



A Message from Pastor Trish

I am haunted by a couple of the sermons I gave at the beginning of the year. I don't remember the exact Sundays, but I do remember saying that I had no idea where God was leading us in the coming year. I also remember saying that it didn't matter; for wherever we would go the Spirit would be ahead of us, meeting us there.

Our current circumstances are like nothing I could have ever imagined, and I'm sure you feel the same way. We are caught now in this transitional time in which we know we will not soon be returning to what was "normal" just a couple of months ago; yet we have no idea what a "new normal" will be like either. And this is true, not just at church, but also at work, in social activities, travels, etc.

Those sermons haunt me because all of this means I must practice what I preached! In other words, I must truly be OK with not knowing where God is leading, and at the same time, **allowing God to lead**. (And I, like many of you, prefer certainty to uncertainty, and being in control to having no control.) But a recent article by the *Congregational Consulting Group* was helpful for me to understand that these times require a different set of practices, and so I share them with you in hopes that you too might find them helpful.



First, we must **surrender to this moment**. That doesn't mean give up, but it does mean recognizing that working harder is not going to fix this situation. Instead, surrender means acknowledging we don't have all the answers for this moment in our history, and we will indeed need to depend on God's Spirit to lead us!

Next, we get to **lean into our disorientation**. The longer we try to cling to the way things used to be, the harder it will be to let go, and we all will need to let go. But trusting in God's long history of leading God's people through times of great difficulty can make the letting go a bit easier. God's faithfulness is indeed secure.

One of the ways to move forward is to **look for meaning in the moment**. We are creatures who yearn for a life of meaning, and so together we can discover the importance of this experience to shape and transform us. I recently told a group of colleagues that I am so grateful to be able to live through this time. I don't like it of course, but when it is all over I know that I will be so glad to have experienced it. I already know it has begun to change all of us as individuals as well as this community of faith.

This is also not a time for long-term planning, and so we simply **look for one good next step**. What can I do today, or this week, that can make a difference, offer meaning, be helpful to someone else? That's all we need in this moment – just one good next step.

Finally, it's OK to **yearn for something more**, something different, as well as to long for this to be over. That longing helps move us into the future. It also helps answer the question – where is God leading us? What do our hearts say? How are we feeling?

There is no clear path, no certain answers, no necessary actions. That's difficult to accept but necessary to understand. It also offers a unique opportunity to try new things, and to experiment. That's what we have been doing ever since we started on-line worship services, and it's what we will continue to do until we have settled into a "new normal". You'll read about a few ideas in this newsletter; more ideas will come out in response to changing public health guidelines as the virus continues its trek across the world. In the meantime, remember that it really doesn't matter where we go or what we do so long as we try something, and remember as well that whatever we do and try God will be with us and waiting for us.

Update from Intern Pastor Janet

Dear Friends in Christ,

What a different time we are living through right now! We are not able to gather in person, and I do miss our worship together, the singing, the laughter, sharing God's peace and especially gathering at the table. What a glorious day it will be when we can be physically together again!



One of the ideas that came out of the council retreat in February was to partner with the North Mankato Taylor Library Bookmobile in their outreach program to our neighbors. In March I was able to connect with Amy, who manages the bookmobile. Though we are waiting to see how all of this unfolds, the original plan was to begin the first Thursday in June. The bookmobile would park in the west lot from 1-2pm, and Amy was asking for volunteers who might be willing to help with some craft activities or other programming. They were also planning on hiring a translator for the first couple weeks, until people whose primary language is not English understand how the bookmobile works and what services are available to them.

Again, at this point I do not have updated information about when this might happen, but if you are interested in helping with this ministry please let me know. As soon as I hear definite dates we will get more involved in planning and scheduling. But for now, it would be great to know who would like to be a part of this. Thank you for your consideration, and God's blessings be upon you!

Spark House Lessons

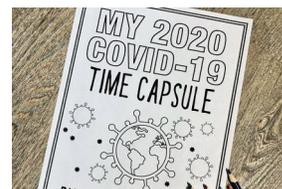


Every Sunday, through June 7th, Spark House will be offering free family Sunday School lessons. They include a video story based on scripture, and downloadable worksheets, games, and activities. Check your email each week for a link to their site, or go to:

messiahnorthmankato.com > Ministries > Elementary School Ministries.

Time Capsules

We are all living through a unique period of world history, and while it can feel overwhelming at times, it can be helpful to sit down and think about what impact this will have on our lives going forward. This COVID-19 time capsule is a tool to help us remember both where we are at and where we would like to be going forward. There are both adult and children versions available. It can be found on our website at messiahnorthmankato.com > Ministries.



Quilting Update

Our quilters are no longer meeting. They were still able to complete numerous quilts and we still want to display them! Rather than on Mother's Day, as originally planned, we will make sure there is a later date to highlight the wonderful work they have done.



Sunday School Updates

The beginning of May marks the end of our traditional Sunday School year, and we usually celebrate! This year we will celebrate differently. SS families received an Easter goodie bag of surprises, activities and stories. Thank you to Barb and Denny Meier for both contributing to the bag and being our delivery people! By the time you receive this newsletter you may have already received another bag, reminding you we are thinking about and missing you! Then, the first full week of May, we hope to get out a bag with the theme of "Creation" that will include a devotion, story and discussion questions as well as a craft that we hope you will enjoy throughout the month of May. Let us know if you find these helpful. Send us a picture and we will share it with the congregation!



2020 Graduates



We are reminded of so many things that we lose when we cannot be together, and this is an especially poignant time for our high school and college seniors! Please keep them in your prayers. At this time, we plan on celebrating with them later this summer, hoping we can do so in small groups, at least. So stay tuned for further information!

When will we gather again?



The honest answer to that question is we don't know. But we are thinking about it! And here's what we are thinking. First, we will follow public health guidelines to determine when we might gather and the ways in which we might gather. We will likely be limited to smaller numbers, and we are thinking about how many services we should have on a Sunday morning and/or throughout the week to accomplish those gatherings safely. We expect to be outside because we have more room and it is easier to practice physical distancing. (This means we are giving thanks for a big yard and a sound system that is portable and we've also ordered an FM transistor, based on a recommendation from Matt!) We have also tossed around the idea of bringing worship to you – or at least, to some of your neighborhoods. Maybe we can do some small driveway gatherings! Time will tell, and it will likely be that we keep experimenting until we get it right. We have ordered some funky communion "individual servings" that are often used in hospital settings or "on the go" that we plan to use for our times of Holy Communion, at least in the beginning. We will likely encourage or expect facemasks. There will probably be other protocols as well, all designed to keep us safe even as we gather together. But no matter what – we will also continue to offer an on-line worship opportunity so no one should feel obligated to "come out" when it is safer to stay home. Stay tuned!

Your input is needed: Driveway Worship?

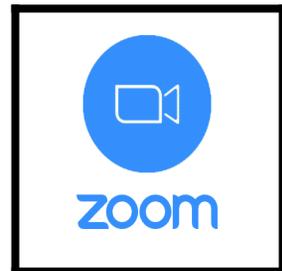


When will we be able to once again gather for worship? It remains a question without an answer, but we will be following public health guidelines and doing all we can to ensure our mutual safety. In the meantime, as we continue to think about when and how we might begin to worship in person, one idea that surfaced is to worship in smaller groups in a Messiah member's driveway. Now that the weather is nicer, and we can enjoy being outside, we wonder if there might be interest in having a worship service in your "neighborhood." Members who live in that area would be invited as well as other neighbors who may need the good news of Jesus Christ in their lives right now. (I am thinking that people would need to bring their own lawn chairs and follow any social distance rules.)

Of course, this is only one idea of many possibilities. However, if you think this might be a successful way to begin to worship in person, and are interested in possibly hosting a "driveway service," please contact the church office and let us know. At the time of writing this article, we are looking for feedback and for anyone who might be interested in giving this little experiment a try, when the time is right. Intern Pastor Janet

Zooming Together

As the Messiah Council met a week or two ago we tried to discern what the members of our congregation might need that we aren't currently able to provide, and the fact that we all miss one another and our church family quickly rose to the top of the list. It's a major reason why we do a Zoom worship on Sundays – so we can see each other. We are thinking that many of you might be interested in more "face to face" time with your Messiah family. So – we are going to experiment and see if we can find opportunities to spend time with one another. First up – we want to try a couple Zoom gatherings. The dates will be *Wednesday evenings in May—May 13 and 27 at 6:30 PM*. The link will be <https://zoom.us/j/98714728638>



The purpose of our Zoom gatherings will be an opportunity for fellowship! Depending on how many show up we will hopefully give everyone an opportunity to visit. One evening we will try playing some games on Zoom – there are some games that can be adapted, or the list of ideas to try is growing out on social media. The other evening we will likely have some guided questions that you can ask one another. Nothing too serious – just an opportunity to visit, maybe get to know each other better, and learn something new about one another.

We hope you will join us. We will send out reminders again closer to the time of the first gathering.



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www.messiahnorthmankato.com



“Sharing the Love of Jesus...”



Meet our 8th grade students, who should have celebrated their Affirmation of Baptism at the end of April. Our Messiah 8th graders are: Avery Como, Jade Wildt, Livia Anderson, Drew Anderson, Emma Tokheim, Autumn Pipes, London Campbell and Acea Worthen. They have spent the last three years coming to Wednesday nights and growing in their learning and faith, but the celebration of their achievement has been postponed until a later date (we hope to do it on Reformation Sunday in October). In the meantime, please keep these students in your prayers. We thought it would be fun to introduce them to you, and to find out what they are doing these days during their stay-at-home time.

When asked what they liked about their stay-at-home time, they could come up with just a couple things, including sleeping later (Drew) and having it be a little slower paced (Emma). But many of them are missing some of the activities they were looking forward to this spring and summer, including baseball (Avery), swim team (Autumn) dance (Livia) the MN Zoo event and Lancers (Emma). If you are wondering how on-line school is going for them, they were unanimous in their opinion that it was not fun. In many ways, it's very hard – not because the work is more difficult, but because teachers have varying levels of technological aptitude, and 8th graders can tell the difference. They are also frustrated with having to wait for course-work and assignments to be posted. Of course, school is more than schoolwork, and missing their friends – A LOT – was also something that everyone agreed on. Finally, as DMMS 8th graders they are missing out on completing the mural in the hallway. They hope that there will be an opportunity to still do that at some point, as it is a DMMS tradition, but it will not be the same.

Like all of us, our 8th graders wish that we had never heard of the coronavirus. But when I asked them to imagine what they will remember the most when they look back 20 or so years from now, Autumn spoke for the others when she said “how many will have died”. That is why we are doing this, isn't it? So many have and will die, and at the same time, we know that it would be even worse if we weren't making sacrifices. We give thanks to God for our 8th graders and all of our students and teachers who are doing their part to protect one another.

Get to know Messiah's Class of 2020, as they prepare for their next journey!



Full name: Cole Alan Himmer
Parents: Mark and Jodi Himmer
Siblings: Tyler Himmer
Favorite class: Science and Math
Best high school memory: Going to Worlds for Robotics 3 times
High school activities: Cross Country, Robotics, Track
Favorites:
--**Movie:** Deadpool
--**Book:** Physics of Star Wars
Who is your hero: Cross Country Coach Ward
Describe yourself with 3 words: Analytical, engineer, recluse
Future plans: attending Iowa State University majoring in Aerospace Engineering



Full name: Blake Patrick Donkin
Parents: Sean & Jen Donkin
Siblings: Garret Donkin
Favorite class: Math
Best high school memory: State Skiing
High school activities: Football, Skiing & Lacrosse
Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing & Golf
Favorites:
--**TV Show:** Last Man Standing
--**Song:** E.T.
--**Movie :** Bad Boys
--**Book:** The Maze Runner
Who is your hero: My Parents
Describe yourself with 3 words: Trustworthy, Dedicated & Funny
Future plans: Plumbing Apprentice



Full name: Joshua Benson
Parents: Dan and Lisa Benson
Siblings: Christa, Erica, and Zach Benson
Favorite Class: Woodworking
High School Activities: Cross Country
Hobbies: Biking, Running
Favorites:
--**TV Show:** The Office
--**Movie:** Fast and the Furious
Describe yourself with 3 words: Tall, Smart, Funny
Future plans: Going to MSU, Mankato to study civil engineering



Full Name: Emily Elizabeth Ries
Parents: Brad and Tracy Ries
Siblings: Devin Ries
Favorite Class: Band
High School Activities: National Honor Society, Pep Band, Band, Volleyball and Mankato Area 77 Lancers
Future plans: I will be attending Minnesota State University, Mankato.

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Full Name: Sophie Simonson
Parents: Dale and Diana Simonson
Siblings: Dylan Simonson
Favorite Class: Art
Best High School Memory: First Hour Art with my Friends
High School Activities: Shopping and Singing
Favorites:
--**TV Show:** Grey's Anatomy
--**Movie:** Lion King
--**Book:** The Raft
--**Song:** Whitney Houston—I Have Nothing
Who is your hero?: My Mom
Describe yourself with 3 words: Sassy, Sarcastic, and Caring
Future plans: I am going to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth and major in Psychology. I will then attend a law school to become a family lawyer.



Full Name: Malia Ravae Lagred
Parents: Nathan & Juanita Lagred
Siblings: Donovan and Gracia
Favorite Class: Choir
Best High School Memory: Choir trip to Europe
High School Activities: Volleyball, track, choir, key club, national honor society.
Hobbies: hanging out with friends, swimming, sleep, 'hammocking'.
Favorites:
--**TV Show:** Grey's Anatomy
Song: 'Sunflower' by Rex Orange County
--**Movie:** 'The Perks of Being a Wallflower'
--**Book:** 'The Alchemist'
Who is your hero?: Daniel Caesar
Describe yourself with 3 words: Thoughtful, inclusive, easy-going.
Future Plans: Attend Gustavus Adolphus and possibly majoring in psychology.

Full name: McKenna Marie Malvin
Parents: Scott and Amy Malvin
Siblings: McKayla and Nicholas
Favorite class: CNA class
Best high school memory: Hanging out with friends at school events.
Hobbies: Hanging out with friends and shopping
Favorites:
--**TV Show:** NCIS
--**Song:** Young Once by Sam Hunt
--**Book:** Too many to choose
Who is your hero: Haven't met them yet
Describe yourself with 3 words: Hard-working, kind, considerate
Future plans: Going to MSU for Nursing

Full name: McKayla Marie Malvin
Parents: Scott and Amy Malvin
Siblings: McKenna and Nicholas
Favorite class: Math
Best high school memory: JOBS
Hobbies: TV and walking
Favorites:
--**TV Show:** Grey's Anatomy
--**Song:** Too many to choose!
--**Movie:** The Proposal
Describe yourself with 3 words: Tired, determined, independent
Future plans: Go to MSU for Social Work