

OPENDOOR

AUGUST 2020



HOLY TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Doane on Returning to In-Person Worship

There is a group of people I would like to raise up for you. They deserve our heartfelt gratitude. I'm talking about the members of the "Return to In-person Worship Task Force". Members of that task force are Nita Cunningham, Sue Lambert, Wayne Russell, Lisa Strasser, Kevin Letcher and Deb Pohlenz. It has been my privilege to work with these committed people to guide us through a safe return to in person worship.

Also, I want to thank Tom Cavanaugh for his skilled work on the technical side of Live Stream worship. I know that Don Lambert and Bill Hillery have also been helpful. Thank Carol Letcher for her talented, music leadership on Sunday mornings. On one hand these people and members of the task force have helped us make the best of challenging circumstances. On the other hand because of their leadership, we remain a strong and vibrant congregation. Our viewership on Sunday

Inside this issue:

Stroll through summer Adopt-A-Spots	4
Council Highlights	5-6
Birthdays and Anniversaries	7
Spiritual Guidance	8
Bishop Gafkejen Letter	9-11



(Continued from page 1)

morning remains strong. And in talking to you, most say they still have a strong sense of fellowship and solidarity with people at Holy Trinity, even though we have not been together in person. We have all cared for each other well. Thank you.

Now is the time for us to begin planning for a return to in-person worship. I must admit I support doing so, but with a bit of caution. I saw something posted on FaceBook regarding teachers and the return to school. It struck me it applies to churches as well. So I tweak things a bit to make it more applicable.

As our leaders plan for a return to in-person worship, they must anticipate what worship will look like when the day arrives. Please pray for them! We face some challenges and here's some of them.

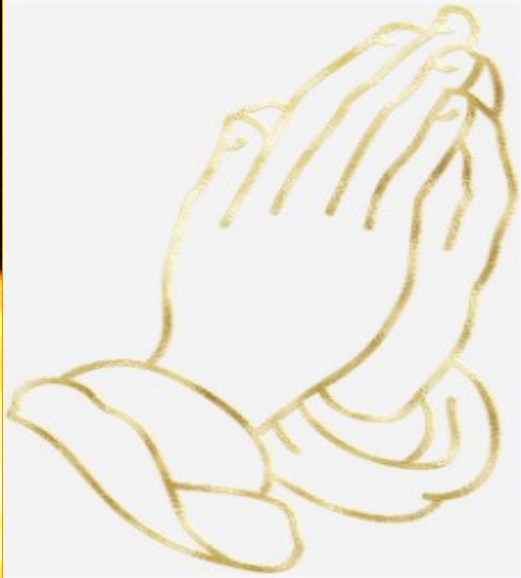
- If we reopen for worship, some will rejoice, others will be angry.
- If we don't open for worship, some will be happy, others will be angry.
- If there are restrictions in worship, some will understand and others will rebel.
- If masks are mandatory, some will agree and some will disagree.
- If we don't wear masks, some will be relieved and some will be angry.
- If we don't sing, some will be disappointed, some will understand.
- If there is no coffee and fellowship hour some will under-

stand, others will complain.

We face some challenging days ahead. But we do not face the challenges alone. I believe the power of the Holy Spirit will be with us, as the Spirit has been with us since the beginning of this pandemic. We will get through this. I am confident. I know some will not feel ready to return just yet. I completely understand. If you are in a high-risk category or if you don't feel it is safe to be among people then please, stay home. Live Stream Worship will continue even when we begin in-person worship. I do ask for your continued support and prayers. You have all been so generous in supporting your church all this time. I pray you will continue. And I pray the Spirit will be with each of you to guide, to keep you safe and well.

Pastor David





PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

Almighty God,

Thank you for walking with us through illness, dissention, and fear. You have been there for generations before us; you are here for us now.

You are full of wisdom, grace and healing power. We need your guidance as we listen to the noise of our world. Help us hear your voice.

When our world shouts out loud with discord, confusing messages and frustration, direct us to your Word.

Thank you for the hope we have in Jesus.

Amen

To My Church Family,

Thank you, thank you, thank you! I can't say that enough. You have been nothing but a blessing to me over the many years at Holy Trinity. Thank you for loving, challenging and nurturing me. Thank you for calling me out to serve with you and be used by God. You have helped me grow spiritually and inspired me to be a better person.

I'm so grateful for your prayers, support, encouraging and loving words. It's so wonderful to have such a loving church family. Thank you for your kindness, I will not forget.

I've been excited, sad, peaceful and nervous but I know it's good and right to be with family at this time. You still feel like home to me and I'll miss you. I already do!

God Bless You!

Marilyn Weber

A stroll through some summer Adopt-A-Spots



JULY 13, 2020 COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

In compliance with directives of the ELCA and state and local government, the July 2020 HTLC Council meeting was held online via Zoom.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 by Kevin Letcher
Devotions: Paul Widmer



The meeting agenda was approved.

Attendance: Floyd Garrott, Pastor Doane, Stan Harlow, Michele Russell, Carolyn Claussen, Kevin Letcher, Al Davis, Dave Krueger, Bob Montgomery, Paul Widmer
Absent: Nita Cunningham
Quorum was established

The June 2020 minutes were approved.

Reports

Pastor's Report - Report Submitted.

Pastor Doane discussed the difficulty in determining attendance from the number of online viewers. Issues with live streaming appear to be linked to problems with bandwidth. The advantages of switching to a different internet provider will be explored.

Cameras ordered through the technology grant remain on backorder.

Contacts with congregation members and attendance at Zoom meetings were discussed.

June 2020 Treasurer/Financial Secretary Report

Summary: Month Six of the Calendar Year 2020 - Target Percent is 50%.

Current Envelopes: Income for the month \$19,561 which is \$3,356 below monthly need of \$22,917

Total Income YTD: Above projection by \$10,570

EXPENSE: Contained overall

NET INCOME:

June: Loss (\$1,491)

Year-to-Date: Gain \$11,831

CURRENT ASSETS

Total Balance: \$319,432

In Review:

Corrections to prior monthly Net income

April : Loss (\$7,047)

May : Loss (\$7,386)

HT received the grant for recording/broadcasting equipment

Quarterly statements have been mailed; please review for accuracy

Albert Davis, Treasurer

The June 2020 Treasurer's Report was approved. Al Davis requested corrections above be reflected in the HTLC Council meeting minutes for May and June.

Old Business

The Quilters asked the Task Force for reopening for permission to use their room to work on their projects. Because of the equipment and space needed to work on quilts the request has been granted by the Council and Task Force. Quilters will follow the recommendations of the Task Force for wearing masks, social distancing, and limiting the number of people in the people in the room.

In light of an increase in COVID-19 cases Governor Holcomb has delayed full implementation of stage 5 reopening. HTLC Task Force for reopening will meet again next Thursday to re-evaluate current conditions. The goal at this time is to start in person worship in August.

The attendance at in person worship at Covenant Church in West Lafayette was discussed.

Pastor Doane and the HTLC Council would like to thank the Task Force for their work on safely reopening Holy Trinity for in person worship. We gratefully recognize Wayne Russell for all his time and effort in ensuring all changes are completed.

New Business

Committee Reports:

Committees communicated electronically as needed and did not meet in person.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Evangelism – Did not meet

Technology – Report submitted.

Property – Report submitted.

Mutual Ministry – Met the week of July 6 to discuss the progress toward reopening safely.

Christian Education – No report submitted.

Youth – No report submitted. Any youth activities not possible at this time.

Stewardship – Quarterly statements have been mailed.

Worship/ Music – No new report.

Outreach – Report submitted. The committee plans to participate in Family Promise, Back to School, and Jubilee Christmas. In light of COVID-19, the format of these ministries is not finalized at this time.

The HTLC Council gratefully acknowledges all the committee members and volunteers who give so generously of their time, talents, and resources to support the ministry at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

The meeting closed in prayer.

Next meeting: Monday, August 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Carolyn Claussen



“You’ll Be Back” - a church parody

A bit of silliness captured in a U-Tube video presented by our Episcopal friends.

You can play this on your computer if you click the link below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFduNE4pXAQ&fbclid=IwAR0iuN1_HrgcBWh6mNs91aXtpx3t99cKxEwk1Ua17dG_Y14_CEUt0EJ4HHo



LET'S CELEBRATE

Return to In-Person Worship
tentatively slated for one service
beginning

August 16 — 9:30 a.m

Watch for email announcements via
the Epistle for updates.



Back to School BBQ and Backpacks

The annual Bethany Church Back to School BBQ, Backpacks and Blessing has cancelled the in-person event for this August. Holy Trinity has been a partner in this even, along with Elmwood Church of Christ, for the past several years.

In place of the supply distribution, each congregation will make a monetary contribution that will be divided among Glen Acres, Vinton and Murdock schools, for the principals to use at their discretion for COVID-19 supplies (masks, sanitizer) or school supplies for children in need.

In addition, August 20 (the first day for LSC) will be a day of prayer for all schools, student, teachers, staff and parents. Watch for details about how you. An sign up for a prayer slot that day.

Our thanks to everybody @ HTLC who has contributed and/or volunteered in past years. Please continue to support this new-look event with your prayers. Any questions, please contact Mary Anderson at mm.anderson3600@gmail.com

August Birthdays

- 1 Stan Harlow
- 3 Beth Sherry, Urian Sabec
- 4 Dona James
- 5 Peggy Favorite
- 8 Jim Richardson
- 9 Jim Smith
- 10 Vickie Tetzloff, Garret Benner
- 11 Louise Baugher
- 12 Collin Wallace
- 14 Patrick Whiteaker, Pat James
- 19 Dan Lokke, Riley Lee
- 20 Justin Crowe
- 22 Patricia Garrott, Walt Niezabitowski,
Nita Cunningham
- 23 Patti Smith, Peg Wright
- 26 Deb Pohlenz
- 27 Janell Uerkwitz
- 29 Dixie Pederson
- 31 Paul Weflen

August Anniversaries

- 1 Urian & Allison Sabec
- 8 Ross & Shannon Tolen
- 10 Kurt & Jane Tolen
- 15 Kevin & Carol Letcher
- 18 David & Cindy Doane,
Terry & Joann King
- 20 Kenneth & June Rude,
Sam & Rita Biederstedt
- 23 Al & Sue Davis
- 29 Gordon & Elaine Rains



Our Faithful Guide

No matter what our social/economic status, we enjoy a higher standard of living from the work of persons in the medical, sanitation, law enforcement, and all service professions. Our lives are made better by their efforts to heal, protect, and attend to our needs. My prayers go out for them, as I challenge myself to express gratitude whenever possible.

Another category of those in sacrificial service to others is those who teach. Think about all the teachers who have impacted our lives. From pre-school to high school and perhaps beyond; Sunday school, camp counselors, parents, relatives, neighbors and friends; many good people have shared wisdom and insights that impact our lives for the better.

Yet even with their best intentions, please consider that the Bible exceeds them all! It not only instructs about the nature of God but also how we may best navigate our lives as Christians in this world.

This reliable resource offers encouragement and tangible guidance for whatever we encounter:

Temptation - 1 Corinthians 10:13

Adversity – James 1: 2 – 4

Prosperity – 1 Kings 2: 3

Also, God's Word assures us that nothing will separate us from his love for us.

I have adopted a practice of reading a chapter of Proverbs daily. Proverbs concentrates on the skill set required to survive and thrive in "this on-earth-as-it-is-in-heaven everyday living." I *always* encounter at least one couplet aimed directly at me and a circumstance I face.

To keep the practice simple, I read the verse in alignment with the date. So today is 27 July 2020.

Proverbs chapter 27 is action packed! Over confidence, foolishness, anger, gratitude. I probably should limit the daily readings to a few verses in order to improve digestion. But for now, I simply repeat the cycle every thirty days or so.

And I am a better person for it.

So instead of (or perhaps in addition to) calling a friend, searching the internet, or venting on Instagram, when direction is needed, we should first go to God's Word. And then ask the question,

"Am I listening to its teaching?"



The Bible is meant to strengthen our faith and our relationship with God. It is filled with stories of the ordinary and extraordinary. Its effectiveness is enhanced by the openness of our hearts to its wisdom, and we must have humility to accept any of the instruction offered.

"Be wise, my child, and make my heart glad, so that I may answer whoever reproaches me." Proverbs 27: 11

As you renew your relationship with our heavenly Father through the study of his Word, I encourage you to pause, ponder, and practice.

In His Service,

Albert Davis

Bishop Gafkjen's Message

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

For the Lord strengthens the bars of your gates;

God blesses your children within you.

God grants peace within your borders;

And fills you with the finest of wheat.

The Lord sends out his command to the earth;

God's word runs swiftly.

(Psalm 147:12-15)

Grace, mercy and peace be yours in abundance, dear people of God, from God our creator, through the

Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Many of us thought, hoped, that it would be over by now. But, the number of Covid cases are rising at record pace across the country, including both Kentucky and Indiana. Unrest continues to rise around racism. Important public and personal decisions change daily. Division and debate abound around everything from wearing face masks to the opening of everything from bars to schools to professional sports. There is so much uncertainty, so much loss and grief, so much anxiety and fear in this continuing coronavirus wilderness that we walk and will likely walk for quite some time to come.

In the midst of this profoundly uncertain and challenging time, we stand together – and as always

– we stand on the firm foundation of the grace and goodness of God. I thank God that in the midst of grief and anxiety, fear and uncertainty, loss and grief, we can trace the mark of the cross on our brows and cling to the promise of the Spirit that seals our lives.

With the psalmist, we can continue to praise the one true living God who strengthens the bar of our gates and blesses the children within. We praise the Lord who grants peace within our borders, fills us with the finest of wheat in the wilderness, and whose Word – Jesus crucified and risen for the life of the world – runs swiftly through this wilderness working healing and hope, renewal and resurrection.

Interestingly, in his reflection on Psalm 147, Martin Luther wrote this:

“We have the saying: “God gives every good thing, but not just by waving a wand.” God gives all good gifts; but you must lend a hand and take the bull by the horns; that is, you must work and thus give God good cause and a mask.”

Luther continued:

“What else is all our work to God—whether in the fields, in the garden, in the city, in the house, in war, or in government—but just such a...performance, by which God wants to give God's gifts in the fields, at home, and everywhere else? These are the masks of God, behind which God wants to remain concealed and do all things...”

1 Luther's Works, Vol. 14, p. 114 (Psalm 147:13)

In other words, God gets God's work done through masks! God loves and serves God's beloved people and creation through us, the masks of God! God offers healing and hope to the world, cares for the common good, through us!

Yes, God gives all good gifts; but, as Luther suggests, we must lend a hand and take this bull of a coronavirus by the horns; that is, we must work and

thus give God good cause and...a mask. It is especially important now, as Covid cases are rising at record rates across our territory, that the body of Christ be a mask of God, God doing God's work through us, as we live in and move through the coronavirus wilderness.

How can we do that? There are myriad ways to be God's masks in this wilderness, of course. Here are just a few that have been on my mind of late:

Wear the mask, literally! Masks are now mandated in both Indiana and Kentucky. Medical experts tell us that wearing a mask, along with observing physical distance and other hygienic protocols, is the key factor in slowing the spread and saving lives. As a member church of the Kentucky Council of Churches put it in a meme:



And, I would add, for our neighbor's sake. As Luther suggested, it's not only our mouths and noses concealed behind the masks, God is concealed, doing what is needed for the healing of the world.

Secondly, **please be patient about in-person gatherings, including worship.** In a meeting with bishops and other judicatory leaders, including me, this week, Kentucky governor Andy Beshear asked us to consider and to suggest the continuation of online or parking lot worship only – or even to suspend in-person worship if we've begun it, or

delay starting it – for at least two weeks, in order to partner with others in Kentucky to slow the spread and save lives. I support that suggestion, not only for our worshipping communities in Kentucky, but also across Indiana. And, of course, if and when you do engage in-person worship or other gatherings it is crucial that everyone abide by established hygiene and safety protocols.

This past week I read that Northpoint Church in Atlanta, Georgia, a congregation that regularly gathers 30,000+ worshipers at its multiple locations, has decided to cancel all in person adult worship services through the end of 2020. The congregation's Pastor, Andy Stanley, acknowledged that this decision is controversial and not universally welcome in his community. Yet, he and his leadership discerned it was the right decision for them at this time. When asked about this decision Pastor Stanley said:

"We are intentionally an outward facing organization. Spending time and money to create safeish Sunday morning gatherings struck us as insider-focused. In-person services during COVID" he continued, "is neither missional nor evangelistic—unless of course the mission of the church is to gather in a building on Sunday morning."

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/july/andy-stanley-north-point-church-reopening-2021.html>

As important as worship together is, the mission of the church is to share the good news of Jesus, to love and serve our neighbors. It may very well be that one of the masks we are called to wear during this time, one of the crosses we are called to take up, is to not gather in-person while we continue being church for one another and for the life of the world.

A third mask we can wear is to **support and encourage one another in the body of Christ despite differences** of perspective on everything from in-person worship to face masks, from politics to diversity. Sadly, I have been told stories, too many stories, of members leaving congregations because

(Continued on page 11)

the congregation has not returned to in-person worship, or pastors and other leaders being attacked, even bullied, over their perspective on things.

Dear people of God, this is a time to come together, not to pull apart or pick at each other. This is a time to bear one another's burdens, to be tender-hearted, kind, and forgiving with one another. This is a time to support and encourage and give thanks for the pastors and deacons, musicians and congregational leaders who are working so hard and so diligently to offer faithful ministry and leadership to the church. God is also concealed behind this mask of mutual care and support, working the wonder of healing and hope, reconciliation and new life that is ours in Christ.

Finally, **other Synod Staff members and I will continue the suspension of ministry travel through the month of August.** This is part of a commitment to slow the spread and save lives. We will continue to engage actively with folks across the synod via video conferencing and phone calls. We will also be discerning about emergencies or urgencies that may require travel under strict meeting protocols.

But staying home is another mask we can all wear for the sake of the common good while we entrust ourselves and our world to God's presence and promises.

Won't you join me and the rest of your synod staff and siblings in Christ all across this great territory in being God's masks for God's work of healing and hope for all of God's beloved world through every twist and turn of this ongoing coronavirus wilderness? I trust that you will.

Peace be with you, with all of us, along the way,

The Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen, Bishop

Video versions of this message may be found on YouTube and Vimeo:

- * Bishop Bill's Vimeo Page: <https://vimeo.com/441463524>
- * Synod Vimeo Page: <https://vimeo.com/441475554>
- * Synod YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbhx-JeqV08&feature=youtu.be>

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

1005 North 21st Street
Lafayette, IN 47904-2296
Phone: 765-447-4205

E-mail: office@htlcweb.org
Website: www.htlcweb.org
Open Door Editor: Susan Davis

Transitions

Please keep these families in your prayers for the recent losses they've experienced:

- * Linda Hedman on the passing of her husband, Gary
- * Chuck & Pam Guarino on the passing of Chuck's father, Charles
- * Paula & Daryl Gillespie on the passing of Paula's mother, Roseann Carter
- * Katherine & Phil Tackett on the passing of Katherine's brother, Peter Minton