

From the Church Council Regarding In-Person Worship

Effective September 1, 2021 all operations will resume as normal; kitchen will be open, music ensembles can resume rehearsals, educational classes may be offered, and groups/committees/council can meet in-person. Masks will still be required on Sundays or when children are in the building due to the fact that children age 0-11 years old will not be vaccinated. Masks will also be required for individuals who are not vaccinated. Subject to change per guidance from the CDC or MN Department of Health.



We hope to see many of you in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings for worship. We WILL continue to broadcast our services over Zoom and will continue to publish that link in the weekly congregational email on Saturdays for those who prefer to worship from home for the time being. (If you are not receiving the Saturday email newsletter and wish to do so, please contact Deacon Phil Holzman.)

Read on in this newsletter for news about other groups within GA Church and whether they will resume meeting in person this month or whether they will continue to meet over Zoom during this time.

Academic year at GA



FAITH FORMATION

The start of the school year will look a little different this September at GA. Due to the uncertainty around the current global pandemic and the lack of an approved vaccine for children under 12, the start of Sunday School and Frolic will be postponed until it is safer for our children to gather in groups. Confirmation will start this fall and will meet in-person. Adult Bible studies and book groups may begin as of September 1, 2021. Thank you for your understanding, and keep watching in future months as this situation continues to unfold.

Lutheran Disaster Response Helping with US Wildfires & Haiti Earthquake Relief

Here is an opportunity for all of us to help with these two disasters by making a contribution to Lutheran Disaster Response. 100% of our gifts go directly to those affected by these disasters. How can you help?

- Write a check to GA Church with "Wildfires," "Haiti," or "Disaster Response" in the memo line and put it in the offering plate on Sunday or send it to the office.

- OR -

- Make a contribution directly to Lutheran Disaster Response online. In your web browser, do a search for "Lutheran Disaster Response" and follow the links to give to either one of these disasters – or to give to LDR in general.



Holy Communion in the Sanctuary

Remember that we are handing out Holy Communion packets that include a small bread wafer and cup of juice or wine. (See picture.) You do not need to provide your own elements from home. (Two drawbacks to these packages: 1. They are a little difficult to handle, especially for arthritic or larger hands; and 2. we do not currently have a gluten-free version to offer.) We hope these packets are helpful and meaningful for worship, and we do appreciate your patience as we continue to navigate through this unusual time. Thank you!



Our Prayer List

One of the most important ways we love and support one another is by praying for each other. And it's important that prayer lists are regularly updated to remain current and to prevent us from becoming oblivious to them. To that end, Phil and Susan have tightened up how we receive and share prayer requests as follows:

- Beginning September 1, all names currently on our prayer list will drop off. Contact Phil (philh@gachurchmpls.org or 612 789-7256, ext. 11) if you would like your name to remain on the list.
- Names will stay on the list for six weeks, then automatically drop off. If you would like your name to remain on the list another six weeks, simply contact Phil and ask him to add it again. You will need to update your name every six weeks, or it will automatically drop off.
- Beginning September 5, during the Prayers of the People each Sunday, we will read aloud the first names of each person on our prayer list. If you don't want your name read aloud, just let Phil know that when you make your request.
- HIPPA regulations require that each adult must give permission for their name to be added to a public prayer list and/or read aloud. Parents can add minor children, and spouses can add partners.

We trust that these new guidelines will make it easier for us to stay current about who among us is in need of prayer.

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. If you don't receive the Saturday email and would like to be included, contact Deacon Phil as well.



Transition Musings

by Interim Pastor Susan Masters

excerpted from sermon on August 22, 2021, on John 6:56-69

Messy, Wobbly Faith in a Challenging Time

(Context: Jesus' claim of being living bread sent by the Father sounds like he thinks he is God, and those who have been following him are increasingly uncomfortable with the implications of that claim. And they are beginning to walk away.)

... No one was surprised when these newcomers to the Jesus message were struggling to embrace the claims of this itinerant preacher who seemed to always be preaching wildly outlandish things.... Except - here's the thing: This time, the ones who walked away weren't just the newcomers. These weren't fair-weather friends of Jesus who were abandoning him - they were his disciples. They had served on church council, they had taught Sunday school, they had raised their children in the church of Jesus, these were the faithful ones.

... I don't think this is a story about unbelief or lack of faith. I think it's a story about Messy Faith. Faith that has hit a wall. Faith of those Jesus believers who were literally, physically hungry and tired of the crowds they had to tunnel through to get the bread they needed. Believers who were weary of the increasing surveillance of the religious authorities every time they turned out to hear Jesus. Believers who couldn't bear to hear about one more pandemic death, or watch one more catastrophe hit Haiti, or witness thousands of Afghans frantically trying to flee the new government that assuredly aimed to harm them.

This isn't about failed faith – it's about exhausted faith. It's about faith that is heartbroken. And it's probably about faith that wonders where God is in the midst of so much suffering. That age-old question: How can a good God let such suffering happen? And, friends, isn't THAT the primary question at the heart of faith that struggles? Where IS God in all this pain? And how we understand God's presence in our lives will ultimately answer that question for us. When God is the Victorious One who goes before us, clearing the way, snatching us from the clutches of suffering before it can harm us, then it naturally follows that when we ARE touched by suffering, we are left to wonder where God is. And when that suffering is a sustained onslaught, it becomes a house of cards, and over time, everything we thought was true about our faith can slowly begin to crumble. And sometimes all we know to do is to walk away.

But there is another way to understand who God is in our lives - a way I would argue is more biblically sound - and that's the God of accompaniment, of companionship. The God who may or may not remove the suffering in our lives but who will, every time, move through our suffering alongside us, giving us what we need to get through it. Usually through the people around us.... Reframing the way I imagine God's participation in my life and in the world, and knowing that my community will likely be the vehicle through which that participation will be made known to me can be a game changer when faith is wobbly and struggling to stay intact.

...Friends, I can't speak to the faith of each and every one of you in this particular historical moment, but I can say I know that there are those among us who are struggling. I know this because you have told me. More than one of you have told me. And if you hear nothing else from me this morning, please hear this: Doubts, struggles, faith that feels unreliable – it's okay, there is space for that in the way of Jesus. And if you need a conversation partner, please know that Deacon Phil and I are here. There's a really good chance we won't have all the answers. Beware of anyone who tells you they have definitive answers about suffering. But what we do have are hearts full of love for each one of you and a strong desire to see all of us get through this challenging time together.

Operative word: together.... You are not alone. We are not alone. And we are bold to claim the promises of the God who accompanies. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Quilting Session for September

The GA Quilters will meet at the church on Thursday, September 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. All are welcome to join us!

Men's Breakfast

Men in the congregation of all ages are invited to church for breakfast, devotions, and fellowship on Saturday, September 11, at 8:00 a.m. in the church kitchen.

Memorial Service for Tom Parker

The Parker family invites the GA Church family to Tom's memorial service at church on Friday, September 24, at 11:00 a.m. with visitation one hour prior. There will also be a visitation at GA on Thursday evening the 23rd from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Monday Night Book Group Meets Oct. 11 via Zoom

Join us on Monday, Oct. 11, via Zoom to discuss Sue Monk Kidd's *The Book of Longings*. In this novel, Kidd tells the story of Ana, an upper-class educated woman who later marries Jesus. Read about Ana's journey to defy social boundaries as she records the stories of the silenced women around her.

Our Zoom meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. and we will discuss the entirety of the book. See below for Zoom Meeting ID. Questions? Email Andrea Carter at andreaLcart@gmail.com. All are welcome!



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83691074008>



Virtual GA Choristers (and Other Choir News)

From Deacon Phil Holzman

All young people in grade 1 through middle school are invited to join for our first Zoom Choristers session of the fall on Wednesday, September 22, at 6:00 p.m. We'll sing some of our favorite songs for 20 minutes or so and just catch up on how everyone is doing after summer break. Join us on Zoom – the meeting ID is 837 8262 4680 with the familiar passcode of 1509.

Joel and I are in the process of pondering and evaluating the start of the Gustavus Bells, Contemporary Choir, and the Senior Choir as we consider the ramifications of the Delta Variant for these groups. We have been and will continue to be in touch with the members of these groups regarding possible start-ups. Look for more news in the October edition of this newsletter. Blessings to all of you as we continue to move through this time of pandemic.

Gustavus Adolphus Executive Committee Contact Information...

Matthew Streed, Presidentmatthewstreed@gmail.com

Derrick Watson, Vice-President.....dwmn2012@gmail.com

Dee Kjera, Secretarydeekjera@gmail.com

Michelle Rinken, Treasurer.....michellekathleen@msn.com

GA Transition Team Update for September 2021

The Transition Team has been active this summer, and we want to provide an update on our progress and a preview of next steps.

We are so thankful for the gift of your time and energy in meeting with us after worship and engaging in conversation. As we continue into the fall, there will be many more opportunities for you to share your ideas and ask questions. We'd love to hear from you. Thank you.

Transition Team: Aaron Miller, Aaron Olson, Gary Anderson, Hannah Rosebrock, Jenny Arneson, Lynn Lurvey, Interim Pastor Susan Masters (advisor)

Mission and Vision: Summary

A mission statement defines purpose. It describes who we are, what we do and who we serve. It tells others why our congregation exists.

A vision statement imagines an ideal. It states what our congregation hopes to become. It is a picture of our future.



Identity: Who we are — Our passions, values, interests

Purpose: Our gifts — Skills, time, money, physical assets (buildings, meeting rooms, kitchen)

Context: The challenges, needs, and goals of our Community

Mission and Vision: Themes and thoughts

- “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18)
- You can’t move forward without a common vision.
- Children are our future. Invest in our children.
- Care for our elders.
- Welcome is about creating a safe place where people can come in and be their true selves.
- What are we willing to change? What are we willing to risk?
- Mission is two-fold: Nurturing our faith as a congregation. Responding to community needs.
- We want to expand our concept of community beyond GA and NE Mpls.
- It is important that we listen to the community vs. assuming that we know what is needed.
- Mission and vision statements must guide our thoughts, actions and decisions every day.
- How do we communicate, connect and collaborate with other Mpls. churches and organizations?

Stewardship and Finance: Summary

“Stewardship is everything I do after I say, ‘I believe.’”

- Chick Lane, former Director of the Center for Stewardship Leaders at Luther Seminary.

“From the perspective of the gospel, fund-raising is not a response to a crisis. Fund-raising is, first and foremost a form of ministry. It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people into our mission. Vision and mission are so central to the life of God's people that without vision we perish and without mission we lose our way. Vision brings together needs and resources to meet those needs. Vision also shows us new directions and opportunities for our mission. Vision gives us courage to speak when we might want to remain silent....”

- From Henri Nouwen's *The Spirituality of Fund-raising*.

We are abundantly blessed. So how do we steward faithfully? And how do we still have the imagination to vision **BIG**, to hear and heed God's call for us here at GA? Let's dare to dream.

Stewardship and Finance: Themes and thoughts

- Abundance and faith vs. scarcity and fear - Feeding the Five Thousand. (Luke 9: 10-17)
- Our recent capital campaign had an intentional mindset of abundance. We exceeded our goal.
- It all belongs to God.
- “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” (1 Peter 4:10)
- Working in the gig economy requires me to think about sharing my gifts and talents instead of money.
- People have a desire to contribute to ministry, programs and activities, not to a budget.
- Money, if it just sits there, is not providing value to you.
- Transparency is important. Sharing what we are doing, and what we are hoping to do.
- Looking at our savings or reserves as a “Hope Account” or “Wish Fund” vs. emergency fund.
- Keep in mind wanting a pastor willing to talk with us about mission, vision and stewardship.

Activity to Date:

6/20/21	Mission and Vision #1: Temple Talk and Breakout Discussions
6/27/21	Mission and Vision #2: Temple Talk and Breakout Discussions
7/25/21	Stewardship and Finance #1: Temple Talk and Breakout Discussions
8/01/21	Stewardship and Finance #2: Temple Talk and Breakout Discussions

Next steps:

TBD	Transition Team meets with Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review activity, proposed next steps and governance recommendations
9/19/21	Worship. Theme: Forgiveness - Time for reflection during the service
9/26/21	Worship: Healing Service - Letting go of the past and opening up to the future
TBD	Communication, Connection and Conflict: Temple talk/s and discussion/s
TBD	Revisit Mission and Vision
TBD	Revisit Stewardship and Finance

GA—Kid Style
Sunday, Sept 12* & Oct 3
5:00



Program with Singing & Stories
Light Dinner**
Play

*20 minutes of singing
& stories*

*Outside
Picnic Style*

*A program for all ages:
Our youngest kids to the
young at heart*

*Bring your own lawn
chair*

Play with friends

*Blessing of the Backpacks
On Sept 12

****Menu includes:**
PB&J sandwiches
Chips, juice, ice cream
Contact GA if your child needs
dietary accommodations

Monthly Financial Report

	Jul	Jul	Jul	Jul
	2021 YTD	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	2021 vs 2020
	Actual	Budget	Actual	YTD Actual
Income	\$161,904	\$192,025	\$192,910	(\$31,007)
Expense	\$182,411	\$189,630	\$187,161	(\$4,750)
Inc - Exp	(\$20,508)	\$2,396	\$5,749	(\$26,257)

The figures above represent our income/expenses through July 31, 2021.

- ◆ July 2021 YTD Actual Income of \$161,904 represents 84% of our budgeted \$192,025.
- ◆ July YTD Expenses of \$182,411 represent 96% of our budgeted \$189,630.
- ◆ The (\$20,508) difference constitutes our YTD deficit.

One other balance that's important to highlight this month is our general checking account (which we use to pay salaries, bills, etc.).

- ◆ Our checking balance has dropped from \$35,369 at the beginning of the year to \$13,769 as of July.
- ◆ Given our monthly budgeted expenses are \$27,090, our Finance team is keeping a close eye on our current account balance to ensure we can continue to cover all of our outing payments.

We ask that you continue to consider how you might further support the ministry here at GA during the remainder of 2021.

Michelle Rinken, Treasurer

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

Church Phone: 612-789-7256

Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Church Staff ...

The Rev. Susan Masters, Interim Pastor (Ext. 10)
pastorsusan@gachurchmpls.org
Cell phone (for pastoral emergencies): 612-327-7454

Deacon Phil Holzman, Minister of Word & Service (Ext. 11)
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Zachary Copa, 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 Church (besides bringing your offerings on Sunday morning to worship):

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, Zach Copa, for details. Zach can also
help you if you are interested in learning how to
contribute stock donations.

Gustavus Adolphus Church Council

Matthew Streed, President
Derrick Watson, Vice-President
Dee Kjera, Secretary
Michelle Rinken, Treasurer
At-Large Members:

Wendy Bradshaw	Jenny Parker
James Hamilton	Beverly Prawalsky
Curt Navratil	