

Transition Musings

from Susan Masters, Interim Pastor

Friends, even though we officially continue in lockdown mode at GA, as our state's leaders allow, we are (very) slowly beginning to emerge from this time of separation from one another. Some things to know about this include:

- Bishop Ann Svenningsen has asked all congregations in our synod to submit a preparedness plan before beginning to gather again. To that end, our church council created a Re-entry Team to begin creating such a plan. While we know we will not likely gather for full in-person worship again until 2021, we want to lay the groundwork now for doing that as safely and responsibly as possible when the time comes.
- The Re-entry Team recently surveyed the congregation (with a strong response rate – thank you!), and overwhelmingly you told us that you are in no hurry to gather for in-person worship any time soon. You want to move forward slowly, in compliance with both our governor's mandates and guided by the prevailing medical wisdom about what is safe. (Please see elsewhere in *The Gazette* for more detailed survey results.) We are grateful for your affirmation of our plan to move forward slowly and safely.
- While we won't be gathering inside our building any time soon, the Congregational Life Committee has recently sponsored some safe outdoor events. These included a gathering of crafters in the parking lot; a family scavenger hunt (it was SO wonderful to see our children again!); and drive-by caravan visits to some of our elders who are not able to get out much right now (and it was so wonderful to see them, as well!). Please see elsewhere in *The Gazette* for photos from all these events.
- The crafting group decided to make it a regular thing – they'll meet in the parking lot on **Wednesdays @ 10:00 a.m.** Bring your own chair and a craft to work on. Or just bring your own chair and come for the fellowship – crafts are optional!
- We hope to offer at least one or two outdoor worship services sometime this fall – the Re-entry Team, Congregational Life Committee, and Council are working out the details. Stay tuned for more information about this.
- For the time being, the restrooms at GA are closed. When you come for an outdoor event, please prepare accordingly ... 😊

In other news This past March 29, two weeks after we went on lockdown, I was scheduled to give my "state of the interim" report. This would've been a summary of our focus groups in the fall, as well as my own observations in my first four months as your interim pastor. I would also have included recommendations for how to move forward in the next phase of our interim work together. Obviously that report has been delayed, but it's not off the table. I will make a video of the report, along with a written version, available to the congregation sometime in the month of August. Then Council and I will offer opportunities for folks to discuss the report together (in small groups via Zoom, by phone call, or in safely distanced individual meetings).

This time of separation, coupled with no clear sense of what our church life together will look like on the other side, make it challenging to know what our next step of interim should be. But we have not abandoned this time of transition, and we will continue our work together, however long that might take in this uncertain time.

A few weeks ago, we launched "Sermon Chew," a time each Sunday after our worship service, to meet on Zoom and discuss the sermon. And we've had some great conversations together since! Please check the Saturday email for the Zoom link (which is different than the worship link), and plan to join us. (*cont'd next pg.*)

Transition Musings, continued...

Finally, I am so pleased about the work of our new Racial Justice Committee. This group of nearly a dozen people meets weekly to talk about GA's appropriate response in this time of racial unrest in our country. Already we know that, as an overwhelmingly white congregation, doing the work of racial justice will challenge us in ways that will not always be comfortable or even welcomed. But, as believers in the gospel of Jesus, we cannot NOT do this work. As this committee seeks to lead us in this important work, we welcome your prayers that the Spirit will guide us to do it faithfully – both to God and to our sisters, brothers, and siblings of color who need us to step up and do it.

Dear ones, I've never led a congregation through interim in a time of pandemic lockdown, and, to be honest, I'm mostly making it up as I go along ...! Please don't ever hesitate to reach out and let me know if you have questions or concerns about this challenging time. My Zoom (or phone or email) door is always open – and I welcome hearing from you. Truly.

May God's abundant mercies and peace surround you in these strange and interesting days.
Pastor Susan

Greetings from a Deacon in Quarantine

During this time of pandemic quarantine, I have been amazed and a bit perplexed by the passage of time – of how time seems to me to be passing differently than before. In some regards, it seems that time has been standing still since the moment we went on lockdown in March; in other ways, it seems that time is moving quickly. I've talked to some other folks who are finding this to be true. Some people have termed this "Covid Time." These are indeed different and challenging days we are living in. I hope that you are finding good ways to cope with the many challenges we are all facing these days. And I hope that you are finding your faith and our congregation here at GA to be among the positive ways that you are coping.

I want to remind you to look on our Facebook page each Wednesday when I post some organ music. Each Wednesday, my trip to the GA office includes a little recording session of 6-10 minutes of organ music that I post on my personal Facebook page and on the GA Facebook page. I am grateful for the many encouraging messages that I've received; I am glad that so many of you are finding this music to be uplifting.

Blessings to all of you as we continue to find our way through this time!

Deacon Phil Holzman

philh@gachurchmpls.org

612-789-7256, ext. 11 (leave a voice message)

320-304-1774 (cell phone/send a text message)



**Sunday Zoom Worship –
9:30 a.m. Every Sunday**

See the Saturday email each week for Zoom invitation link.

Or contact Deacon Phil Holzman for call-in information.



There are ways you can stay connected to your GA family during this time when we are not able to gather in person. The activities listed on this page can help you do just that. If you have any questions about any of these activities or ministries, contact the person leading that particular ministry or contact Pastor Susan or Deacon Phil (their contact information is listed on the back page of this newsletter).

Monday Night Book Club Resumes on August 10!

Join us on August 10 via Zoom to discuss two historical and powerful documents: Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail* and Malcolm X's "The Ballot or the Bullet." Both documents are available for free online. We will meet via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. Meeting ID: 840 3343 2450. Password not required. Questions? Email Andrea Carter at andrealcart@gmail.com. All are welcome!



Crafts in the Trunk!



We're inviting you to gather with your GA friends to do crafts, coffee, and conversation! Here's the scoop:

Crafts in the Trunk really enjoyed the opportunity to gather, chat, and work on their craft projects on a recent Tuesday morning. We also enjoyed a visit from Melanie from the NE Mask Makers Group. (See more from this group in an article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

The Crafts in the Trunk group will be meeting every Wednesday morning from 10-12 in the church parking lot. Please bring a chair, beverage, your craft and of course your mask to wear while moving around. We'll be meeting through August and possibly into September. All are welcome to join, craft or not! Questions? Call Cindy Bach at 763-360-4502. See you there!

Community "Meal" During Covid

It has been such a challenging time for our community members. This past month, we learned that some of our guests are suffering from low food supplies and isolation. We will continue to distribute gift cards for the month of August; so if you would like to participate, you can drop off gift cards or donations to the cause at church. We have been giving \$10.00 gift cards to Cub Foods or any of the local restaurants and fast food places in the neighborhood. Your choice. We are also open to receiving any gift cards you wish to donate. Another idea for you gardeners would be to drop off extra produce you have for us to share with our guests on the day of the August "meal" – Saturday, August 22 (4th Saturday).



In September and following, we will try to have a warm dish (Que Viet, Marino's, etc.) for guests to take home with them. Please reach out with your ideas anytime!

It is a good time for us all to remember our community and to reach out with kindness.

God's good love and peace to you.

Lynn

llcurvey@gmail.com

Re-Entry Survey Summary

The Re-Entry Task Force is at work! We suspended in-person worship and other activities on March 14. At the time, we thought we would be back to “normal” by Easter. It’s August. We are still at home. But we know that at some point, we will be back together. To prepare, the Re-Entry Task Force is creating a Preparedness Plan. This document will outline phases for different levels of togetherness, guidelines for activities, and thresholds for when it is appropriate to move from phase to phase.



To inform this Plan, we asked for feedback from you! Over 80 of our members responded. The ages of the respondents varied. You said:

We all want to be cautious in coming back together. Some of you are not able or not comfortable returning to worship prior to a vaccine (about 20%). Others indicated they may return if we, as a congregation, take proper precautions and external conditions warrant gathering. Almost all of us intend to take the personal precautions of wearing masks and maintaining social distance. Around 90% of us would not be comfortable if the sanctuary was more than half full. However, only 65% of us would attend worship at a different time and 47% would attend on a different day. There is an interest in outdoor worship, provided the weather is right!

There is more uncertainty around Sunday School and Confirmation. People with children are split as to whether they would be willing to have their children attend Sunday School or Confirmation. However, about 70% of us would consider attending small group gatherings.

It is clear we care for each other and for our community. We miss each other. And we want to be safe. The Re-Entry Task Force will continue in our work in developing a plan that incorporates your feedback. We will be prudent. We will be cautious. We will find ways to be in community safely.

Members of the Re-Entry Task Force are: Cindy Bach, Deacon Phil Holzman, Ed Huble, Cheryl Johnson, Sarah Larson, Pastor Susan Masters, and Jenny Parker. You can feel free to contact any of them if you have questions or would like further information.

We Need Your Help!

We are NE Minneapolis Mask Makers, a group of neighborhood volunteers making washable, reusable, masks to donate to people in need in our community. We are also part of the MaskMvmt, a larger mutual aid network.

With recent the state mandate, requests for masks are flooding in. We need volunteers to sew masks, cut fabric for mask making kits, and to deliver masks and supplies. We are also in need of 100% cotton fabric, especially in fun kid-friendly designs.

One of the ways we can combat the fear and anxiety of these uncertain times is to focus on helping and being of service to those around us. We love this community and want to do all we can to help everyone get through this crisis. Please, join us if you can! Thank you for all you are doing to make the world a safer, happier and healthier place!

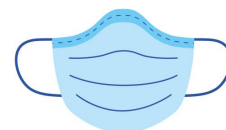
♡ The NE Minneapolis Mask Makers ♡

Contact: Melanie Groves

612-770-7794: my cell

NEMinneapolisMaskMakers@gmail.com

'NE Minneapolis Mask Makers' group on Facebook



Pictures! These two pages contain pictures from some of our recent activities sponsored by our Congregational Life Committee. Thanks to everyone who helped organize the events, and especially to everyone who came out and participated! Enjoy these pictures and be reminded of our dear friends in our GA congregation.

From the Scavenger Hunt on July 29...



Emily M. and Aubrey L.



Connor A. and Mary L.



Dean and Nora N.



Dee K. and the Hentges family plus others



The Petersons



Gathering at the church



Doing a craft activity at Diana's house

From Crafts in the Trunk on July 28...



From Drive-by Visits on August 2...



Deacon Phil greeting Roger Cropper



Standing on the corner with Eleanore Miller



Pastor Susan and Ron Anderson



The caravan lined up at the Hendrickses

From Our Racial Justice Committee

The Racial Justice Committee has been in communication with a Black-led artist initiative that designs window signs. The signs are black and white with "Peace & Solidarity" with "Justice for George Floyd" written below. They are \$10 each, and all proceeds will go to the artist group. Please note, we have a limited number available, so reach out as soon as you can!

In addition to the visible support and solidarity, it is with great hope that the financial contribution can be one way you support BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities experiencing oppression on a daily basis.

If you are interested in purchasing a sign, please email Brandon Arneson: barneson1901@gmail.com.

Frolic Mini Lesson - Jonah and the Whale

Here is a frolic mini lesson you can do with your infant or toddler at home. Let me know how you are enjoying these mini lessons and any suggestions. – Kari Navratil

Read: Read the story of Jonah from the Frolic Bible (pg. 20-21) or another Bible storybook.

For Infants

- Breathe to make wind and pretend to blow the boat on the page. Then find your fish tongue and swimming arms.

For Toddlers

- Have your child squiggle like a bolt of lightning, crash like thunder, and drip like rain. Then swim like a fish.
- Make sounds like storm ("Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!") and a fish ("Glub, glub, glub!"). Then practice saying "I'm sorry."

Connect: Jonah said "I'm sorry" to God. God forgave him, and Jonah got a new start when he was spit out by the fish. You can say "I'm sorry" to God. When we say we are sorry, God forgives us. God is always ready to listen to us and forgive us and give us a new start. Let's pretend to be spit out by the fish and make a new start.

Play:

- Create a tunnel with couch cushions and a sheet. Encourage your child to crawl into the fish belly tunnel. Play peek-a-boo in the fish belly. Pray in the fish belly.
- Point to the big fish in today's story. Make fish faces in a mirror and at each other.

Finger Play:

- Sit face-to-face with your child and repeat these words and actions together.
- "Share," said God. (Hold hands out, palms up.) "No," said Jonah. (Place hands on hips.)
- "Gulp," said the fish. (Make swimming fish hands and gulping sounds.)
- "Sorry," said Jonah. (Bow head and fold hands.)

Pray:

"Dear God, Thank you for letting us say, "I'm sorry." Thank you for your forgiveness and your love. Amen."

August Finance Report

	June 2020 Actual	June 2020 YTD	June 2019 YTD
Income	\$20,954.15	\$165,441.41	\$167,121.66
Expenses	<u>\$7,696.97</u>	<u>\$129,571.56</u>	<u>\$183,813.36</u>
Inc-Exp	\$13,257.18	\$35,869.85	<\$16,691.70>

Thank you for giving so faithfully to God's mission for GA while we are physically apart. In addition to your offering giving, GA received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan back in May from the federal government to cover payroll and utility expenses for eight weeks due to the pandemic. This loan gave us welcomed breathing room with our finances. Thanks be to God! The remainder of the PPP money has been spent and GA will apply for the loan to be forgiven. Our monthly budget at GA is about \$27,000. To keep our finances healthy, we need to give \$27,000 each month to support ministry. Please consider how you can give to GA while we are apart. Thank you!

Andrea Carter, Treasurer

Next Finance Zoom Meeting: Thursday, August 13, at 6:00 p.m.

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church *A Reconciling in Christ Congregation*

Sunday Zoom Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Church Staff ...

The Rev. Susan Masters, Interim Pastor (Ext. 10)
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Deacon Phil Holzman, Minister of Word & Service (Ext. 11)
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Dan Hager, Finance Manager (Ext. 14)
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Joel Lurvey, Contemporary Choir Director
joel.lurvey@gmail.com

Linda Lindahl, Church Custodian



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Ways You Can Give to GA During This Time When We Are Apart

1) Mail your offering to GA:
1509 27th Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418



2) Give electronically at our website,
www.gachurchmpls.org. Just click on the
"Donate" button on any page.

3) Sign up to give electronically through our
"Simply Giving" program. Email GA's Finance
Manager, Dan Hager, for details. Dan can also
help you if you are interested in learning how to
contribute stock donations.

Gustavus Adolphus Church Council

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Sarah Larson, Vice-President	
Cindy Bach, Secretary	
Andrea Carter, Treasurer	
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