

From Pastor Dan

The other day as I was scrolling through Facebook, I happened upon a FOX & Friends panel discussion about none other than the ELCA. My gosh, I wondered, what had we done to arouse the interest and subsequent ire of FOX News. After hearing a panel member unhesitatingly declare that the ELCA was encouraging people to “break the law,” I went looking for some explanation of what this was all about. Checking on the ELCA website, I found the following press release from our bi-annual churchwide assembly which met in early August in Milwaukee:

ELCA Churchwide Assembly declares ELCA sanctuary church

8/7/2019 10:15:00 PM

MILWAUKEE — In a key action this afternoon, the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to approve a memorial that declares the ELCA a sanctuary church. The ELCA is the first North American denomination to declare itself a sanctuary church body. As a sanctuary church the ELCA is committed to serving and supporting migrant children and families in communities across the country.

I was taken aback because neither I nor my local ELCA colleagues had received any information that such a declaration was in the offing. Now, I realize the church doesn't have to check with Pastor Dan before it makes a move; but I think we all would have appreciated a heads up.

So, what does the declaration of the ELCA as a “sanctuary church” mean? I don't know for sure. I received some “Talking Points” from the ELCA which I am still processing. I will make the talking points available to you all. Additionally, I will certainly be available to discuss what being a “sanctuary church” might mean for us at St John.

In the meantime, I am sharing a letter from an ELCA pastor in Georgia to his congregation. He obviously has a bias in favor of the ELCA decision; yet, he also seems to have a thoughtful and calm approach to the matter. Read what he has to say, think about the spirit of the decision by the ELCA, and we will keep the topic open for continuing discussion.

The promise of God's peace and wisdom be alive in us all,

Pastor Dan

A Pastoral Letter Regarding
the Churchwide Assembly Vote
to Become a Sanctuary Church body

Dear friends in Christ,

In the middle of last week, the Churchwide Assembly voted to designate the ELCA a "sanctuary church body." Over the next several days, news organizations picked up the story; the coverage was mostly vague.

When I returned home from worship this afternoon, I learned that Fox News aired a short panel discussion on the Churchwide Assembly's decision. I assume that this piece will make the usual social media rounds over the coming days, and I write to you today in hopes of addressing any concerns that might be raised by the segment. After repeated viewings of the panel, I can state definitively that Fox News misrepresented the facts both about the ELCA's position. Fox News did not have a representative from the ELCA on the panel and implied that ELCA congregations would simply ignore US law. This is not true.

The ELCA's designation as a "sanctuary church body" means that our denomination will continue to support refugees as they are resettled in the US through our partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, provide legal assistance to immigrants pursuing their legally-protected right to seek asylum, and ensuring that undocumented immigrants are aware of their rights under US law. Moreover, it means that the ELCA will continue to advocate for just and humane treatment of detained immigrants, such as calling for adequate housing at detention centers and accompanying minors through immigration court as part of

the ELCA's AMMPARO program. Congregations that have the resources to do so may provide food, shelter, and financial assistance to migrants in need. Finally, it also means that the ELCA will speak out against xenophobia, racism, and fear-mongering against all people.

You may notice that these are long-standing ELCA practices. As I have mentioned many times before, ours is an immigrant faith: transplanted from Europe into the US and Caribbean by wandering Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. These immigrant communities maintained their customs in this new country and shaped the ELCA as it is today. After World War II, one in six Lutherans was either displaced or a refugee. And over the years, our faith has become more diverse, made up of Lutherans from Central and South America, Africa, India, the Middle East, and every corner of the map. On a typical Sunday, Lutherans in the ELCA worship in more than thirty different languages. Because we are the spiritual heirs to a wandering Aramean, roving Germans and Danes, and displaced Christians from across the globe, our denomination has long been committed to welcoming the stranger. We do so in the belief that what we do unto the least of these, our sisters and brothers, we do unto Christ himself.

The Churchwide Assembly's actions, then, re-commit us to this long tradition.

“Council Corner”

Randy Trulen, Council President

Recently, Diane and I attended the funeral of my cousin who died much too young from sarcoma. Chuck was a larger than life personality with a heart filled with kindness and a desire to always help others. The service and celebration of his life was as emotional as one would expect. I had much time to process this as we made our 3 ½ hour drive home

to Wausau. My mind kept coming back to a poem that was read during the service, "The Dash" written by Linda Ellis.

The Dash
by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tombstone
From the beginning to the end.

He noted that first came the date of her birth
And spoke of the following date with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
That she spent alive on earth
And now only those who loved her
Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own,
The cars, the house, the cash,
What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard;
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real
And always try to understand
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
And show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
And more often wear a smile,
Remembering that this special dash
Might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash
Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent your dash?

© 1996 Linda Ellis

The poem made me reflect on so many things. What is most important in my life? What *should* be most important in my life? I thought of my family, friends, my church community, co-workers, neighbors, and people whose path I might cross each day. Through my actions and words, do I live as a loved child of God? I thought of the challenges we face in our country, state and communities today. I wonder if we would put others before ourselves, would our own lives be better. I wonder if we treated each and every person with respect, would we be treated with respect in return? What would Jesus do? Are there things you would like to change?

What should matter is that we put God before all else. If we truly believe in a life with God in heaven, then worldly possessions and all the other drama become insignificant; dust in the wind.

So when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash
Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent your dash?

P.S. A reminder to all about the upcoming Polka Service on Sunday, October 13. Come and enjoy God's word and toe-tapping music.

Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday Mornings

6:30 p.m. Wednesday Evenings (June 5 - September 4)

Please join us as we worship our Lord!

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Council Members. Here is a list of Council Members. Please contact them with any concerns or issues you may have. Council meets once a month and welcomes input from the congregation.

President: Randy Trulen – 715-675-4091; rtrulen@gmail.com

Vice President: Jan Mueller – 715-675-9558; dmjm5455.wau@gmail.com

Treasurer: Curt Cooley – 715-675-8566; 715-571-4057; usfcool@gmail.com

Secretary: Tammi Smith – 715-581-3892; tammism79@gmail.com;

tammism@aspirus.org

Trustees: Lee Sillars – 715-218-5041; rdfx1234@gmail.com

Scott Oestreich – 715-675-4360; scottsmachinellc@gmail.com

Evangelism: Lane Bahr – 715-297-0017; lucylane35@hotmail.com

Fellowship: Mike Preisig – 715-675-4981; cindypreisig@yahoo.com

Education: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; 715-432-3837; bcdenowak@gmail.com

Worship: Heidi Teske – 715-551-4485; heidi.teske2007@gmail.com

Mission Statement: “We are called to serve God; serve each other; serve the community; serve the wider church.”

Serve God through worship, prayer, and the dedication of our lives to His kingdom.

Serve Each Other by mutual care and support to encourage everyone to fulfill their God-given potential. **Serve the Community** by making known the good news about Jesus

and the love of God by word and deed. **Serve the Wider Church** through prayer and practical support to help spread the good news about Jesus throughout the world.

Homebound Parishioners. The following parishioners are no longer able to consistently attend worship services. I visit them to remind them that they are loved by God and loved by their community of faith, St. John. Sometimes it is helpful to hear those reminders from someone in addition to me.

Ann Kieckhafer
1347 Crystal Avenue
Room 236-1
Naperville, IL 60563

Harriet Wanner
1240 Merrill Ave.
Apt. 2
Wausau, WI 54401

Carol Fitzke
237227 N. 120th Ave.
Wausau, WI 54401

Joan Schreiber
1957 Kowalski Road
Kronenwetter, WI 54455

Leona Wilde
6550 County Road F
Merrill, WI 54452

Harley Goetsch
Rennes Health/Rehab Center
4810 Barbican Avenue
Weston, WI 54476

“Rally Sunday” and “Blessing of the Backpacks”



Please join the education team here at St. John’s as we celebrate the kick-off to our “school” year on Rally Sunday! On Sunday, September 8th, kids of all ages are welcome to bring their backpacks to the worship service for a “Blessing of the Backpacks.” After worship, we will celebrate the start of St. John’s educational season with games and treats! **Please bring a “brunch” food item to share with our all of our friends in Christ!** All are welcome!

Financial Report for July, 2019

Income Received	Expenses Paid	Difference	Budget
\$18,490.43	\$11,612.01	6,878.42	\$12,950.83

Year-to-Date

Income Received	Expenses Paid	Difference	Budget
\$88,496.98	\$92,817.50	(\$4,320.52)	\$90,655.81

Attendance Report

	2019	2018
Average Weekly/July	81	84
Average Weekly/Year-to-Date	116	126

Council Meeting Minutes. Copies of the minutes from the most recently held Council meeting are by the mailboxes. Please feel free to pick up a copy. If more are needed, please contact the church office.

Reminder! If you are in the hospital and would like Pastor Dan to visit, **PLEASE CALL** and let him know. Because of privacy issues, the hospital will not notify him or the church that you are there.

Food Pantry. The food items collected for the food pantry will be donated to Maine School. Your donations are appreciated. If you are able to help out with delivering these items to the school, please contact the church office.

Contribute to St. John with Tax-free Money

If you are over 70½ years old and have an IRA, you are required to take an annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), as I'm sure you know. But did you know that you can give all or part of this to St. John as your contribution without having to pay tax on it first? You simply ask your fund manager or the custodian of your funds to send a check in partial fulfillment of your RMD directly to the church. As long as the money never comes to you first on its way to the church you do not pay tax on it. Think about using the tax savings to increase your giving to St. John as well, so it's a win-win (except for the IRS, of course). Note that you cannot use an RMD from a 401(k) plan in this manner. Also, unfortunately, you are limited to \$100,000 contributed in this manner each year!☺ Finally, since this will be a large, one-time contribution each year you can decide when the church might need the money the most. I chose to make my contribution in the summer, when lower attendance typically means lower income.

Jesus Was a Carpenter. How about you?

We are looking for folks with carpentry skills to add another tier to our Confirmation graduates photo display in the parish hall. After adding the photo for this year's class, we will have only one space available. We intend on having a bunch more confirmation graduating classes than that. If you can help with this project, please contact your council president, Randy Trulen.

South African Visitors

For approximately 10 days (we still don't know for sure) sometime between June 17 and June 30 in the summer of 2020, visitors from the Western Diocese in South Africa will once again be hosted by congregations in several different churches in our synod. By mid-September, we will send a letter to our partner congregation, Rietpan, letting them know how many possible guests we would be able to host. Of course, in order to give them a number, we need to know how many families of St. John would be willing to host a visitor.

Hosting would involve providing a place to stay along with at least one meal a day, usually breakfast. Also, the host family would be responsible to provide transportation for the guest to different activities in which they might be involved. At a minimum, we would want two host families per guest for a maximum of five days per host. However, three hosts per guest would be ideal.

Our connection to Rietpan congregation has not been particularly robust even though they have visited us twice and we have visited them once. Also, we share prayers once a month and occasional email messages. Nevertheless, any positive connection with Lutherans from a different country and culture is a good thing. At the very least, we are exposed to a world view other than that of a white Midwesterner. Of course, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being a white Midwesterner, but positive exposures to various life and world perspectives can only benefit us all.

We are under a time crunch, so please if you are willing to help out by hosting or if you have questions about hosting a South African guest, please contact council secretary Tammi Smith or council president Randy Trulen as soon as you can.

Thanks

September Birthdays

9-2 Nancy Frostman
9-2 Sue Harris
9-2 Sam Young
9-3 Tyler Bunge
9-6 Easton Voigt
9-7 Greg Grunenwald
9-10 Harriet Wanner
9-12 Brian Nowak
9-12 Tre Swemke
9-15 Greg Melander
9-16 Chad Walter
9-18 Mike Preisig
9-19 Buzz Rosenau
9-20 Eleanor Grueneberg
9-20 Pete Hirn
9-20 Jayne Rowe
9-22 Sue Anklam
9-22 Karla Schuett
9-23 Roger Knight
9-23 Mitch Lubecke
9-23 Fritz Poeske
9-23 Kelsi Seubert
9-24 Doug Doede
9-27 Hunter Landrath
9-27 Joseph Nolan
9-27 Kathie Reissman
9-29 Dale Nass
9-29 Zachary Voelker
9-30 Sharon Kilinski

September Anniversaries

9-5 John & Sue Rakow
9-8 Eugene & Kelly Dehnel
9-8 Mike & Sharon Kilinski
9-8 Keith & Georgia Koenig
9-18 Jerome & Debbie Klug
9-18 Louie & Kathie Reissman
9-19 Josh & Brooke Howe
9-19 Mike & Julie Lavake
9-20 Mike & Tara Pasholk
9-23 Jason & Jodie Wilhelm
9-24 Dale & Kay Knapp
9-28 Roger & Susan Knight
9-29 Brec & Rachel Ohrmundt