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# The Epistle

October 2020

## Six months and Counting/Trusting in God

It has been over six months since we have been able to worship and gather in-person and shake hands or hug or just enjoy each other's company as we talk over coffee. It has been a long time since we have been able to sing together and share communion in our sanctuary. A long time.

We, the planners of worship and other online gatherings, have tried to bridge the gap of immediacy but I know things still feel very strange to me. I think the busyness of trying to figure out all the details of how to live and work in this pandemic world made me mostly anxious. But now, six months into sheltering at home and recently passing 200,000 deaths in the U.S. from COVID-19, I am feeling more grief.

I grieve the death of my friend Joe who died near the beginning of the epidemic in the U.S. and also that his spouse Thompson will now need to move out of the area permanently. I grieve the time we have lost and the suffering of so many due to the illness directly and to loss of work. I grieve not being able to plan for customary Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations at the church or with my family.

I share this with you because I am sure that many others have similar feelings. This has been and will continue to be a distressing time. It is not without some advantages and some joys along the way, but challenging nonetheless. These feelings are normal, and I want to encourage you to continue to support one another through these days.

Last month we had our first in-person outdoor worship. It seemed to go well and I felt confident that we were able to be together safely while we bid farewell to June Pedranti. (She will be greatly missed, though with our online worship and com-

munication I hope we can remain connected.) With that successful trial, we now look forward to our next in-person outdoor worship on October 4.

As our worship on October 4, we will include some time to remember the many people who have died from this disease in our country. We recently passed 200,000 people killed by this virus. It is difficult for us to imagine this terrible cost and, of course, it continues. Also, I want to mention that I know people would like to have Holy Communion at that worship, and if we can determine ways to do that at low risk, we will.

I know this is a challenging time because I share it with you. I feel adrift from time, amazed that it has been six months and also amazed that it has been *only* six months. We just entered Fall and part of me is still waiting for Easter! I am sure you have similar struggles and so I pray for all of you.

Even as we are confined to home and our lives have become, perhaps, increasingly monotonous, we are also challenged to change and adapt. In the church, it means new ways of worship and gathering online, and that continues to evolve. There are changes to other parts of life too. Too many, you may say. No matter what may come, let us not lose faith. I think of Paul writing Philippians, the epistle of joy, stuck in a prison and not knowing whether he would live or die. May we all have that kind of confidence in God, that no matter what comes, we are absolutely secure in the love and life of God.

In the grace and peace of Christ,  
Pastor Clark

## ST. TIMOTHY LUTHERAN CHURCH FINANCES

### Financial Summary St. Timothy Lutheran Church As of: August 31, 2020

Summary Profit and Loss					
Income	August Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	
Congregational Giving	\$ 11,387.62	\$ 11,467.00	\$ 82,903.10	\$ 91,731.93	
Outside Groups	\$ 3,260.00	\$ 3,616.67	\$ 13,402.00	\$ 28,933.32	
Misc.		\$ 750.00	\$ 3,017.00	\$ 6,000.00	
Special Income					
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 14,647.62</b>	<b>\$ 15,833.67</b>	<b>\$ 99,932.31</b>	<b>\$ 126,665.25</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>					
Administration	\$ 828.71	\$ 1,937.51	\$ 7,245.59	\$ 8,324.97	
Church Staff	\$ 2,653.51	\$ 3,435.40	\$ 22,421.70	\$ 27,483.29	
<b>Committees</b>					
Education		\$ 58.33	\$ 24.69	\$ 466.64	
Finance		\$ 16.66		\$ 133.32	
Hospitality & Welcome		\$ 37.50	\$ 55.74	\$ 300.00	
Property	\$ 105.00	\$ 395.83	\$ 2,940.59	\$ 3,166.64	
Service	\$ 2,522.66	\$ 1,013.17	\$ 8,259.50	\$ 8,105.28	
Worship and Music	\$ 458.25	\$ 245.83	\$ 1,275.49	\$ 1,966.64	
<b>Total Committees</b>	<b>\$ 3,085.91</b>	<b>\$ 1,767.32</b>	<b>\$ 12,556.01</b>	<b>\$ 14,138.52</b>	
Loan Expenses	\$ 554.54	\$ 575.00	\$ 4,503.04	\$ 4,600.00	
Office	\$ 239.22	\$ 337.50	\$ 2,648.82	\$ 2,700.00	
Pastor	\$ 8,090.72	\$ 8,392.26	\$ 64,816.50	\$ 67,137.92	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 15,452.61</b>	<b>\$ 16,444.99</b>	<b>\$ 114,204.22</b>	<b>\$ 124,384.70</b>	
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ (804.99)</b>	<b>\$ (611.32)</b>	<b>\$ (14,931.91)</b>	<b>\$ 2,280.55</b>	
<b>Loan Principal</b>	<b>\$ 656.46</b>	<b>\$ 656.46</b>	<b>\$ 5,184.96</b>	<b>\$ 5,184.96</b>	
<b>Net Operating</b>	<b>\$ (1,461.45)</b>	<b>\$ (1,267.78)</b>	<b>\$ (20,116.87)</b>	<b>\$ (2,904.41)</b>	

## Lutheran Disaster Response U.S. Wildfires & U. S. Severe Storms



Make checks payable to Lutheran Disaster Response. Write "U.S. Wildfires" or "U. S. Severe Storms" on your check's memo line and send to:

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**P.O. Box 1809**  
**Merrifield, VA 22116-8009**

Call **800-638-3522** to make a donation with a credit card. Operators are ready to assist you Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Central Time.

**GIVE NOW**  
**WILDFIRE RELIEF**  
**HURRICANE RELIEF**

## UPDATES AND REMINDERS

**Service Commission**— Providing a meal for I-Help for Women October 7th. Meeting in the church parking lot at 4:00pm. Thomas Carmen Food Bank Tuesday, September 15, 4-7pm.

**Confirmation Classes**—Resuming September 23 from 4:30-5:30pm to be held outdoors in the St. Timothy Community Garden.

**Property Committee**—Meeting October 8th at 10:00am.

**Game Day**—October 9, 1:00pm. We will continue to play Croquet outdoors. Hosted by Cheryl Plaskett. Please call Cheryl if you need directions @ 383-9052. Please join us!

**Council Meeting**—October 19 at 3:30-5:30pm via Zoom.

**Foundation**— Guardian Angel Relief Fund: If you, or someone you know may need assistance in this manner, please contact Pastor Clark via email at [pastorclark@stim.org](mailto:pastorclark@stim.org) or call 831-375-2042. Information provided will remain confidential.

**Faith Giving**—In order to close a budget gap, our congregation voted to encourage all members to give one extra weekly offering once per quarter. September was a Faith Giving Month, pandemic caused a memory lapse. An extra offering in October would be appreciated. Thanks

## IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICE AGAIN

On Sunday, October 4th and November 8th, 10am, we will again be offering in-person worship gathering. This Service of the Word will be outdoors, in our lower parking lot, and maintain high standards for physical distancing.

This is how we will be doing this with the utmost caution.

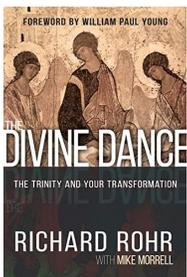
- We will be in our lower parking lot where we will have lots of airflow.
- Everyone's temperature will be checked upon arrival, and we ask if you are not feeling well to stay home. We will ask you to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer upon arrival.
- We will maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance, but of course households can sit together. Sorry, we won't be able to shake hands or hug each other. We need to maintain physical distancing before, during, and after worship.
- We will all wear masks except for service leaders when they are speaking.
- Bathrooms and doors will be cleaned and disinfected before and after worship.
- We will refrain from singing, except for soloists.
- We will not share in Holy Communion, nor will we have food or coffee following worship.

The first step for us now is for you to **RSVP to the church office by October 1** if you plan to attend October 4th and **November 5th** for November 8th. Please email [office@sttim.org](mailto:office@sttim.org) or call (831)375-2042. We need to know:

- Your name;
- Phone number;
- Number of people who will be attending;
- And, if you cannot use the stairs, that you need to park in the lower parking lot.

We will continue to offer our online worship as well. Let us continue to hold each other and the whole world in prayer as we learn to live with this virus.

On behalf of the Safe-Gatherings Task-Force  
Jim Helgason, Jim Chinn, Matt Schulz, and Pastor Clark Brown



### Tuesday Evening Class: The Divine Dance

We will begin our new Tuesday evening class/discussion tomorrow night at 6:30pm, based in the video series "The Divine Dance." This series features Richard Rohr and is based on his book of the same name. He will give us some new ways to think about God as Trinity and how this changes how we understand the world and ourselves. All are welcome to grow with us!

Here is how to join by Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86150656412?pwd=ZHlPZHlYxRVUvenMwaUdZb0w4bE5HZz09>

Or dial in: (408)638-0968

Meeting ID: 861 5065 6412

Passcode: 248737



## PRAYER VENTURES October 2020

- 1** Give thanks and take comfort in knowing that God is trustworthy and unwavering in remembering and accompanying us every m1 Give thanks for the gifts, witness, leadership and faith of our LGBTQIA+ siblings in Christ. Pray that we will continue to grow as a church centered in the gospel and committed to the inclusion of all people. Pray that we will recognize and challenge the dynamics of bias, fear, power and privilege that discourage participation and equity in this church and in society.
- 2** Ezekiel confronted the Israelites for their resistance to change and to God's ways of fairness. He rejected their arguments that change was too difficult, that they were acting only as they were raised and that he needed to live in the real world. Pray that we will repent, embrace God's peace and justice, and heed God's command, through Ezekiel, to "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!"
- 3** *Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church (1181-1226)* Pray that we will greet each day with a sense of awe, gratitude and respect for creation, for the organisms and creatures that inhabit the earth and for humanity in all its diversity and complexity — the handiwork of God.
- 4** The Lutheran World Federation's Season of Creation 2020 invites us, through prayer and activism, to give thanks for creation and renew our human vocation for its care. Join Lutherans around the world in the online meeting and closing prayer today.
- 5** Persist in praying for all affected by Hurricane Laura, by wildfires in the western United States and by flooding and severe weather. Pray that we will generously assist relief and reconstruction efforts and support the work of Lutheran Disaster Response.
- 6** Give thanks and praise to God that our righteousness and salvation come not through our own efforts but through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 7** Ask forgiveness for our involvement — consciously or unconsciously — in perpetuating the racism, laws and structures that benefit the majority through inequality and oppression. Pray for the Spirit to stir our humility, wisdom and persistence as we reflect on our lives and society and strive for racial justice, reform, reconciliation and unity as children of God.
- 8** Ask God to strengthen our faith and deepen our roots in the good news of Jesus Christ. Pray that we will draw on God's strength through our faith, especially when we grow weary or doubtful in the face of the world's challenges, criticism and ridicule.
- 9** Pray that we will actively engage with our communities and neighbors, developing the resilience and hope needed to absorb, endure and recover from the spiritual, medical, social and economic impacts of natural and human-caused disasters.
- 10** Remember in prayer those who have lost jobs or are furloughed from work, that they will have the resources and support to meet their daily needs as they seek employment. Pray that our congregations will be welcoming, supportive and ready to help, concerned for their dignity and their spiritual, physical and emotional needs.
- 11** Give thanks and praise to God for welcoming us into the kingdom of God, an undeserved gift to be shared with the world. Pray that we will never take the joy and blessings of this gift for granted or hide it from our neighbor.
- 12** The Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC), a joint ministry of the ELCA and the Lutheran World Federation, represents Lutherans at the United Nations. Give thanks for the LOWC's work in monitoring issues of concern to the church, sharing our perspectives and speaking for peace, justice, human rights, respect for international law, and better standards of living for all people.
- 13** Pray that we, too, will hear Paul's assurance to the Philippians in difficult times, that "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Ask that the Spirit fill our lives with peace, love and mercy that will shine brightly in the world.
- 14** Pray for our companion-synod relationships throughout the world, especially during this time of physical separation, that we will continue to nurture and strengthen one another for life and ministry through prayer, study, communication, and sharing resources for doing God's work in the world together.
- 15** Throughout our baptismal journey, Psalm 23 encourages, calms and nourishes us with the reassurance that we are never without God's love, attention and guidance. Give thanks to God and pray that we will reflect God's loving presence and care in

all that we do and say.

**16** Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathered, in person and online, for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

**17** Pray for active-duty military and their families, especially in times of deployment, transition and separation, that their faith will comfort and strengthen them and that they will have confidence knowing they are always connected with the love, support and concern of their home community of faith.

**18** Remember in prayer newly elected synod bishops. Ask the Spirit to give them the wisdom, vision and faith to meet the challenges of their ministries, helping congregations and special ministries spread the gospel, serve our neighbors in need and grow the church.

**19** Ask God to help us provide comfort, support and hope to our neighbors who feel helpless and overwhelmed amid the pandemic, natural disasters, economic struggles and social unrest.

**20** Pray that we will experience God's love, encouragement and unity in the body of Christ through worship and the sacraments — in person, online or however we gather.

**21** Give thanks to God for one another and pray for our siblings in Christ, that we will be steadfast in our faith, proclaim the gospel in our daily lives and serve as examples of God's mercy and love in the world.

**22** Thank God for our special relationship with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 2009. Pray for the church, its diverse ministries and its members and leaders, that together we will find mutual support, new partnerships and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

**23** "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it," for God is great, powerful and wondrous. Sing praise to God!

**24** Pray for students, teachers, school staff and parents as they continue to adapt to the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on school environments and distanced learning.

**25** *Reformation Sunday* Praise God for the gift of grace that sets us free to change and be changed, to form and reform as the body of Christ for the sake of humanity, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in the world.

**26** Pray for the Spirit to deepen our understanding of what being a Lutheran Christian means, through prayer, Scripture, reflecting on our creeds and teachings, being renewed and united through the sacraments, and opening ourselves to God's voice and guidance in an ever-changing society and world.

**27** Give thanks that, though we have sinned and fallen short of God's expectations, God has set things right with us and restored our relationship through the gift of grace we have in Jesus Christ. Pray that throughout our baptismal journeys we will spread the hope and good news of God's merciful love for humankind.

**28** The ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship program supports students of promise attending ELCA seminaries. Pray that we will generously support this program to make seminary more affordable, to enable more future ministers to study and to help them graduate with less debt as they respond to God's call to serve as the church needs and the Spirit leads.

**29** "God is our refuge and strength." Give thanks and praise to God and reflect on how God sustains you, gives you courage, influences your decisions and actions, and equips you for living as a follower of Christ in the world.

**30** Pray for the Spirit to guide and inspire our discernment and decisions in the upcoming presidential election, and to help us prioritize the needs of our neighbors, the well-being of communities in turmoil and the task of healing the deep divisions in our society.

**31** *Reformation Day* Give thanks and praise to God for the ministry, teachings and impact of Martin Luther and other church reformers, who took great risks to refocus our faith, institutions and practices on the word of God and the good news of Jesus Christ. Pray that we will continue to be a reforming church, mindful of the Spirit's guidance as we discern how to follow Christ — now and in the future.

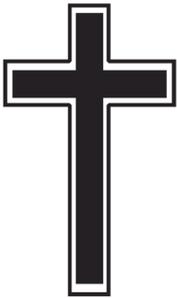
## Myriads of Donations for God's Work, Our Hands



Our food donation event on Sunday, September 13th, resulted in generous donations of canned and boxed foods, brown bags, egg cartons, and desserts collected in our parking lot. In 3 hours, we received the equivalent of 2 trucks full of items which were delivered Monday to the Thomas Carman Food Pantry whose mission is to provide food for needy households and individuals. In

addition, we had substantial monetary contributions! Thomas Carman personnel were overjoyed to have their pantry full!

Our organizers enjoyed partnering with St Philip's Lutheran. Many thanks to each member of our churches for participating and enabling significant contributions to Thomas Carman! St. Timothy has donated year to date to Thomas Carman Food \$568.11. The amount donated in September through the Gods Work, Our Hands amounted to \$355.00.



### St. Timothy Foundation Donations

The St. Timothy Foundation was pleased to be able to make these recent donations to:

- Thomas Carman Food Pantry \$1000.00
- St. Timothy Lutheran Church \$4000.00 for Streaming Equipment to enable Worship services to be streamed/shown live.
- St. Timothy Community Garden received \$2000 for projects and improvements.
- Campus Trip expenses reimbursed \$200.00.
- Guardian Angel Relief Fund disbursed \$3000.00.



Cathryn Chinn	10/14	Cheryl Plaskett	10/23
Deborah Love-Sudduth	10/21	Nancy Opsata	10/25
Thomas Barber	10/23		