



Revelations

of First Evangelical Lutheran Church - 19419 Royalton Road - Strongsville Ohio 44149
440.238.7890 - www.firstchurchalive.org

May

2017

Dear Friends:

In May I'll be traveling to North Carolina with a few friends for a five-day cycling trip. On one of those days we plan to ride to the top of Mount Mitchell, the tallest peak east of the Mississippi River. Over the course of the entire trip we'll climb somewhere in the neighborhood of 20,000 - 25,000 feet. Needless to say, it will be a real suffer fest, and without a doubt the most difficult thing I've ever done on a bike.

You may ask why I would choose to put myself through that? As my body continues to age it doesn't recover as quickly as it used to, and daily pain has become the new normal. But I believe it's important to keep challenging myself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It would be easy to spend vacation time on the couch watching TV or reading a book, lounging at the beach, or sipping umbrella drinks by the pool. But anyone could do that. Not everyone can propel a bike up a mountain; not everyone can find value in testing their pain threshold; and not everyone will find joy in conquering a new challenge that pushes their bodies and minds to the limit. The reason is simple: because it's hard.

And that's the point. When we do easy things we don't learn as much about ourselves. We don't find the deeper meaning in life. And we never learn how to deal with the potential of failure. There's an old saying that is often associated with challenges: **If it was easy, everyone would do it.**

I think that applies to discipleship. Following Jesus is hard. If it was easy, maybe more people would be doing it because, it seems to me, a lot of folks these days are looking for the comfortable way. Convenience has become a top priority. Whatever makes things smoother in the midst of our busy, demanding, hectic lifestyles is a hot commodity. Which, may be one reason why the church is shrinking and Christianity is no longer as appealing as it once was.

There is absolutely nothing convenient about following the way of Christ. The demands of loving enemies, forgiving the thorns in our flesh, sacrificing for the betterment of the whole, serving others, finding value in the lost and lonely, honoring the destitute, grieving with the dying, walking alongside the poor, setting aside judgment, becoming more empathetic, and standing for justice are perhaps things we don't even want to think about, let alone put into practice on any kind of regular basis.

Yet that remains the challenge of being the Church. To continue to do these difficult things as a witness to the crucified and risen Christ, so they become visible and meaningful signs that there is still hope in the midst of the horrors that infiltrate our broken world.

As the risen Jesus ate breakfast with his disciples on the beach shortly after the first Easter, he kept posing a question to Peter: "Do you love me?" And after each time Peter responded in the affirmative Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep." I think Jesus kept asking the question - even to the point of Peter's irritation - because he knew it would be hard for Peter and the rest of the disciples to keep on doing what he had taught them. The temptation to slack off would be great. As it is for us. Will we accept the challenge to be faithful followers, even if it's really difficult and undoubtedly cause some pain? If discipleship was like riding a bike would we tackle Mount Mitchell knowing it will be an exhausting climb, or would we just cruise on the smooth, flat pavement where the pedaling is easy and the challenges few and far between?

What kind of disciples will we be?

In Christ,

Pastor Chuck

SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY, MAY 14 at 9:45 AM

**ELECTION OF COUNCIL & ENDOWMENT MEMBERS
FINANCIAL UPDATE
OPEN FORUM**

75 MEMBERS ARE NEEDED TO CONDUCT BUSINESS

WORSHIP NOTES FOR



Pub Chuch

Tuesday, May 2

6:30 PM

@ TGI Friday's in Strongsville

Easter 4

Sunday, May 7

8:30 AM
11:00 AM

Contemporary Service, Eucharist
Traditional Service, Eucharist
ELW Setting 3

Easter 5

Sunday, May 14

8:30 AM
11:00 AM

Contemporary Service
Traditional Service
ELW Setting 3

Easter 6

Sunday, May 21

8:30 AM
11:00 AM

Contemporary Service, Eucharist
Traditional Service, Eucharist
ELW Setting 3

Easter 7

Sunday, May 28

8:30 AM
11:00 AM

Contemporary Service
Traditional Service
ELW Setting 3



Summer Worship Schedule

Beginning June 18 we will transition to the summer worship schedule:

9:00 AM	Contemporary Service
10:30 AM	Traditional Service

While many of you will be traveling and vacationing during the warm summer months, please continue to join us for worship, and remain part of our dynamic Christian community that is always seeking new ways to love and serve Jesus.



KIDS HOPE USA

May is here – along with sunshine, spring flowers, and growing grass. May also brings with it the end of our eighth year of KIDS HOPE USA mentoring. Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, our mentors have faithfully shown up to see their students every week. Behind-the-scenes prayer partners have also shown up to pray for the mentors and their mentees. With this support, the students have flourished and blossomed in many ways – academically, socially, and emotionally. Watching these nurturing relationships develop is quite rewarding. The mentors have become very important in their mentees lives, and the kids can't wait to see them every week.

Our congregation owes a HUGE thank you to these volunteers who have touched the lives of these children in countless ways and who are making such a difference in our community – one child at a time. Thank you, mentors and prayer partners for another wonderful year. You and the work you do are greatly appreciated.

Story of the Month

“Mr. Joe” had mentored “Billy” for two years. Then “Billy’s” family was able to purchase a home, and they moved to a nearby suburb at the end of last school year. Several weeks ago, “Mr. Joe” was shopping in a Strongsville store. He heard someone calling, “Mr. “Joe,” “Mr. Joe!” Then he received a running hug that almost knocked him off his feet. “Billy” and his father were shopping too. “Billy” and “Mr. Joe” chatted and had a nice visit. “Billy” said his new school did not have KIDS HOPE mentors, but they needed them. “Mr. Joe” also talked with “Billy’s” dad and made plans to see them in the future. “Mr. Joe” certainly had an impact on “Billy’s” life!

This story could not have happened without a supportive prayer partner and the support of this congregation for our KIDS HOPE program, so a HUGE thank you to First Lutheran Church members and Council also.

For the kids,

Gloria Reichert
Director
KIDS HOPE USA

Upcoming Sabbatical

Greetings,

As we draw closer to July, I thought it important to share with all of you my sabbatical outline. If after reading through this you have any questions please feel free to contact me as I would welcome any opportunity to share with you my goals and objectives for this time away.

Sabbatical Outline

Dates: July 1 – September 17, 2017

Purpose:

This is intended to be an extended block of time for study, personal growth, and reflection apart from usual congregational responsibilities. Therefore, I have blocked this time into three components: personal, spiritual, and educational.

To address the educational and spiritual components I will be centering in on several things. First and foremost an opportunity to replenish and rejuvenate for the ministry and mission that lies ahead. This is more than catching my breath or catching up on life, this is an opportunity to get my battery charged and to re-gear for what lies ahead. Sometimes stepping away gives us a greater awareness and a sharper insight into that which we might otherwise be unable to see or notice. I look forward to the development of a new and fresh perspective so that I in turn might be more effective within my leadership here at First Church.

In addition to fine-tuning my skills I will also use this time to grow in my understanding and awareness of myself and others within the system of what we know as congregational life. I hope to achieve this by further work and study within the area of Bowen Family System Theory. Dr. Murray Bowen had a unique insight into human nature and managing the emotional side of organizations. My goal is to continue my growth within my practical application of that theory and within my understanding of organizations. This will undoubtedly prove to be a useful tool, not only within my own personal ministry goals and objectives, but as it relates to the life and work of the congregation.

Finally, it is my desire to do a better job at staying healthy. As a pastor, I see personal health coming from different components: one's frame of understanding, emotions, spirituality, and healthy living. Therefore, I will also be spending some time exploring and understanding ways that I can do a better job at the healthy living piece. My desire is to grow in my ability to maintain a healthier approach within the way I currently balance my understanding and sense of wellness within my life and the duties of the pastoral office.

Reading materials that have been identified to date:

David and Goliath	Malcolm Gladwell
Great by Choice	Jim Collins
Give and Take	Adam Grant
Help Thanks Wow	Anne LaMott
The End of White Christian America	Robert Jones
The Gifts of Imperfection	Brene Brown
The Happiness Project (Updated)	Gretchen Rubin
15 Invaluable Laws of Growth	John Maxwell

Registered Seminars:

Luther Seminary

July 10 – 14

St. Paul, Minnesota

Kairos Courses

Emotional Intelligence and Human Relations Skills

This workshop is an intensive, five-day session designed to enable participants to learn about, build and practice emotional intelligence skills in a small-group setting. Skilled facilitators provide tools and feedback to enable participants to learn about themselves and to immediately practice emerging skills. As group life unfolds, participants give and receive feedback regarding the impact they have on others in the group. Participants will learn both interpersonal and intra-group communication skills.

Emotional Intelligence is the key to improving leadership effectiveness for faith-based leaders.

Identified Workshop Outcomes:

- Improved awareness of the concepts of emotional intelligence and the impact of emotional intelligence on the participant and all with whom he or she interacts
- Enhanced ability to identify, articulate and reflect on various aspects of working and living in a faith community
- Strengthened understanding of how one is impacted by others in a group and one's own impact on the group
- Increased skills in pastoral leadership
- Heightened awareness of the importance of constructive behavioral information about self and others as leaders
- Enhanced awareness of the presence of God's Spirit in group life and the ability to identify and reflect on that presence

Monastery of the Holy Spirit
July 21 – July 23
Conyers, Georgia

Health and Wellness

This retreat centers on your personal journey to sustainable well-being, and no two journeys are alike. This retreat will lead exploration and opportunity to explore health and wellness in relationship to mind, body, and spirit.

In addition, there will be continual opportunities throughout the day and night for silent prayer, meals in prayerful silence, scriptural meditation, worship, and the celebration of the Lord's meal.

Center for Courage and Renewal
July 31 – August 3
Techny Retreat Center
Techny, Illinois

Habits of the Heart for Healthy Congregations

Focus: The value of appreciating the habit of "otherness".

A retreat to discover new skills for fostering leadership – both within yourself and among others – for the sake of revitalizing faith communities locally and globally. A discovering of ways to renew your spirit and the spirit of your community of faith.

Post Sabbatical:

When I returned from Sabbatical in 2011, I scheduled three different opportunities for people to come and discover more specific information regarding what it is that I did and learned during my time away. I intend to offer the same opportunity this time as well.

My hope would be to hold these gatherings during the month of October.

In addition, I will also write a formal summary to be submitted to council for documentation purposes.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev Kathleen L. Kluck



WE NEED HEROES FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Hi, my name is Flame, a hero for God. I am coming to your church this summer for your Vacation Bible School program. That is, if your church gets enough volunteers for my awesome program. We need teachers, aides, people to help set-up and take-down along with decorating. The program is June 26-30, 9:00 AM-12:00 Noon. Please consider volunteering, contact either Jennifer Paine or Laurie Uline if you are interested. I can't wait to meet you all!

OVER 50'S GROUP

...will meet on **Tuesday, May 9 at 12:15 PM** in the *Fellowship Hall*. Bring your bag lunch and join us. Dessert will be provided by *Curt Dean*.

911 DRUGS AND ADDICTION

"Our Community, Our Emergency, Our Solutions"

Monday, May 15, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
North Royalton United Methodist Church
13601 Ridge Rd., North Royalton

Join PHNR

(Partnership for a Healthy North Royalton) for:
"Empowering Yourself and Your Family to
be a Part of the solution"

Guest speaker is Jim Joyner who will discuss the changing landscape of addiction and highlight the impact of addiction in our neighborhoods. For more information you may visit the PHNR Facebook page or call Amy Kuntz.

Open to teens and adults. Free childcare is available.

ATTENTION ALL PARADE LOVERS!

First Evangelical Lutheran Church is planning to have a float in the Strongsville Homecoming Parade this year! The parade is on



Wednesday, July 19, 2017. We are looking for lots of help with this exciting project and we are in need for a flat-bed to hold the float and a truck to pull it. If anyone is interested, please contact *Joy Blankenship*. More details will be coming soon!

FIRST LUTHERAN LEGACY

This time of year, many of us may be receiving bonuses or tax refunds. If that applies to you, won't you consider sharing a portion of that blessing with a Planned Gift to First Church? For more information pick up a brochure outside the office or contact *Wayne Mosley* at wmosley238@gmail.com.

MENTORS NEEDED

KIDS HOPE USA is in need of three mentors at Whitney Elementary School for three boys, grades 1st, 2nd and 3rd. If you are the one to make a positive difference in the life of one of these children, please contact Gloria Reichert at g.reichert68@gmail.com.

MAY YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- **May 5: BLAST AND FUEL (6-12th)**

Whirly Ball and Laser Tag
Sign-up on youth bulletin board



- **May 14: Youth Board Elections**

10:15am – Fellowship Hall

- **May 14: Bake Sale**

9:00am – 12:00pm



VBS 2017

Calling all children from 3 years old – 5th grade

Come and discover your strength in God!

June 26 – 30 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

We hope to see you there!





Help Beautify First Church by donating Red Geraniums!

Each 4 1/2" Red Geranium is \$5.00. We'll decorate the altar in RED for Pentecost,
then plant them in our beautiful church gardens for the summer!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Geraniums: _____ @ \$5.00 each = _____
(payment *must* accompany order – make checks payable to *First Lutheran Youth Gathering*)

In honor of _____

OR

In loving memory of _____

Deadline is Sunday, May 21, 2017



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Deadline is Sunday, May 21, 2017

MAY VOLUNTEERS

		May 7 Communion	May 14	May 21 Communion	May 28
Acolytes Ellen Kolman	11:00	Elissa Scheel Sidney Hoffman	Abbi Lindsey	Sydney Leon Lance Fowler	Ethan Forse
Ushers Maureen Shorts	8:30	Dave Chaya Renee Chaya Bob Strong Alli Thellman	Dave Bewie Margaret Bewie Linda Browning Gladys Otto	Hank Pekkola Gayle Pekkola Mike McNamara Stacey McNamara	Mary Barnes Joy Blankenship Kurt Blankenship Alli Thellman
Dawn Evangelista	11:00	Wayne Mosley Steve Harris John Brinzo Alfonso Hinojosa	Jerry Krueger Barb Krueger Mike Magons Jocelyn Magons	Dawn Evangelista Dennis Beckman Deepshikha Paul Alan Evangelista	June Zakrajsek Jim Zakrajsek Reiner Mueller Herb Adams
Readers & CA					
Barb Krueger	8:30 Comm Assts:	Bruce Holderead - RCA Jan Holderead Paul Worsencroft Mike McNamara Chuck Whitecar	Mike Thellman	Joy Blankenship – RCA Kurt Blankenship Gayle Kovach Connie Nielsen Don Nielsen	Gail Landfried
	11:00 Comm Assts:	Claudia Lenarz - R Barb Krueger Jerry Krueger Cindy Shoens Janet Kaiser	Caroline Haggett	Maryann Tower – RCA Holly Perzy Linda Walker	Dennis Beckman
Nursery Bonnie Bailey	8:30	Jennifer Paine Kelly Worsencroft	Gayle Kovach Sandy Treudler	Gerri Sagan Barb Krueger	Natalie Haggett Caroline Haggett
Counting Teams Terri Mosley		Jim Gist Sheri Gist Gary Walters Mary Walters Dick Kiplinger	Reiner Mueller Shelley Hoffman Al Hoffman Pierre David	Gayle Kovach Rita Ross Carol Paulini	Sam Reichert Rolf Gaab Jackie Wojciehowski John Brinzo
Altar Guild Beth David		Barb Krueger Lynn Stenger Shelley Hoffman Sue Ludwig Jacquie McLemore	Sandy Rath Billie Hoffman Karen McFarland	Pat Sauernheimer Janet Kaiser Sandy Kaskey	Dawn Evangelista Marsha Stephens Sheri Gist Tricia Nolder

May 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:30 – Brass Choir 7:00 – Bible Bonanza 7:00 - AA	2 6:00 – Crossroad Stitchers 6:30 – Pub Church 7:30 – Al-Anon	3 7:30 – Chancel Choir	4 <i>Pastor Chuck on vacation thru 5/13</i> 6:00 – Praise Band Rehearsal	5 10:00 – Prayer & Care	6 <i>Geyser-Babb - Fellowship Hall</i>
7 9:45 – SCS 12:15 – Bell Choir Spark Outing	8 6:30 – Brass Choir 7:00 – Bible Bonanza 7:00 - AA	9 12:15 – Over 50's Group 7:00 - Cabinet 7:30 – Al-Anon	10 KHUSA Bowling Event 7:30 – Chancel Choir	11 6:00 – Praise Band Rehearsal	12	13 9:00 - Strongsville Food Bank
14 <i>Mother's Day</i> 9:45 – SCS 9:45 – Congregational Meeting 10:00 – Youth Election 12:15 – Bell Choir	15 <i>Revelations Articles Due!</i> 6:30 – Brass Choir 6:30 – Confirmation interviews 7:00 – AA	16 7:00 – Council 7:30 – Al-Anon	17 10:00 – Lydia Circle 4:00 – Youth Board 7:30 – Chancel Choir	18 6:00 – Praise Band Rehearsal 7:00 - Education	19	20
21 9:45 – SCS	22 6:30 – Brass Choir 7:00 – AA	23 8:30 - KHUSA 7:30 – Al-Anon	24 7:30 – Chancel Choir	25 6:00 – Praise Band Rehearsal	26	27
28 9:45 – SCS 12:15 – Bell Choir	29 Memorial Day! Office Closed! 7:00 - AA	30 7:30 – Al-Anon	31 7:30 – Chancel Choir	Notes:		

Pastor Charles Knerem
pastorchuck1@gmail.com

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Pastor Kathleen Kluck
revklk@gmail.com

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