

The Beachcomber

First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach, Shoreline, Washington

Summer 2020

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



"How pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity," says the psalmist.

"Don't neglect meeting together as is the habit of some," warns the Apostle Paul.

Dwelling together... meeting together... how we wish we could! So many of you have shared with me your desire to get together, to be together somehow, some way. I desire this too. Preaching to a

camera lens, for someone who gets his energy from those I'm preaching to, is a challenge. When I preach, each week I have a specific person or situation in mind that I'm preaching into, hoping that if I hit my target by speaking to their needs, I'm speaking to others as well. It's tough when we're separated and I'm not as in touch with your needs. The gospel is not generic. It is specific. It is God's Good News landing into the bad news of our specific lives. So no one wants to be together more than me.

But, as Christians, care of neighbor is what frames our daily walk with Jesus. COVID numbers continue to rise and, so far, masks and social distancing seem to be the best strategy for flattening the curve. This is a time to pay attention to science, not politics. We need to have our neighbors' best interest at heart more than our own, which means our time of social distancing must continue.

For now, I will prayerfully continue to encourage online worship and we will patiently wait with expectation and anticipation for the day we can all gather safely in-person again – when all can gather – from the most healthy to the most vulnerable – and we fill our church building to overflowing again. I faithfully believe this is true.

As Christians, we're committed to following Jesus Christ, loving our neighbor, and we continue to be informed by the scientific community. You will see in this Beachcomber that our staff is working hard to provide ministry through as many channels and mediums of communication as possible.

I hope and pray that each week you are being fed spiritually and, in the context of our current challenges as a nation, finding ways to grow as disciples. Tune into our weekly worship service online. We're working to make that even more accessible and hope to soon provide DVDs of the service to those without internet. Make sure you receive the weekly eBlast emails with vital information as to what's going on. That same group of emails will also receive a weekly video meditation from myself or one of the staff. Join our weekly "Zoom of Life" bible class each Wednesday at 11:00 am. Be a part of our Sunday virtual coffee hour hosted by Amy Day. Join Cathy Thomas for an online prayer time. Connect with Terry for online Sunday School (for both children and parents). Join Joel in his virtual musical gatherings. There are many opportunities to connect with one another at FLRB even now and our staff has done a tremendous job adapting their ministry areas in light of our current situation. To learn how to do any of these things—contact our church office or a staff member.

Please know that you are each, individually, by name, in my prayers. My heart yearns for God's people to come back together—to worship, serve, pray, fellowship, give, laugh, learn, grow, and care for one another again. That day will come! I faithfully believe that. Until then, may you continue to dwell in God's Word, be filled with his grace, be empowered by his Spirit so that, together, we may continue *to live, love, and serve as Jesus did so that*, even now, especially now, *others might come to know Him!*

With Much Love, Pastor John

EVENING VESPERS

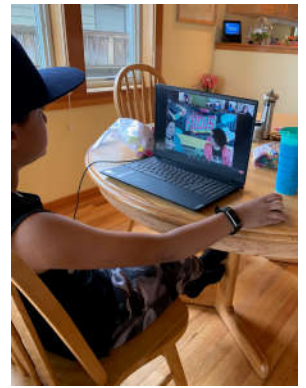
On July 29 at 6:30 pm, bring your lawn chair to the FLRB Parking Lot for a socially-distanced time of worship and communion. Pastor John will give a brief meditation, Joel will offer music, and we will partake in Communion.

Masks are required. Communion elements will be commercially prepackaged in individual serving containers.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Wow! What a spring and summer it has been. In the fall when I started planning this summer I never could have guessed what was coming. I think that this is a sentiment that is repeated by so many of us each day. This year our lives have been turned upside down in a way that none of us could have prepared for.

As I reflect on this season of life there have been a few things that stand out. This is hard—it is hard on everyone in different ways but almost everyone is effected in some way. As a ministry leader who is called to walk through hard things with people that realization can be very overwhelming. However it is hard on everybody.....wow how uniting is that. Early on in the pandemic as I was watching TV I realized that companies had already changed their commercials to reflect the fact that we were now all home and working remotely and what that meant for whatever product or message that they were trying to promote. This brought me hope. It had been so long since anything had been uniting. When I read the Bible over and over again what I hear about is God's uniting, and redeeming love and grace for all people. There will always be ways that divide us. It is the sinful nature in all of us that makes that not only possible but inevitable. But during this time of hard things what I have seen are the ways that this experience has, is, and can unite us as a community, church, state, country or world. That is God's love in each of us. God's love on us pushing and pulling us to find ways to love others better.



This past spring, ministry continued although it looked a little different. We moved Youth Group, JaM, Sunday School, Parents' Sunday School, and Moms' Bible study online via zoom. We added in a college age bible study as well. This summer we offered a virtual VBS experience and a virtual/socially distant mission trip for youth.

The mission trip for youth this year focuses on our community and the ways that we can help at home and our immediate community. Social Justice is also a huge part of the focus. This is what is going on in the world and learning about what our faith says about standing up for those who are marginalized is important.



As we move into the fall I suspect that many things will still need to be done virtually or in a different way than how they have been done before. This is a conversation that we as a staff as well as myself and the volunteers in children, youth and family ministries are having and continuing to have. Please know you are not alone. You are loved. Please reach out! You matter your story matters, your needs matter. We will not be able to meet all needs of all people but so many of the great things that we have done including the Pentecost Parade came out of you the congregation expressing your heart, and your struggles.

May the God of love, and grace continue to be with you now and forever.
Terry Baird, Faith Formation Director, ffd@flrb.org

MUSIC MINISTRY

We are continuing to make music at First Lutheran even when the world is on pause. Creating a sense of community is so important during this time of isolation and music has a way of breaking through all that weights us down. Our music ensembles have continued to meet online each week via Zoom Happy Hours, and as Washington has entered Phase 2 of COVID re-opening we have begun to meet in small groups at church. Participation is limited to groups of 4 and online sign-ups have made it possible for those interested to reserve a spot to sing and play. If there is any interest in singing or playing in these quartet ensembles, please contact Joel Bevington: music@flrb.org

Bell Choir: Mondays from 5:30pm-6:30pm in the Upper Room
Choir: Mondays from 6:45pm-7:45pm in the Upper Room
Band: Wednesdays from 6pm-7:30pm in the Sanctuary



REFUGEE FAMILY UPDATE

FLRB, in conjunction with St. Luke Parish, has been working through Lutheran Community Services NW to help settle a refugee family from Afghanistan.

Our refugee family of eleven arrived on February 13th and with the help of volunteers from the two churches, was soon moved into their apartment. Unfortunately, not long after, the coronavirus pandemic hit our state making interaction with the family much more difficult. Despite this, much has been accomplished in helping the family in the resettlement process. Two major issues have been obtaining financial support through DSHS and the mandatory health screening. All eleven family members have now had medical and dental appointments and have received their immunizations.

With the schools transitioning to online learning, another challenges has been enrolling the children in school and then getting the technology up and running so that both the children and adults could participate in online classes. In addition, many volunteers have spent countless hours tutoring the children and adults either online or in person. The father and the two oldest girls will be starting English Language Learning classes online at Edmonds College on July 1st.

With pandemic guidelines in mind, it also became necessary to hire the services of two professional women who speak Pashto, the language of our Afghanistan family. One is a teacher in the children's school and will be working this summer tutoring the children in preparation for school in the fall. The other woman is mainly helping the adults with interpreting and cultural adjustment.

The father and the two oldest girls are now in the process of applying for jobs. The pandemic has added to the difficulty of the job search since many places aren't hiring at this time or if they are, some English is required. So that he can start to support his family in his new home country, the father is very eager to get a job. He doesn't speak much English but if you know of a possible job opportunity, please contact either Judy Borrow or Karen Neumeister.

Many thanks to all the FLRB volunteers who have given of their time and talents to help this family. It truly does "take a village."

CARE MINISTRY & PARISH NURSE

What interesting times we are living in. It seems so long ago (I think February), that we were pondering if we might close the church for COVID-19, and how. Then we assumed we would be open for Easter! Here in the middle of summer, we are pondering when do we reopen, and what does that look like? We miss being together!

FLRB is doing remarkably well – of course, you are all such caring people and you don't even need to be given assignments. Several people are still connecting on the phone and through social media. As I check in with people, you all have such great attitudes and are being wise by sheltering in place.

Technology has been such a gift during this time. FLRB has a prayer group that meets on Thursdays and what a wonderful way to support and care for each other during these times of not seeing each other. The FLRB Cancer Support Group meets monthly on Zoom, and of course cancer hasn't taken a pause. Pastor John has Zoom of Life on Wednesdays. Terry is keeping the youth connected with Zoom, and we had a fun EVBS with craft packets to use "together"! If you need connections/invites, please contact the office or staff members. Of course we also hope you can join us for worship on Sundays on YouTube. That invitation goes out weekly and if you are not receiving emails and videos from the church, please contact us! We sure do miss seeing you in person! We do hope to have DVD's made of church services soon. If you have any needs, please let us know! If it's difficult to ask for help, maybe a friend or family member can reach out. You can reach me by email at nurse@flrb.org or call the office for my cell phone.

Cathy Thomas, RN, Parish Nurse



Remembering those from our church family who have died in 2020:

Christine Louise Nelson; Hazel Edholm; Ruth G. Johnson; Irma Guthrie; Benny Pagan; John Reed; Torbjorg Solberg; Scott Lindberg; Robert Petrie; Ivar Reiten; Buzz Kahn; Chris Riveland; Lillian Schneider; Phyllis Frick; Viola Erickson.

PASTORAL CARE

These have been hard times fraught with many challenges—loneliness, health issues, isolation, economic hardships, etc. Know that we see you! We know some of you are hurting. We are all hoping and praying that we'll be able to safely gather again soon. We don't know when. We are optimizing for the health and well-being of our entire community. We realize that many in our congregation are in that vulnerable category. COVID has hit our country's elderly population hard. We are being very deliberate about when we'll re-open our doors and gather again publicly. But know that we are still here for you. If you would like to visit with either Pastor John or Cathy Thomas, our Parish Nurse, you may do so by appointment. They are willing to meet you at the church or over the phone. You are not alone. God is with you through this whole ordeal and we are with you too. We care about you and love you and if there's anything we can offer by way of support or care, please let us know.

VIRTUAL GATHERINGS

Sunday Worship Online

Sundays at 10:00 am. Refer to www.flrb.org or our facebook page for links to online worship.

Virtual Coffee Hour

Sundays at 11:00 am. Say hello to friends, old and new, as we gather together via Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly eBlast (email goes out on Fridays to the church mailing list; to add your email to the list, please email office@flrb.org).

Zoom of Life

Wednesday mornings at 10:00 am (resuming in September), join Pastor John via Zoom to discuss and study the Scripture passages that will be preached on during the upcoming Sunday. This is a time for everyone to share their thoughts, ask their questions, and be guided into seeing what these Scripture readings mean for us and our congregation. This hour of study will help you hear the sermon each week differently and, at times, even allow you to shape it through offering your ideas as to what these Scriptures mean for you. Contact Pastor John to connect.



Monthly Cancer Support Group

You are welcome to join our cancer support group. We meet via Zoom to share our stories and lift each other up. We share bumps in our care and offer support and uplifting suggestions. It is good to be able to share our concerns and thoughts in a confidential group. Members are cancer patients, cancer survivors, and family caregivers. Sherry Shellman, cancer survivor leads the group with medical support from our Parish Nurse, Cathy Thomas, retired oncology certified nurse. Please contact Cathy Thomas (nurse@flrb.org or 206-546-4153 x103 and leave a message) for Zoom details.

FLRB PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

The end of the 2019-2020 school year brought many challenges and many moments of resilience. In alignment with the FLRB COVID-19 plan and the required Washington state school closures, we closed our in-person learning in mid-March and finished our school year through virtual learning. This was incredibly difficult as young children learn best in person. Our teachers did a tremendous job creating at home learning opportunities, sharing resources, hosting virtual classes, recording instructional videos, putting together take home learning packets, mailing activities to children and families, and more. The FLRB School Board followed through on a plan that involved applying for CARES Act funding, moving our fundraising online, partnering with families around tuition payments, and offering tuition assistance to every family asking for it. We have done our best with a difficult situation and I am so proud of the FLRB Preschool & Kindergarten team!



As we look ahead to the 2020-2021 school year with hope, we continue to be faced with many challenges. Safely reopening our doors means smaller class sizes, necessary personal protection equipment, increased cleaning and disinfecting practices and supplies, and a number of rigorous policies to protect the safety, health and well-being of each child, family and staff member.

Our reopening plan involves prioritizing the following health and safety areas:

- Reducing and/or maintaining small class sizes and low teacher to student ratios.
- Assuring that groups of children stay together with minimal exposure to other groups.
- Minimizing the use of shared spaces and classroom materials.
- Screening children and staff at drop off each day to check for signs of illness.
- Staggering our entrance locations and start and pick up times.
- Strengthening our daily cleaning and disinfecting practices.
- Following Washington State Department of Health guidelines regarding masks.
- Having a well-established plan in case we do need to provide learning-from-home content.

While these measures will go a long way in keeping our community safe, they are costly. With a decrease in tuition income due to smaller class sizes, our need for support for this ministry is great. There are many ways that you can support First Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten this year:

- Make a donation to FLRB School. Your donation will support the increased need our families have for tuition assistance this year, help us cover the increased costs associated with maintaining the highest level of safety during this pandemic and will help us keep this ministry available.
- Consider serving on our FLRB School Board. This group of dedicated individuals provides guidance and support to the school in so many invaluable ways.
- Donate adult or child sized cloth face masks, disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, isopropyl alcohol or disposable gloves.
- Above all, we ask for your prayers for the children, families, staff and board as we all learn, play, teach, grow and stay safe together this year.

If you have any questions, would like to learn more, or are able to help, please contact me at 206-546-0320 or preschool@flrb.org. Thank you!

With hope,
Laura Schleede, Director

SPRING FUN

Pentecost Parade

Staff waved and called greetings as cars of First Lutheran families drove through the parking lot on Pentecost Sunday.



KnitWitz—Prayer Shawl Ministry

This group continues to knit prayer shawls at socially distanced gatherings.



Writers' Group

FLRB writers have been meeting via Zoom and the occasional socially distanced outdoor gathering as weather permits.



First Lutheran Richmond Beach

The Beachcomber

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WORSHIP

Virtual Sunday Morning Worship - 10:00 am

Visit www.flrb.org for a link to FLRB's YouTube channel.

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council is your elected leadership at FLRB. Please contact council members with your questions, concerns or suggestions. Council Meeting are usually on the second Tuesday of each month.

President - Fran Uchida
Vice Pres. - Doug Schneider
Secretary - Kären Beasley
Treasurer - Mike Laslavic

At-Large - Stephanie Bertges
At-Large - Matt Schleede
At-Large - Chris Stroh
Past Pres. - Chris Verschuyt
Lead Pastor - John Bjorge

STAYING CONNECTED

Social Media, Emails, Seasonal Newsletter

Follow us on Facebook or check out our website to keep up to date on events happening this fall. We will be posting photos, events and articles on our Facebook page. If you would like to receive the weekly e-mail newsletter or would like to receive our seasonal Beachcomber newsletter electronically, please contact the front office, 206-546-4153 or office@flrb.org

Church Staff

John Bjorge, Pastor
Joel Bevington, Director of Music Ministries
Terry Baird, Director of Faith Formation
Laura Schleede, Preschool Director
Christina Nichols, Office Manager
Karen Ewing, Bookkeeper
Cathy Thomas, RN, Parish Nurse
Girmai Berhe, Facilities Supervisor

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facilities@flrb.org

ONLINE GIVING

Download the GIVE+ App Today!



Give+ Mobile

The GIVE+ app shows the same giving options as our website. You can make regular offerings and youth trip fees payments here. If you need more help, or if you have questions, please contact Karen Ewing. Direct links to app stores:
bit.ly/androidGive bit.ly/appleGive