

Live Courageously

Be strong,
and let your heart take courage...
Psalm 31:24

What does it mean to live courageously? It may mean discovering and following a new path, changing the direction of our lives, or our values and priorities.

God is calling us to find a new way forward as a mission outpost for Jesus. We know that the

Christian Church is in decline in many communities, including ours. We are facing a new time in the history of the Christian Church in America. Our Council and Staff have read a book, "Canoeing the Mountains," about the need for innovation in how we do church based on the historical story of Lewis & Clark's expedition. Canoes – the way we've done church in the past – are no good when scaling the mountains (a new landscape upon which God is calling us to be church).

It could mean calling attention to the path upon which we are already walking – and being more intentional about the journey.

God calls for us to live courageous, even "'questionable' lives!" (That means to live in such a way that people are curious about Jesus and the Christian message). We do not want to retreat, but to take risks to share the Gospel in new ways. What choices do we make each day and at church that are motivated by our faith? What would non-Christians find surprising or intriguing about our actions? Our choices? Our practices? Our generosity?

Maybe it means taking a stand.

Sometimes our faith in Jesus calls us to stand up against injustice. First Lutheran is presenting a drama in November about the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor who was a leader in the resistance against Adolph Hitler in World War II Germany. Bonhoeffer's writings and witness can encourage us to live out the freedom of the cross of Jesus Christ by taking a public stand for justice.

This theme (Live Courageously) will shape our worship and preaching, as well as link to our work with **Kairos & Associates** for mission planning and a possible capital appeal. We expect Kairos will help us this fall:

- a) Conduct a congregation-wide Missional Assessment Profile (MAP) inventory - an web-based survey for members to identify how we see our congregation today – are we puzzled? stationary? nostalgic? seeing possibilities? This will take place in October.

First Lutheran Church
of Columbia Heights, MN
flcch.org

**Special Congregational Meeting
Sunday, September 16, 11:15 am**

**Information (Town Hall) Meetings
Sunday, August 26 &
Sunday, September 9
11:15 am**



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TAKE HOLD OF THE LIFE THAT REALLY IS LIFE

1 TIMOTHY 6:18-19

- b) Lead Deep Listening sessions – conversations with leaders and other active members.
- c) Hold a Community Listening Panel - a public panel with leaders from Columbia Heights and other nearby environs so that our members can hear what the community needs from our church
- d) Leadership Summit – to review with leaders and others the outcomes of the work (above) and to determine the scope for the Resource Assessment (see below)
- e) Resource Assessment – What is our capacity, willingness and readiness to support our missional hopes and goals, as well as an appeal?

The motion before the congregation:

We authorize the Church Council to sign a contract with Kairos and Associates to provide consultation services in two phases with fees paid from interest earned on our Endowment Fund.

Phase I: For congregational assessment and profile, leadership inventory, and resource assessment. The contracted fee is \$10,800.

Phase II: Based on the outcome of Phase I, to equip leaders, prepare, and lead a capital appeal to address the debt on our facility and other facility needs to be determined. The contracted fee for these services is \$25,200 plus out-of-pocket expenses.

The Christian Church has always had to adapt to economic, social, political, and geographic changes. The language of our worship, the tunes to which we sing the words of faith, the length and style of sermons, and even the means by which we travel to church – have always gone through change. For many, these changes bring some anxiety and stress. But “the general population’s lack of interest in church life...has the temperature ripe for innovation. One approach is to circle the wagons, while another is to open up space for birthing new, interesting ways of being church.” Peggy Hahn, ELCA Deacon and Executive Director of LEAD, in her book, *“Faithful Metrics.”*

To what is God calling First Lutheran? What shall we carry with us on the journey besides the Bible, our book of faith? What do people find curious about us, and how do we invite them to join us on the journey of life? What bible stories shape our own faith journeys?

It will be exciting work to do together!

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox
Senior Pastor

August 22, 2018



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