

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

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Office Hours (remotely)

Worship Schedule (suspended for now):
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 and brothers in Christ,

It seems like all I've been doing lately is stealing ideas from other churches and the pastors I trust. Now, it isn't quite as immediate as seeing whatever response to COVID-19 this other congregation comes up with, and instantly pass it along to our council leaders. No, I go through my usual visceral process: "That's going way, way overboard...this pastor is just trying to draw attention...do we have to be obsessed with the .000000001% chance!?!?" But then, I eventually realize my colleagues are not coming up with these plans by themselves. They're not conspiring with each other across computer screens over and against their respective faith communities. Instead, they've consulted with medical professionals in their congregations and beyond, checked with their church's insurance companies, actually read through these scientific studies as opposed to just hearing/reading about them being referenced in newspaper articles or on news network shows. Safe to say, we've tried to go back to our biology/chemistry/anatomy & physiology days in high school (all of which were not my favorite parts of my teenage days, to say the least), to better understand aerosols and droplets and whatever else.

One of the ideas I've decided to steal, after a fair share of mentally wrestling with it, is an image I heard from The Rev. Sherman Bishop, who now serves as interim pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Vermillion (as well as serving as Dean for the Cleveland West conference of us deer-in-the-headlights appearing pastors). When I first heard the metaphor, of sorts, I thought it was incredibly over-simplistic in trying to describe this massive coronavirus problem regarding the organized church operation. And yet, after going through my usual visceral instantaneous and stubborn reactions, I realized there was something to it, after all. He brought up what we usually envision with our decision-making is approaching a fork in the road, in a sense: there is a correct way to go and an incorrect way. When it comes to our Westernized culture of black-and-white outlook on the



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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

world, including for our own lives, that mindset takes over not just with financial planning or moral values, even religion, but also a global pandemic. There is a right and a wrong way to “re-open the economy” in terms of timing and the who/what/where details, which carries over to in-person public worship...again, at least from our perspective with not too much background in epidemiology (a branch of science I never knew existed until this virus made me learn about dreaded science again).



The Rev. Bishop encouraged us to consider something else: it's as if we're walking into a cave, not knowing the terrain at all. Granted, we will walk in after we do our fair share of discussing the plan with all our fellow hikers on this rather tumultuous turn on our collective journey, but let's get one thing straight: we're not about to charge in without any care for what lies underneath our feet or what surrounds us entirely. We understand this is going to be a matter of us taking one step forward and a couple steps back. When it comes to in-person public worship, we'll try some things that won't work. We'll take a step back and reassess. We'll try something else. We'll need the usual divine allotment (as well as from each other) of grace, forgiveness and Resurrection empowerment. New research may come along from other leading epidemiologists (or other immensely intelligent people), and we may have to take another step back that will lead us to more frustration and second-guessing and wondering if we're going way overboard. Welcome to the cave.

Thankfully, this whole ministry operation, this whole lengthy arduous and beautiful road of faith, is sustained by the One who's been in a rather dark cave of death, who knows what we need to keep moving forward, regardless of how we do so. However, the whole idea behind the Resurrection was and is that our Lord would never leave anyone behind in this life. The Resurrection life was not going to be limited to a select few disciples or to certain sisters and brothers in Christ who worship in-person by such and such a date. The church is divinely emblazoned with the same principal: we are not going to leave anyone behind (at least, we *shouldn't*). We will figure out whatever way we can to ensure that the same Gospel of unstoppable love, relentless grace and undeniable hope gets proclaimed for us all to experience and be further sustained for whatever terrain lies ahead. Amen (so let it be)!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

From all of us at Triune, we wish all the fathers in our life a happy Father's Day!





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

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Jenny Adams | Mary Phillips |
| Rosa Arias | Hazel Schwab |
| Bev Deitrick | Courtney Spencer |
| Cathy Gallagher | Cicellia Taurus |
| Norelle Gress | George Tomaselli |
| Richard Jakubcin | Martha Wasson |
| John Kurtz | Mardell Weiss |
| Jean Kurtz | Clara Wilcox |
| Matthew Loede | Dave Wilcox |
| Tim Mize | |

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.

- 3 Barb Saylor
- 9 Jan Halishak



- 26 Evan Schwab

- 26 Alan & Elaine Siggelkow



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



An e-mail was sent out last week with our potential consideration for worshipping outside. One of the reasons why we are doing this is because many scientific studies (if you're interested, please visit a more concise description at www.drheatkernelson.com/singingandcovid19) reveal the danger of singing indoors, as well as speaking corporately (such as when we speak the creed and the Lord's Prayer together). Doing so outdoors gives us more options. We will take the next few weeks to consider, for starters, options between outdoor speakers and AM/FM transmitters so that everyone who attends may hear as clearly as possible; again, if we were to consider doing this as a congregation.

We, also, wanted to give you advanced notice about the many changes the Triune Council has already discussed for when we do return to worshipping in the sanctuary, not knowing when that will be and not knowing what new information will be made available to ensure the health and safety of worshippers. Nevertheless, this is what we have discussed thus far, knowing we will need to mentally prepare ourselves for such changes for when we do return indoors. As of right now, looking forward:

- pews will be marked where people can sit with so many feet separation between those not in the same household
- bulletins will be placed at marked spots in the pews
- hymnals and other pads of paper will be removed from the pews
- offerings will be placed at the back of the sanctuary (no passing of the offering plate during worship)
- no sharing of the peace (at least, not the way we normally do)
- no receiving line with the pastor after worship and worshippers will need to leave pew by pew starting from the back towards the front
- strongly, *strongly* encouraged to wear masks
- when we do celebrate Communion, individual wafers and cups of wine will be placed on at the front of the sanctuary; they would not be received directly from the pastor or Communion assistant

Please be advised, such plans can change, but this is to make you aware of our on-going discussions for worship. If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, including your preference between worshipping outdoors with singing or indoors with no singing, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Brad or one of our Triune Council leaders.

My Take: The Church is Not Closed
(originally published April 28, 2020 on LivingLutheran.org)



Our new reality has taken over with blinding speed. Life has gone from normal to “wash your hands” to “shelter in place” in what now seems like an instant. Businesses have closed, events have been canceled and millions have lost their jobs. Families can’t visit relatives in nursing homes or hospitals, and grandparents can’t visit grandchildren. Teenagers have been barred from gathering with friends, and college students are unexpectedly living at home again.

Churches have been shuttered as well. Sometimes with just hours to respond, congregational leaders have scrambled to maintain some sense of normalcy by creating online worship, Bible studies, confirmation lessons, council meetings and even coffee hours. Still, it has been jarring, heartbreaking even, to see videos of empty worship spaces with just a pastor and a handful of musicians trying to counteract our growing sense of isolation. Pastors have preached about change, grief, fear and hope. Worshipers have mailed in contributions or registered for online giving because, even though a church’s doors may be locked, congregational ministries have continued, expanded even, and become critical.

The church is open—both when we gather *and* when we scatter.

Our buildings may have been shuttered to combat an invisible enemy, but we must live into the reality that the church is not closed. Our church is not a building, an organization or a worship service. According to the New Testament Greek, the church is the *ekklésia*, the called-out *people* of God. We have been called by God for a special purpose: to love and serve the world. The church is open—both when we gather *and* when we scatter. Even when scattered, we are still church, some of us sheltering in place and others working in essential roles. These are the vocations we have been training for throughout our years of gathering in person.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a *kairos* moment to reconnect with and fulfill our God-given vocations for our neighbors, whoever they may be. In this crisis, our vocations among our family, friends and community are even more important.

God in Christ continues to work in and through us to provide the necessities of daily life for our neighbor. Examples can be found all around us:

- Quilters are raiding their fabric stashes to make face masks, and Boy Scouts are using 3-D printers to generate face shields.
- An Episcopal priest convinced the owner of a shuttered diner to let him use the kitchen to cook meals for nearby hospital workers. He rehired the cooks and dishwashers that had been laid off, providing them with a way to make a living.
- Every night at 7 p.m., people in New York City open their windows and stand on their stoops to cheer and clap, and drivers honk horns and run sirens, all to support the hundreds of thousands of people who save lives and keep the city running: health care providers, emergency medical workers, grocery workers and delivery drivers.
- Several nights a week, one of my Facebook friends feeds an anesthesiologist who lives nearby to thank him for his service.
- An anonymous donor gave every resident of an Iowa town \$150 in gift cards to local businesses to provide for those in need and support the local economy.

Gathering virtually will continue to be important—we need that connection, comfort and hope. But this *kairos* moment calls us to find creative and bold ways to live into the reality that, even when the building's doors are locked, the church is still open.

Take action

Pray for essential workers by name and role, and use social media or video clips during online worship to tell stories of how we are serving our neighbors. Create online support groups for medical and other essential workers and their families. Use time formerly occupied with meetings to telephone members, inquiring about and affirming their scattered ministries.

The ELCA's Life of Faith initiative provides resources and networking to aid congregations in realizing their vocations. Watch our introductory video at <http://lifeoffaith.info>, then check out the resources on the site.

The Rev. Dwight L. DuBois is an ELCA pastor, a leader of the Life of Faith initiative and author of The Scattering: Imagining a Church That Connects Faith and Life (Wipf & Stock, 2015).

This article and many other resources for the journey of faith are available at LivingLutheran.org.

Minutes of Triune Lutheran Church Council Meeting of 27 May 2020

Meeting opened at 6:04 AM with a prayer by Pastor Brad. Minutes of last meeting of 10 February had been distributed. These had been approved and no matters needing present consideration were seen in them.

This meeting was for the main purpose of considering when to commence with services and how we should structure these services under present physical separation conditions. Dave and Edith Schatt were invited to join this meeting.

First, Jack reported on financial and other aspects of our operation during our “down” period. He reported \$135,888 balance in our mutual fund and \$554 balance in checking. Also reported \$144.93 dividends from our Thrivent securities to our local Lend-A-Hand charity. Jack distributed a record of the performance of our Thrivent Diversified Fund.

Bonnie reported inquiries as to Willmann Hall rental but present occupancy restriction work against approving rentals.

On our main subject of concern, Pastor gave us plenty of information on responses from ELCA congregations and from other denominations regarding in-person worship, and how few, in the ELCA, are currently doing so. A major concern to everyone is whether we should adhere to a principle of 14 days of reduced confirmed cases/death rate before re-gathering together in the same space, knowing of complications with more testing possibly becoming available.

Pastor let us know of plans from local congregations to host outdoor and or drive-in worship. As we discussed this, there seemed to be many variations on how this could be handled, including potential weather problems (both heat and rain). We discussed using Willmann Hall instead of the sanctuary, both for easier seating arrangement variations as well as for sanitizing (also, it could be an alternative to outdoors in case of weather).

Also discussed was how singing is much safer outdoors, people could bring their own lawn chairs. We would look into using speakers or AM/FM transmitters. For services in the sanctuary, there would be the marking of seating positions and needing hand sanitizer in all occupied pews, among other details still needing consideration.

The many variations both of venue and method require many decisions. We decided to meet again on 17 June at 6:00 PM to allow time to gauge the congregation’s interest in drive-in/outdoor worship, as well as to monitor the rates of COVID-19 in Cuyahoga County after many businesses open and crowds emerging.

Meeting closed at 7:03 PM

June 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Holy Trinity Sunday	8	9 AA @ 7pm	10	11 AA @ 8 pm	12	13
14	15	16 AA @ 7pm	17	18 AA @ 8 pm	19	20
21 Father's Day	22	23 AA @ 7pm	24	25 AA @ 8 pm	26	27
28	29	30 AA @ 7pm				



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.