



May 2020

A Publication of
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Christ Lutheran Church REPORTER

While we remain socially isolated, God continues to be at work, renewing us and all creation. The grounds at Christ Lutheran Church are coming into bloom, and the peepers offer a n outdoor concert each evening.

Until you can see its beauty in person, enjoy a few photographs from the church grounds!





Pastor's Page

Just over a month ago—it seems far longer—the question on church leaders' minds was, "Should we hold regular worship services, and if so, what precautionary measures should we take?" That question seems quaint or naïve these days, and looking toward May and beyond, new questions have arisen, some immediate, others less urgent, but no less important.

While we're all wondering when we might return to in-person worship and other gatherings (I won't say "return to 'normal'"—more on that later), all that is clear now is that it is not yet, and unlikely to be in May, and perhaps not in June or July, either. The only honest answer any of can give is "I don't know."

Related to that is the matter of how we proceed in the meantime. For several weeks now, including Holy Week, we have been gathering virtually via Zoom meetings. We've tweaked the format a bit, and will continue to do so, to create the optimal experience under less-than-optimal circumstances, and recognizing that virtual worship is not and cannot be the same as worship as the assembly of Christ's people.

In addition, Tom Berryman and I have composed daily meditations on our website. (If you haven't yet accessed them, look for the blue-violet button on the homepage titled "Community Connections During COVID-19," and tell us what you think.) Critical meetings of the Council, Finance and Property Committee, and Endowment Committee, as well as gatherings of the Choir and Book Group have also been conducted virtually these last weeks. More of that is certainly possible. Zoom Bible studies are an option, as are other kinds of discussions. (See elsewhere in this issue about a discussion of a draft social message on the church's role in civic engagement.)

As we have begun to establish a new normal, or "in the meantime" way of being the church in this place, a broader question of longer-ranging consequence is before us: how will this pandemic change our churches—change Christ Lutheran Church—and how might God be at work to coax some positive outcomes for our life together and ministry to neighbors?

Recently Bishop Hazelwood convened a virtual town meeting for New England Synod pastors and deacons, where a similar question arose. Now, please don't hold the bishop accountable for my **very loose** and summary paraphrase of his response, but it went something like this: *Some churches will close, and significant changes for all of us, which we've been talking about, anticipating, and experiencing, will be accelerated.*

I appreciate the bishop's candor regarding the stark situation for some of our sister congregations (and without wishing ever to be complacent about our own, that is not a concern in our foreseeable future), and his non-anxious demeanor in relation to changes for all of us. It suits the moment, and it rests on faith in God's power, providence, and grace.

More than one observer has noted that the 21st-century church may look a lot like the 1st-century church: small assemblies ("house churches") with very limited or dramatically changed roles for clergy, mutual care and sacrificial service to neighbor as the unmistakable sign of Christian belonging, and undergirding and overarching it all: a profound and abiding understanding of our dependence on and trust in God. We could learn from their example.

In the middle of the 3rd century, a plague of unknown origin—a novel disease—swept through the Roman Empire. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage at the time, had the dubious distinction of having the pestilence named for him. But the church also distinguished itself in its response to the plague.

Undergirded by the promise of life that extends beyond earthly existence, Christians undertook the risky tasks of caring for the sick, and spent generously to provide for those in need, both fellow Christians and pagan neighbors. By the time the pestilence had passed, Christians' survival rate greatly exceeded that of the general population, almost certainly due to the care they had received, and the church had grown considerably, on account of the witness that Christians had given.

As the world at large and we as a community of faith continue to contend with the novel coronavirus, may faith guide us in our response. Let us choose compassion over fear. Let us give thanks and pray for the researchers working on developing a vaccine and treatments. Let us pray for all who contract COVID-19, all who care for patients, and all who grieve the dead. Let us pray for all of the “essential workers” who keep showing up to keep food on our tables, lights on in our homes, and mail at our doors. And if we are not called to offer direct care to those affected, let us be bold and generous in responding as we are able.

I give thanks for the acts of generosity and compassion that I have witnessed among you: those making masks and sending them to Ascentria Care Alliance, Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey, and other places, and making sizeable contributions to numerous organizations affected by the virus and serving those in need. Now more than ever, may our posture be one of fearless and tireless concern for our neighbors.

Peace in Christ.

Pr. Rebecca Bourret

Update from the Finance and Property Committee

Financial Results. For the first three months of 2020, we continue to be on sound financial footing because a few families have contributed their full annual contribution as a single gift. During this period of suspension of services, we thank those who have been sending their envelopes to the church (113 Union Street, Natick, MA 01760) and those who signed up for Simply Giving and encourage a continuation of that faithful stewardship to assure that we can balance our budget for the entire year.

Thank you from the Bishop's Office:

Dear Pastor Bourret and the people of Christ,

Thank you for your faithful mission support and for giving more than your original pledge in 2019. Your ministry is a gift to your local community and the wider church. Thank you for that witness.

In these times of physical distancing please know you are held close in prayer.

Blessings and thanks,

Pastor Sara Anderson

Music Notes May 2020

Live music has become Virtual music these days

At Christ Lutheran, we've been busy recording music for our Sunday services and for Daily Reflections. The live recordings produce a higher level of fidelity than actual live performances during the services and devotions. It's a real treat to feature our CLC and guest players and singers in these virtual performances.

Looking for some suggestions of fine music to see and hear "virtually?" Here is a short list of YouTube performances of some of my favorite contemporary choral music.

Arvo Pärt "Which was the son of..." The lineage of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyPmFBpiF7E>

Sofia Vokalensemble, Stockholm

Click "Show More" for the text from the Gospel of Matthew outlining the genealogy of Jesus.

Arvo Pärt (b1935) is an Estonian composer, coming from an impressive national choral singing tradition. Have a look at this trailer for the movie "A Singing Revolution" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4njksFKyycY>

Ola Gjeilo "Ubi Caritas" "Where there is love, God is there"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxu7XuElJ9g>

Performance by Voces 8. This is a beautiful performance of piece that the CLC Choir has sung numbers of times, especially on Maundy Thursday. Ola Gjeilo (b1978) is a Norwegian composer.

Conspirare "Unclouded Day" arranged by Shawn Kirchner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE3nN6lvIGA>

Conspirare, a professional vocal ensemble based in Austin, Texas and directed by Paul Hella Johnson, sings an arrangement of this wonderful gospel music song.

Stephen Paulus "Pilgrim's Hymn"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8aGplwgAgw>

University of Utah Chamber Singers

Click "Show More" for the text. Stephen Paulus (1949-2014) was one of America's finest composers. The CLC Choir and guests sang "Pilgrim's Hymn" in 2018 for our November Evening Prayer Service.

Happy listening!

Tom Berryman, Music Director



Help Wanted:

For several years members and friends, folks experiencing illness or other hardships or homebound, have been remembered each month with lovely cards through the Card Ministry funded by the Roger Laakko Memorial Fund. As Janice Laakko steps down from this ministry, we are hopeful that someone new will come forward to oversee this important ministry of care.

The primary responsibilities are to maintain an up-to-date list of those who should receive cards and to send them out at the beginning of each month. Janice is happy to train a new coordinator.

Please contact Pr. Bourret if you can consider taking this on.

youth and family news

Hello there, Youth and Families of Christ Lutheran,

Where are we? In our homes, pretty much, yet...where are we each day, in terms of preoccupations? Where are worries are, there our attention will be also, I suspect!

Me, I am trying to find my balance. How much of aiming to be God's hands in this world includes steaming the wallpaper off the bedroom walls? What about planting a larger vegetable garden that the local rabbits will enjoy--a lot? Or learning to speak a little Spanish with the help of an online app that's really a game?

When I sew masks to give away, then I know that's serving God because the masks serve God's Children who need that protection. Easy call!

What about writing in my journal, though? That's a harder call. Yet I'm pretty sure that writing, which is one of the gifts I finally lay claim to, should be going on right now. Oh hey: look, I'm writing this piece for The Reporter! Better than nothing.

Any rate, it makes sense to me that there are many dilemmas we can talk about now. Which interest you the most?

I suggest we set up an online grouping via Google Hangout or House Party or even Zoom. That way we can talk about what's going on, not going on, and/or watch a movie and/or play a visual game like Pictionary and/or make some recordings and so on!

So I hope you will text/call/email me with suggestions as to what you'd actually look forward to doing, and which medium you prefer at this point—is it House Party now? Is Zoom way too much like classes? etc. Are any of you interested in Hosting such, given your experience with that now?

Feel free to reach out to me any time to Respond, or if you just want to talk. My flip phone Still Works!

God's peace and presence be with you—are with you--yet I'm praying for even more to manifest for you. Thank you kindly, and... help!!

—Your Y&F Coord., Gail W-R



Did you know...?



When our church, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, issues statements of social issues, they do not reach us from the top down, but are developed through a process that includes ordinary lay people as well as members with expertise in relevant disciplines. Such a process is now underway regarding a social statement on government, civic engagement, the relationship of church and state and related matters, as called for by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

From the ELCA website's page on the process:

A Draft Social Message on Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy

The ELCA is preparing a social message on government and civic engagement. From March 20 to May 27, ELCA members are invited to provide feedback on a draft of the message. This writing project was requested by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and authorized in November 2019 by the ELCA Church Council [CC19.11.47w]. It will be considered for adoption at a June meeting of the council.

Click [here](#) to read the draft "Social Message on Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy." To offer feedback, please fill out the [survey](#). You may also choose to email comments to draftsocialmessage@elca.org. The comment period ends May 27.

Social *messages* are teaching documents of the ELCA focused on particular social topics. They are intended to focus attention and urge action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to church and society. ELCA social *statements* are more comprehensive documents developed via a five-year process led by a task force and adopted at churchwide assemblies. To read more about the upcoming work toward a social *statement* on church and state, click [here](#).

To learn more about the social message and the process of its creation, please see the "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" document.

Social statements are the ELCA's primary documents to address significant social issues. They are intended to aid reflection and shape conscience and to set forth the ELCA's teaching and policy on the major social issues and questions of contemporary life.

An ELCA task force provides primary leadership for the statement's development over a five-year period, using an established process of study and widespread participation in theological and moral deliberation. This task force will begin meeting in the fall 2020.

Please contact Pr. Bourret if you might be interested in discussing the draft as a part of a group via Zoom meeting.

Family Promise Highlights



To Our Registered Walkathon Participants,

Congratulations to **Carol Virshbo** for being our **Top Individual Fundraiser** with almost \$7,200 raised for our Campaign for Hope. Carol was also the Team Captain for the **CLC Walkers** which was also the **Top Fundraising Team** for 2020 with nearly \$11,000 raised. Thank you to all the members of the CLC Team for your amazing fundraising efforts.

We would be remiss in not also recognizing the outstanding fundraising efforts of **Team ICB Wayland** once again this year, which came in second place at \$8,500 raised.

Team Myles To Go was our **Top Youth Fundraising Team**, raising over \$1,000 to support families in need. Great work!

Thank you to all 49 teams that registered for this year's walk. We look forward to seeing you next year!

We look forward to seeing you all next year at our 12th Annual Walk.



It's been no secret at CLC what a crucial role Laraine Marthinsen played in the establishment of Family Promise Metrowest, as well as how important her leadership has been among us in prioritizing its ministry.

It's a joy to see Laraine receiving public recognition for her vision, heart, and tenacity that have meant so much to our community.

Last year the Parmenter Foundation board of trustees honored Laraine Marthinsen with the Grace Johnson Volunteer Appreciation Award, and this week The Natick Tab ran a story about this well-deserved recognition. Read all about it here:

<https://natick.wickedlocal.com/news/20200424/natick-volunteer-receives-award>

Congratulations, Laraine, and thank you!

BOOK GROUP

The CLC Book Group convened virtually in April to discuss How to Be an Anti-Racist.

The next meeting on May 18 will have an international focus. Each member will select their own book to review, whether fiction or non-fiction; the one criterion is that the book's author be from outside the United States.



If you're interested in participating, contact Marianne Swenson: MSwenson10@concast.net.



Several members of Christ Lutheran Church have had their sewing machines humming, turning out hundreds of masks for donation to Ascentria Care Alliance, Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey, and beyond. Thank you for putting your time and talents to work!

CLC also contributed \$1000 from our 2019 surplus to Family Promise. Here's an excerpt from a note from Executive Director Sue Crossley:

Please share my gratitude with everyone at the congregation for this generous donation. It is so heartwarming to live in a community of people who care.

With warm regards,

Sue



1 Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others of the Rocky Mountain Synod gathering online for a **digital synod assembly**. Pray that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

2 There are more than 100 Asian congregations and ministries in the ELCA. We remember in our prayers these congregations, ELCA Asian and Pacific Islander Ministries and the Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders, and ask God to bless their work with distinct, unique groups and communities as part of a common yet diverse Asian community.

3 Jesus is our Savior, guide and shepherd, whom we have faith in and trust with leading us through life in this world and to a new life — life eternal — that we could not have imagined or created on our own. Praise God!

4 Give thanks for the service and witness of U.S.-based mission personnel and of young adults serving in the Young Adults in Global Mission program, who have been brought home from their work with global companions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pray for their physical and spiritual health and that they will continue to respond to God's call to serve in our church, our congregations, related organizations and society.

5 Ask God to help us have faith in how God leads, comforts, protects, nourishes and loves us all the days of our life.

6 Pray that we will be guided by the spirit, manner and example of Jesus to be humble and gracious in our faith, service and daily lives.

7 Ask God to help us endure the risks and difficulties of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, doing good, working for justice and serving our neighbors in need.

8 Give thanks for the work of the ELCA Domestic Mission unit, directors for evangelical mission, synod staff, coaches and consultants, and other partners assisting congregations as they renew themselves as communities of faith engaged in God's mission — locally and globally.

9 Pray that children and youth who suffer domestic abuse will experience the physical, emotional and spiritual care of concerned, skilled adults who intervene in their situations and help provide the safety, healing and trustworthy love for which they yearn.

10 Remembering Jesus' words to Thomas — "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" — we pray that they will empower us to embrace Jesus as the son of God and our salvation, and fill our lives with confidence to perform works of love, mercy, justice, truth and kindness.

11 Pray for our outdoor ministries and their year-round and summer staff, who are working to adapt their ministries, programs and ways of serving congregations and communities during these times of COVID-19.

12 Pause throughout the day and give thanks for the simple things of creation that enrich your life and faith and fill you with joy and wonder.

13 Give thanks that God knows us intimately and listens to our prayers, and that God is our rock, refuge and source of steadfast love in all circumstances and in all places.

14 Pray for students of all ages as they participate in online classes, wonder about their school year, prepare for finals and graduations, and long for their normal social interactions and school activities.

15 Pray for synod leaders who are discerning new plans, formats and dates for their assemblies with concern for the health and well-being of leaders, voting members and others; pray the Spirit will guide their plans and strengthen their unwavering work of proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in the world.

16 Give thanks and praise to God that our church and lives are built on the solid, enduring foundation of Christ; pray that we, as siblings in Christ, will be bold and welcoming in our invitation to our neighbors to believe, have faith and experience the blessings of community with us.

17 The love of God and the Spirit of truth dwell within us and prevail in our daily lives. Pray that with this knowledge and inspiration, we will feel encouraged to follow the commandments and ways of God and to exemplify love, truth, mercy and service in the world.

18 Thank God for our special relationship with the Reformed Church in America, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1997; pray for the church, its diverse ministries and its members and leaders; and pray that together we will find mutual support, new partnerships and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

19 Pray that our baptism into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will banish our fears of doing God's work in the world and will prepare us daily for sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor with gentleness and reverence.

20 Give thanks for parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents whose example and convictions teach children and youth the values of compassion, generosity and respect for one another.

21 *Ascension of Our Lord* While we look forward to everlasting life and being with Jesus in heaven, pray that we will live with confidence and joy in the promise of salvation and the presence of the Spirit, which sustains and equips us for the work we are called to today as people of the good news.

22 Remember in prayer our ELCA missionaries, global companions and international leaders. Pray for their health and well-being as well as their continuing witness and service in the world even though some of our work together may have been temporarily suspended.

23 Think about the blessings, wisdom, revelations and gifts you have received by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ; give thanks for each one.

24 Give thanks, praise and glory to God for restoring our relationship with our Creator and unifying us — beloved children of God — through the love and sacrifice of Jesus.

25 *Memorial Day* Today we remember, mourn and give thanks for the military men and women who have given their lives in pursuit of justice, peace and freedom for our country and all nations.

26 Pray that the Spirit of God working in us will help us value every generation for its faith, wisdom, gifts and diverse life experiences, and that we will not disparage or discount one another because of age, mistakes or differences of perspective but instead will give thanks and affirm and support one another as members of the body of Christ, which includes all generations.

27 Pray that we will be mindful and responsive to those who have become more lonely, isolated or distant over the past weeks and months, and that they will feel more connected and comforted as we reach out to one another and discover new ways of being in community and relationship with each other.

28 Give thanks for the commitment, creativity and compassion of teachers, teacher assistants, professors, educators and school staff who, facing difficult and uncertain situations, have persisted in attending to the educational and personal needs of their students — our children, youth and young adults.

29 Pray for congregations, Christian education leaders, youth and family ministry leaders, and volunteers preparing for summer programs, that they will deepen and stir the faith of members and reach into neighborhoods and surrounding communities with the gospel and an active spirit of hospitality and service.

30 Pray that our church's endeavors to foster understanding and unity between Lutherans, other Christian denominations and other faiths will yield abundant fruit for the glory of God and for healing our rifts and our brokenness.

31 *Day of Pentecost* Lift up prayers of joy and thanksgiving for how we are united in one Spirit yet manifest diverse gifts, abilities and wisdom for sharing the gospel, building up the body of Christ and serving our neighbor.

The June Reporter deadline is MAY 20, 2020



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