

The logo for the newsletter, featuring the word "spirit" in a large, white, lowercase, cursive font, with "NEWSLETTER" in a smaller, white, uppercase, sans-serif font below it. The background is a dark blue gradient with a faint, stylized starburst or compass rose pattern.

The Monthly Newsletter Publication of Triune Lutheran Church
“Set Free to Serve One Another”
April 2020

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Office Hours:

Monday & Wednesday, 10AM-1PM

Worship Schedule:

Saturdays 5PM (contemporary)

Sundays 11AM (traditional)

Ministers.....All People

Pastor.....Brad Ross

Administrative Assistant.....Jan Piskac

Organist.....Edith Schatt

Council President.....Dale Kirk

Council Vice-President....Bonnie Piskac

Council Secretary.....Bill Weidman

Council Treasurer.....Jack Schwab

Sisters & brothers in Christ,

Talk about a rather significant difference between when our March newsletter went out and as we put this together. The stay-at-home order is in effect throughout the state of Ohio, and in many states across the country. We have already canceled three weekends of worship in March, and we know at least one more weekend is off the table in April. And we're not so sure about Holy Week leading into Easter. We seem to be in the never-ending holding pattern of hope surrounded by utter chaos.

Please know, our Triune Lutheran Church council makes all such decisions regarding worship with the health and safety of our members, no: our sisters and brothers in Christ, our dear friends, people we cherish; at the forefront of our minds. We will always err on the side of caution, because we care about your life, your all-around well-being. As of right now, we do not have any set office hours. If you need to get a hold of anyone, please contact me via e-mail or through my cell phone number. Our Monday Bible study is on hold until the virus pandemic improves. We will not worship Palm Sunday weekend. We hope we can gather for Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but we will take these decisions one week at a time. If we do not worship on Easter Sunday, we hope to put together a recording of a service to share with you, but we will see how that goes. We hope to keep everyone up-to-date through the e-mails we have been sending out on a near-daily basis with bulletins, devotions, Scripture images and prayers. If you have not been receiving these e-mails, and would like to be included, please let me know. For those who do not have e-mail, I will be sure to call you regarding worship.

Nevertheless, when it comes to that Holy Week, many theological experts contend we live in the Saturday portion of that timeframe. We know Christ has already done so much for us. We know Christ has died for us, and yes, we know the Resurrection has already happened; but now, we wait for that Second Coming. We wait for that Risen Christ



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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



to come again, to make all things right: not just in the sense of ending potential viruses, but all physical ailments, all forms of war and hate, all economic inequality, all the selfish behavior; just make it all right, once for all eternity. And so... we wait.

Granted, there's still some incredible great power, the encapsulation of the Good... no, Great News, that comes on that Resurrection of Our Lord day. And when it came to our usual Saturday in between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, we may not have thought too much of it, because we knew it was coming. We knew it was taken care of for us. We knew we would gather up with the usual bigger crowd and all the pomp-and-circumstance of organ blasts. We might have, quite honestly, taken it for granted.

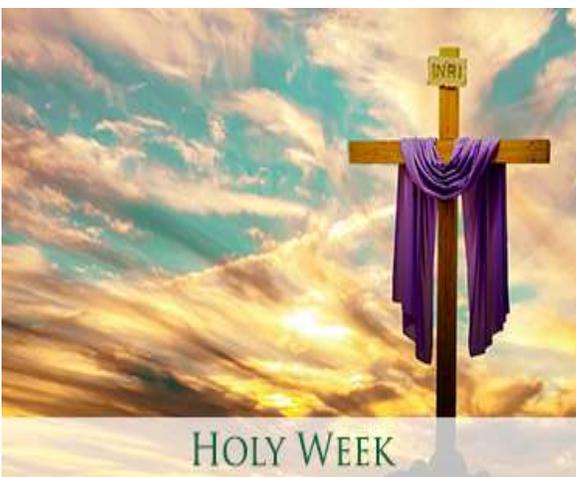
Perhaps, this year we won't. Even if we cannot worship together side-by-side; the Resurrection of Our Lord is going to give us the extra dose of blessed re-assurance we absolutely need right now. We know this seemingly insurmountable stone of

“Stay-at-Home!!!” will not be in place forever. We know this COVID-19 will not end up taking over our life for the rest of our time here on earth or into eternity. We know this, too, shall pass. Granted, we must do our part to make that happen quicker and more effectively (God gives us wisdom, common sense, Holy Spirit, brains, whatever you want to call it; or a combination of all the above and then some) for the benefit of all God's children, who yearn for new life to arrive.

In the meantime, we have this rather eerie connection to those who waited after Jesus was taken off the cross and put away in a tomb, for, what some wondered, may be the end of it all. God had other holy ideas, one of which was that the Resurrection was, by no means, limited to that day outside Jerusalem. It happens every day, even in closed-off homes. It will happen, again, when all of us work together in making personal sacrifices to bring about joy and new life in a way that will be celebrated to the level of all the angel choirs put together. Yes, we wait, for now; but we wait with the most holy eager anticipation of God's Resurrection ministry to be unveiled yet again, for the whole world to enjoy. Amen (so let it be)!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

Photo Caption: “Brazil’s Christ the Redeemer statue [Rio de Janeiro] lights up with the flags of countries hit by coronavirus” LonelyPlanet.com



Again, we will not worship Palm Sunday weekend (April 4/5). We hope to worship together Good Friday at 5pm (there will not be Saturday worship, April 11, regardless of the pandemic improving or not), as well as to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord April 12 at 11am. We will inform you via e-mail if more worships are canceled (and calls will be made to those who do not have e-mail). We will, also, continue to provide e-mails with Scripture readings and prayers, as well as devotions on Wednesdays and the bulletin with a sermon on Sundays. If you wish to be included in this e-mail list, please contact Pastor Brad.



We ask you to keep the following sisters and brothers in Christ in your prayers:

Jenny Adams
Rosa Arias
Bev Deitrick
Bill Deitrick
Cathy Gallagher
Richard Jakubcin
John Kurtz
Jean Kurtz
Matthew Loede
Tim Mize

Mary Phillips
Hazel Schwab
Courtney Spencer
Cicellia Taurus
George Tomaselli
Martha Wasson
Mardell Weiss
Clara Wilcox
Dave Wilcox

If you wish to send any cards, please send them, or drop them off, to the church office, and we will be sure to deliver them.

- 2 Dave Schatt
- 8 Tina Schwab
- 10 Bonnie Piskac
- 15 Kyle Schwab



Monday Bible study/discussion group is currently in hiatus until the virus pandemic improves.

You are encouraged to continue supporting your Triune family through your prayers and gifts, including your offerings that you would normally put in the plate on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings. You may mail them to the church, or drop them off in the church's mailbox, yourself. Such offerings are not simply about supporting the ministries of Triune, but for us to help ministries beyond us, including seminaries and universities, church camps, Lutheran Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger. We thank you for your continued support during this time! Blessings to all of you!



Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes (still need to be approved by the congregation)

The Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting of March 1, 2020 was called to order at 5:41 PM.

It was preceded by a delicious potluck dinner, which featured deli sandwiches, chicken paprikash, pasta supreme, fruit, and Tim Mize's legendary dessert donuts.

Attendees included Pastor Brad, Dave & Edith Schatt, Norelle Gress, Tim Mize, Heidi Bailey, Almut Zvosec, Jack Schwab, and Dale Kirk.

The minutes of previous congregational meetings from March 3 & November 19, 2019 were read and approved. (Motion by Heidi, Second by Tim).

Pastor Brad reported that he and Edith have now been ministering at the Oaks of Brecksville on the first Monday afternoon of every month for the past two years, and plan to continue to do so.

In keeping with our new tradition of seasonal projects for community outreach, Pastor Brad said he is researching various groups that we might be able to help this coming spring. Several members gave suggestions. Pastor said final details will be included in the April newsletter.

Pastor, also, invited any who would be interested in attending the Passover Seder at Fairmount Temple in late March. Several members commented on what a worthwhile experience it had been in the past.

It was announced that we will have a Good Friday service on April 10, 2020 at 5 PM.

We engaged in a lengthy conversation about the fate of our Triune Lutheran Church, and what our options would be if nothing else changes. Questions concerning what happens to the building, what happens to the church's assets, etc., were asked and discussed. Tim Mize offered insight from his experiences as Council President during the last years of St. Matthews in Parma, just before it was closed and sold.

Treasurer Jack (I always get the best deal) Schwab reported the following account info:

\$1,745 in the checking account

\$147,753 in the Thrivent Mutual Fund

\$102,989 in the Brokerage Account from the Messing family

Jack reported that the Thrivent Fund is growing an average of 6 to 6.5% a month, and over 16% during the previous year.

A thorough discussion, then, followed about the benevolence regarding the Messing bequeath. Issues include how much to donate, when to donate, and to whom should the donation go. After much consideration, the following was agreed upon by all attendees:

Since it is an endowment, the stock value will not be touched. At the end of each quarter, the dividend interest earned will be donated to a charity of our choosing, decided from year-to-year.

We chose that, for this year, Quarter #1 will go to the Lend-a-Hand group.

Quarter 2 will go to Building Hope in the City.

Quarter 3 will go to Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry.

Quarter 4 will go to Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Dave Schatt made a motion to approve this arrangement, and Edith seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Jack, then, reported that he recently switched our natural gas service provider from Direct Energy to Energy Solutions of Dominion Energy. Jack said that, in the first bill alone, we saved \$180, further proving his theory that we were getting ripped off by Direct Energy.

Jack, then, reported that service had to be done to our heating system twice within a 6-week period. First, the sanctuary's thermostat had to be replaced, and then electronic igniter and venter motor work had to be performed on the two outside heating units. Jack said he is, also, in the midst of investigating a roof leak in the upper hall.

This was followed by a report from our all-star bookkeeper, Almut Zvosec. Among the highlights of her report were that our financial giving for 2019 exceeded the previous year, operating expenses were below budget in most categories and, although, 2019 had several positive developments, Triune is still operating at a deficit...an important fact we need to address in planning for our future.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM, and everybody helped clean up.

God bless our Triune family!

These minutes are submitted by Dale Kirk. Kirk out.

On Not Getting Used to This

My spiritual practices have long been communal ones. I love people—and their presence.



I am a pastor, and a failure at contemplative spiritual practices. The few meditation sessions I've attempted have devolved into list-making within minutes. One silent retreat led to existential navel-gazing. I suffer through silent, individual prayer—in it I find no joy.

Instead, my spiritual practices are material and communal. I bake bread for communion, kneading my way into a shared meal with the people who will eat the bread of life. I take walks, noticing the world given as a gift, with no other purpose than to be enjoyed and loved. I read books that unite me to beautiful, difficult, and complex thinkers who form a communion of saints.

But mostly I love people. My spiritual practice is to hold space for the celebration and sorrow of people's lives. I love the pitch of human laughter and the varying temperatures of palms pressed into mine. I love textures of skin, the complications of long relationships, the tone of voices woven together in song, the tracks of tears on skin.

Christianity produced an earthy, human set of texts by which we set our lives. In the Gospels Jesus pulls apart fish on a hillside. A woman breaks her best oil jar over his feet, massaging ointment into his worn soles. In another story, Jesus takes earth and his own spit, making holy mud that washes away the stigma of sin from a blind man. The Gospels are stories of bodies that hunger and long, fight and weep, rest and toil, drink and bleed. And the center of Christian worship is a meal in which we claim to ingest God, the body of Jesus becoming part of our bodies.

What do you do when people, your sustaining spiritual practice, are taken away?

In this strange new world marked by the coronavirus, I have continued my pastoral work. I've called each of my church's households to offer a spiritual and emotional check-in for worried times. I've conducted online worship, preached to a camera, and gathered worship leaders to test singing on a streaming service. I've scheduled slots for digital pastoral care.

My colleagues have performed funerals open only to a few close family members standing six feet apart. There is no touching, no holding one another, no firm hold on a shaking shoulder to let the grievéd know they do not bear this death alone. My chaplain friends speak to chronically ill and elderly patients through windows. Others are turned away from offering last rites at the beds of the dying.

I've tried my best to overcome solitude by attending Facebook concerts and operas. My children have connected with quarantined friends through cell phone play dates. We've doodled and danced before screens. But these are mere substitutes for a life I love, a people-d life. There is no replacement for humans.

I've thought that maybe now is the time I could reactivate personal spiritual disciplines with intense rigor and focus, attending to my "interior castle" with new zeal. But I've decided instead that I want to allow the longing for the physical world, for people, to grow. However long this strange season lasts, I am going to nurture my yearning for human life, for the rituals of food, water, and fire that require other humans to ignite.

Coronavirus snuck into our lives during the liturgical season of Lent, when Christians around the world spend 40 days in waiting, preparation, and expectation for Easter. On Easter Sunday the church enacts a yearly ritual of life being birthed from death. If we were to meet together, in the flesh of being the church we would celebrate Communion. There would be hugs and a shared lunch. We would proclaim a body risen from the dead with our bodies side by side.

This year my Lent may last longer. I anticipate that the absence of my spiritual practice of loving people in their bodies, just as they are, will continue to widen a space that cannot be filled with virtual access. Giving attention to the curve and shape of that empty place, being drawn back to longing for the lives that will fulfill it—this will be enough.

Melissa Florer-Bixler is pastor of Raleigh Mennonite Church in North Carolina and author of Fire by Night (Herald Press).

Photo Credit: Mario Purisic / Unsplash

This article published via The Christian Century (March 23, 2020).



Regardless of whether we are physically together or not on Easter Sunday, all of your Triune family, wish you and yours a happiest celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord! No matter the circumstance, Christ is still Risen for you! Share the Great News wherever you are!



And, as we are asked to stay on the home-front for the health and safety of our surrounding community and beyond, we are still invited to be outdoors. May we, always, be thankful for the most beautiful Creation that surrounds us and remember our call to care for it, that numerous generations after us may be able to enjoy it as well!

April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 AA @ 7pm	8	9 Maundy Thursday AA @ 8 pm	10 Good Friday Worship @ 5pm	11
12 WORSHIP @11 AM Easter	13 Bible Study @ 1 pm	14 AA @ 7pm	15	16 AA @ 8 pm	17	18 WORSHIP @ 5 PM TIM MIZE
19 WORSHIP @11 AM	20 Bible Study @ 1 pm	21 AA @ 7pm	22 Earth Day	23 AA @ 8 pm	24	25 WORSHIP @ 5 PM PASTOR BRAD
26 WORSHIP @11 AM	27 Bible Study @ 1 pm	28 AA @ 7pm	29	30 AA @ 8 pm		



If you have something you would like to put in the newsletter, please let us know by email, written letter, phone call or stopping by the office.