

June 7 & 14, 2020

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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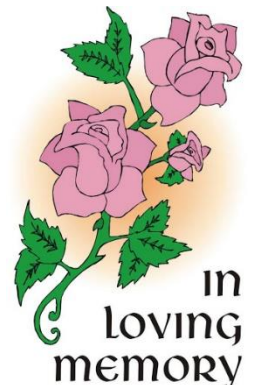
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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## In Memory of Yvonne Lee

Our sister-in-Christ, Yvonne Lee died on Sunday, May 31. She had been battling lung cancer for the last two years and it progressed quickly this spring. A week ago she had a stroke and mini-heart attack and that she could not recover from.

Please keep Yvonne's family in your prayers during this time.



## An Update on Communion during the Pandemic

There have been many questions regarding communion and when we might begin receiving it again. First, let me say thanks for your patience. When we first started fasting from it, at the request of Bishop Hazelwood, we thought it would be just for a few weeks. Obviously, it has not lasted a few MONTHS! We want to begin participating in it again, but not without giving it great thought about how to implement it and we want to receive guidelines from Bishop Hazelwood.



Thanks for your time and energy as we go through this.

## Pastor Tim's Response to the Nationwide Protests & President Trump's Photo Op on June 1

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

You have heard me say over my time with you that I am called to be political and not partisan. What that means is that I am called to talk about the systems and structures that organize and order our life but not let that veer into one party or another. I believe I have done that. I write this email in that same vein, although it might sound more partisan, because of the person I am going to be talking about.

Last night, President Trump used tear gas and rubber bullets to move a PEACEFUL PROTEST so he could make his way to a nearby church to take a picture of himself on the steps of that church holding a Bible in his hands after giving a speech at the White House. This is blasphemy.

The speech he gave was supposedly supporting peaceful protests and grieving for George Floyd's death. Unfortunately, he spent very little time at the beginning to grieve the killing and spent most of the time railing on the protests, of which some have turned violence with looting and rioting, and how he needs to restore law and order. He said the following.



"I am mobilizing all available federal resources, civilian and military, to stop the rioting and looting, to end the destruction and arson and to protect the rights of law-abiding Americans, including your Second Amendment rights... If a city or state refuses to take the actions necessary to defend the life and property of their residents, then I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them"

I am not sure where to begin, but let me try this. There has been a quote going around on social media that says, "Here's an example of how white privilege sounds. You keep saying 'It's horrible that an innocent black man was killed, but destroying property has to stop.' Try saying, 'It's horrible that property is being destroyed, but the killing of innocent black men has to stop.'"

President Trump is acting out in ways that are severely unchristian and contrary to the ways of love and peacemaking while greatly exposing white privilege and the damage it can do. He is more concerned about stopping the protests (I believe he wants all the protests stopped, not just the violent ones) than he is seeking justice for George Floyd or improving the system that killed him. The reason why the protests are occurring and have turned violent (not condoning or condemning them) is people do not feel they are being heard. To quote Martin Luther King Jr. "Let me say as I've always said, and I will always continue to say, that riots are socially destructive and self-defeating...But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard." President Trump is still not hearing them (nor are many

of us) and he is threatening to use violence to end violence. Now, there might be a time for violence (stopping the Nazi's is a good example) but this is not it. Then to invoke the name of Christianity to support what he said, is again downright blasphemous.

Now, some people might say that President Trump is trying to support peaceful protests. I don't believe that. If he supported the protesters, he would have taken the advice he gave to Gov. Whitmer of Michigan when she had protesters at her doorstep. He told her to listen to them and "Talk to them. Make a deal." Or remember all the hullabaloo surrounding Colin Kaepernick taking a knee during the National Anthem prior to the start of a football game? There was no support for that peaceful protest. Just the opposite. Vice President Mike Pence even "attended" a game and left when that peaceful protest occurred as a way to protest the protest. Trump is quoted as saying the following in response to this peaceful protest.

"Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners — when somebody disrespects our flag — to say, 'Get that son of a b\*tch off the field right now. Out. He's fired. He's fired!'"

This doesn't sound like supporting peaceful protests. That doesn't sound like something from the Bible that he held up on the steps of the church for his photo op.

Let me tell you something about Jesus. As you all know, he was killed. Let me tell you part of the reason why he was killed. He saw the abuses of the system and called them out. He saw people being mistreated and taken advantage of by the system and cared for them. Most of the time, he was calm and peaceful. But not always. Very few stories are occurred in all four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. One of them that is, is Jesus turning over the tables in the Temple when he saw the abuses that were occurring and how the system, which was supposed to convey God's presence and love was clearly hurting the people instead. According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, this is one of the final public acts of Jesus. One might say this was the straw that broke the camel's back. The powers that be would not tolerate it anymore and tried to snuff it out with the most heinous punishment they knew at the time, crucifixion.

I see so many similarities between what was happening then and what President Trump appears to be threatening now. Faith, any faith that is worth being a part of, does not condone the use of violence, but understands what is happening when violence is utilized. There are people who have resorted to rioting and looting because they don't know how else to make their voice heard. I may not agree, but I can empathize. We also need to remember, there are some who are using and inciting the rioting and looting because they want to manipulate the emotions and situation for their own personal end. This is wrong.

Then there is President Trump, who, rather than empathize, or manipulate it, wants to bring his own brand of violence, in the name of Christianity. This is wrong. If the story of Jesus teaches us anything, it is violence only begets more violence. In the end, Jesus allowed himself to be killed because he had a

weapon that others did not understand. Love. Love acts in ways that may not make sense to everyone. Love understands. Love empathizes. Love does not force or coerce. Love listens and cares. Love lays down its own life for the benefit of the other, not dominate or silence those who are oppressed.

During this time, I pray that we can view the events of the world going on around us through the eyes of God, which is through the eyes of love. It means to see pain where it is and to understand what is causing that pain. It means to look people in their eyes and see the image of God being reflected back. It means to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. This is the only law I believe that ultimately mattered to Jesus. When he saw it not happening, he acted. May we do the same.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Tim

### **Pastor Tim's Article: June 4, 2020**

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you for all the conversation I have participated in regards to my sermon last Sunday concerning race and racism and for the email I sent about President Trump's photo op. While there were a few people who do not fully agree with what I said, all people have engaged in civil and I believe fruitful conversations. I am so thankful for this.

I wanted to follow up with what I have been speaking and writing about recently with a list of resources for people who want to learn more. We now have a link on our website under the "Grow" tab, labeled "Anti-racist resources." You will find a list of movies, articles, books and podcasts to help you on your next step of learning. You can find it at [www.htelc.com/antiracist-resources](http://www.htelc.com/antiracist-resources)

If you decide to use one of those resources and learn, it will most likely challenge what you have previously thought was true. If you are like me, there will be a range of emotions which well up inside as you understand a history and worldview that was never taught or perhaps mentioned briefly but not fully explained. You might feel guilty, angry, sad, embarrassed, shameful or awkward. Try not to label what you are feeling as good or bad, simply notice what you are feeling and ask yourself why you feel that way.

Also, try to refrain from rationalizing the past you knew to justify the present that you want to hold on to. What I mean by this is, as you read about events from a different point of view, stop yourself from thinking or saying, "But what about..." or "That may have happened, but this also occurred...". A better question to ask would be, "Why am I only learning about his now? Or "Why wasn't this taught when I



was in school?" This will lead to empathizing or a deeper understanding of someone else's point of view. Remember, as we learn, it doesn't mean you have to agree with everything. It is okay to disagree. The goal is to learn and understand. That is always the first step.

Another thing I would recommend is to find someone to process this with. It is good have someone to talk to and listen to. Perhaps they will hear something you won't. You will hear things they don't hear. This could be a spouse, teenage child, friend, etc... It should be someone you trust and you can be open and honest with. If you are in need of someone to do this with, let me know, perhaps we can find other people at the church that are looking for someone as well.

Lastly, don't feel like this is your problem to solve. It isn't. You can't. You aren't responsible for solving it. But that doesn't absolve you from being part of the solution. Your responsibility is being aware and educate yourself and then act as you are able and see fit. That is being part of the solution, which we can do and are called to do.

Blessings on your journey and learning. Thanks for letting me come along with you.

Pastor Tim

### **Pastor Tim's Article: June 11, 2020**

I have good news! We are in the beginning phases of organizing outdoor gatherings AT OUR BUILDING in the near future. We don't have the specific dates yet, but I do know they will begin in early July. Here is some basic information to know.

- Strict safety guidelines and protocol will need to be followed, further details to come.
- They will have a different format than our "regular" worship.
- They are not replacing Sunday morning worship, but will be a supplement to it.
- They will occur twice during the week, at various times and days, but will NOT be on Sunday morning. Specific days and time will be released in the next 2 weeks.
- Each gathering will be the same for the week, but vary week to week.
- To attend, you will need to sign-up using "Sign-up Genius" or call the office. There will be a limited number of people who can attend at one time.
- Worship on Zoom will remain our primary weekly worship experience as it allows for the largest gathering of our community at one time.
- More specific details will be released within the next 2 weeks.

I know this is not ideal. Many people are craving and aching to resume worship in our building and are frustrated. If your question is, "When will we resume worship in the building?" the honest answer is,

“We do not know.” There is simply too much unknown to make any kind of prediction and I believe it would be misleading and give false hope to attempt to do so.

I do recommend you read the following article as it does a fine job of laying out the concerns that I have regarding in-building worship and why it will be a while until it resumes. It is an interview with Dr. Michael Osterholm, a leading epidemiologist in the world and has been on the forefront of COVID-19 research. On a side note, he is also a practicing ELCA Lutheran!

[https://www.bluezones.com/2020/06/covid-19-straight-answers-from-top-epidemiologist-who-predicted-the-pandemic/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=covid-19-straight-answers-from-top-epidemiologist-who-predicted-the-pandemic&fbclid=IwAR280W1hUSdKHip2W3qLRHdgmFVy7ARQk3JmN4Pzew3U4wWx\\_rMvmXM-j0](https://www.bluezones.com/2020/06/covid-19-straight-answers-from-top-epidemiologist-who-predicted-the-pandemic/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=covid-19-straight-answers-from-top-epidemiologist-who-predicted-the-pandemic&fbclid=IwAR280W1hUSdKHip2W3qLRHdgmFVy7ARQk3JmN4Pzew3U4wWx_rMvmXM-j0)

What I hope will reassure you is, except for not gathering in the building, we have not missed a beat. We continue to gather for Bible Study. We continue to provide resources to organizations in our community and have even given more, financially, than we were anticipating this year. We haven't had to decrease any of our spending, specifically payroll and were able to do this without a PPP loan from the government. In fact, we are “in the black” regarding our finances this year!

This weekend, we were supposed to have our Semi-annual meeting. In place of it, Cristina Dolcino, the council president, and I will record a “State of the Church Address.” In it, we will share a bit more of where we are as a church and update everyone, as much as possible, of where we hope to go. It will be broad strokes that we hope will enable all of us to continually be encouraged during a time that can be so discouraging.

One last note (MORE GOOD NEWS!), we are going to resume communion in the near future as well. The synod has given churches recommendations and questions to answer in order to start this practice again. Soon, please look for more information on how this will happen and what you might want to do to prepare.

As always, thanks for allowing me to be your pastor during this time and for your presence in my life.

## Property Team

The virus issue has imposed some strange and challenging times on property matters because of the obvious restrictions on Thursday Morning Group activities as well as what I personally feel comfortable with doing in this period of uncertainty. I know each of us has their own personal view of things ... what is safe, what is more risky. I am probably more tolerant of the risks, but I recognize my responsibilities to Martha, the Thursday Morning Group, and all others I may encounter in the process of going about my routine, or should I say, the new normal. Still, property work has continued to a degree. The lawn is getting mowed and trimming continues in fits and starts, depending on the weather and time. A conspicuous pile of brush has been hauled away. Some of the more adventurous Thursday Group folks and others have been in to do window washing, repairs to our trash bins, and trimming of grass and weeds. Required inspections using outside services have continued as they come due. Our annual fire panel inspection and testing was recently completed, and others will be completed when required to the extent that our service providers are working in these times.



Having said all of that, we are behind on several fronts. The tent is not yet up, the air conditioners are not installed, some of the outside tasks have fallen behind, some important tasks to resolve Fire Department concerns have not yet been completed, some outside building repair and maintenance work has been delayed, and I could go on. Overall, we are doing fine, just not as good as we expect to do based upon past practice. Bear with us.

*Dave Mercer, Property Team Leader*

## Dover Friendly Kitchen

I thought I should give you a report as this is an ongoing ministry of our church which happens once each month and has not stopped due to the pandemic.

We did our third take out meal for DFK on Tuesday, May 26th. Because we checked the weather and found it would be a very warm day, we chose to do our summer picnic supper instead of the hot baked ham meal. The kitchen at St. Thomas gets very warm in the summer, and it's even harder to breathe in there with masks on. So, our meal consisted of 2 ham and cheese sandwiches with small containers of mustard and mayonnaise available, a package of veggies and Ranch dipping sauce, a package of chips, a watermelon slice and a bag of store bought cookies. Clients came to the front door where Marguerite, our coordinator, handed them one or two meals, each bagged, and their choice of bottled flavored water. We made 74 meals and gave away 66. We took the rest home to give away if we saw a need.



We feel very happy to be able to continue in service to the struggling in our community in this way, in spite of the pandemic. We had eight volunteers, which is the limit right now, and Pam Shaw brought her latest design in home made masks, to match our tastes. The Bauers came this time, and other returnees were Kristin Crawford, Rich Swiatocha, Jeff Morrison, Lara Scammon and myself. Jill Schock had done veggie prep in advance, so really, there were 9 of us involved. The best part is almost always just being together while doing this ministry, especially now in this time of forced separation.

The next DFK meal for us is June 23rd. Three of us will not be able to volunteer that week, so please contact Jill Schock a week ahead of time if you would like to help. It will officially be summer by then, so the menu will be the picnic meal once again. - *Bonnie Sanders*