



MESSIAH
lutheran church
Sharing the love of Jesus

June 2020

1706 Lee Boulevard
North Mankato, MN
507-387-5537

A Message From Pastor Trish

1. In a time of pandemic

What does this time mean for our spiritual health? We know that the “stay-at-home” time now followed by a “stay-safe” time is best for our physical health, keeping us as protected as possible from Covid-19. We also know that these same restrictions are very difficult for our mental and emotional health, as we chafe at the restrictions, miss the contact of our regular relationships, and struggle with the disruption to our routines, jobs, and understanding of what we always thought of as “normal”. But what about our spiritual health? I propose that the state of our spiritual health is and will continue to be dependent on the mindset we choose to use. Let me explain:

We are used to living with what Terri Elton calls a “fixed mindset” – we see the world composed of understandable goals and outcomes. We set goals for ourselves, measure our progress toward these outcomes, and assume that our success or failure will be defined by how well we accomplish our goals. (Instead of goals you can say dreams, desires, accomplishments – choose the language that resonates with you.) But Elton talks about the importance of an “explorer mindset”- one in which we are curious, wondering, and open to new learning and ideas. While in her writing Elton is talking specifically about faith formation, I believe these same mindsets can help us look at our spiritual health right now.

At the moment, our traditional ways of looking at the world have been disrupted. A lot. Those goals, dreams, desires, and expectations that we had for ourselves and others no longer seem reasonable or achievable, and we struggle with what to put in its place. If we continue to try and use a “fixed mindset” to make sense of our world, it is likely that our spiritual health will suffer right along with our emotional and mental, maybe even physical, health.

Instead, what does an explorer mindset look like, and what might happen if we move to that way of seeing the world in this time? You can see an explorer mindset happening all around you – businesses finding new ways of meeting customer needs, churches going online, zoom family reunions. So what about a spiritual explorer mindset?

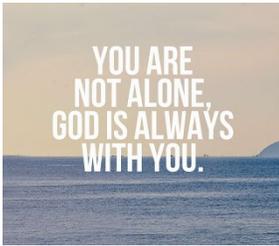


A spiritual explorer recognizes that God is in control, even when everything else is out of control. A spiritual explorer must also be willing to look for God at work, and to see this work in places and activities where it might be least expected. Finally, a spiritual explorer asks lots of questions, makes space for wondering, and listens carefully for and to the resulting answers.

Continued on next page...

A Message from Pastor Trish (continued)

What might God be saying to me as I pay attention to the low but constant level of anxiety that greets me upon my awakening each morning? How does the scripture passage or devotional that I read today sound different from 6 months ago? What is the message I am hearing, perhaps for the first time? What are the gifts that I have been given because of the changes in my life/my family's life? How do I see God at work in our political leadership and public servants? How is God working in the person who has a very different opinion from my own? How is God calling us to respond to one another? What's my task? What are the needs of our community that cannot be forgotten? What might God be calling me into, and what might God be calling me away from?



These are just a few of the questions we might begin to ask, and they then need to be followed by a time of wonder and listening. Here's where increased solitude comes as a gift for us all. As we sit (or walk or...) in silence and in the presence of God, we tend to our body, our emotions, and our thoughts, and we begin to sense God's lead. And then? We follow. Big steps or baby steps, it doesn't matter. Just follow. Maybe it's into more time of prayer, or scripture, or into a reconnection or repair of a relationship. Maybe it's into a new opportunity, or taking a risk, or offering up ourselves or our talent or treasure in a new way.

As we make time for our questions and wonderings, as we listen for and follow God's lead, we are tending to our spiritual health. One more thing – this tending is an ongoing opportunity and responsibility. Our spiritual health, our faith – it is a lifelong process of being and becoming. An explorer mindset and willingness to follow God's lead is important now, but it is also important for the rest of our lives. So go, explore, and remember: God is out ahead of you, is by your side, and has your back. You are never alone.

2. In a time of confronting systematic racism

The article above was written a few days before George Floyd died. As I reread it before we print the newsletter, it suddenly seems less relevant, overshadowed by the events of the last 10 or so days. We are all feeling challenged in a variety of ways by the ongoing events, and we struggle with our response, especially a response as people of faith. Our spiritual health still matters, especially in these times when we are being called to care for one another in ways we would have never been able to imagine just a few months ago. As people of faith we are called to first, listen carefully to the pain and lament in our world, and then, with an explorer mindset, to lean into places that make us uncomfortable and anxious in order to discover what God is up to, and what we must be up to for the Kingdom and the Kin-dom. There will be so much more for all of us to say; for now, let us begin with listening. Please carefully consider the study opportunity found on p. 4 of this newsletter.



WORSHIP AT MESSIAH

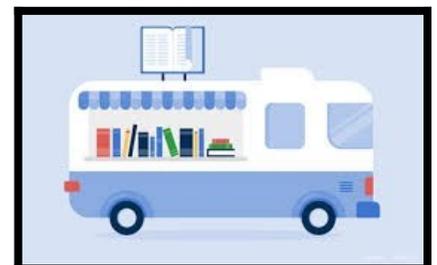


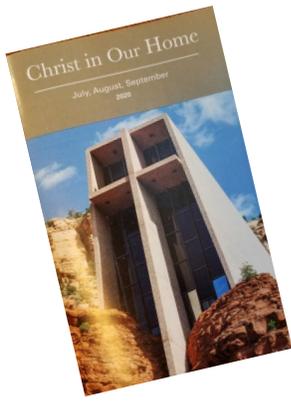
As of this writing, we are currently worshipping outdoors on Sundays at 8:30 and 10:00 AM. It is our goal to have opportunity for people to be out on the lawn or to worship from their cars. On-line worship will happen via Facebook Live at 8:30 AM, and a worship service will be posted on the web site each week as well for your convenience. In case of inclement weather, we will do Facebook Live at 8:30 AM and a Zoom worship at 10:00 AM. Here's the Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89382983806>

Members should have received a copy of our "Gathering Guidelines" via email a couple weeks ago. You will be able to find the most recent edition of these guidelines on our web site. That is also the place to watch for any changes in our worship practice. The situation is frequently changing, and we thank you for your flexibility in adjusting with us as we make changes.

Update from North Mankato Taylor Library

Amy from the Library called the week of May 18th to give us an update. The bookmobile is **not** going to be able to start the summer schedule, and she thinks that they will have to put any "new stuff" on hold for a while. Though she is hopeful, she is not sure whether the bookmobile will be able to go out this summer at all. For now, everything is on hold, and we will re-group later on in the summer to see if anything might be able to start up. Thank you to those of you who volunteered to help with this partnership. We will keep you informed if and when we can move forward.





Christ in Our Home

Devotionals for July, August, September are here. We'll have them available on Sunday mornings or we would be happy to mail one to you if you're not comfortable coming to worship yet. We also have a few left for the month of June.

Graduates

This is the time of year when we would normally be celebrating with our 2020 graduates, but those celebrations are not being held due to Covid-19. So please, continue to hold these young people in prayer. We do look forward to celebrating with them at a worship service later this summer, and offering gift and blessing at that time.



Day camp at Messiah is cancelled, but watch for opportunities for something later this summer thank you!



Sunday School students and families – we hope that in July we will have some activities for you to take part in, replacing what would have been a more traditional week of day camp here at Messiah. Watch for more information in the July newsletter, but expect an opportunity to come as a family to church to try out a story, a prayer station, a craft, etc.

Mission Mankato

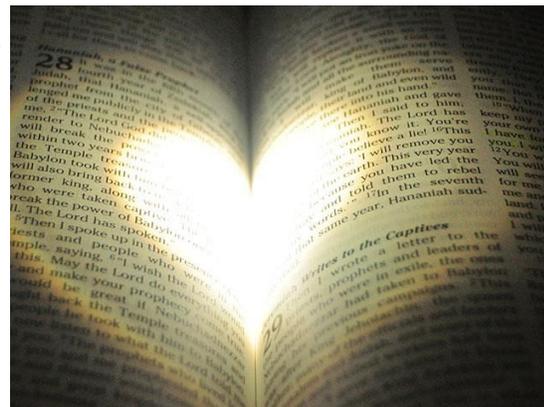
Mankato area churches have agreed that we will be unable to hold Mission Mankato as originally planned. This was to have been our second year of working together with students and staff to complete a variety of service projects for our area while also making time for fun and fellowship. Depending on virus spread and restrictions in place, we are still hoping to have a gathering and opportunity for service work later this summer, so watch for more information come July/August. We look forward to 2021 for our next opportunity for students completing grades 6-12!



Study Opportunities

Bible Study

The Thursday evening Bible study participants recently finished their series on “Simply Jesus” and want to continue on with a new series. We are currently exploring possibilities but expect we will use another video series by NT Wright that includes a scripture reading and short lecture on the reading followed by discussion. We have been meeting for one hour at 5 PM on Thursdays via Zoom, but there may be capability to do a hybrid Zoom and in-person for those without technology or a comfort level with Zoom. If you are interested in joining us when we start back up again (probably in the next few weeks) please let the church office or Pastor Trish know and we will get you more information!



And Who is My Neighbor?

If you have been watching the violence that has erupted since the death of George Floyd on May 25, you are likely wishing it would all just go away. But it is also likely that you understand that stopping the violence won't make the historic and systemic racism that has always been a part of this country go away. If you are struggling to understand what's happening and what's at stake, if you want to do something to help create positive change, and if you are willing to engage in respectful, loving but difficult and uncomfortable conversation, consider being a part of conversation here at Messiah. On Wednesday evenings at 6:30, we will listen, read and talk using a curriculum developed by Lutheran Social Services of MN in 2016 called “Who is My Neighbor? Talking About Race and Racial Equality”. Here's what the people at LSS have to say about this curriculum:

“We are offering a study on racial equity to congregations called And Who is My Neighbor? as a grace-filled entry into this conversation. This study was authored by Dr. Eric Barreto, past professor at Luther Seminary and now on the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. Respondents to Eric's



writing are five pastors of color in Minnesota –who don't always agree with him! This guide also includes a sampler of video aids and experiential exercises on the subject as well as video stories by five people of different racial backgrounds associated with LSS. And it includes an appendix of further reading and next steps for consideration.

A conversation on race in Minnesota is not easy – never has been. The subject brings up our deepest held beliefs about who we are and who we should be. It brings up anger, pain, fear, guilt, shame, and even hopelessness. And it is way past time we all pressed into it. Our hope for the study is that it will cause more Minnesotans to decide to invest energy into reading, learning, listening and understanding why and how racial disparity has come about in our State. We hope more will also decide to become more active in trying to change it.”

If you are interested in being a part of this conversation, or even if you're not sure, email the church office or Pastor Trish by June 14. Once we know how many people might be interested we can determine if we will hold the conversations in-person, via Zoom, or through a hybrid approach. (This decision depends on how many are interested as well as comfort with technology.)

Driveway Worship Update

Driveway Worship Update – We are still debating when and how to move ahead with this idea. We are trying to evaluate what members of Messiah most need and want for spiritual nourishment in these days, and wonder if the opportunity to now worship outdoors on Sundays meets those needs, or if it still makes sense to bring a small worship opportunity into the neighborhoods. So, stay tuned for more information, and let us know your thoughts along the way! Contact Intern Pastor Janet at jadams007@luthersem.edu with your input!



Financial and Ministry Updates

We are most grateful for your continued support for the ministry at Messiah during these difficult days. Although we are not gathering for worship in the building, we are still gathering in other ways and places, and the ongoing work here is made possible by your offerings. In April, our offerings totaled \$23,073, and our expenses were \$24,774. In addition, we applied for and received funds through the Payroll Protection Plan totaling \$28,500. These funds can be used for payroll as well as utility expenses through the end of June. Thank you!



Are you wondering what IS happening around here when we can't gather together? Besides missing you terribly, staff at Messiah remain busy, planning and leading worship services at 8:30 and 10:00 AM on Sunday mornings, getting those out on Facebook, though Zoom, and on the website. We have nightly devotions as well (Monday – Friday) at 6 PM on Facebook Live, and these are also placed on our YouTube channel for access anytime (the front page of the website has an easy link to "YouTube").

We have continued to maintain contact with our Middle School students through periodic Zoom gatherings, and in May, we also tried a couple fellowship nights over Zoom. The Thursday evening Bible Study has been "zooming" as well, and materials for the Thursday morning group are still sent to them every week. We've coordinated and through the help of many volunteers have a phone tree that reaches out periodically to our older members. We also try to maintain contact with everyone, knowing that people have a variety of ways in which they receive information. So, a letter goes out each week to those without internet access, and we are continually trying to keep all our other streams of communication updated and working. Pastoral calls are made regularly.



Thanks to the help of Barb and Denny Meier we've put together and delivered packages of devotions, crafts and surprises to Sunday School students and families.

Finally, we are trying to stay on top of ever-changing guidelines and make plans for worship as the situation changes, activities in lieu of a week of Vacation Bible School, revisiting some of the many things that were canceled during our stay-at-home time....we are still here, and still working hard to meet the spiritual needs of our faith community. With all of that, we covet your continued prayers.



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www.messiahnorthmankato.com



“Sharing the Love of Jesus...”

Please Pray...

In our thoughts and prayers: Darrin P, Ben K, Jan L, Brandy R, Cheech M, Craig V, Dave C, Earl W, Gary Z, Greg S, Jackie W, Jess R, Judy F, Kathryn R, Milo L, Patrice P, Rosie L, Paul, Mark & Kathy, Beth R, Edith, Ann & Kyle A., Susa, Mary

Those who serve our country: Dan P, Brian M, Derek M, Roger W, Carly & Alex

Prayers of Sympathy for Dayle & Kimberly Moore and family on the death of Dayle’s father Doyle.



Edith Alberty, 2 (granddaughter of April & Carl Rosendale) will be having her 2nd heart surgery on June 18th. To follow along with Edith’s progress, you can check out her Caring Bridge site at https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/babyedithsheart?utm_source=DAS+Summary&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DAS+Summary+email&utm_content=Visit+the+site+to+view+all+the+activity