

First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach

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NOVEMBER OUTREACH – THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Help give a family a Thanksgiving Meal and support our Shoreline Food Bank!!

This year's goal: 50 Families

We have so much to be thankful for here at First Lutheran! This year we again want to share the bounty by collecting non-perishable items and cash donations for all perishable items. Due to the even greater needs in our community this year, our goal is to **double** the number of families we have helped in the past. We will be providing all the items necessary for a Thanksgiving meal AND additional non-perishable items that can be used for additional meals to help **50** local needy families. We will be handing out grocery bags with suggested shop-

ping lists after the services on, November 1st and 8th. There will be collection boxes in the narthex for your donations. In addition we will have a sign-up list to bring turkeys, and one for those of you who can help by making deliveries. All items will be needed on or before Sunday, November 22nd, the day they will be distributed.

Any food we collect that is more than we need for the baskets, will be donated to the Shoreline Food Bank.



Look for your shopping bag on Sunday the 1st and 8th!

Thanks for your generosity!

-The Outreach Team

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First Lutheran Church
of Richmond Beach

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The Beachcomber

Welcome New Staff

First Lutheran is blessed to be able to welcome two new staff members as we begin the new church year. Be sure to introduce yourself and give them each a warm PNW greeting:

Omaldo Perez—Director of Music Ministries

Omaldo was born and raised in Santo Domingo, the capitol of the Dominican Republic. He lived there until his desire to pursue higher musical training led him to New York, where he studied piano performance at Brooklyn College under the supervision of Michael Rogers. On a parenthetical note, it was soon after giving his graduation recital that Omaldo first met his wife Sonia, who was studying voice at the same institution.



After playing in numerous church jobs in what is known as the New England Tri-state area (NY, NJ, and PA), Omaldo found his calling as a church musician serving Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey and continued the path of ministry never suspecting that God would bring him to First Lutheran in the Pacific Northwest.



Wolfgang Laudert—Intern Pastor

Wolfgang (or Wolf, as most call him) is a student at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. He will begin his internship with us November 2 and will be with us through next summer. Wolf was raised in Brooklyn, NY and in Minneapolis, MN. He is a graduate of Augsburg College in Minneapolis, is a member of Central Lutheran in Minneapolis, and served his Contextual Leadership at Calvary Lutheran in Golden Valley—the same congregation Maynard Nelson once served. Wolf categorizes himself as a Confessional Lutheran and loves the theology of Martin Luther. Wolf will help with teaching Confirmation and will work in a variety of areas as he seeks to grow and develop his gifts and calling toward pastoral ministry and congregational leadership.

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Special points of interest:

- Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Wednesday, November 25th at 7:00 pm—RBUCC
- Operation Christmas Child—see page 7

A Word from Pastor Bjorge

There's a small mat that gets put on the ground in front of the front door of a lot of homes. It's just a little mat that people wipe their feet on, but there would often be a single word on it. It's called a "welcome" mat. It's just a simple mat that says to a person at the door, "You know, we're not neutral about your presence in this house. When you walk through this door you'll find that you're celebrated here. Welcome to this home!"



Sometimes at homes, in lives—even religious communities—there are other signs. I read that there was a convent and it had a huge fence all the way around it to keep people out. And there was a sign at the gate that said, "Keep Out. Beware of Dog. No Trespassing. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law." Signed: *The Little Sisters of Mercy.*

When Jesus walked among us, it was like there was a huge welcome mat out in front of him. And wherever he went, it read: *Welcome, poor. Welcome, slaves. Welcome, Gentiles. Welcome, sinners. Welcome, prostitutes. Welcome, everybody. Everybody's welcome, nobody's perfect. Anything's possible.* Signed: *God.*

I've been thinking about this a lot these days because our church here has always been and will always strive to be just that kind of welcoming place—a place that welcomes the poor, welcomes the sinners, welcomes the addicted, welcomes the immoral, welcomes the proud, welcomes everybody... a church that believes that nobody's perfect and that in Christ anything's possible!

I've been thinking about this mostly in light of the ELCA's recent decisions. I've strived to be clear that what we're talking about with these decisions and the reason I oppose these decisions is not about whether or not we welcome all people. We do and will continue to! God's grace and mercy is without limit and can and does extend to all. But the issue, as it's been voted on by the ELCA, is not about grace but about two things: how do we understand marriage and what ought to be the behavioral standards for Lutheran pastors.

The ELCA voted this summer to recognize "lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church." The ELCA has always allowed celibate homosexual people to be pastors. Now they have voted to allow those who are in partnered same-sex relationships. They have also, in their social statement, opened the possibility of blessing same-sex unions. In so doing they have abandoned the historic and biblical view that sex is to be a gift expressed in marriage. What's at stake is that they have placed the church and its decisions over the clear teaching of the Scriptures rather than allowing the Scriptures to have authority over the church.

To their credit, in order to maintain unity, they have also said, "This resolution calls on members to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree." This means that if there are pastors, churches, or even synods who disagree with this direction, that the ELCA will respect them. It is in this camp of having a "bound conscience" to God's Word that I have placed myself, and I fully trust that the ELCA will respect that stand.

In October our Council brought in Chris Spetzler, the program director from the Decision Education Foundation out of Stanford University, to help us gain clarity on the issues and to facilitate helpful conversation. His work with us was excellent and has given us already a wonderful sense respect and understanding for one another as we move forward in discerning these important issues.

I have to admit, sometimes I worry that people can hear in this discussion something that's less than welcoming. And I ask myself in all of this: Am I putting out a welcome mat by what I say or write, or am I instead unintentionally saying, "No Trespassing?" But know: it's my heart's desire to do two things and to do them both well: to genuinely welcome and love and care for all people—like Jesus did; and, also like Jesus, to hold fast to the full witness of God's Word and to the belief that the power of the gospel is transformative!

"What's at stake is that [the ELCA has] placed the church and its decisions over the clear teaching of the Scriptures rather than allowing the Scriptures to have authority over the church."

No Programming

No Village night November 11th—Veterans day, November 25th Thanksgiving week
No Confirmation Sunday November 22 and 29th

David Scherer and Rachel Kurtz in Concert Middle school and High school youth Meet at FLRB at 6:15pm RSVP to Terry by November 8th

Trinity College is hosting a concert on Saturday, November 14, to benefit world hunger, featuring Christian artists David Scherer (Agape) and Rachel Kurtz.

The cost of the concert is FREE to attend due to the generous gifts of Trinity Lutheran College and local congregations and organizations. **Youth are invited to each raise \$20 for the ELCA World Hunger Program** – those who do will receive a free digital download card with music from all of the concert artists.

Everett Silver Tips Game
High school youth
November 18th
Cost:\$15
Leaving church at 6:15pm
Money due to Terry ASAP



Family Advent Log Making Sunday November 29th 9:45-10:45 am

All are welcome to come kick off the advent season with the making of advent logs. Please bring a stapler.
Donation of Logs, greens and other decorative items needed, please contact Terry ffd@flrb.org

Sunday School news Theme: In the Doghouse

This month Children will be focusing on stories in the bible that talk about sibling rivalry and jealousy. Children will learn about showing God's love through controlling anger, being honest, encouraging each other, and by forgiving each other.

Faith Formation tid-bit

Key #two Of the four keys to nurturing Faith in the home

Rituals and traditions- As we approach the holiday season start thinking about the traditions your family has and how you can bring God into those traditions. Rituals are an important part of our lives. When our world is turned upside down with chaos it is those family traditions that pull us through. Kids crave traditions and rituals. Here are some examples of traditions to share: Eat meals together, Mark regular family events with simple faith celebrations ex: blessings at birthdays, baptismal anniversaries getting a drivers license ect., observe different church seasons in your home ex: advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, and Pentecost.

PRESCHOOL NEWS

Family Faith Walks—November

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” 2 Peter 3:8

Faith walk:

Take a walk in the evening, paying close attention to the changing length of days and the passing of time.

Faith Talk:

- Discuss what determines the length of a day and a year and why the number of daylight hours changes.
- As winter gets closer and there are fewer daylight hours, how does the way we spend our time change?
- We live tied to time. We look at clocks to see if it is time to get up, to go to school, to eat a meal, or go to an activity. Time affects everything we do.
- God does not live tied to time. It may seem that we must wait a long time for God’s Second Coming. But to God it will seem as if only a moment has passed since He created the world.

Faith Activities:

- Make a chart of the time of sunrise and sunset for two weeks. What do you see happening to the length of the days?
- Set a timer and sit for the 10 minutes without talking or moving. After the timer beeps, discuss how it felt to wait that long. Sometimes time seems to move slowly, but we need every minute God gives us to share the Good News of Jesus.
- Check out a book from the library on time and learn about how people in different parts of the world and different historical eras have kept time.

Dear Father, Creator of Time,
You do not keep time by days or hours but by the people who are yet to be saved. Please focus our hearts on those who need to know the way to heaven. Help us witness to them and through the power of Your Spirit, bring them into Your kingdom. For Jesus’ sake. AMEN



“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”

Brightly wrapped packages, Christmas trees, holiday parties, holly and the scent of pine, unending, upbeat carols in shops and malls, visits from friends and family, baking and cooking, food everywhere--and the awed, hushed joy of welcoming a tiny Infant to our world and our hearts--these are the images and memories of Christmas most of us celebrate and treasure.

for the cheer and the bustle, the anticipation and the excitement. It's at such times that we need to make the space and take the time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone. For these reasons, we invite you on December 6th at 3:00 pm to come and join in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture and music that comes to shine light into our darkness.

days. Please accept this invitation to be with us, a time to move from feeling "blue" to experiencing the wonder and hope of Christmas. No need to RSVP, our doors will be open to all who come, so please feel free to invite others to come with you, as your support, or if you know that they too are finding that Christmas hurts.

But each year some people - the grieving, the lonely, the hurting - dread the approach of the holiday season. They have no heart

The brief service will be followed by a time for light refreshments, fellowship and suggestions on how to make it through the holi-

Sponsored by Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry Training coming in January!

When was the last time you heard someone say, "That is the pastor's job," when referring to some aspect of ministry? Ministry is not just the job (or, better yet, the opportunity) of the clergy. The opportunity and responsibility for doing ministry has been given to all Christians. The upcoming Stephen Ministry training class in January is a chance to be trained and equipped for doing ministry. Talk to any of our Stephen Ministers, they will tell you that it is

a joyous privilege to share Christ's love with others. Stephen Ministry has been a part of our church for 12 years. It has been a blessing to individuals, to the Stephen Ministers themselves, and to the whole congregation. In order to continue and expand this ministry of care, we are beginning another training class in January. Take advantage of this opportunity to share the love that God has given you. You

will find that being a Stephen Minister will not only be helpful to others, but it will be one of the most fulfilling and joyful experiences that you have ever had. To get more information, please contact Cathy Thomas - 542-9161, Anita Riksheim - 361-2725 or the church office - 546-4153. Is this ministry the one for you?

FLRB Preschool SCRIPS

Scripts is our on-going fundraiser. With the Holidays fast approaching, don't forget to fill out an order form!!! The Preschool gets a percentage back for every dollar spent on Scripts (or gift cards). What an easy way to support this ministry!!!!



Snoopy just loves it when someone buys SCRIP and supports the Preschool!!!!

November Order Dates
6th & 20th

Senior Lunch—November 18th

Everyone is invited to come to lunch on November 18th! We are so blessed to have Jim Shilt volunteer his time to prepare a meal! He is planning a hearty home-cooked meal of meatloaf, potatoes and vegetables. Please bring a desert to share, if you can. Otherwise, just come and join in the abundance that appears on the table.

The program for the day is still being planned, but you can look forward to something special—maybe we can get a look at the pictures of the trip to Israel?

This monthly event is in its second year, and continues to be a time that is looked forward to as an opportunity to become better acquainted with one another and build friendships among the seniors of our congregation.

Often, people come at 10:00 am for the *Word of Life* Bible Study with Pastor Bjorge, and stay for lunch. The Bible study takes a look at the texts for the upcoming Sunday (listed in the What's Happening), and frequently becomes a lively discussion, al-

ways a chance to look at faith in new ways. Everyone who has the chance is encouraged to attend.

Reminder
Reminder



Return to Standard TIME!!

For November 1st, set your clocks back one hour.

New Member Class—November 18th at 6:30 PM

Come one, come all!...We are excited to be hosting a New Member Class on Wednesday, November 18th at 6:30 PM! Pastor John will meet with everyone who is interested in exploring membership at First. He will discuss questions about what "membership" means, why you might like it, how to do it, and what gifts you receive as

well as how you might give your gifts to FLRB. Attending does not create a requirement that you join, but it does open the door for you to consider deepening your relationships through commitment, fellowship, and serving.

We hope you will be able to attend, in fact, we encourage and

welcome ALL friends. Come for dinner at 6:00, if you like, and stay on for this special meeting. If you have any questions, please call the church office or speak to Pastor John.

Go! by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop NW Washington Synod

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20 NRSV)

This is one of the Bible verses that those of my generation got to memorize in confirmation. *The Great Commission* is still one of the marching orders texts for the church. As I look at this text again I find the verbs to be powerful challenges to our understanding and work. The first verb, *go*, is the one I want to pay attention to in this reflection.

The disciples who in this story are both worshipping and doubting are commanded to go. Jesus is not saying if you build it they will come. Jesus says go. Get up and move on this command. There is a sense of urgency about this command. Jesus is ascending and the followers of Jesus are to get to work.

That same message is coming to us today with renewed urgency.

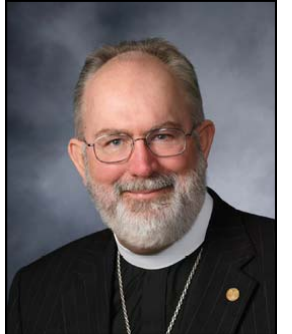
The statistics are impossible to ignore. In the last eight years we have closed or consolidated seven congregations. Seventy-five percent of our congregations have reported a drop in their average worship attendance. The average age of our members is on the rise. The symptoms are alarming and yet the future is open to numerous possibilities.

First, the call of God still remains. We are about God's work. It is true that recent surveys suggest that our reputation as the *None Zone* may be changing. The fact remains that the majority of our friends and neighbors still do not participate in the work of Christ's church. We have a theology that knows the power of God in the reality of daily life. We bring the message of grace in a world bound in sin and self centeredness. Second, the message of the gospel is a message to be

shared. You do not hide a lamp under a basket. We say to every baptized child of God, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." God is still calling others to faith through the word and the witness of each of us. This is God's urgency, not our institutional angst.

Jesus word to the disciples was and is *go*. Be witnesses, teachers, baptizers, carriers of the message and know that I am with you always. The age has not come to an end.

We live in one of the most obvious mission fields in the world. Now is not the time to study, now is the time to go into our homes, workplaces, playgrounds, markets, or schools and share the truth that is in us. In Jesus Christ God is at work in the world bringing life, hope and the reason for being. *Go!*



Bishop Chris Boerger

Classes for Adults Abound!

One thing we like to do at First Lutheran is learn — to study our faith and learn the lessons about God’s will for us and how we can better live in the world He gave us.

Many classes are offered and you are welcome to attend any of them and see if it suits your need to learn.

Sunday:

New Community meets in the Upper Room at 9:45 am to explore faith through the Bible with Pastor John. This season, he looks at

Womens’ Book Study gathers in Room 202 at 9:45 am to engage in a lively discussion of the book A Mary Heart in a Martha World, led by Julie Anneberg.

Monday:

Womens’ Bible Study meets each Monday evening at 7:00 PM. Fran Uchida leads this group of dedicated ladies.

Financial Peace University, a Christian-based financial study, is in progress through mid-December. Registration was required for this course.

Stephen Ministry Support Group meets twice a month on the second and fourth Mondays from 7:00 to 9:30 PM. This is a time that they engage in mutual support and an ongoing continuing education program. This meeting is confined to current Stephen Ministers. A Stephen Ministry training class is planned to begin in January. Anyone who feels called to serve as a Stephen Minister is encouraged to apply.

Wednesday:

Word of Life Bible Study meets at 10:00 am on Wednesday mornings. Pastor John leads a discussion of the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. An in-depth look at the words of the Bible and how they direct our lives today is always nourishing.

Village Night: Everyone gathers at 6:00 on Wednesday evenings to share a meal and then we disburse for classes. **Carhartts for Christ** is a mens’ Bible study led by Alan Herr and meets in the Library. Youth programs for all ages are scattered around the building, and additional short-termed studies for adults phase in and out. See the listing of classes as you enter the lobby on Wednesday nights.

Thursday:

On the second Thursday of the month, Mary Martha Circle meets at 10:00 am in the Library for a study.

We also host **Deborah Circle**, women who gather monthly for lunch and a Bible Study. They are currently setting a new schedule, so watch for more information in the next weeks.

A Letter: to the Congregation and Friends of FLRB

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Sonia and I would like to thank everyone at First Lutheran for the warmth we have experienced and the thoughtfulness with which we have been welcomed into your midst. You made us feel immediately at home and we are overjoyed and grateful to you and to God for the gift of your open arms. We feel truly blessed for the opportunity to share and grow; joining hands in ministry, walking together in our Christian journey.

Speaking of gifts, in the middle of the excitement of unpacking, finding and organizing my way around a few boxes of music, I came across

one of my favorite keepsakes. More than fifteen years ago, I was fortunate enough to receive a piece of wood with the inscription “Joy is the unmistakable sign of the presence of God”. Today, that noble dictum sits on my desk as a personal reminder. That small sentence on a little wooden plaque in my office, though brief, is my inspiration both as a human being and as a musician: I aspire to be the recipient of and conduit to a Sound of Joy that is contagious and finds its way to all around me; a sound which can only be understood as the manifest presence of God in a grateful heart.

We come, full of gratitude, to you, for receiving us into your family. We come, full of gratitude to God, for guiding our steps to this very moment.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to bring your voices in song in an enthusiastic sacrifice of praise, joining the celestial choirs whose supernal anthems we read about in the hymn *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones* (Lutheran Book of Worship hymn #175). In our praise, therefore, we shall echo the one great song of all creation, a song full of ever-flowing, never-ceasing Alleluias to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One!

Who is Missing?

Look around and see if someone you are used to seeing at church is missing! Might they be sick and in need of a visit? Might they have pulled away from our congregation and want to have a conversation? The church is no longer contacted by hospitals or facilities to let us know who is in-

firmed...it is up to you to notice who you find missing. If you or someone you know is not attending worship, please contact the church office!

We have eucharistic ministers who are available to bring com-

munion to people unable to attend worship. They are waiting to serve, so if you know of a need, please contact the church office or Cathy Thomas (206-542-9161).

A Community of Generosity

I looked back to my newsletter of a year ago and it began “In the midst of a global financial crisis.....”. Well here we are, 12 months later. We have weathered the crisis and come out on the other side. We know there is still real concern and there are real problems in our society to be corrected, but we also know that as a Christian congregation we have put our trust in Jesus words in John 13:34-35. “I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” This commandment is about community, about common good, about living as disciples of Jesus.

And I believe this congregation takes that command seriously. We have the enriching experience of bringing the abundant gifts we have to the community within and outside of our doors, a world yearning for peace and healing. Our worship

life, our Sunday School, our Village Night, our youth and adult classes, our hospitality and our outreach events all demonstrate our generosity and our understanding of the important work God has Called us to do.

But to carry out these experiences takes a commitment by each of us to support the budget adopted at the annual meeting in June. We are excited about the new opportunities available due to the arrival of our new music director, Omaldo Perez. We will soon be blessed with the awesome opportunity to share God’s vision with and learn from our new Pastoral Intern, Wolfgang Laudert. We continue to be blessed and served by the rest of our staff (Pastor John, Terry, Linda, Girmai, Carolee and Kären and the preschool staff) who create and supervise the programs, and work with our building needs. During the first 2 months of this fiscal year we held our own with income and expenses being equal.

However, we have fallen behind more each week in October with expenses now exceeding income. The command from Jesus is about community, about common good, about living as disciples of Jesus.....as disciples, please remember you have good work to do here at First, your generosity both in volunteering and in financial support impacts God’s work every day in this place. During November Pastor John and our Stewardship team will be emphasizing the generosity of our Lord among us and asking for your renewed pledge of support. Please consider “Stepping up” to the new challenges before us.

May God bless and keep you. *Carolee Grumm*, Parish Administrator.

