



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

A CONGREGATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

1950 NAGEL ROAD

CINCINNATI OH 45255

MAY 2020

VOLUME 49 ISSUE 5

RAMBLINGS

OUR VISION STATEMENT

To become a vibrant, benevolent congregation that serves God's creation both locally and globally.

A congregation that offers meaningful and inspirational ministries and worship for all ages that honor and praise God while maintaining the feel of an intimate family in Christ.

Also, a congregation that provides opportunities for all to be involved in ministries and programs that foster the development of gifts in all people needed to sustain and expand God's mission.

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Lest You Forget...

Our Annual Theme is *Still* Beloved Community!

“Community is one of the things that makes life worth living, one of the things that can help us come into the fullness of who we are, and one of the things that usually makes life’s hardest passages a little easier. The pandemic has taken it from us. Or, more accurately, our experience of community has been altered. Community still exists, but sensory deprivation is a price we pay. Community has become much more challenging to create and maintain. Some congregations ironically have become more walled-off from outsiders in their new digital-only habitat.” – Dr. Matt Skinner, Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary

I suppose that it would surprise none of you to hear a Lutheran professor of New Testament write so glowingly of church community. Likewise, I trust that it would not surprise any of you to hear your pastor agree with him. Gosh, I miss the “in person” aspect of our Beloved Community!

One of our members wrote me that her teenage granddaughter is bored because she is quarantined at home. Guess what, in a way, I am bored too! Oh, don’t misunderstand me, I have already stated that there are some parts of this distancing that I’m appreciating – some degree of quiet and solitude, more time to read and reflect, more appreciation for what “is” in creation around me – but I wouldn’t mind balancing that with some people time and conversation. The technology connection just doesn’t suffice for me. The words that jumped out at me in the quote above are “sensory deprivation.” While we are finding advantages in live streaming worship or in video conferencing, they are surely not an adequate replacement for the gathering of temporal community. Many of you have expressed as much to me too.

While I long for the day that we can be together again in the fullness of Beloved Community, I thought that I would share a few miscellaneous thoughts this month:

*Pastor Nicole and I have been talking about how social isolation affects introverts and extroverts differently, and I have found a number of writings that have also picked up on this subject. It appears that introverts are rather comfortable with the isolation aspect of the pandemic. They function well with increased opportunity to reflect, contemplate, appreciate silence, and slow down a bit. Extroverts, well for them this time is like fingernails scratching on glass! So what happens when introverts and extroverts live in the same house, perhaps are married to each other? It can be maddening! All of this will come to an end, and frankly, I’m beginning to see more signs of “cheating” whereby for the sake of mental health, small gatherings of family, playmates, neighbors, or co-workers are beginning to happen. In the meantime, recognize your personality type and the traits of those who share a home with you, and try to be exceedingly patient and understanding with each other. Offer each other the grace of their turn to be who they are; to sit silently with a book, or to jabber incessantly at the TV news.

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Our Annual Theme is *Still* Beloved Community! (continued)

*Speaking of introverts and extroverts, electronic community and temporal community, and the Beloved Community, as things begin to loosen up (I'm writing this as it is expected that Governor DeWine will announce careful re-opening of Ohio), I remain available for pastoral conversation while maintaining safe social distancing. With the weather getting nicer, it seems there are many ways of doing this. I am very interested in knowing how our families are "weathering this storm" and your thoughts of the future.

*Speaking of the future, I find a tension between wanting to think about how our ministry gets going again and recognizing that it may still be too soon to think about that. I saw a pastoral paper a week ago with twenty-four questions that churches will need to answer to get their ministries started again. This will not be easy. If you have questions, concerns, or ideas about this, Pastor Nicole and I will be glad to listen and consider them. If you would like to read the article, let me know, I'll send you the link.

*One of the obvious advantages of live stream worship is that we are connecting with new people or reconnecting with former members. This is an opportunity for evangelism. I am following up with former members to see if this might be time for them to reconnect with LCR. As for you, this could be a good time to invite unchurched friends to view our worship services from their homes; a very non-threatening way to "try" church! Clearly, Pastor Nicole and I are offering messages that are intended to be healing and hopeful, not only to our members, but to all people in these challenging times. I have often said that the Holy Spirit tends to work well in times of adversity such as what we are experiencing now. This is an opportune time to "invite a friend!"

I mentioned in my sermon last weekend that the Emmaus Road story is one of my favorites in the entire Bible. I truly appreciate the image of two best friends walking alongside each other and sharing their deepest feelings. Beloved Community can be that small! Cleopas and his friend also offer an image of the ELCA model of "accompaniment" in mission throughout the world. Unlike in past generations of missionary work, we don't walk ahead of the innocent, incompetent heathens dragging them along to adhere to our expression of faith, but rather we walk alongside them with respect that they too, bear the image and experience of God. Beloved Community can be that big! In between the smallness of two friends and the largeness of national denominations, LCR remains Beloved Community. What is true of all of them and why are they Beloved Community? Because there is an openness to Christ coming alongside so that eyes are opened and hearts burn with the gospel! On the Road to Emmaus, "we had hoped" is transformed into new hopes for the future. God is already in our tomorrow!

He is risen indeed!

Peace,
Pastor Zorn

A greeting from the Fellowship Committee

Hello everyone! I hope many of you have been able to get out in the beautiful weather we have had lately, especially with rain in the forecast the next few days.

We do very much miss our LCR family, being able to worship together in person with you, the special Holden Evening Prayer Lenten services, Soup & Salad dinners, Seder supper and Easter breakfast that didn't happen, and just being able to see you all at church services and events that we attend throughout the year.

We obviously don't know at this time if Zach Maus is going to be able to bring in the pig for roasting, how and when Confirmation will happen, Orange Fest and Luther Tables are going to happen, but we pray for the best.

Once we do get back together, we will look forward to worshiping with you again and working together to plan our Fellowship events.

In the meantime, when you are at home and maybe able to do some more cooking or baking, remember that LCR is putting together a 50th anniversary cookbook, so think about which recipes you want to share, which can definitely include all those wonderful Lenten soups we got a chance to enjoy. Email your recipes with full directions to recipes@lcrresurrection.org. Don't forget to include a small introduction about the history of the recipe. I personally asked for some of the recipes, but did not get a chance to get the recipe for the ham soup that was served the second week of Lent, so I hope that recipe along with the other soups will be in the cookbook.

Blessings & e-hugs to you all.

Åsa Durtsche & the Fellowship Committee

HISTORY OF HYMNS: “WERE YOU THERE”

By David Bjorli

African-American Spiritual

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh! sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Included in almost every major hymnal of the last thirty years, “Were You There” is one of the most prominent and popular of the African-American spirituals. Yet, like most spirituals, the origins of “Were You There” are impossible to trace, borne not from the pen of an individual but out of the communal slave experience. As Paul Westermeyer notes in the companion to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, its first published iteration came in 1899 in William E. Barton’s *Old Plantation Songs* in the section “Recent Negro Melodies.” There, it included four stanzas: 1) Were you there when they crucified my Lord?; 2) ...when they nailed him to the cross?; 3) ...when they pierced him in the side?; 4) ...when the sun refused to shine. The *United Methodist Hymnal*, along with many other songbooks, includes a fifth: “...when they laid him in the tomb.”

The series of questions that forms the basis of the song is obviously not meant to be taken literally; none of us were physically present at the passion of Christ. Rather, the questions are meant to function as a form of *anamnesis*. From the Greek, anamnesis literally means to remember. Yet, it is much more than simple mental recall of an event. It calls the community to re-member the past to the present, to bring these historic events to bear on the now and make them part of our story. When Moses tells the second generation of Hebrew people about to enter the promised land, “Not with our ancestors did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today,” it is anamnesis; when Jews continue to proclaim at the Passover Seder, “*We* were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord our God took *us* out,” it is anamnesis; and when the Christian community celebrates the Lord’s Supper “in remembrance” (and the Greek word here is anamnesis!) of Christ, it is anamnesis. “Were You There” is then an anamnestic song that is meant to bring the past events of Christ’s suffering and death into the present and transform us in its light.

Yet, if our anamnestic exercise only includes Christ’s passion, it is incomplete. The song also calls us to re-member the African-American slave experience out of which the song arose. As James Cone notes in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, the cross is central to the African-American experience: “During my childhood, I heard a lot about the cross at Macedonia A.M.E. Church, where faith in Jesus was defined and celebrated. We sang about ‘Calvary,’ and asked, ‘Were you there?’, ‘down at the cross,’ ‘when they crucified my Lord.’ ‘Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.’ ... There were more songs, sermons, prayers, and testimonies about the cross than any other theme. The cross was the foundation on which their faith was built.”

For African Americans, this re-membering of the cross allowed them to claim the Christ who knew their suffering and stood in solidarity with their oppression. Again, Cone notes, “In the mystery of God’s revelation, black Christians believed that just knowing that Jesus went through an experience of suffering in a manner similar to theirs gave them faith that God was with them, even in suffering on lynching trees, just as God was present with Jesus in suffering on the cross.” The spiritual thus re-membered the suffering of Christ to the suffering of the African-American community, with its inherent promise of God’s presence and resurrection power.

Yet, like any hymn or song that has achieved such prominence, the message of “Were You There” quickly expanded beyond its initial context. African American pastor, author, and civil rights leader Howard Thurman gives one poignant example in his memoir, *With Head and Heart*. On a trip to India, he and his wife, Sue, had the honor of meeting with Mahatma Gandhi. After a wonderful conversation, the talk took a surprising turn as the Thurmans prepared to leave. Thurman notes, “But before we left, he asked, ‘Will you do me a favor? Will you sing one of your songs for me? Will you sing “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”’ He continued, ‘I feel that this song gets to the root of the experience of the entire human race under the spread of the healing wings of suffering.’”

While the story could be told simply to marvel at the image of Howard and Sue Thurman singing “Were You There?” with Gandhi in his ashram tent, it also shows the power and affect of the spiritual. And while the influence of Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolent resistance on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the burgeoning Civil Rights movement has been well documented, perhaps we see here how the influence was reciprocal, as this song borne from the crucible of suffering spoke to any and all around the world who faced oppressions of every kind.

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History of Hymns (continued)

As we journeyed through Lent and Good Friday where many of our congregations no doubt sang “Were You There,” anamnesis calls us not only to remember Christ’s death but also the stories of all those who suffer at the hand of oppression. As mass incarceration, discriminatory drug policies, and police brutality continue to disproportionately target African Americans and other people of color, the song continues to give comfort to the oppressed that they serve a suffering Savior especially present in their suffering. Yet, it also asks those of us in privileged positions of comfort not only if we “were there” at the cross of Christ, but if we *are there* in the suffering of the oppressed where Christ’s cross still stands.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

David Bjorlin, a minister of the Evangelical Covenant Church, is a doctoral student in Liturgical Studies at the Boston University School of Theology. He teaches worship courses at North Park Theological Seminary and is a pastor at Resurrection Covenant Church in Chicago. He recently co-authored *Incorporating Children in Worship: Mark of the Kingdom* with Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom.

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-were-you-there>

Provided by Matt Mauro

Accommodating for COVID-19: How Pastor Zorn’s Sabbatical will be Modified, Plan B

With the dramatic changes to our lives, and to pretty much all activities including travel, Pastor Zorn will not be able to take his sabbatical as planned. Pastor Zorn felt that the best way to approach this was to develop a plan B. He consulted with the Sabbatical Committee, and then presented this revised sabbatical plan to the Church Council at their last meeting. It was unanimously accepted. Pastor Zorn’s revised sabbatical plan has four components for this upcoming year as follows:

- 1) Pastor Zorn will take two weeks over the summer (time TBD) to address life transitional issues. This will be for his personal life transitional affairs more than for LCR pastoral leadership.
- 2) Pastor Zorn has proposed that the Church Council leave the funds allocated for the Assisi retreat in place. The airfare and retreat registration fees have already been paid. The possibility of refunds is not known at this time. Pastor Zorn is allocated two weeks of continuing education time each year, but he has not used these weeks in a long time. He will use his 2021 continuing education time for the Assisi retreat in June 2021 (presuming it will happen, as it has happened in June for many years). Pastor and Cindy will defer their 40th anniversary celebration in Italy until next summer.
- 3) Pastor Zorn has no firm ideas about visiting regional churches at this point. It is difficult to know how long it will take churches, including our own, to rebuild from this pandemic. As LCR lives into its future, and if the Church Council thinks this is important, time can be allocated for Pastor Zorn to complete this part of this sabbatical.
- 4) Pastor Zorn’s spiritual director has advised him to take a one-week retreat as part of this mini-sabbatical. Pastor is unsure if he can do this without the Coronavirus implications distracting him. He plans to leave this open as an option and ask the Council to allow for that time if he believes that it would be helpful.

Please keep Pastor Zorn’s sabbatical journey in your prayers.

Dick Durtsche, Sabbatical Committee Chair



Thank you from the smile and warmth in my heart for all the cards and prayers. I love our prayer chain and the opportunity it offers us to send God’s love and energy even though we may not have met the person or people personally. We know our commandment to love one another; Romans 5:6 reminds us God’s love is poured into us through the Holy Spirit. I believe this love cannot be contained in our heart. Freely given to us, we pour it out onto others. I would like to extend thanksgiving to ALL my brothers and sisters for sharing Christ’s love as we remember to pray for those around us: family-friends, church-pastors, and those in our country and world. May God’s love and peace remain in you.

Diane Ross

News from the ELCA

-Julie Pahutski, Mission Interpreter



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Because of COVID-19 and the resultant shutdown, I thought it might be interesting to share stories from other Lutheran congregations. This is from the ELCA website; other stories are available there.

As the world has grappled with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the ELCA has sought new ways to meet this unique cultural moment, engaging members in worship and faith formation through innovative means.

For a number of ELCA congregations, that's meant launching or reviving drive-in services. Zion Lutheran Church in Ann Arbor, Mich., began such services at a drive-in movie theater in the 1970s. Now the congregation holds them on its premises each summer, broadcasting its early Sunday service through a low-power FM transmitter.

But in March, the congregation began presenting both Saturday evening and Sunday broadcasts—as well as two livestreamed services—“as a way of meeting, but respecting the bonds of social distancing,” said Jim Debner, a pastor of Zion.

“It's very important to some of our senior members who have mobility problems. I have a new appreciation for the service for that reason; it allows people to build community when they might've been isolated in their home before.”

Shortly after Zion had switched to the drive-in format, a shelter-in-place order was issued for Michigan, and the congregation had to shift formats again. “We will have to figure out how to do that from within our homes,” Debner said. “We have to experiment to see what works and what doesn't.”

He believes the ELCA is distinctively able to serve people at this uncertain time. “It's an exciting time to be the church,” he said. “People, more than ever, need to hear that perfect love, which is God, casts out fear. There's a lot of fear now. Resurrection is the one thing that brings hope. ... We have a great message, and people are eager to hear it.”



WELCOME: We celebrate the birth of **Penelope Gray Robertson** to **Justin and Ashley Robertson**.

SYMPATHY: We express sympathy with **Terri Karsten** and her family on the death of her father, **Dr. Anthony Salem**.

Did you know that LCR has an endowment fund?

Yes, I knew that. But...what's an endowment fund????

Quite simply, a gift to the endowment fund is a way to provide lasting support for LCR. An endowment fund is set up so that distributions of “income” are made according to a formula that will preserve the purchasing power of the principal over time.

The power of an endowment fund is this: if you make a gift to an endowment fund and assume roughly a 5% annual distribution and a 7.5% investment return, in less than 18 years, the endowment will make distributions totaling the amount of your original gift, but the endowment still exists and will continue to benefit LCR for many years to come!

You can contribute to LCR's endowment fund by making gifts in honor or memory of others, gifts of stock or other property, making a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA (if you are more than 70 ½ years old) or by providing for a gift through your will.

Any questions? Contact a member of the Endowment Fund Committee.



The Endowment Fund

UPDATED CHURCH INFORMATION

- Join us for our online services every Sunday at 9:30 at <http://www.facebook.com/lcresurrection>
- You can watch all prior online services on our webpage—www.lcresurrection.org.
- Christian Yoga is now held every Friday at 1:30. You can join Sarah Pritts via the LCR Facebook page.
- SWAG luncheon on May 6 has been postponed.
- Second Grade Bible Presentation and Graduate Recognition has been postponed.
- Confirmation has been postponed.
- VBS has been cancelled for this summer.
- Our Annual Rummage Sale has been postponed. Keep an eye out for updated information.
- The Sr. High trip to Guatemala has been postponed.

RAMBLINGS is a monthly publication from Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, a congregation of the Southern Ohio Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection strives to be:
A COVENANT based congregation, NURTURING spiritual growth and
WELCOMING all into Christ's community through
Word, sacrament and love.



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