

Monthly Newsletter

Christ Lutheran Church -Yakima, WA

August 2020

A Message From Pastor Schraan

Dear Friends in Christ,

Over the last few weeks, I have enjoyed the opportunity to study Acts together with you using Dr. Skinner's Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit. Acts recalls what God has done and summons Christians into a new future where they enter the ongoing story to pass along this news. How shall we do that? Another aspect of Acts is how it presents the early followers of Jesus exercising discernment.



What happens in Acts is less about choosing and deciding and more about discerning. When I speak of discernment, I mean a process that involves reflection on who God is, what God desires, and how we, as God's people, might play a part in being faithful to God's purposes. Discernment entails more than just collecting data, making projections, and choosing a sensible course of action. Discernment is an act of faith, because in the end the discerners don't say, "This is what we choose" but "This is where we think we will discover the challenges and rewards of faithfully bearing witness to Jesus."(pg. 62)

Every decision a church makes says something about what it understands God's desires to be, who gets a share in God's work, and exactly how a church will commit itself to the justice and reconciliation at the heart of the good news. Not every decision needs to be monumental, but no decision is purely routine. (pg. 65)

For our own reflection:

- What kind of discernment or decision-making process does our congregation use?
- How do we sense the leading of the Spirit among us?

Pastor John

MISSION STATEMENT

Called by God to Worship,
Learn and Nurture; Sent to Serve and Tell

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Jesus is Lord and Savior.

We are called to learn and share the Good News.

Welcome and serve all people.

We are servants of God to others.

Holy Spirit, mighty in prayer leads us to answer God's call.

Fellowship sustains each other.

Learning and Fellowship – Physical Distancing Edition

Monday Night Bible Study:

We continue to study the Sunday's Gospel reading via zoom on Monday at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesdays Together:

Grab a coffee Tuesdays at 10 a.m. and join Pastor for an informal chance to connect with one another over Zoom.

Let's Celebrate!

Happy Birthday to...

2nd - Rita Fisher!
14th – Ethel Rasmussen!
16th - Patsy Lake & Laurie Wilson!
25th - Kaiden Kunz!
29th - Joyce Stephens!

Happy Anniversary to...

10th– Pastor John and Katrine Schraan
17th -Kyle & Tammy Bosch!

Combined Drive in Lord's Supper

Yakima Joint Communion Liturgy with Central and Tree of Life will be held August 16th and September 20th in the Christ Lutheran Parking Lot.

1. The Communion Liturgy starts at 10:30 am and lasts less than 15 minutes.
2. Distribution of Communion kits: We will be set up at 10:20 to pass out prepackaged cups of grape juice with attached wafers.
3. Enter the Lincoln Avenue entrance. When you arrive at the pick up station, please indicate how many people in your vehicle are communing by holding up the correlating number of fingers. Please be sure to wear your mask when picking up your communion or if your window is rolled down.
4. Communion will be bundled in bag and handed through your rolled down window with the use of a metal grabber, at which point you will grab your communion bag, roll up your window, and proceed to park (please avoid touching the grabber tool, so we can keep distribution speedy and safe).
5. Once you are parked, you will tune your radio to 101.5FM. (We'll post this as well).
6. Communion service will start at 10:30 am or as soon as everyone has communion, whichever happens first.
7. After service is over, you may leave using either exit. Please dispose of your used cups and bags at home.

A few extra details:

Since we are gathering with all three congregations, please try to limit cars to one per household. We also ask you to stay in your car with windows rolled up and air conditioner "on", as we will not be distancing cars. The building will remain closed, no restrooms available.

Parking Lot Worship

We added outdoor worship on August 9th @ our normal 9:30am worship time. Zoom and recordings will continue, for those unable to attend in-person.

To ensure that we have adequate time to prepare, please arrive no earlier than 9:15. Please bring and wear a face covering at all times. We will continue to use a similar process as we did last month for our Communion Service. Enter the parking lot using the Lincoln Ave. entrance. Indicate the number in your vehicle and receive a kit and worship aid. Slowly proceed to a parking spot. You may either remain in your car (tune to 101.5FM) or bring your own lawn chair. Chairs may be set up maintaining at least 6 ft of physical distance between different households on the lawn or a few parking spaces in the shade. Please remember to maintain this distance before and after worship. The building will remain closed and locked without access to restrooms, please plan accordingly. A brief Communion Liturgy will take place after regular worship ends (except the 3rd Sunday, when we wait until 10:30). If you are unable to attend Communion due to health reasons, please contact Pastor John. We will be learning as we go the first several weeks. Patience and flexibility are appreciated.

Here's a Look at Our First Drive in Communion



Help Wanted

Just prior to the pandemic, Deacon Dave retired and since we have not yet called our new Deacon and our administrative needs have expanded with our new digital setting, we could use help relieving Katrine of some jobs she voluntarily took on in the short term. Opportunities include co-hosting zoom worship, newsletter, creating worship PowerPoints, bulletins, editing/uploading/sending videos, and worship assistant. If you are interested in helping, E-mail: pastor.schraan@gmail.com or call and leave a message 509.966.1720. Training and templates will be provided.

Blood Drive

Thank you everyone for making our June American Red Cross blood drive a huge success. Twenty units were collected! Thank you to our volunteers who guided the donors through the many changes in the pre-collection process. Many of the people were local people who had never given at Christ Lutheran before. Christ Lutheran provided a much needed service to our community in these trying times. Our next blood drive will be September 29th.

A Letter From Our Bishop—Extending Grace

On our staff Zoom call the other day, we were remarking on the weirdness of time right now. It's simultaneously stressful, boring, never-ending, and flies by. How is it possible that time can be all those conflicting things simultaneously?



We continue to live under the oppressive shadow of COVID-19. I confess that I have felt like I have been spinning my wheels in sand. Early on—in March and April—there was a sense of urgency. Information to be distributed, guidance to be offered, congregations to be supported. But in more recent months, we've settled into what has become our new normal. Zoom or recorded worship. On-line committee and council and staff meetings. On-line bible study. Our computer and phone screens have become our access to the world as we use them to make contact with those who live outside our "COVID bubbles". And I've wondered: what comes next? Why are we working so hard? What are we paddling this canoe toward? Anything?

Early on, we spoke of Easter...then Pentecost...then Summer...then Fall as the time when we would return to normal. Now, I hear less of those sorts of hopeful comments. I hear more despair. More grief. More wondering when we will get to be back. Some denominations have cancelled in-person worship through 2021, believing that doing so will be the best thing to keep their leaders and their members safe. Before you panic and wonder if I'm going to do the same thing: rest assured that the ELCA does not have the constitutional ability to make that sort of decision for congregations. But if I did have that authority, I would have given serious consideration to doing so, and here's why: because as much as we miss in-person worship, as much as on-line worship is an unsatisfactory replacement, it is still not safe to gather together in person. And yet I hear that some congregations are putting pressure on their pastors to "re-open" worship.

I'm going to ask lay leadership to take an attitude of cooperation with their rostered leaders in this time. I know you miss worship. I miss it, too! I miss the sounds of singing, the wheeze of the organ, the glow of candles and the taste of bread and wine on my tongue and the words of forgiveness in my ears. I miss SEEING people with my own eyes, not through the medium of a computer or television screen. I miss the particular smell a Lutheran sanctuary has—books and dust and linen and funeral flowers and perfume and flame and a hint of bread and wine. And (to be honest) I REALLY miss having in-depth conversations with people that I'm not married to or parent of. My family is amazing, and I love them beyond all expression, but...I'd like to have a few other folks to chat with over the course of a week, you know? For those of you who are thinking that your pastors and deacons are refusing to resume in-person worship due to laziness, let me assure you: they work FAR harder to get the recorded services to you every week than probably any "normal" week in the pre-COVID calendar—including Holy Week. They are working so hard, trying to care for you the very best they can, and to be met with criticism around this is deeply demoralizing.

None of us are at our best right now. We're under stress. We're missing important touchstones in our lives, our days. We are living with ambiguity, and our nation seems to have lost its collective mind. It makes sense that we would want to get back to something

A Letter From Our Bishop—cont.

familiar. Something that has been largely unchanged in our lives. Words that we know in our bones. Songs that our mothers used to sing us to sleep. Prayers that were some of the first language we ever learned. Missing this, wanting to get back to it makes so much sense! But it is not safe yet. It won't be safe for a long time. So we shift to the language of "acceptable risk" and I'm not convinced that we're at that point yet, either, regardless of what "phase" your county of residence happens to be at. Just because we CAN go to Walmart, Home Depot, the grocery store, or a restaurant doesn't mean we SHOULD. And that is what I'm looking at when offering guidance around resuming in-person worship. Not what we CAN do, but what SHOULD we do? What should we do for the good of the entire congregation, not just a vocal few? What should we do for the good of our leaders, who bear the brunt of this stress?

Coronamide has been incredibly hard on your deacons and pastors. I'm not going to sugarcoat it for you, because I'm not that kind of woman. Many of your leaders are barely hanging on. They aren't sleeping. They aren't exercising. They are worried about you, they are worried about family, they are worried about their children. Leading a congregation in this time feels like a never-ending marathon—they are working endlessly and often feeling as though it is never enough. The congregation members they hear from are those who have a complaint, because that's when humans tend to talk—when they are unhappy. Your leaders aren't hearing words of love, support, hope, gratitude. They need to.

As congregations, you must take care of your leaders so they can take care of you.

Pastors and deacons are not an infinite resource.

Deacons and pastors are not an inexhaustible resource.

And many of them are probably giving some consideration to leaving the ministry because this work has gotten so hard.

People of the Northwest Intermountain Synod: it is absolutely that grim for your leaders. For your beloved pastors and deacons who will sacrifice everything that feeds them to take care of you, and never say a word about it.

As more and more school districts in the synod begin to announce their plans for the upcoming school year, many are choosing to go either 100% on line, or some sort of hybrid of in-person and on-line school—this will put incredible strains on your leaders—female OR male --with school-aged children at home.

Many of our leaders live several hundred miles away from vulnerable parents, parents in nursing homes, parents who are ill—and cannot travel to see them, cannot offer the care they want to because COVID-19 has interrupted lives so completely.

Many of our leaders serve in small communities, and have faced the loss of regular contact with colleagues—something that can make a huge difference in being able to shoulder the load of care that comes with this life of public ministry.

Some of our leaders are single, sheltering in place all alone—cut off from human contact

A Letter From Our Bishop— cont.

except through electronic means. No one to talk to. No one to share a meal with. No one to offer a hug on a bad day.

Many of our leaders have pre-existing conditions that do not prevent them from doing wonderful ministry in “normal” times, but that make them incredibly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19—and perhaps they don’t want to have to disclose those conditions to the congregation (which is their right). How do they balance the demands of ministry while holding the knowledge that a visit could be a death sentence for them? Now some of you may be thinking, “Bishop! There are TONS of people who are facing all those same things!” and that’s precisely my point. Your deacons and pastors are facing all the same challenges as everyone else, as well as trying to take care of the spiritual and emotional needs of congregations full of understandably anxious, needy people.

I’m focusing on rostered leaders (in pastoral AND specialized ministry) because they are often treated as employees, hired to fill needs and fulfill 100 individual expectations. They are the ones who often bear the brunt of unpopular decisions—and only rarely are they the ones who get to make the decision that is unpopular. More often than not, they are just the messengers. I cannot emphasize this enough: just ONE person expressing concern, gratitude, offering kindness, checking in, offering support, can change everything for your rostered leaders. ONE person saying “Thank you for the way you keep pulling these worship services together, even though none of us are happy about them—I know you don’t like it either, but you keep taking care of us. Thank you.” can have an absolutely transformational effect for your leaders. A card popped in the mail, a text, an email, offering to have pizza delivered to their house for dinner one night, a recognition of how much they are doing—for you—will make the difference between a pastor or deacon who begins to feel like they might just survive this time, and one who could very easily decide to leave the ministry for good.

We can’t change the reality of life in these strange days. But we CAN make it better for one another. And that’s by doing something we seem to have gotten very bad at as a nation: putting the needs of others ahead of our own wants. Checking in with one another. Giving positive feedback. Extending grace and forgiveness, rather than holding grudges. Stop labeling something you disagree with as “political” and instead consider how you can set aside politics to be Children of God to one another. If we are part of the Family of God (and through our baptism: we are), the expectation is not that we always agree with one another. But we always care for one another. Always.

Know that I have held the synod—pastors, deacons, everyone—in prayer in these days. They make no sense. So I lean hard into the “peace that passes all understanding” and pray that the same peace makes a place in your hearts and homes.
God be with you.

+Bishop Kristen Kuempel



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Mission Spotlight



ELCA World Hunger Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

This article from the Spring 2020 ELCA World Hunger—Life Lines publication is just one example of how your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are making a difference during this current pandemic. Thank you for your generosity. -Kathy Sebree, Mission Interpreter

As COVID-19 began sweeping around the world, Bridge of Peace Community Church in Camden NJ did what many other congregations did — adjusted quickly to keep serving. Beginning in early March, the congregation began assembling and distributing emergency food and toiletry bags containing hand sanitizer, soap, toilet paper, canned food, rice and more.

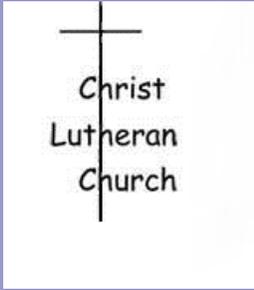
“We found during Hurricane Sandy that many of our families struggled with the inability to stockpile supplies due to financial instability” said the Rev Giselle Coutinho, the church’s pastor. “Since then, we have done this twice before as a way of being proactive in our community to give people we serve as a way of caring for their families and be prepared rather than live in fear. This is particularly necessary in places of deep poverty.”

As the situation quickly shifted, the congregation’s food pantry — supported in part by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger - adjusted too. Usually a supermarket-style facility where guests choose their own items, it switched to preassembled food bags to keep guests and volunteers safe. Instead of accepting food drop-offs in person, Pastor Giselle asked the local community to order items online and have them delivered directly to the pantry. Still her top concern is keeping the growing number of guests and the volunteers healthy.

“Volunteers are incredibly passionate about this work. They will do anything to make sure there is not hunger in this city.” Pastor Giselle said. “It’s a very difficult adjustment. Its day-to-day and hour-to-hour, people coming together and figuring out new ways to do things”. Along with modifying the food pantry, Bridge of Peace has also made adjustments to its congregational life and ministry from hosting Bible studies via video conference to enlarging its domestic violence ministry while families and partners are confined at home together. As homeless shelters in Camden filled up, Bridge of Peace continued to serve people experiencing homelessness.

“Our ministry believes that no one should ever go to bed hungry” Pastor Giselle said. “We’re just trying to be present to our community. Even in the midst of being physically distant we can be socially present to each other.”

Despite the ongoing and anticipated challenges, Pastor Giselle said she sees God at work. Usually the pantry offers produce only in the summer as it works with local farmers. Recent community connections led to a new partnership to get produce beginning in April, which helps provide even more healthy food to even more people in this time of great need. “That’s really the work of God in the midst of this. Whenever we think we aren’t going to have enough there is enough.”



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Worship, Learn,
and Nurture:
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Worship Times

Sundays on Zoom and in the
Parking Lot at 9:30am
Recordings Posted to
YouTube
Facebook
Your Inbox

Give Online

Download the Give Plus + App



Christ Lutheran Prayers

Prayers for Our Ministry Partners:

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, ELCA World Hunger, Northwest Inter-mountain Synod, YWCA, and Northwest Harvest.

Prayers of Comfort and Healing:

Be with Kay, Becca, Ed, Patsy, Jeanine, Lilly, Dean, Nathan, Matthew, and Orle. Sustain healthcare providers; and tend to all who feel hopeless or despondent.

Additional Prayers:

Foodbanks, government officials, first responders, the homeless.

Please send any additional prayer requests to Pastor John via email pastor.schraan@gmail.com with "Prayer Request" in the subject line no later than Thursday at 4pm to be included in the written Sunday prayers. If you do not have e-mail, please call the church and be sure to include the correct spelling in your message.

August Weekly Schedule

Sunday

Worship Live on Zoom and in the Parking Lot at 9:30 (zoom fellowship and Parking Lot Communion Liturgy immediately following service) or watch the recording (posted and e-mailed by Noon)

Every 3rd Sunday - Communion Liturgy will be postponed to 10:30 am to allow those worshipping from home time to arrive for communion.

Monday

Bible Study (Zoom) 7pm

Tuesday

Tuesdays Together (Zoom) 10:00 – 10:30

August Scriptures

August 9th

[1 Kings 19:9-18](#) *The Lord speaks to Elijah on Mount Horeb*

[Psalm 85:8-13](#) *I will listen to what the Lord God is saying. (Ps. 85:8)*

[Romans 10:5-15](#) *Hearing and confessing the word of faith*

[Matthew 14:22-33](#) *Jesus walking on the sea*

August 16th

[Isaiah 56:1, 6-8](#) *A house of prayer for all peoples*

[Psalm 67](#) *Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)*

[Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32](#) *God's mercy to all, Jew and Gentile*

[Matthew 15:\[10-20\] 21-28](#) *The healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter*

August 23rd

[Isaiah 51:1-6](#) *The enduring foundation of God's salvation*

[Psalm 138](#) *O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever. (Ps. 138:8)*

[Romans 12:1-8](#) *One body in Christ, with gifts that differ*

[Matthew 16:13-20](#) *The profession of Peter's faith*

August 30th

[Jeremiah 15:15-21](#) *God fortifies the prophet against opposition*

[Psalm 26:1-8](#) *Your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. (Ps. 26:3)*

[Romans 12:9-21](#) *Live in harmony*

[Matthew 16:21-28](#) *The passion prediction and rebuke to Peter*