate with the other.”

I had a similar situation this weekend. A wonderful, longtime member of our church died on Friday evening. Her name was Lucile Munson. She and her husband Roger have always been so faithful in the church. I could always count on seeing their smiling faces in the same spot every Sunday morning, just a few rows back, on the right side of the church (my left, when I’m facing the congregation), near the aisle. Lucile’s sister, Pat Polson, and her husband Merle, usually sit right in front of them. And there is often extended family scattered around in that section.

Whenever we get back to worship in the sanctuary, it’s just not going to be the same without Lucile smiling back at me. I know that she is now in heaven with Jesus. I know that her physical struggle is over and she is healthy and happy and enjoying reunions with family members and friends. But I felt so sad on Friday night when she passed away. I knew that our church had lost a wonderful woman of God.

On Saturday morning I came in to tape our church service for the weekend. Ever since we had to shut down the church in March, we have been taping a full worship service in the sanctuary every Saturday morning at ten o'clock. It gets posted later that day on our church website and people can watch it whenever they want to. Many of our members joke about watching the service in their pajamas on Sunday morning, while sipping their coffee. It might be hard to get some of them back to church when this is over!

Meanwhile, in the sanctuary, it's just me, one of our musicians on the organ or piano (Lynne Swanson, Kathy Allen, or Gayle Little), Tracy Brennehan on the soundboard, and Glenn Allen on the camera. My wife Lisa and my oldest daughter Becky (who has been staying with us) also attend. They are responsible for assembling all of the children (stuffed animals) around the altar for my children's sermon, while I am reading the scripture lessons for the day. So there are six people each week who make the worship service happen. It's a little strange preaching to a near-empty church, but I'm getting used to it.

Yesterday, when we taped the service, I had a heavy heart, because Lucile had passed away a few hours earlier. In addition to that, the sermon that I was preaching was kind of heavy. I've been doing a sermon series on the book of 1 Peter, and this week's message was about trusting God when we are suffering. The title is "Entrust Your Soul To A Faithful Creator." That phrase comes from 1 Peter 4:19.

So when we finished taping the service, and I had thanked everyone, I headed back to my office. I wanted to start writing this edition of the Pandemic Pulpit for Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. I had just sat down in my chair and fired up my computer when Tracy stopped outside my office door. He said, "Pastor, Lisa (my wife) needs to see you out in the parking lot." That sounded strange. But I got up from my chair and headed down the hall to the north door.

When I stepped outside, I was stunned. The parking lot was filled with cars! My secretary, June Ohlson, was standing outside of her car. She shouted, "We organized this drive-by greeting to show you how much we appreciate you!" I was speechless, which is pretty unusual. Tears started welling up in my eyes. There was a reporter from the local newspaper, the Bureau County Republican, taking pictures. She asked me, "Do you have anything that you want to say?" I said, "We have an awesome church!" It was all that I could get out without blubbing like a fool.

Then, one by one, the cars drove by the spot where I was standing. I had been in contact with many of these people by email or on the phone, but it was such a blessing to see their faces! The sun was shining, the air was warm, and the mood was festive. In mere moments, I had gone from the incredible sadness of losing a beloved church member to the incredible joy of seeing our beautiful, loving church family gathered together.

In a world of strife and struggle, the church of Christ is an amazing, wonderful, uplifting, life-giving family. In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul compares the church to the physical body. We have all of these different parts working together for one common purpose—to make Jesus Christ known to the world. And along the way, we love and support each other. Paul says, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together."

So I encourage you to reach out to the family of Lucile Munson. Let them know that you love them and care about them, even though we cannot physically be together right now. And thank you so much for your amazing act of appreciation. I can't adequately express how much you have lifted my spirits. You are truly the people of God. And I am truly blessed to be your pastor. Amen and Amen.

**Office hours: 9-12 & 1-4 Mon.-Thurs.**

**Website:** [www.flcprinceton.org](http://www.flcprinceton.org)

**Check us out on Facebook.**

**Phone: 815-875-1685**

**Email:** [office.flcprinceton@gmail.com](mailto:office.flcprinceton@gmail.com)

*If you have any **special announcements** for Pastor to make when he tapes on Saturday mornings, please get them to the office **by Thursday**. Call and leave a message, drop off a note or email: [office.flcprinceton@gmail.com](mailto:office.flcprinceton@gmail.com). We have received several messages that didn't arrive or were not discovered before the taping. Our apologies.*

#### PLEASE NOTE

There are **no scheduled activities listed on the June calendar**. But...if you belong to a group that has 10 or fewer members, please feel free to come meet at the church. You should easily be able to do your social distancing and it's time to return to some normal routines! Please call ahead so we don't have too many in the building at one time.

**THANK YOU, Mary Lee, for organizing Pastor's Surprise Drive Thru!  
70 people came!**

#### COUNCIL SUMMARY:

The council met May 12 with 5 council members present plus Pastor and June. The meeting was held in the Fellowship Hall with social distancing practiced throughout the meeting.

- March 10<sup>th</sup> minutes and April email timeline was approved. Additional licensing to Live Stream our worship & increased internet speed were purchased to improve our ability to post services. The Church is part beneficiary of Charles & Beatrice Hodson Irrevocable Charitable Trust. An anonymous gift was given to the church to be used for those experiencing hardships from the shutdown of businesses.
- Since the shutdown, Pastor called every member that he could, began writing a daily "Pandemic Pulpit" devotional series, and began taping his sermons and worship services to post online
- Attendance for the 3 Sundays in March was 90 and on March 22 & 29 there were 248 views on our website. We received \$700 in gift cards to help others.
- Financial reports were accepted. Income has exceeded expenses, we are more than \$5000 ahead.
- Property – trim replaced in classroom & nursery, white boards installed to replace chalk boards, and north steps painted.
- Service & Mission – all activities of this group have been cancelled, No Our Table, Baby Bottle collection, mobile food pantry or Old Wheels.
- Outreach & Fellowship – First Lutheran pens were received.
- Youth & Education – No VBS this summer. Sunday school materials are being mailed to students.
- Endowment – financial investments have experienced some losses. \$250 payment to Ministerial Association toward a scholarship approved. Money returned for Journaling retreat that was cancelled and Building Fund paid interest on the loan for the heating system.
- New Business – how to open again? Members agreed that once it is okayed to hold gatherings of 50, members will be invited to attend the Saturday taping at 10am and add back 9:30am on Sunday. Service will still be posted on our website for those not ready to return to "in-person" worship. Other measures for personal safety are being reviewed.



**First Family News:**

*Our Sympathy to:*

Kevin & Jackie Martin – Jackie’s mother,  
Doris Billhorn of LaMoille,  
passed away on 5-7-20

*Our Sympathy to:*

The family of Lucile Munson.  
Lucile passed away Friday, May 22, 2020  
Private services will be held for her on  
Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.  
A Memorial service will be held at a later date.

Additional May birthday: Jim Muehlschlegel  
Jim & Ryne share birthdays on May 25<sup>th</sup>

**2020 GRADUATES! CONGRATULATIONS!**

**PHS :** Ryne Muehlschlegel, Nyla Thompson &  
Kayla Richardson  
**IVCC :** Madison Kloster  
**U of Wisconsin/Platteville:** Abby Jaques

*Best Wishes!*

Nathan & Camille Shields were married on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> in their car in Orange County, California, in a parking lot by a Justice of the Peace. Their wedding plans were changed because of all this “sheltering in place” and they adapted. What a story they will have to tell their children! We wish them all the best and much joy for their planned celebrations this fall.

**The Old Wheels Show scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup>**

is postponed. The committee is looking to reschedule. Watch for that announcement.

*Hospitalized recently:*

**John Purvis** – at Aperion

**Tommy Larson** – in Franklin Grove nursing home

**Dick Mills** – in ER fractured collar bone

Tommy really appreciates cards.

His address is:

Franklin Grove Living & Rehab Center  
502 N. State St., Franklin Grove, IL 61031

*Continued prayers for:*

John Purvis, Roger Munson & family, Merle Polson, Laurie Anderson, April Buchanan, Judy Mugerdichian’s sister, Tom & Jo Kloster’s granddaughter, Tommy Larson, Cynthia Strader, Dick & Barb Mills, Linda Bacon’s niece Zoey, Ashley Richardson, Marge Laine, Dorothy Kerr, all nursing home residents and those suffering in many ways from the imposed “sheltering” order.

**JUNE BIRTHDAYS**

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Karen Femrite 6/1     | Becky Shields 6/15      |
| Chris Mills 6/6       | Carl Anderson 6/17      |
| Abby Sandberg 6/6     | Rob Dunn 6/20           |
| Chris Anderson 6/9    | Parker Johnson 6/21     |
| Tucker Pierson 6/10   | RuthAnn Gallentine 6/23 |
| Nyla Krabbenhoft 6/11 | Kelly Phillips 6/25     |
| Chris Adamow 6/11     | Devin Keller 6/25       |
| Dash Nutter 6/11      | Emily Adamow 6/26       |
| Glenda Knotek 6/13    |                         |

**JUNE ANNIVERSARIES**

Norm & Karen Femrite 6/16 – 47<sup>th</sup>  
Duane & Mary Ann Smith 6/20 – 50<sup>th</sup>  
Bryan & Ashley Busche 6/20 – 11<sup>th</sup>  
Josh & Nicole Burke 6/22 – 1<sup>st</sup>

Thank You!

Kids, keep sending in your pictures for Pastor. He likes show them during his children’s time.

Follow a new blog:  
[godsstubborngirl.blogspot.com](http://godsstubborngirl.blogspot.com)

**BASKET OF PROMISE**

We will continue to collect these items through the summer. Drop them off anytime or bring them when we are able to return.

Personal Care Kit:

- Light weight bath-size towel (*dark color*)
- Bath-size bars of soap (8-9 oz. any brand in original wrapping – no mini or hotel-size bars)
- Sturdy wide-tooth comb (no picks or fine tooth combs)
- Metal nail clippers (file optional)\*

Note: we are **not** in need of toothbrushes this year.

*Freedom House*

We will continue to accept items for Freedom House. They are in need of Clorox /or other disinfecting wipes and All Purpose cleaners, laundry soap, dish soap, paper towels, body soap, towels, toilet paper, shampoo & conditioner. You may bring them to church & they will be taken to Freedom House.

**Abigail Women’s Center**

Since the Baby Bottle fund raiser provides 25-30% of their income, Abigail Women’s Center is in need of your donations. If you could send a check directly to them (put our church name in the memo line), send them to:

**Abigail Women’s Center**  
**P.O. Box 28**  
**Mendota, IL 61342**

They provide education, training, ultra sound and care for pregnant women. They also help with equipment, diapers & clothing for babies. The Center serves 450-650 clients per year. They could use our help.

**B.C. Senior Center**

*The Senior Center has some emergency funds to help with many expenses. This is strictly for anyone over age 60 who has lost over 50% of their income due to this Covid19 virus. There are some restrictions. Call Denise.*

*The Senior Center is also giving food away on Monday and Wednesday afternoons starting at 12:45pm. They also have soap, laundry detergent & various tissues available. There are some eligibility requirements, please call ahead to: Denise Ihrig at: 815-879-3981.*

**THANK YOU!**

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ at First Lutheran Church in Princeton!

Thank you so much for the generous wedding gift! Camille and I feel so blessed to have such a supportive, caring family. How amazing it is to feel your love from so far away! Your gift will help us immensely in building our home together, and your thoughts and prayers fill us with such joy and gratitude. We can’t wait to see you all again to thank you in person.

God bless you and give you his peace.  
 With love, Nathan & Camille Shields

**THANK YOU!**

I so appreciate how much Lynne, Kathy, Gayle, Glenn, Tracy & Jeff do to keep the physical & musical aspects of the church running smoothly during this really difficult time. I'm so happy to receive the printed material and updates, and participate in worship in a meaningful way. This has only happened because all of you (*forgive me if I've left anyone out*) have gone above and beyond! Lisa & Becky do a great job, too, setting up the "children" on the altar steps and doing so much more to help Pastor. I have thanked him for all he does, Pandemic Pulpit, and sermons, but want to thank you, and all who are the hands and feet of Jesus.

So...THANK YOU and GOD BLESS!

Jackie Pilcher

**CLOSED!**

The Tri-County Opportunities office is closed to walk-in business right now. The **Food Pantry will remain open** on Monday, Wednesday & Friday mornings from 9:00am-11:30am. Distribution will be "curbside service" in the alley behind the Tri-County office. Pull up to the ramp & volunteers will bring pre-bagged items & place them on the trunk. Clients will need to load their own bags into the car & move forward. **DO NOT BLOCK THE ALLEY! Others will be allowed to pick up food with a proxy. Call 815-875-6064 for more information. NO WALK-UPS, call if unable to pick-up.**

Monetary donations to the Food Pantry should be mailed to 1019 N. Main St., Princeton 61356. Call 815-875-6064 if you have food donations to deliver.

**LCW News**

Well, we've gone through another month of this shelter in place for the corona virus. We hope that everyone is well and surviving this different time of our lives. It's hard to not be together, but we have our online worship service and Pastor's "Pandemic Pulpit" to get into the word every day. Thank you, Pastor, for providing these daily devotions for us.

Our programs for May were unfortunately cancelled. We will reschedule the Memorial Book Dedication.

Our programs for June are also cancelled. The OWLS Mid-Summer Cookie Fellowship, scheduled for June 4<sup>th</sup>, the Old Wheels Bake Sale, scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup>, has been postponed until the event is rescheduled and the Fund Raiser for Buddy Bags at Culvers on June 30<sup>th</sup> is cancelled.

The Prayer Shawl group, the Quilters, and our 3 Circles will also not be meeting in June.

Because we were unable to have our Basket of Promise collection during Lent, you can still collect the items needed for the Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits. Just a reminder...we will collect Bath Towels (dark color is recommended), bath size Bar Soap (in original wrapper), Comb (sturdy large tooth comb), and Metal Nail Clipper (file optional). Sorry I don't have more to report at this time....hopefully we will be able to get together soon. Until then...stay safe. We have a lot to catch up on.

**Stay Safe at Home Everyone.**

**♥ We Miss Seeing Our Church Family ♥**