



Spirit of Joy LUTHERAN CHURCH

How long, O Lord, how long?

A cry we can borrow from the Psalmist. When we last met on March 8th – yes, three plus months ago – we were planning for our ministry teams and signing up volunteers to assist in our worship and service life. And in the midst of planning our 25th Anniversary year of celebration.



And in a moment, everything changed. It felt like a never-ending, changing daily treadmill, as our Council and Worship Team, and Rosie in the office, adapted almost daily to the new ways of connecting and worshipping. We have adapted how we do everything, from online worship, to Zoom meetings, to phone connection teams. When I came out of seminary, I never pictured leading a church that couldn't gather for worship, fellowship and service projects. The Safe Gathering Task Force (SGTF) has been working hard to try to cover all the bases for return to worship. Please know that there is NO RISK FREE way to gather. Only RISK-Management ways.... Outside is better than inside; a small crowd is better than a large crowd; more distance is better than close; less time gathered is better than extended time; masks help, though they too are not a guarantee. This virus is airborne. I know you have all become immersed in the endless news regarding numbers and cases and death tolls. We are living in extraordinary times. *How long, O Lord, how long?*

Yes. There is grief we all have to work through. Grief at the loss of our "normal" worship life and our regular routines. But I can assure you that God is with us in the midst of it all. We have found new ways to connect. We long for relationship and connection. This is to be expected. I encourage you to look for the ways this time apart has deepened your faith, and/or your understanding of church itself. We continue to look for ways to serve our neighbors and extend God's love in the world.

Worship will not look the same at first when we do gather. I refer you to Micah's report in this newsletter for some of those details. In the meantime, I am researching ways to offer at-home communion in a "contact-less" way.

Besides becoming an iMovie and Zoom novice during these months, I have tried to work my way through the directory, phoning you to check in and pray specifically for your concerns. If I have not reached you yet, feel free to reach out to me at any time. My cellphone number is 330-466-3936. Please put this in your contact list so you see me on caller ID. I am doing more work from home, so am using my cell phone more.

I will continue to make those calls, but I will connect with those who have email in that way, as well.

You are constantly in my prayers and thoughts, and I look forward to see you all soon. Hopefully, we will have concrete information about gathering in the next few weeks.

May God's grace fill you with peace and hope.

Pastor Sharon

Safe Gatherings Task Force Update

The safe gatherings task force continues to meet through the month of June and is working diligently to finalize a plan by the end of the month. We have looked at a variety of possibilities for in-person worship opportunities that can best allow us to meet together with minimal risk while still offering a meaningful worship setting. Many of the things you are hearing from medical professionals and organizations have factored greatly into the work of the task force and once we meet together, you'll see these things in action.

The group has closely followed COVID case numbers using three websites to monitor daily. Data used in this area has come from the CDC, Arizona Department of Health Services, and Yavapai County Community Health Services websites. Numbers continue to rise at a fast rate in Maricopa County, just to our south. With summer travel in full swing, we know there are added risks as Arizona, including Sedona and the Verde Valley, is a popular travel destination. While we are aware of these increased threats, numbers in the Verde Valley remain comparatively lower. We prayerfully hope our local numbers don't see a large spike.

The task force is creating a 4-phase model of worship. Currently, we are in phase 1 with online worship. Even as we move into future phases, we see online worship as an important piece to reach a greater number of our Spirit of Joy family. Phase 2 will introduce courtyard worship late Saturday evenings and early Sunday mornings. Social distancing practices will apply as we want to create an environment that feels safe and spiritual. Phase 3 will transfer this format indoors to our sanctuary where we'll have use of the organ, monitors with PowerPoint guiding the order of worship, and more consistent climate control. The final phase would see us back to a traditional worship setting.

When we return to in-person worship, the following expectations will be asked of attendees:

- * Wear mask in the courtyard
- * No handshaking or other forms of physical contact
- * Maintain physical distancing
- * Keep chairs in pre-set locations
- * Limit use of bathrooms
- * Remain in family groups or individually
- * Monitor personal health and stay home if symptomatic
- * Use main front gate for entrance/arrival
- * Be sure greeters check you in on roster
- * Guests will need to fill out visitor card for record keeping
- * Get bulletin and communion upon entrance (if available)
- * Utilize the offering box to avoid contact
- * Keep hands off of gate and door handles (these will be propped open)



The task force will be passing the full details along to Pastor Sharon and the church council to make a final determination on when we can open our gates for worship. As we prepare for this return, we ask that you continue to pray for our church and community.

Everyone Likes to Read the Psalms

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

You can probably quote the rest of it by heart, or most of it, anyway. These words have been a great comfort to you—and to so many others—during many rough points in your life.

What did these psalms mean in the culture and time when they were originally sung? How do we interpret the abundance of metaphors they contain? What is the specific setting in which each psalm was composed? And most importantly ...

What additional meaning might you find for your personal spiritual growth in these psalms?

This fall, the class ***A Study of Selected Psalms*** will discuss 36 of the 150 psalms. In this class you will learn more about this biblical collection of Hebrew chants, which has meant so much to both Jews and Christians for millennia. With the knowledge you'll gain in this class, the book of Psalms will bless you even more than it has to this point in your life.

A Study of Selected Psalms includes a notebook of more than 125 pages. In it you'll read an up-to-date paraphrase of each psalm to be studied, the text from the New Revised Standard Version, questions for discussion, and information to help you better understand these psalms. While a contribution of \$15 to the SOJ Adult Education Fund is suggested to cover the cost of this notebook, you're welcome to enroll in class even if you can't contribute toward its cost.

You'll discover more about the Psalms than you ever thought possible. You'll be happy you set aside time to take this course. ***A Study of Selected Psalms*** begins shortly after Labor Day, with identical classes on Monday evenings and Tuesday mornings. For more information—or to reserve your seat in class and obtain your notebook—contact Torrey at Torrey@CableOne.Net or (928) 634-2542.

SOJ's In-Reach/Outreach/Social Ministry Committee

Help support the **Navajo Evangelical Mission**. We have seen on TV the needs are great. Go to www.nelm.org to watch a nice video. You may support the Navajos with monetary donations or the following much needed items: toothpaste, toothbrushes, bar soap, shampoo & laundry detergent. We recommend sending/delivering checks to SOJ and specify for the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission (NELM). Products and donations collected after July 1st will be sent on September 1st. A tote will be outside the gate at church for hygiene products. Thank you!

Council Minutes from May 20, 2020

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm by Micah Swenson.

Attendance: Pastor Sharon, Micah Swenson, Donna Woodruff, Marcia Shanahan, Marie Parkinson, Jan Graham, Jim Converse, Susan Bro, and Dave Tjeimeland.

Devotions: Donna Woodruff

Thank you letters were received from the Synod thanking SOJ for our donation and continued support.

Secretary: The minutes were reviewed and approved with date of Synod Assembly changed from 2020 to 2021.

Finance Report: Marcia presented the financial reports pointing out that as of the end of April we are within a few hundred dollars of meeting the budget. This is the first time in a couple of years that we are this close to meeting budget. Snowbirds will be leaving so we are looking at the normal slump in giving during the summer months. Council approved paying only the interest for the month of June, which will continue to help us meet the budget. We will be able to make up the principal payments in the fall, with no penalty. A \$15,000 memorial was received with designation for “education”. Pastor Sharon discussed with the family the possibility of using the funds for a new audio and video system for the sanctuary, which will allow for additional education opportunities. Council approved the update of the MS Office for the lap top used by the treasurer, Mary Stelpstra. Going forward the update will be annual and automatic. This will eliminate a great deal of frustration by using a much older version of MS Office that continues to fail. The Financial Report was approved as presented.

Executive Action: None

Pastor’s Report: The focus has been on the weekly video worship. She continues to send the bulletin via e-mail and postal service for those without e-mail. Pastor is currently calling every member of the church to say “Hi” and make sure they are doing well. Her vacation to Scotland has been put on hold for at least one year, due to COVID-19. She is looking to use vacation time to visit family in Ohio, probably the month of September.

Ministry Team:

Christian Education (Sue)

In-Reach (Marie)

Out-Reach (Donna)

Social Ministry (Jim)

Property (Dave): The roof has been repaired. Currently,

the property is in need of washing away all the evidence of the birds in the neighborhood.

Worship (Jan)

Youth (Micah)



Old Business: The Bishop has recommended that we continuing to meet for worship via video due to COVID-19 issues, and our need for a specific plan to worship face to face. At this time we are not aware of any Post COVID-19 community needs.

New Business: The Task Force will meet through the month of June via Zoom meeting. Those on the Task Force are: Micah Swenson, Lucy Acheson, Torrey Barcanic, Pam moody, and Ian Musil.

No specific date has been designated for the first face to face worship.

A drive in worship may be considered.

A worship in the courtyard may be another option.

Time of day must be considered due to the heat of Arizona.

Council will allow time for the Task Force to meet and work through issues and make recommendations.

Pastor requested a lowering of her phone allowance due to a change in the plan being used at this time. She also requested we pay for the internet service at her home, due to her working from home at this time because of COVID-19. Both of these requested were approved by the council.

Next Meeting: June 17, 2020

Devotions for June: Jan Graham

Devotions for July: _____

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 5:45pm



While you're away, our desert sage shrubs (pictured on the left) and crape myrtle plant in the courtyard (pictured on p. 2) show off their beautiful colors. Life around us goes on—in spite of COVID-19!

WEEKEND BIBLE READINGS

July 5: Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12: Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19: Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26: Romans 8:26-39; Matthww 13:31-33, 44-52



Honoring our Graduate



Chance Densmore, our only and singularly honorable graduate, has received an academic scholarship from the Fleishman Foundation. It is clear we have an exceptional young man in our midst – only now we are apart and we do not have the honor to hold a reception with cake in the fellowship hall.

Some of Chance’s other accomplishments include being named Mingus Union High School’s Male Athlete of the Year, 1st Team All Grand Canyon Region honors and 2020 Grand Canyon Defensive Player of the Year, track and field, cross country, Link Crew, National Honor Society, Interact and student council.

Chance, please know that we are virtually wishing you well on the next chapter of your life. We know you will do well in whatever you put your mind and heart into. Blessings to you!

MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATUS—May 2020

<u>Financial Status</u>	<u>Month of May</u>		<u>Year-To-Date 2020</u>
Income (Total Offering) *	\$ 34,735		\$ 122,802
Needed Income (Budgeted)	\$ 22,226		\$ 111,125
Over/Under Budgeted Income	\$ 12,510		\$ 11,675
Net Ordinary Income after Expenses	\$ 21,420		\$ 48,525
Change in Bank Balances	\$ 21,570		\$ 33,282

Remaining Mortgage Balance	\$ 285,636
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*Please note the May Income figure includes a \$15,000 designated memorial gift.

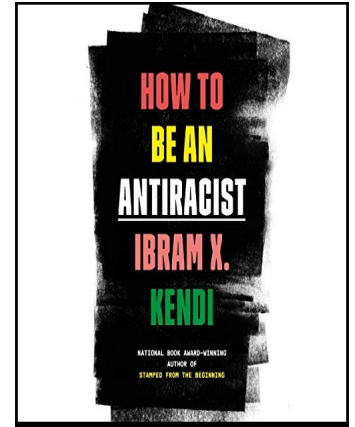
Thank you again for your generosity in keeping up with your giving to support the mission of Spirit of Joy in these unusual times. As can be seen in the attached chart, we are \$11,675 over budget in total giving year-to-date but that does include a designated memorial gift of \$15,000 which will be used for other, non-budgeted purposes. We are pleased to inform you that we are able to make our regular principal and interest mortgage payment on July 1 after taking advantage of the opportunity to pay interest only for April, May and June. It is our plan to begin to catch up on the postponed principal payments later this fall with your continued support. May God continue to Bless our congregation!

Join Me in Virtual Book Study

How to Be an Antiracist

By Ibram X. Kendi

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR by *The New York Times Book Review* • *Time* • *NPR* • *The Washington Post* • *Shelf Awareness* • *Library Journal* • *Publishers Weekly* • *Kirkus Reviews*

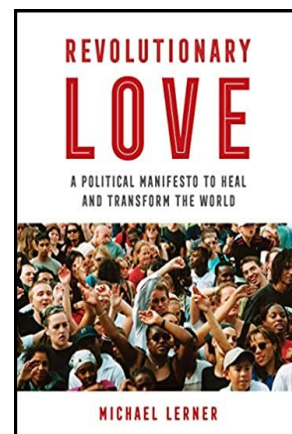
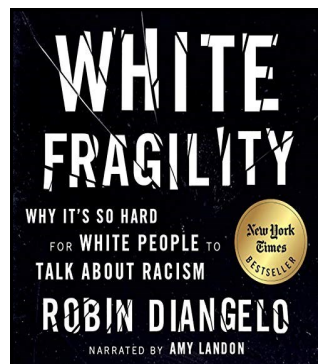


Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients and reenergizes the conversation about racism—and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. At its core, racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas—from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities—that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.

Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.

Pr. Sharon will be starting this book study in the near future. If you are interested in being a part of this study, please contact her.

Other titles to consider: *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo and Michael Eric Dyson and *Revolutionary Love* by Rabbi Michael Lerner.



Do you have a 300-500 piece puzzle with all the pieces you'd like to share?

Almond Peterson has gone through the ones he has. If you would like to re-gift a puzzle to him, call the church office. We don't want him to end up getting too many.

One of his daughters will pick them up from the church and deliver them to him.

Almond will be in town for several more weeks.

June Birthdays

- 2 – Mary Eder
- 12 – John Diets
- 12 – Mary Davis
- 17 - Patti Bays
- 18 - Norma Davidson



Anniversaries



- 11 - Barb & Rich Huber
- 23 – Rick & Donna Woodruff
- 28 - Myra & Joe Piechowski

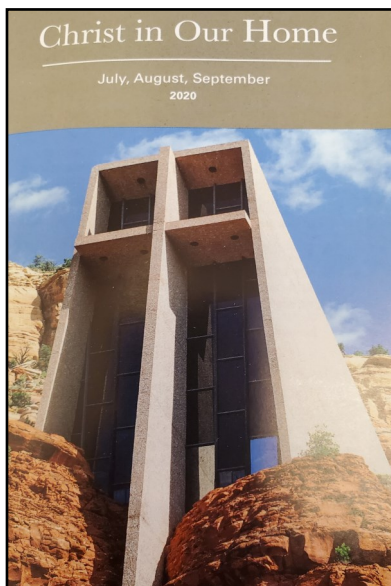


WELCA Bible Study Group...

will be meeting on Thursday, July 9th via Zoom. We will be using the June study guide from our Gather magazine.

All are welcome to join us!

Check out our YouTube channel for Worship Services, Morning and Evening Prayers, and Reflections from Pr. Naomi Barcanic.



DAILY DEVOTIONALS

July, August, September

Christ in Our Home (both regular and large print) and *The Word in Season* are now available in the church office. If you would like to receive your copy of either one or both, please call the office and we will mail them to you.

