

Dear Adorationers:

We don't yet have the capacity for a newsletter as we ordinarily have it available. Because the newsletter is usually focused on events--those to come, and those that have passed. But, there is still information that you all need to have regarding life at Adoration and so this email is an attempt at making that available to you.

At the end of this email is what would normally be at the beginning of the newsletter. That is, the Words from the Interim Pastor. I will add it to this email, and also send it separately as an attachment where it will be easier to read.

The Update

1. Annual Meeting: We are beyond the time when our Constitution directs us to hold our Annual Meeting and election of officers. May is what the Constitutions says. Ted Lazaris, Council President, consulted with Pastor Kristin Nielsen from the Synod staff about whether we could postpone it. We can, and the Council made the decision to do so. However, Adoration will need to hold a all congregation meeting in the not too distant future because you are nearing the end of your Call Process which will require an all congregation meeting and vote. So, we are talking now about the best way to do this that keeps us in compliance with Wisconsin State Law and our Constitution. It is not a simple matter to hold a virtual all congregation meeting as you might imagine

2. New email address: Our email address has changed for the church which allows us to have the church office have a distribution list for the whole church. Our new email address is: adorationlutheran@gmail.com.

If you send an email to the old "hotmail" account it will be forwarded to this new email address. But it would be great if you could add this email address to your address books so that email from the church does not go into your spam.

3. Prayers of Intercession updates: In order to keep the list of names added to the Prayers of Intercession to a reasonable length, the policy at Adoration has always been that someone stays on the list for a month, unless someone specifically requests that they remain on longer. With Lori's leaving her position, names have accumulated. So, I spoke with her last week to determine who could be removed and who should remain. Next week you will see the list shortened unless you call to let me know that you wish someone to remain.

If you want someone to be part of the Sunday Prayers of Intercession, you need to let me know directly. Right now, since I am saying those prayers for you, if you send them to Judy Goodwin without also sending them to me you run the risk of their being a week's delay in my receiving them. So, text me, email me, or call me if you would like us to pray for someone specifically.

4. Finances: By now you all know that Adoration has received one of the federal "forgivable" loans. That will be helpful to us as we navigate our finances in the wake of

the pandemic which has taken us out of our church building and regular corporate worship. Please, as you are able, continue to maintain your pledges. Our bills have not gone away because we are not in our building. And many thanks to those of you who have either paid your pledge earlier than you had planned or who have shared with Adoration part of all of your stimulus checks.

May I ask again two things: One, is that you consider tithing part or all of your stimulus check, as you are able, to your church community.

The other is that you seriously consider using Simply Giving so that your offering goes immediately towards the care of your church each month in direct deposit regardless of whether we are in the building or not. Please contact Sharon Anderson (mailto:and0058@sbcglobal.net) if you would like information about how to be part of Simply Giving.

5. Parish Virtual Gatherings: Right now, besides Council meetings, there are two gatherings that any of you can participate in.

Virtual Coffee Hour: 11AM on Sunday. Each Saturday either Jim Haas or I will send out a meeting invitation to meet on Zoom. It's an opportunity to chat for a while with other members of the Adoration community and get caught up as well as to ask questions of me, just as you would on a Sunday. Watch for the invite in your email Saturday night. It will be there by Sunday morning.

Bible Study: There is a Bible study each week at 9:30AM on Wednesdays. It's by specific invitation, but if you are interested in being part of it, please let me know directly (mailto:revdebra@aol.com) and I will add you to the weekly distribution list.

6. Directory: We are continuing to get ready for your new Pastor. One of the things that we told Pastor candidates in our profile is that we would commit to an updated pictorial directory to make their transition time into their new ministry easier. Because of the pandemic, we have very few new pictures to add to the directory. Some of you have no photo at all. And some of your pictures are so old that they no longer look like you. So, could all of you please send in photos to the church office for the Directory. We will do a print edition when we are back in the building--but we need to make something available for your new-Pastor-to-come soon.

7. Call Process: Last month the Council suspended the Call Committee for another month to allow the Mission Exploration Team time to meet to look at the Mission Site Profile (MSP) again in the light of the pandemic. That has now happened and some gentle "tweaking" of the document occurred to take into account the new needs you might have in a new Pastor in the light of the pandemic. The Council now needs to approve these changes.

The Council will review the Call Committee suspension again at their upcoming Council meeting on June 9. If the Council votes to lift the suspension at their meeting then the Call Committee will move forward in the search for a new Pastor.

8. Synod Assembly: The all Synod Assembly which was postponed from May to August has now been cancelled.

9. Worship: I am guessing that the question most on everyone's mind is: when can we get back to worship together? Ted, Jim, Barb and I spend more time talking about the how and the when of this than anything else. Our primary value remains that whenever we gather again, we do so at a time and in a way that keeps people safe. When we finally gather in the church again we want to make it possible for everyone to re-gather, alive and healthy. As your church leadership makes these decisions we do so aware that *80% of our membership is over 50 and 60% of our membership is over 65--and many of you have underlying health conditions. We are very concerned that whatever we do does not put vulnerable people at risk for contracting the virus.*

Recently, many folks in the greater Milwaukee area have stopped paying attention to social distancing. Some because they are part of the protest groups in and around Milwaukee. And some because they are prioritizing their own comfort and convenience over other's health and safety. This recent increase in non-social distancing has made our decisions about our church that much more difficult. (It was much easier deciding to not gather than it is figuring out when it might be safe to re-gather.)

Some churches in the Synod have made the decision to wait until the fall to tackle this issue because they believe that now is not safe. Others are planning on trying to re-gather this coming Sunday. At Adoration we are watching the numbers and engaging in the conversation about what a worship gathering might look like for us.

There is no worship gathering in person that is completely safe right now. So, all of our thinking goes into how to minimize the risk that we would be creating if we open to a worship gathering. In addition, we are paying attention to the fact that we need to follow the guidance of our insurance carrier, Church Mutual, in order to be covered by that insurance should we need it for a claim that could be made in the wake of someone possibly contracting the illness at a worship service.

Our current thinking is that if it becomes safer to meet this summer such a worship service would include:

**It would be outside--weather permitting, or canceled if not.*

**Everyone would be required to wear masks that would have to be over both nose and mouth. Masks would be provided if people do not have them.*

**We would mark off places on the lawn for social distancing.*

**There could be no "mingling" before or after worship.*

**People would not be allowed in the church itself (enclosed spaces are highest risk).*

**People would have to RSVP so that we would know ahead of time who would be there. And we also would need to gather the names of everyone who came, so that we have a record of who was there for contact tracing needs.*

**The service would be short--probably 30 minutes because folks would not be able to be in the church and have access to the bathrooms.*

**There would be instrumental music but no singing--singing is a very high risk activity which spreads the virus far, and in small droplets that do not drop to the ground. This is true even if folks wear masks.*

**Initially, there would not be Holy Communion. If the services went well, we would look at a way to make the distribution of Holy Communion safe.*

When we gather for worship again, it will not look like what you remember, or most likely are longing for. Your safety is our highest priority. And the virus itself will tell us when it might be safe to gather at all. We are going to carefully, thoughtfully and prayerfully, find our way to a new normal and learn how to live with this virus. We won't do it perfectly. But we will do it with love.

Our core value as Lutheran Christians is found in the question, "how does the decision I make serve my neighbor?" (1 Corinthians 10:23-24). We are still learning, still evolving in our understanding of how to work with this virus. And our Bishop, Paul Erickson, suggest that we "make the best decisions we can, be open to changing them, and err on the side of caution."

Either, I, your Interim Pastor, Ted Lazaris (Council President), or Jim Haas (Council Vice President) are glad to talk with any of you about any part of this that you want clarity about. Please let us know if you want more information or to talk with any of us about this.

Pastor Debra: 262-255-9266

Ted Lazaris: 414-690-6554

Jim Haas: 414-882-3916

10. Pastoral Care: As is always true, if you want or need to talk with me about anything, please call. Even if you just want to chat about the weather. Call. I will always love to hear from you. I have loved the conversations I have had with many of you.

Now you will find my "Words from the Interim Pastor" which would be in the newsletter if this were a newsletter. You can also read it in a Word document that is attached for easier reading.

Blessings and love to you all, Pastor Debra

Words from the Interim Pastor

Beyond Easter, we go singing.

Having been grabbed by resurrection we are full of tears and laughter.

Into Pentecost, we go singing.

Having been disturbed and reawakened by the Spirit, we are full of life and wonder.

The way ahead is unknown. It will always be like that.

But having danced in the light, we will look for glory everywhere.

Every week I get a copy of prayers that my senior year seminary advisor, Canon Victoria Garvey, sends out across the country for prayers crafted for the upcoming Sunday. People get downright feisty if they don't receive Canon Garvey's lovely and lovingly crafted offerings. This prayer was part of what she sent out for the Sunday of June 7. And it made me think of Adoration. Much does these days, I find.

We who have been grabbed by resurrection and disturbed by the Spirit, are fully aware that the way ahead is unknown. We darn well wish that were not the truth! We like to know what is coming, and failing knowing, we try to script it. But it is unknown, it always has been. No matter how hard we try and script what will become of us, the future remains unknown. And facing the unknown we become afraid. Fear can paralyze us. Fear can make us behave in ways that we would not, were we not afraid. Fear can take us away from Jesus, if we let it, and to a place that is more dark.

But having danced in the light, we will look for glory everywhere.

It is not naïve to look for the light when we are afraid; to seek the light when darkness comes into our souls. It is our faith: that light always comes into the darkness when we seek it. So, seek it we must. And we pray that others seek it, too.

There is much light at Adoration, even now when we are out of our building because of the pandemic, and what we see that is dark is only of our own making. If we focus on what we no longer do, we miss what is happening anew. If we focus on those who have died or left, we miss the gifts of those who have more recently come; and worse, we miss our children! If we focus on the money we do not have, we miss the many blessings of wealth that are evident in our life together. If we focus on those who dislike us, we miss those who love us.

We have choices about where to put our focus. I choose to focus on the light and the multiple gifts so evident in our community. I choose to focus on the rebirth that is happening, on the amazing people who make up our faith community, on those who speak words of love. And I choose to pray that light comes to those who live in a darker place than the glorious light of Christ so evident in our church community!

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This same prayer offering from Canon Garvey for June 7th concludes with another prayer. In it is the lovely language:

Lord of compassion and mercy,
you give back to us what we fear is lost beyond recall.

Our God is lavish in God's love. Our God is full of compassion and mercy. If we are afraid, we need to pray ever more fervently. We know that God answers prayers, however they are offered.

With God, nothing and no one is lost beyond recall. And so it is true that we are all loved and all saved.

As you all know, I have a tag line on my email signature. I change it from time to time. I will probably change it shortly. I am thinking about returning to an old one. And it seems like a good ending to this particular musing. It is a line from a lovely movie that I commend to you all:

*"It will all be all right in the end. If it's not all right, it's not the end."
-The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*

(The Rev.) Debra Trakel, LCSW, M.Div.

She/her/hers

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." (Maya Angelou)