

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.htelc.com](http://www.htelc.com)

22 Fox Run Road \* Newington, NH 03801 \* 603-436-1704

[office@htelc.com](mailto:office@htelc.com)

Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team would like to give a cheer to all of those who made pledges to Holy Trinity during the Pledge Campaign that we just completed. Your response was wonderful and it will allow the Church to continue its mission to our community and the world. Thank you again.



## Toys for Tots

The holiday season is approaching and we will once again be collecting new, unwrapped toys for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. The collection box will be in the narthex as it has been in the past and toys can be dropped off during services or sanctuary time. All donations must be received by December 6th for timely delivery to the Marines. Thank you for your generosity.



## Faith Formation Team

*We are hard at work putting our creative thinking caps on to bring Holy Trinity families some new and exciting things to partake in during the upcoming advent season.*

The Faith Formation Team would love for the congregation to send in pictures, or videos, of you and/or your family with your home nativity (or christmas) scene. We are hoping to have enough content, of as many HTELC families as possible, to put together a virtual collage to send out. Even if we are not able to share in person with our church family this season we can still create and collaborate to show our unity. Please send pictures and/or videos to [faith@htelc.com](mailto:faith@htelc.com) by December 12th. Thank you!



## Pastor Tim's Article: November 9, 2020

“Liminal” is a word that is not used very frequently in most of our vocabularies, but it has never been more relevant in so many aspects of our lives than right now. I gave a sermon on “liminality” a few weeks ago, but didn’t use that word. Can you guess? It was the sermon when I talked about molting of insects and crustaceans. The time in their life with they shed their exoskeleton and are at their most vulnerable. They don’t have what once gave them shelter and protection and enabled them to move and they haven’t yet developed their new exterior. They are in a “liminal” time.

If you need a more specific definition, try the following. A liminal time is “...one thing has ended and a new thing has yet to begin.” That definition comes from the book I am about to finish titled, “How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You are Going: Leading in a Liminal Season” by Susan Beaumont.



“Liminal” seems fitting for today, doesn’t it? Everywhere we look it seems like one thing has ended but a new thing hasn’t begun. We are in the middle of a pandemic and our old way of life has ended and we are waiting for a vaccine for it to start again, but we are unsure of what will be the same and what will be different. If you are a parent, it can be a permanent time of liminality as you try to raise kids. They are always in the process of becoming something new and never exactly who they used to be. Churches are in this place also. We once were in the middle of society as people looked to us for guidance and planned life around us. Now, we have been moved to the fringe as people are busy and don’t always have time for worship, or Bible Study and many people in society see us as irrelevant. Church is no longer the center and we aren’t sure where we fit in right now. All of this can be exhausting!

It is very common for institutions and people who are in the midst of liminality, (in the process of becoming something new and don’t know yet what that will be) to reverse course and want to return to what once was. When the future is uncertain, fear can become powerful and certainty can be appealing. We are not people who are comfortable being uncomfortable. We want to move our way through it fast without doing the proper work to understand what led ourselves to be in this place or the proper work that will help move us out of it. We move through it quickly because we feel we are in danger and if action isn’t taken quickly, we may not survive. We fear we are like the lobster or crab that has shedded its exoskeleton and is vulnerable to predators who will devour it during the time it is rendered defenseless.

The reality is, during a liminal time, opportunity abounds, if we are willing to sit in the discomfort. Discernment, the revealing and dreaming up of new ideas and directions, happen during this time if we give them time to develop. God is not far off, but close and we trust the Holy Spirit is alive and kicking during times of liminality. We are not like the lobster or crab that will simply grow a bigger shell, in the

same design as the one they just got rid of. Instead, we have feelings and thoughts and consciousness and prayers to help decide what will come next and what it will look like.

Perhaps, pray this prayer for your life, Holy Trinity and the world.

***Creator of all things,***

***Throughout history, you have always been present during liminal times.***

***In times of doubt, you were there.***

***In times of uncertainty, you were there.***

***In times of fear, you were there.***

***Today, when we are feeling all of these things again, we boldly and humbly ask you to be with us again.***

***We don't want to return to the past, instead***

***Send your Spirit to lead us into your future.***

***A future of which we have doubt, uncertainty and fear.***

***But a future that also contains joy, and love and hope.***

***Give us your presence to sit in the discomfort of the day and to discern your will for tomorrow.***

***Amen.***

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tim

### **CaringConnections**

After a beautiful week of warm weather it is now feeling like winter is just around the corner. The changing of the seasons is definitely one of the constants that we have been able to count on, this year. Another constant, though, is the mailing of packages to our college students. A list of students and their addresses was compiled. Notes/cards were written for each package. Package treats were collected. The packages are currently in the process of being filled, with a plan to mail them by the end of this week. Regardless of whether our college students are living and learning on campus or remotely, they are all getting packages filled with lots of love and joy! Thank you to everyone who helped to make this such a huge success! This truly was a team effort under the great direction of Pat!

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy Thanksgiving!



## Pastor Tim's article: November 12, 2020

The election is over, but COVID is still here. Don't you wish they both would have ended? Alas, that is not the case. Instead of going away, case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths are all on the rise (fortunately, the death rate is not climbing as fast, at this point). While we are still doing well, compared to the rest of the country, we are not immune. This morning on my drive to church I heard a report that cases in New Hampshire have doubled in the last two weeks. As we know, as cases rise, deaths rise as well, just not as fast.

I say this, not to depress you, but rather because it causes me concern as we have begun to hold in-person worship services. While it has been well received by those who attended, it is not a foregone conclusion that they are here to stay or we will hold them indefinitely. Each month, and as necessary, council will revisit the decision to hold in-person worship and whether or not it is the right or wise thing to do. While we take into consideration if people want an in-person worship and will attend, that is not the deciding factor. We look at community spread. We look at trends across the country. We talk about what our role is as a church in helping to mitigate the virus. All this is to say, whatever we decide to do as we move into winter, we do not make any decision lightly. Council is a place where many and varied decisions are offered and heard. We may not always agree, but we do support what we decide.

As we continue to discern our way forward, I ask that you pray for several different groups...

- Churches as they continue to figure out new ways of worshipping and being together.
- All medical caregivers as they continue to put their health at risk to help those who are sick and suffering.
- Counselors and all mental health professionals as they continue to deal with a rise in depression and anxiety in people of all ages.
- Leaders in our community and country as they make decisions to keep people safe, knowing whatever they decide it will make some people irate.
- School administrators, teachers and support staff as they continue to do their best to educate our youth in a way that has never been done before while keep them and their communities safe.
- People who currently have the virus and are afraid of how it will affect them and those who are fighting for their life.
- People who have lost a loved one to the virus as they are entering into the Holiday season.
- For all who are feeling "COVID Fatigue," to strengthen our resolve to do the steps necessary to limit the spread of the virus.
- Anyone else or group that you can think of that is not listed above.



I listened to a podcast yesterday that featured a conversation with Dr. Michael Osterholm. He is a leading epidemiologist and infectious disease doctor in the country. He talked about this being the season of the pandemic in the same way we have a baseball or football season. Each season is not forever, but for a period of time. It will come to an end, but we need to prepare for the season. Maybe we need to think of the time we are in as the 2020-21 COVID season. There will only be one, but we are in the middle of it right now. Let's play our part, as well as we can, so it will be as short of a season as possible.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tim

### **Who Operates Detention Sites**

Did you know that the majority of detention sites in the country are operated by for--profit companies? As of 2017, 70% of people held in immigration detention in this country are held in facilities operated by for-profit companies. The remaining 30% are held in ICE-operated facilities such as the Strafford County Jail. For-profit privately-run facilities such as the GEO Group have a strong lobbying presence in Washington. Want to learn more and find out how you can help? Contact your Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (SISC) volunteer coordinator (Dot Kasik) or read "National Immigrant Justice Center Immigration Detention Oversight and Accountability Toolkit 4," updated May 2019.

### **Hope for the Holidays Campaign**

Did you know? The Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (SISC) was originally formed to support our Indonesian neighbors who were in danger of being deported? Together we offered to stand with and provide sanctuary for our friends. Ove the past years our understanding of what it means to create sanctuary has expanded to include support for people being held for issues related to their immigration status at the Strafford County jail.

SISC isn't the only organization concerned with immigrants and immigration. The Luther Immigrant and Refugee Services (IRS) offers hope and support on a national basis. At this time of year, LIRS is particularly concerned with the thousands of people being kept in detention. They won't be celebrating either Thanksgiving or Christmas with friends and relatives. They won't be getting special meals. They won't be opening presents. They won't be attending Christmas Eve services.

Want to help? Through LIRS's Hope for the Holidays Campaign you can send greeting cards and letters to folks around the country both in detention and in danger of detention. Folks in detention are for the most part completely cut off from their families. The cards we send might well be the only gifts they'll open this year. But it'll be a blessing to someone who has almost nothing.

## President's Article

The end of November marks the beginning of advent, the Latin word for “coming” and the anticipation of Christ. As a child I remember my mother going to great efforts to make a “living” advent wreath. She would go into the woods to collect just the right evergreens and winterberries and then arrange them in a round tray that held water to keep them fresh. She then would go into town to find pink and purple candles. I remember the ritual of lighting the candle each evening with the wreath centered on our kitchen table. My four siblings and I eagerly watched as the circle of lit candles increase in number as Christmas approached. In my very young years, this was the strongest “decoration” of Christmas since our tree didn’t “appear” until Christmas morning.

I have always liked circles. I find them calming, continuous, strong, collaborative, and easy on the eyes. Right now, I am trying to keep this symbolism of circles in my mind. We are going through many transitions with uncertain outcomes. This may include things in our lives and communities. This can be unsettling and uncomfortable because I feel like I can’t really prepare, yet I also know I can’t add more things to my “worry list!” As I sit with my uncomfortable anticipation I try to find ways to connect to God’s guidance. This has led me to stretch and try new things to grow as an elementary teacher and as a Church Council member.

I continue to see Holy Trinity move through its own state of uncomfortable anticipation with success. Over these months, members have served through online and in-person church services, supported local neighbors in need, met the challenge of continuing to grow in faith, and continue to “come together” even though we are told to be safe and stay apart. We have also maintained strong offerings that allow us to support our Church and its ministries.



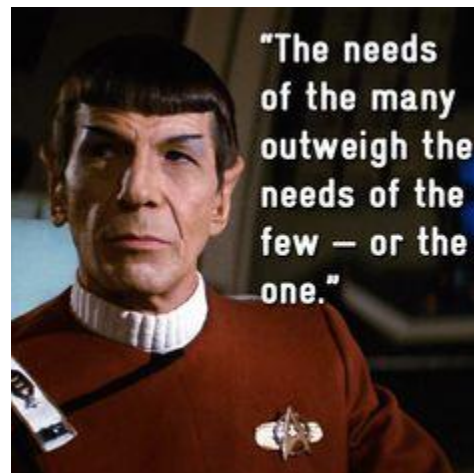
It is here that I find myself thinking about the importance of my Mother’s advent wreath and the power portrayed by the circle of candles lit together. As a Church, we have “lit many candles” over these past eight months. These candles are centering us to change in the ways that Christ asks us to live. I believe we will continue to do so with the leadership of Pastor Tim and the ongoing commitment and involvement of members who contribute in many ways.

## Pastor Tim's Article: November 16, 2020

It is with much sadness, that again, church council has decided to suspend all indoor worship services. It was not an easy decision and one that had various opinions. My opinion on the matter is about what is best for the community and how can we, as a church, do our part in stemming the increase of cases (which lead to an increase in deaths) of this pandemic. While masks and social distancing reduce the spread, the only guarantee of not spreading it is by not gathering. When we believe it is safe to reconvene indoors, we will make the decision to do so. Please continue to pray for the world as we all attempt to do our part to help.

Sunday afternoon, I received the following text from Cheryl Brigham concerning the decision and I think it perfectly sums up many people's feelings on the matter.

*"My favorite line from movie 'Wrath of Khan' when Spock is dying... 'Spock says, "Logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few." Captain Kirk answers, "Or the one.".... So I totally understand the decision to stop in church service. I am disappointed but I also know it's not just about me. I appreciate being able to attend these 3 weeks."*



I so greatly appreciated this text and believe this is the attitude we all need to have. It is disappointing to need to suspend in-person worship. But I firmly believe it is the right thing to do. As a faith community, one of the primary things we do is gather together to hear God's word and receive the sacraments. We are accustomed to doing this in person, but that is not the only way it can be done. We are fortunate to be in a place and time in which technology allows us to gather virtually. It is not ideal, but we trust that it will suffice. We also need to remember the reason why we gather. We gather to learn how we are the body of Christ in the world. We do not live for ourselves, but we live for the sake of the world. Therefore we do not what is in our own self-interest, but what is in the best interest of others. We believe at this time, what is in the best interest of others is to suspend indoor worship. Sorry and thanks for understanding.

Through these last couple of months, I have learned how important it is for some people to be in the sanctuary. Therefore, each week, along with our regular zoom service, we will also live stream a service from the sanctuary on Sunday mornings at 8:30am. You will be able to access this service through the homepage [on our website](#) or our [Facebook page](#). We attempted to stream it this past week, but ran into some technical difficulties. We are working those out and hope to be ready to go this week.

Lastly, we are quickly approaching Advent. One of the traditions here at Holy Trinity is to gather in the middle of the week to sing Holden Evening Prayer. Instead of us all gathering together in the sanctuary, myself and several musicians will gather to sing Holden and stream it for you to watch. This will be done on Tuesday's at 6pm beginning on Dec. 2. Again, you can access this through our Facebook page

or through the homepage on our website. If you would like a copy of Holden Evening Prayer to have at home to join in as you watch, please stop by the church. We will have them out on the table where you pick up your communion supplies. If you are not able to come to the church, please contact us and we can bring one to you.

I don't know when the pandemic will end. I am hopefully it is on the horizon as there have been some very positive signs with a vaccine in recent days. But I know it is still not ready to go and even when it is, it will take months for it to be accessible to the general public. Until that time, check on your neighbor, be easy on yourself, be kind to others and pray.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tim

### **Pastor Tim's Article: November 19, 2020**

Lot's going on this week, and three jumped out that require further or more detailed mention from me.

First, this Sunday, Nov. 22 at 11am, we are having a congregational meeting to vote on our Welcoming Statement, upon which we will become a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. We sent out a letter to everyone a couple of weeks ago announcing this and giving the guidelines for how to participate and how the meeting will function. Remember, in order to vote, you must attend the meeting.

Secondly, take 2! We attempted live streaming a worship service this past Sunday morning. It didn't go as planned. The streaming service we selected did not cooperate well and therefore we never "went live." We believe that we have solved that problem and are set to try again this week. You can access a worship service, conducted in our sanctuary, live at 8:30am this Sunday, and hopefully every Sunday after that. If 8:30 is too early for you, the service will be available immediately afterwards on YouTube. The best way to access the live stream or the recording of it is to go to our website, [www.htelc.com](http://www.htelc.com) and look for the link. We ask that you "Subscribe" to our YouTube channel, as doing so, it will make it easier for you and others to find us in the future. There is a big red button with the word "Subscribe" in white on the main page that you can click.

Third, if you have not heard by now, we are suspending all indoor worship services and other church activities due to the rise of COVID-19 cases in our community and across the country. This was not an easy decision to make. There are thoughts that we could continue meeting and continue enforcing our safety guidelines, and most likely, all would be well. But as stated before, the only guaranteed way to stop the spread of COVID is by not gathering, in-person, at all. Remember, just because we are not physically together, does not mean we are spiritually together. God's love knows no boundaries, including the boundary of this virus in the world. There are lots of ways to connect with each other and continue being the church in the world. The pandemic will never stop that.