

The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

www.htelc.com

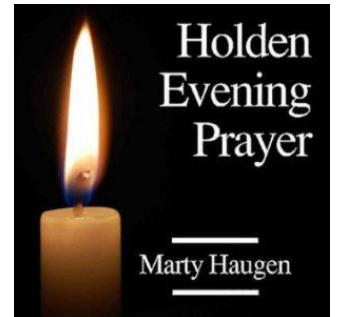
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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

Holden Evening Prayer

Holden Evening Prayer will begin every Wednesday during Lent at 6:00 PM, beginning 2/24. To worship with us, simply go to www.htelc.com at that time and click the YouTube video on our homepage. Pick up a booklet at the Church where you would find Communion.



Operation Blessing

Just a reminder that Operation Blessing is in need of household articles as well as food. The entire list of the needs includes household items, sheets of all sizes, blankets, kitchenware and such. You may put them in the green buckets under the mailboxes or deliver them to OB at 600 B Lafayette Rd on Wed, Thursday or Friday from 10 am - 4 pm. Thank you.



Social Ministry

On behalf of the Social Ministry team, I would like to thank everyone who generously donated items to this year's Mitten Tree. The hats, gloves, scarves, mittens, socks and other clothing items were taken to Cross Roads House. They will be able to distribute them to those in need.



Pastor Tim's Article: February 8, 2021

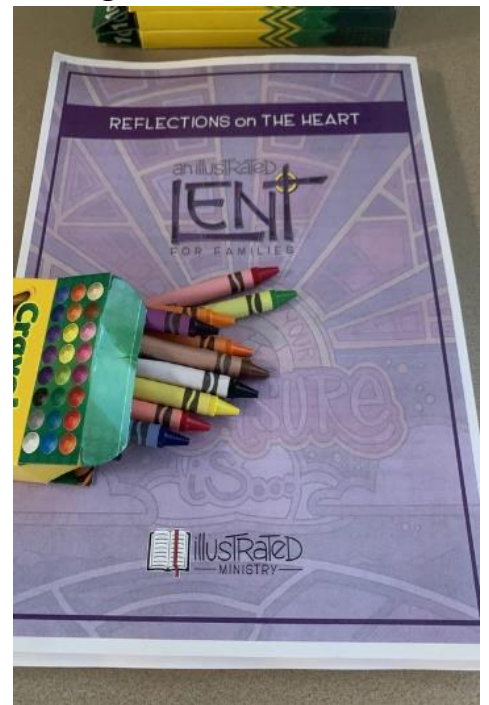
This Sunday is Transfiguration Sunday and then Lent begins. As I have written before, we are going to be learning about the enneagram on Wednesday evenings with the book "The Road Back to You" serving as our primary resource accompanied by videos and conversations led by former member, David Ronka, and myself. Please see information below regarding this.

But I wanted to highlight another way for everyone to participate in faith-based activities during Lent. Faith Bygd, our Faith Formation Coordinator, has been busy preparing "Lent-in-a-Bag." Each bag will consist of weekly devotionals and activities for people of all ages. There are two options. One bag is geared toward families with younger kids and the other bag is geared more toward older kids and adults. Size of family does not matter, even if you are a family of one.

Each bag will have all the supplies you need. You will get a new box of crayons, colored pencils or markers...because who doesn't love opening and using a new box of crayons or markers! Enjoy it! Bags are available to pick up now. Just stop by church during regular office hours. Also, in each bag will be ashes for you to use on Ash Wednesday. If you just want the ashes, they will be out next to the communion elements in the narthex. Please contact the Church Office if you would like one. (We are making extra's just in case some people forget to sign-up.)

Even if we are not gathering, physically, in person, this will still be a meaningful Lent. I hope you will take advantage of the options being offered to make it so.

Have a great day,
Pastor Tim



Pastor Tim's Article: February 11, 2021

There are many mornings right now where I have to find the energy to get moving and be productive. Many times, everything seems to be too much and I want it all just to stop. It's February. Middle of winter. It is cold. There is a pandemic that has been going on for almost a full year. I feel tired. I feel weak. I feel worn.

Do you recognize those words from somewhere? They are from the hymn, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." While I have a lot of favorite hymns, this is one of them. As I sat to write this article, I thought I would write about how that was Dr. Martin Luther King's favorite hymn (at least that is what I was taught in college during a J-term class I took). But I didn't want to say that without fact checking, so, google to the rescue. Fortunately for me, my memory was correct, or more to the point, my professor was correct. Multiple sites affirm that "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" was Dr. King's favorite and he requested it be played quite frequently, including the night before he was shot and killed. But during my searching, I learned the story behind the hymn. It was written by a Gospel choir director and blues musician, Thomas Dorsey in 1933. I could try and sum it up here, but I wouldn't do Mr. Dorsey's story the justice it deserves or communicate the meaning it had to Dr. King.

Whatever you might be feeling, you are not the first to feel that way and you won't be the last. Know that you are loved by the creator of the universe and who will be with you through the storms and through the night, who will take your hand, through the night, to lead you home.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tim



Pastor Tim's Article: February 15, 2021

Last Thursday, I was able to receive the second dose of the Moderna Covid vaccination. I can't tell you how fortunate I feel to have it. Again, I am glad that I didn't have to make up the guidelines for who receives it and when. Seems like no matter what is decided, someone was/is going to be upset.

I also hear more and more stories about people from the congregation getting scheduled for first and second doses. Some with more success than others. Because of the vaccination, many COVID related numbers seem to be trending in the right direction. In fact, on my drive to the church building today, I was listening to the podcast, "Up First" by NPR, and they were sharing the same positive news. It does seem like there is light at the end of the tunnel. This will not go on forever.

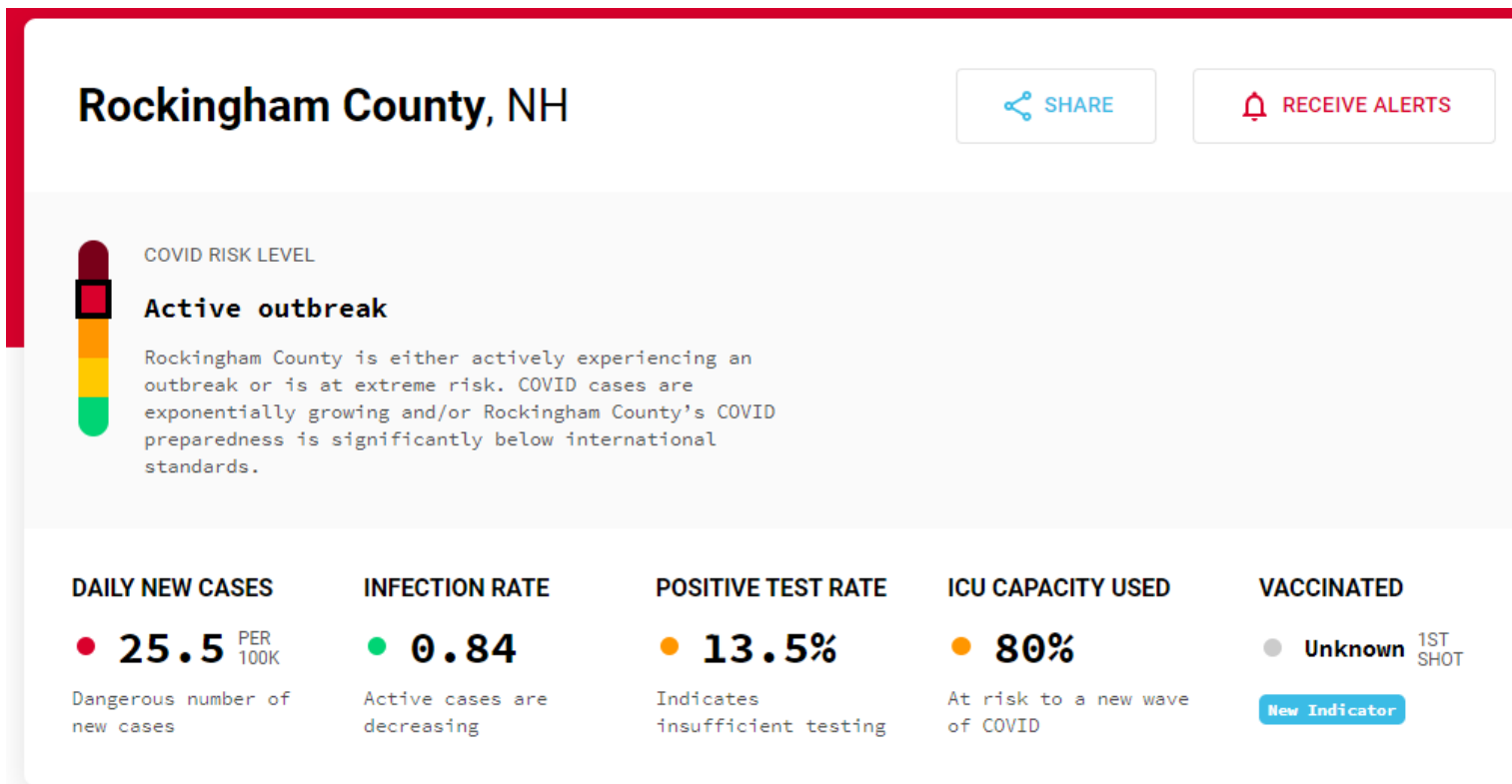
Because things are appearing to be moving in the right direction, it is natural to start wondering when will we begin offering indoor worship services again. In fact, if you have asked yourself that question, you are not alone. I think of it often, as does church council. At our last council meeting, this past Thursday, we spent a good portion of it discussing this question. The conversation was around finding some type of metric that we could follow based on information that we all agree on. Then when the agreed upon information was in an agreed upon range, we would have the conversation about resuming in-person worship. But finding that information is difficult. We didn't want to use something like "survival rate" or "total deaths." Both can be used to skew opinions easily. Even if "survival rate" is a fraction of 1%, when you extrapolate that over the entire population, total deaths could be in the millions. Obviously, that is unacceptable. In reverse thought, if you solely focus on the total number of deaths, it can lead to paralysis and the thinking that there is no acceptable safe behavior.

Fortunately, we came upon the website www.covidactnow.org. What we like about this website is it provides information in easy-to-read formats and provides context for the information. You can search by state, county and city metro areas to find up-to-date COVID information. The 4 basic data points it uses are "daily new cases per 100k," "infection rate," positive test rate," and "ICU capacity." It provides where a state, county or city metro area currently is, regarding these areas, and what are target rates to

achieve that would allow that county to “move to a different color.” I encourage you to take some time and explore it. When it designates Rockingham County as “orange” (we are currently “red”) we will have the conversation about offering in-person worship. Until then, we believe it is not safe to do so. We will be checking this site regularly and will have a special council meeting if we are designated “orange” before our regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

Please pray for everyone who is making decisions during this time. There is no easy decision. Pray for school superintendents and principals. Pray for mayors and county executives. Pray for business owners. We most likely may never know what the “right” decision was, so pray that we have the courage to make what we think are good and wise decisions with the information that we currently have.

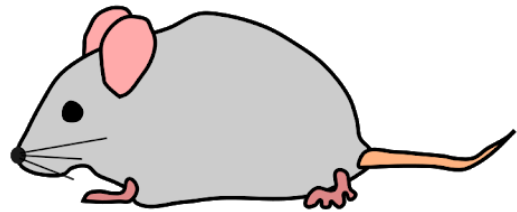
Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tim



Updated February 17, 2021 · See something wrong? [Email us.](#)

Property Team

Do any of you remember that somewhat popular management training book, "Who Moved My Cheese" by Dr. Spencer Johnson? The central theme of the book was change and dealing with change. The book used the playful comparison of changes we all face from time to time to the situation of a mouse arriving at one of the normal locations for a cheese-baited trap and a snack for a clever mouse, only to find it was gone. In our case we have a different twist on this theme. We are not moving the trap. In fact we are adding to the number of traps and hoping our little friends come and try to take their snack. It may be that the change issue for us is the low activity in our building over these many months, particularly since the cold season has arrived. We have always had mice in the building to a degree, but we are certainly seeing quite a few mice here and there, including in the kitchen. In the past few weeks we have encountered more than a dozen of our church mice in traps and on sticky boards. The mice may be sensing an opportunity! We have been taking some action to address this problem. We have placed more traps and more sticky boards in various places, and have been working to seal up some apparent access points in the kitchen. I don't think we need to fear any attacks by these little creatures. After all, we are so much bigger than they are, but we do want to make an attempt to show them who's boss! Unlike mice, we do have fully opposable thumbs, a very helpful tool for setting and dealing with traps!



For those of you who are interested in the new fire alarm system work, I can tell you the work has been proceeding in fits and starts, as they say. I have asked the contractor to give me information on what has been done to date and a projection on completion. There is certainly a lot more work to be done to install new equipment in every room and space in the building and get it wired into the new alarm panels in the basement. I will be providing additional progress information as it becomes available.

President's Article

While driving in Dover doing errands last Saturday, I sensed a shift in the air. It was a day much warmer than our cold weather of late. The sun was shining and there were many people zipping around on the roads. I heard music coming from cars as I stopped at a light and saw people walking with to-go coffees tucked under their masks. My interaction with a person in a store was pleasant and engaging, maybe even more cordial and chatty than typical purchase exchanges. I wondered if people were feeling “lighter” because of access to vaccinations, longer days, or the need to wear fewer layers of clothing.

Another errand was to go and buy a gift card at one of my favorite local coffee shops. I hadn't been inside this coffee shop for a year and I arrived there just before they closed. It was still nice to see the same employees working and the charm of the space could still be felt.



As I drove home I realized I also felt lighter. We each have favorite places we like to visit for different reasons. These places are special simply because they're beautiful, hold meaningful memories, invite fun, coax us into relaxation, or bring important people together. We can probably all say we have put visiting these places on hold but we are beginning to see some light closer to our new normal.

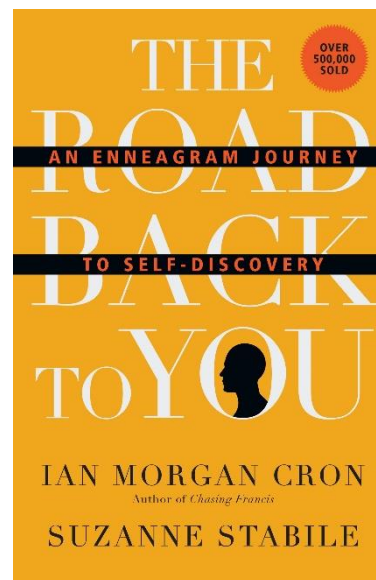
As we move into the season of Lent we are asked to reflect and follow practices that renew our faith. I think we began this church renewal in January at our annual meeting when we approved our Reconciling in Christ Welcome Statement. We spent six-months educating ourselves through discussion, speakers, readings, podcasts, books, and conversations. We asked questions, listened, shared our beliefs, told personal stories, and worked to honor the safe space we created for those who entered. Our work continues as we open more doors of opportunities to welcome and affirm the uniqueness and diversity that makes the world. A world that God created with people who bring interest, growth, and significance to our lives.

The Road Back to You - 5-week Lenten Discussion

Beginning Wednesday, February 24 at 7:00 PM.

David Ronka will join Pastor Tim for a 5-week session on the book “The Road Back to You: An Enneagram Journey to Self-Discovery.” Lent is about self-examination. The Enneagram (pronounced “any-a-gram”) is a tool to help you understand the box you are in for the purpose of being able to get out of that box.

Each week, we will gather on Zoom, Wednesdays at 7pm and watch a 15-20 minute video of David and I introducing that week’s ideas and then have a conversation about insights into what we are learning and assign reading for the coming week. To say that the Enneagram is a “personality test” is a disservice. Generally, personality tests simply “tell you who you are,” kind of like giving you a “pat on the back.” The Enneagram is designed more to understand, at a deeper level, how to be a more whole person than you already are. It actually can be a little uncomfortable.



Order the book on Amazon. Copies are available to buy now at Barnes & Noble in Newington.