

# Alpha & Omega

Seasonal Publication

November 2023



**T**he volume of words we hear, speak and digest in any given day can be overwhelming! Communication has become a precious commodity to anyone making their way in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Has it always been this way, or is living in our time unusually complicated?

Jesus' style of communication varied. Depending on his audience Jesus could be as direct and simple as, "follow me." Or, as deep and wide as, "unless you are born again you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus could and would listen to anyone. The woman at the well was ostracized from her community, but a lone male at Jacob's well, engaged her in conversation, about living water. Jesus could hold his own with the learned Pharisees and chief priests, to say nothing of Pontius Pilate, but he could also sit at the dinner table with outcasts and tell stories of love, caring and forgiveness.

While Jesus would engage in conversation around a table, we get our communication in

multiple forms. We get so much data, so quickly, it becomes difficult to process, especially when what is communicated is hard to digest.

Whether its breaking news, fifty page contracts, how to fix your toilet, or how to program your tv, the way information is communicated makes all the difference. And what communication can we trust? Who tells only one side of the story? Who "spins" the details and leaves out important data? Who has a bias? Who speaks truth?

We have a story to tell at First Lutheran. It is a story with a long history beginning with Norwegian heritage families arriving on the prairie. It is a story which has ebb and flow, it expands, then contracts; and it is a story seeking to understand it's place in our current environment. In our story, we seek to understand what God is calling us to do and be, in our time, in this place.

...will you be part of communicating to a weary world the good news of Jesus?

The congregation council is tasked with leading us into our future. We communicate with one another on important and relevant agenda items on a monthly basis. But there is more to communication than a task list. Many tasks are obvious, most are taken for granted, some are visionary, and a few are inspiring. The list of what could be communicated to you could fill volumes. So how shall we communicate and how will you "hear" what needs to be communicated?

It depends. It depends on those who have knowledge, interest and a heart for the ongoing ministries of this congregation. I have many questions, fewer answers. But I do know this....

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...continued

This is God's church. We, God's people, are caretakers of God's church, all of us, not just the council. Jesus' parable of the vineyard workers is harsh. The vineyard owner sets high standards for his caretakers.

As caretakers of First Lutheran Church, we will be the ones who make decisions about the heating and cooling of the building. We will make decisions about teaching adults, youth and children. We will participate in worship life along with those gathering in-person, online or on radio. We will give of our time, talent and tithes, and change the course of lives for the better.

And, there is always more that we can do. Here is the list rumbling in my head:

- What are we going to do about heating and cooling the building? How much will it cost to fix and then to maintain? Who will step up to give and give generously?
- How are we going to welcome, worship and serve God in this place going forward?
- Do we continue what we are already doing, or do we envision new ways to welcome, gather to worship, share the good news to a wider audience, or lifechanging ways to serve our neighbors, near and far?
- Who will step up to serve in the multiple tasks which need doing in this place we call "church"?
- Who will serve on council?
- Who will lead a group of members and friends to assist with the "tasks" it takes to maintain a property, befriend the lonely, feed the hungry?

The Nominating Committee of the congregation will begin their work this month to invite members of the congregation to serve in 2024. They will be in prayer, asking for God's discernment for who will serve as caretakers of God's church. When invited I trust you will faithfully discern your contribution to this congregation's ministry.

As God's hands and feet in this world, let us follow the example of Jesus. It is Jesus who gathered with the faithful, to tell stories of the God of universe. It is Jesus who invited both saints and sinners to follow him. It is Jesus whom we follow as we welcome, worship and serve the God who loves us, and whom we love. Jesus is the good news....the kind of "communication" that we need to hear....and the kind of "communication" which needs to be shared with all God's people.

Only one question remains....will you be part of communicating to a weary world the good news of Jesus? It is good news which needs to be shared!

*Pastor Kristine*