

Council President's Column –

The last time I was on council, I only wrote one article for the Voice. I hope to do better this time and write at least quarterly.

Serving on Council was not really on my bucket list of things to do in retirement, however, then I felt called to put my life skills to work and help guide our church through these times. The last time I served we were blessed with good times and seasoned pastors with lots of life experience to help guide us. However, even the most experienced leaders have struggled with operating in pandemic times. As Pastor Erin says, there was no class at seminary on operating in pandemic times, so this is new to everyone. Certainly, there are multiple thoughts on how the church should operate during these times and it is okay to have different viewpoints on how we should operate, but without a doubt, our pastor and council have been trying to do their best.

With that said it takes me back to the subject of the prior article I wrote for the Voice. If memory serves me correctly it was titled – IT'S YOUR CHURCH. The premise of that article was that we ALL have a stake in the operation of the church and to get involved. Covid has been so unfair. Because of the isolation that Covid has caused it has been especially hard and stressful for Pastor. Pre-Covid we were all thrilled and in love with our new pastor, then just as we were all starting to get comfortable and were learning how to work together, Covid hit. Since then, because of the isolation so much has fallen on the pastor's plate causing her a lot of stress. Lesser people may have given up saying this is not what I signed up for. We need to count our blessings that she has worked her heart out to keep things going, as much of the church business didn't stop even though the pandemic required us to stay away. It's important to remember what it was like at the start of the pandemic.

Thus, it is a good time to remind the congregation that we have a duty to fulfill here. We have always been proud that First Lutheran built a bishop. Bishop Tom did not acquire the expertise to become bishop overnight. The members of First Lutheran help mentor and shape him and help him acquire the skills to become Bishop. When we called Pastor Erin as a first-call pastor, we made a commitment to her to do our part as a congregation to help mentor and guide her helping her acquire the skills of seasoned pastors. The ELCA even publishes a handbook on this with an entire chapter dedicated to the congregation's role of sustaining first-call pastors. They don't allow every church to take first-call pastors but knew First Lutheran would do its part to support and sustain a first-call pastor.

Without meeting it has been easy to not think about the church. When we feel like church, we can go online 24/7 and watch. Without the personal connection of worship and working on church projects together it is easy to dwell on a negative thought of something that happened and fall farther away. Had we been meeting I know we would be much farther down the road, but Covid waylaid that, kind of a detour with so much falling on pastor. In these times we need you more than ever.

Let's count our blessings that the church has continued to function through this pandemic and that the end is in sight. If local infection rates stay low, I hope some limited worship services can begin meeting soon. Without question I believe we need to strive to get back to normal operations as soon as we can do that and stay safe. Working together we can figure out the path forward.

One of my goals as president is to remove the many church operational / business tasks from the pastor's plate as well as to get the committees operation back in full swing, to allow the pastor plenty of time to dedicate to pastoring and shepherding our church family.

If you have any concerns or suggestions or just would like to discuss church operations, please feel free to contact me via Cell @ 218-340-5772 or my email is Steve@rainylakeonestop.com

I look forward to hearing from you and even more so look forward to the day we can worship as a large group.

Thanks – Steve Lindberg