


TOGETHER

**Mara Halvorson Answers
10 Questions about Her
Design & Video Skills Plus
Helping with Online Worship**



i have God. i'm good.

FAITH THAT WORKS

ONLINE WORSHIP AT
GOOD SHEPHERD: HOW
DOES IT HAPPEN?

IN THE MIDST OF
SEPARATION AND FEAR,
FINDING GOD'S ABUNDANCE

SCRIPTURE STORY:
A GOD WHO
TRAVELS

CONTENTS

MAY 2020



- 3 Senior Pastor's Letter
BY PASTOR KARL N. JACOBSON
- 4 P.E.P Talk
BY PASTOR ELISE POKEL
- 5 From the Council
BY PRESIDENT BETH HELGEN
- 6 Online Worship at Good Shepherd: How Does It Happen?
BY RALPH JOHNSON
- 8 10 Questions with Mara Halvorson
BY TOR JOHNSON
- 9 Good Shepherd Foundation Supports Camden Promise
BY RENEE RAETHER
- 9 Life Passages
ASSEMBLED BY LAURA STEIN
- 10 Amid Separation and Fear, Finding God's Abundance
BY KAREN WALHOF
- 12 Our Global Partners Respond to COVID-19
BY KAREN WALHOF
- 13 Ministry Changes Due to COVID-19
- 14 Caring for Yourself, Reaching Out to Others
BY DOROTHY ELLERBROEK
- 15 Serving in the Healthcare Profession
BY MARY MEESTER
- 16 Continuing Student Ministries – at Home
BY MARK HALVORSON
- 17 TabLET Talk Connects Us
BY PASTOR KARL N. JACOBSON
- 18 Summer Worship Themes at Good Shepherd: Worship in the Easter and Pentecost Seasons
BY PASTOR KARL N. JACOBSON
- 19 Circlets of Hope
- 20 Girasol Preschool Is a "Blessing"
BY LIDA ETEMAD
- 22 SCRIPTURE STORY:
A Traveling God –
Isaiah 10 & 43
BY PASTORAL INTERN
DUSTIN HAIDER
- 24 The Promise
ISAIAH 43:1-4

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SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship with Communion
online every Sunday at
goodshepherdmpls.org

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ON THE COVER: Mara Halvorson

TOGETHER



**THIS IS WHO
WE ARE
HERE, AND
WHAT WE
ARE ABOUT:**

**LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD:
FAITH THAT
WORKS**

Dear friends, greetings to you, in the name of the Crucified and Risen Lord.
He IS risen, and so too shall we!

I hope that you have not tired of hearing it, but the truth is that we are in unprecedented times. And for that reason, I give thanks. Thanks, not because unprecedented times are “interesting” (used exactly the way my mother uses it about a new food she doesn’t much care for) or uncertain, but because of what it always, always means to be a part of a faithful community of God’s people.

I have been amazed by the faithful generosity I have seen from you, not just for our congregation, but also for the people in our community who need help so desperately.

I have been amazed by the creativity, willingness, energy, and – in it all – the faithfulness of this tremendous staff that I am privileged to lead. Mark, Tor, Ralph, Sharon, Karen, Pastor Elise, and our intern Dustin have been brilliant. And a special word of thanks goes to Laura Stein for her steadfast stewardship of the congregation’s resources. Not to mention the work that Roger and Ron did to prepare us for our shutdown.

I have been amazed by the good work of our church council, which has risen to the occasion admirably, thoughtfully, and faithfully. They had no idea what saying “Yes!” to their nomination would mean – none of us could have – but they have done their work well. Thank you to Beth, Kathy, Bill, Tim, Cathy, Tryg, and Morgan.

You will have noticed the recurring word, which I am using quite intentionally: faithfulness, that is both calling and promise in these times. We are called to remain faithful to our God, and we are promised that ours is a God who keeps faith. As we read in the book of Deuteronomy:

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations . . . (Deuteronomy 7:9).

And yes, even to now, and to the days ahead.

Blessings to you all.

Remain steadfast.

And, if you need, do not hesitate to reach out to any of us on staff. We are here for you.

Yours in Christ,

Karl N. Jacobson

Senior Pastor

**FAITH THAT WORKS IS FAITH THAT CAN TRANSFORM
THE WORLD – “MINE,” “YOURS,” “OURS,” “THE.”**

P.E.P. TALK

DURABLE FAITH FOR A GRITTY WORLD



BY PASTOR ELISE POKEL

My original plan for this P.E.P. Talk was to look at the second half of Proverbs and select my favorite nuggets to lift up and draw inspiration from. We'll get back to that for a future article!

As Pastor Karl recently said in a sermon, desperate times call for *faithful* measures. We are living in the strangest of times. Luckily, we serve a God who has lived this life and understands that things do indeed get desperate and strange. The Gospel and Epistle writers understood that keeping a church together in times of crisis is no easy feat.

So, instead of looking at Proverbs, I'm going to remind you about what it means to be a baptized Christian.



On Easter, April 12, I baptized my son, Fredrik Amos. He can't wait to join you in church and be fawned over as soon as it's safe and possible. It was important for us to baptize him on Easter Sunday because Andy and I were both baptized on Easter Sunday. We also wanted to practice defiant joy and faithfulness in

a time that feels stressful and joyless. We wanted to remind death and despair that they were both losers that had already been beaten by Jesus' Easter shenanigans. We wanted to remind ourselves that Fred belongs to the community of saints. We wanted to remind ourselves that we were God's little children, too, though we are overwhelmed.

We believe that Fred has been claimed by and clothed in Christ. I believe that about you, too. I believe that

God desperately and passionately adores us and wants us to walk in newness of life.

St. Paul in his letter to the Romans reminds us that when we are baptized, we are baptized into Christ's death. I believe that Andy, Fred, and I are all dead and buried. It's already over for us. But when we were baptized into Christ's death, God pulled an excellent switcheroo and also grafted us into Jesus' glorious resurrection – past and future! I have great peace at night knowing that all of us are claimed and sealed by the Holy Spirit forever. (I just sang "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" by Stevie Wonder in my head when I wrote that.)

It's a huge deal to know that God has taken care of everything. No matter how anxious, desperate, or afraid our circumstances might make us, we can rest in the fact that we are connected in our baptism to Christians in the past who have been through some strange things (you know – like persecution, torture, oppressive empires), and we're connected to Christians in the future who will also face confusion and turmoil. Jesus holds us all in his scarred, triumphant hands.

The letter to the Ephesians reminds us in chapter four that there is only one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Though we are apart for now, in Christ, we are always held together. If we're not anxious about our futures, God can do a lot through us! Because we have already passed through death in our baptisms, we truly can live in freedom to respond to the desperate needs of our neighbors with patience, grace, and love.

Though we are sheltering at home, Jesus abides with us. Though we are apart, Jesus holds us together.

I look forward in hope and confidence to the day we can safely gather together. Chunky Fred can't wait to be held by his earthly community of saints found at Good Shepherd.

Until then, P.E.P.

From the Council

BY PRESIDENT BETH HELGEN

More than 40 years ago, I served as an assistant in the 3-year-old Sunday school classroom at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield. I don't remember much about that experience except the time Cora Scholz, the lead teacher as well as a gifted musician, gathered a group of children around her and taught them this song:

I am the church!
You are the church!
We are the church together!
All who follow Jesus,
all around the world!
Yes, we're the church together!

The church is not a building,
the church is not a steeple,
the church is not a resting place,
the church is a people.

Hymn text words © 1972 Hope Publishing Company

For years since then, this little song has lodged in my mind, an earworm that has resurfaced unexpectedly during pivotal moments in the life of the church.

The church is a people.

On March 13, Kathy Bench, Laura Stein, Pastor Jacobson, and I met to talk about temporarily suspending worship and closing the building for two weeks in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Little did we know then what uncertainty and disappointments we would face or how our communal life would be transformed without a building in which to gather.

The church is a people.

Our building has been closed nearly two months, now, but we are a steadfast people and have not been deterred in being the church together. Our work continues, but in different ways. We have created virtual worship services for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, calling on volunteers and enlisting family members to sing, pray, and edit video. We continue to gather—with face masks and physical distancing—on the front lines of human need, serving at Camden Promise and Loaves and Fishes. We have picked up our phones and called those in our congregation who might feel isolated

or anxious. We have Zoomed meetings among staff and elected leadership—even among the participants in Psalms and Pscotch. We have arranged online connections among youth and created special story time moments for our children. We have sewn face masks for essential workers, and we have discovered ways to re-purpose the visual art created for Easter worship. We have shared our faith stories through the daily devotional, TableT Talk. We have stepped up with offerings and gifts, recognizing the significant financial strain our congregation faces. We have prayed for one another and for the world.

The church is a people.

On behalf of the church council, I thank you for your financial generosity and for all for the ways you have participated in the life of our congregation during the pandemic. In the months—yes, months—ahead, the church council will continue to work with staff and members to secure our congregation's future and to seek ways to resume our communal life within our building. We don't know what the future will bring, but we rest securely in the Easter promise of new life.

A few weeks ago, our congregation—due to the persistence of our treasurer Kathy Bench—secured a Payroll Protection Program loan under the CARES Act which enabled us to restore staff salaries to 100 percent until mid-June. (The council had voted to decrease salaries by 20 percent beginning April 1, prior to receiving the loan.) This loan will also help us cover utility expenses and mortgage interest for the next two months, and is forgivable as long as we meet the requirements that come with it.

At its April meeting, the council approved the formation of a mortgage task force to identify short- and long-term avenues for addressing this significant monthly expense we will face in 2021. We hope to have plans in place by the fall.

In addition to the council, the finance and personnel committees have been meeting to offer counsel and advice about the financial strain created by the building closure and suspension of activities.

The church is a people.

Whether scattered or gathered, we will persist faithfully and patiently, facing our challenges as we serve as the body of Christ in the world.

Online Worship at Good Shepherd: How Does It Happen?

BY RALPH JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Worship is the beating heart of our life together at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. It is where we come to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ; to share our fears, sorrows, joys, and laughter with God and with each other in prayer and conversation; and to be together as one family of faith. But what do we do when a massive crisis (like a global pandemic) makes it impossible to meet and worship in person together? What does it mean to be a congregation when we can't congregate? This was the question we – and almost every other church on the planet – had to consider when “shelter-in-place” became our way of life and we were forced to close our doors to public activities of any kind.

Like most of our sister congregations, we decided to connect with our church family by moving worship online. Great idea! Only none of us on the staff and worship team had ever done it. No matter, we would just make it up as we went along – and make it up we did! Our initial attempts in March, on both Sundays and Wednesdays (with Holden Evening Prayer), went pretty well. We scrambled, learned, and hopefully improved over those first three weeks. Then came Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter – the holiest (and usually busiest) days of the church year – and we were in it, full tilt.

Now, after six weeks, we are feeling more settled in our process of creating online worship and are starting to dream of ways to make it even more fresh, creative, and meaningful – at least given the diverse technical abilities of our somewhat motley crew. Aiding us in this endeavor is our incredible video designer, camera operator, film editor, and creative director, Mara Halvorson, who has proved to be a true gift from God for us during this time. (Read more about her in “10 Questions with Mara Halvorson” elsewhere in this issue.)



Although the details of worship may change from week to week, our initial “make it up as we go along” has evolved into a fairly consistent pattern for creating our online worship services. It looks something like this:

- Before everything else: Pastor Jacobson sets out the scripture readings and themes of the coming season or series; organist Sharon Vicic, with help from husband and (among other things) free-lance radio producer Silvester, comes to church to record several weeks' worth of organ preludes, postludes, and hymns in advance.
- Monday: I put together a numbered outline of each thing that is to happen in the service (prelude, welcome, hymn, etc.), along with hymn choices and any musical offerings that may be included in the service.
- Tuesday: The outline is finalized by the worship staff and given to Laura Stein, who creates the graphics – hymns, prayers, liturgy, etc. – that will be used in the finished worship video.
- Wednesday (and starting much earlier, of course): Pastor Jacobson, Pastor Pokel, or Pastoral Intern Haider



finish the sermon for the coming Sunday. Laura finishes all the worship video slides and posts them in Dropbox. Next, I (with the assistance of my wife and live-in soprano, Laurie) record the vocal tracks for Sunday's hymns, assemble other musical tracks as needed, and send them to Silvester Vicic to do final sound editing and mixing.

- Thursday: Pastors and worship leaders gather to videotape the announcements, greeting, prayers, spoken liturgy, and sermon (and whatever other ideas Mark and Mara have for creative visuals for the service). Then I number and post the finished audio tracks to Dropbox.
- Sometime between Monday and Thursday: Tor is videotaped by Mark and Mara leading Kids Time. Assisting ministers and lectors for the coming Sunday's worship are videotaped or recorded reading the scripture lesson and leading the prayers of the church.
- Thursday and Friday (sometimes Saturday): Mara and Mark put all the pieces together – along with their own wonderful ideas – to create the final worship video, which Laura posts late on Saturday night to be seen and shared in the homes of the people of Good Shepherd, and even beyond.
- Sunday: We worship with all of you!



As you can see, it's quite a process, but it is one we engage in with love, commitment, energy, and a great sense of fun and delight. Thank you for supporting us and allowing us to serve God and God's people at Good Shepherd in this way.



QUESTIONS FOR

MARA HALVORSON

BY TOR JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES & PERFORMING ARTS

One of the main reasons we've had the pleasure of viewing meaningful, online services during this pandemic is because of the expertise of one of our members, Mara Halvorson. Mara and her dad, Mark Halvorson, have been putting in lots of extra hours videotaping and editing our virtual worship services.

Mara is in the process of completing her sophomore year at Bemidji State University, where her mom and dad attended as well. We are grateful to be able to utilize her creativity. As Director of Children's Ministries & Performing Arts, I am particularly grateful to Mara for the graphic arts projects she's done for our Sunday School programs.

1 AT WHAT AGE DID YOU DISCOVER YOUR LOVE FOR ART, AND WHAT SORT OF THINGS DID YOU CREATE BACK THEN?

I have loved art and have been doing it for nearly as long as I can remember. I remember I used to sit down and draw for hours. Eventually it turned into a love for painting, and I would paint whenever I possibly could. Now, my passion for art has an added love for graphic design!

2 HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU DISCOVERED GRAPHIC/COMPUTER ARTS, AND WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FIRST IDEAS AND PROJECTS?

I was just starting my senior year of high school. I had taken all the elective art classes I could except for a few digital art classes. At Chaska High School, seniors

aren't allowed to have any open hours, so I needed to take a random class. I chose to take design and digital art, and from the first day of senior year I knew that it was more than just a filler class I was forced to take.

3 WHEN DID YOU START THINKING SERIOUSLY THAT GRAPHIC ARTS/DESIGN COULD BE A CAREER FOR YOU?

It was when I took the digital art class my senior year of high school. I was registering for my Bemidji State University courses the spring of my senior year and decided I didn't want to be a physical education major, then switched to a graphic design major at my orientation.

4 WHAT SORT OF PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON AT BEMIDJI STATE?

All the projects that I am working on are for my junior portfolio this upcoming fall – projects such as a 3D rendering of the “Friends” apartment and some trade show booth projects. My favorite class though is graphic design, where we're currently working on a bunch of magazine layouts!

5 I HAVE ASKED YOU TO DO SEVERAL PROJECTS THIS PAST YEAR FOR GOOD SHEPHERD. WILL YOU DESCRIBE THEM?

I created the Bible story graphics that are hung up in a few places around the church building. I also created the graphics used during the Sunday School children's Christmas/Advent performance. That was an especially fun project, because the images needed to align with music and a script. Most recently, I got to work on



the Palm Sunday graphics and animation used during our online worship service.

6 SINCE THE COVID VIRUS HAS SHUT DOWN GOOD SHEPHERD AS A SITE FOR WORSHIP, YOU'VE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING OUR WORSHIP SERVICES TO MEMBERS THROUGH VIDEO AND ONLINE WORSHIP. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH THE VIDEO MEDIUM?

Growing up, I slowly taught myself how to make and edit videos. It has been in the last two years that I have really developed a love and a skill for video creation and editing. I absolutely have loved being able to work with a team to create online worship videos for Good Shepherd these past few weeks.

7 HAVE YOU ALSO BEEN TAKING FILM OR VIDEO COURSES IN COLLEGE?

Not really. Up until this point the classes I've taken have focused heavily on the graphic design and photography side of things.

8 WHAT SORT OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS DO YOU HAVE IN REGARD TO YOUR GRAPHIC ARTS AND VIDEO-MAKING SKILLS?

I hope to be a freelance graphic designer one day and be able to do fun projects like the ones I had the opportunity to do these last few weeks for church.

9 DO YOU FEEL A SENSE OF GRIEVING OR LOSS BECAUSE THE CORONAVIRUS IS TAKING AWAY TIME FROM YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE?

Totally. I am missing out on the last few months of my sophomore year. I'm an RA in a freshman dorm, and I am definitely missing my co-staff members and my residents right now! I can't wait to get back to Bemidji . . . hopefully soon!

10 DO YOU LIKE WORKING WITH YOUR DAD ON ALL THESE PROJECTS?

Hmmm . . . Let me get back to you on that!

Foundation Supports Camden Promise

BY RENEE RAETHER

On March 25, Good Shepherd Foundation directors approved a \$5,000 grant request from Camden Promise, a long-time partner in ministry. The executive director, Pastor Jeff Nehrbass, established a go-fund-me page to raise \$20,000 to fund food purchases for seven distribution sites - four in Minneapolis and three in St. Paul. He asked Karen Walhof if the Foundation would consider supporting this immediate need to address hunger. Within 24 hours, the Foundation directors unanimously approved the request, and the check was given to Camden Promise days later.

In this way, the entire Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd congregation, through the Foundation, supports Camden Promise as they continue their work to improve the lives of our neighbors.

See pages 10 & 11 for the Camden Promise story.

[IN OUR COMMUNITY OF FAITH]

LIFE PASSAGES



◀ BAPTISM

04.12.2020

FREDRIK
AMOS POKEL

DEATH

DONNA BROOKS

8.12.1933-4.21.2020



BY KAREN WALHOF, DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH MINISTRY

Amid Separation and Fear, Finding God’s Abundance

For our society’s safety, we have been instructed to shelter at home, maintain social distancing, and avoid large gatherings. Some of our partner ministries have closed down for now – Urban Homeworks, for example. Others have recognized that their ministries require a modified approach during this time, and they are developing new strategies to continue carrying out their work – Feed My Starving Children, for one.

But some ministries still require people onsite, in the flesh, as we partner with organizations to feed individuals and families who are most vulnerable in this unusual, uncertain time.

Camden Promise. Typically, two teams of Good Shepherd members work at Camden Promise each month, on first and third Saturdays, greeting guests and packaging the groceries they have selected (and also working in the Clothes Closet there). However, in this time of COVID-19 regulations, the state health department has ruled that food must be distributed from food pantries curb-side, to avoid large numbers of people in the close confines of the food pantry.

Therefore, at Camden Promise in April, we came together with members of Gethsemane Lutheran Church to box food received from Cub, Target, Second Harvest, and individual donors. For

example, on April 18 our eight volunteers (masked and gloved) filled 240 boxes with produce, bread and pastries, dairy products, and deli items – two boxes for each household. Pastor Jeff Nehrbass, pastor at Gethsemane Lutheran Church and director of Camden Promise, prodded us as we stuffed the boxes to overflowing. “Every box should tell of God’s abundance,” he said.

By noon, a long line of Camden Promise “shoppers” had lined up, eager to take home two boxes of food and a bag of frozen meat. They could feed their families for another week!

Debbie Anderson, Allan & Louise Campbell, Deb Ellsworth, Josie Fritsch, Deb Kilgore, JoAnn Newland, and Gini & Walt Polley didn’t stop until it was done. What joy to work with them on bright, sunny Saturdays at Camden Promise, where people came looking for a little help and found great gifts of food!

Since COVID-19 restrictions began, Camden Promise has been asked to be the food provider for seven metro food distribution locations – a recognition of their faithful and efficient service to hungry people!

Loaves & Fishes. We anticipated our usual food preparation and serving for Loaves & Fishes at St. Stephen’s School,

22nd and Clinton, on Tuesday, March 17. However, a day earlier, the state ruled that people could not gather in dining rooms like those at St. Stephen's. Food was to be put into take-out containers, and guests would have to claim their dinner, then eat it elsewhere. Debbie Anderson did a fabulous job working with Loaves & Fishes to arrange for needed supplies as well as develop protocols for this ever-changing situation. We have been involved with Loaves & Fishes for over 25 years, but that night everything was new.

The prep crew – John Chrisney, Lynn Hjelmeland, and I – readied the food as usual that afternoon. That evening a required smaller-than-usual Good Shepherd serving crew – Debbie Anderson, Jennifer Johnson, JoAnn Newland, Bob Stein, Pat Sykes, and Mike Thomes – were an assembly line, ladling generous portions of the hot foods into a take-out container, then slipping it along with buttered bread, a container of milk, an apple, and utensils into a plastic bag. Good Shepherd was the first organization to work under the new guidelines, and we were great – efficient and joyful! Matt Anderson, local director of Loaves & Fishes, emailed Debbie: “In this time of uncertainty and ever-growing need, it is very encouraging to witness people like you, continuing on in the face of adversity.”

Most of those who come to Loaves & Fishes for food live on the margins of society, with many in shelters or on the street. A number work, some have obvious mental health issues. Most are men, with a few families and a handful of women – and all are God's children. That night some were confused about the new situation developing around them. I heard one man ask Paul, the site coordinator, if he could suggest a place to stay that night. When Paul asked where he normally slept, he named the city library (“but they're locked up now”) and a city bus (“but they're not running at night anymore”). Another man was alarmed as he told me a business establishment just around the corner had posted a sign on the door indicating they were closed indefinitely. When I told him that the new COVID-19 regulations probably made keeping the building open unwarranted, he responded, “But that's where I go to warm up!” (Remember this was March, and it was cold.) Many seemed mystified about the changes going on around them. We may have fears and concerns about our personal situations, but imagine the overwhelming confusion and anxiety of those who are not sure of a place to sleep, food to eat, or a home which provides warmth and safety.

Meals on Wheels. Rather than delivering food every day, drivers now deliver only on Monday and Thursday – providing one hot meal and frozen meals for the days inbetween. The practice for handing the meals off also has changed, with drivers hanging the bags with meals on the doorknob, then stepping back until the meal is retrieved by our homebound neighbors.

Looking Ahead. We do not know how service ministries will evolve in the future or when they will return to “normal.” But we will continue to be there to offer assistance, to support our partner ministries, to be the hands of Christ to those who come for help.

And even if you're not at Camden Promise putting food in boxes or handing over take-out containers at Loaves & Fishes, you are part of this. Your financial support and your prayers make it possible. Thank you.



Our Global Partners Respond to COVID-19

BY KAREN WALHOF, DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH MINISTRY

Our global mission partners are facing this health crisis in their own place and responding in a variety of ways.

Ethiopia. The Central Office of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) has instructed congregations *not* to gather for worship. The church manages its own television channel, and, each Sunday, worship is broadcast throughout the country in several languages (including Afan-Oromo, spoken in Aira). Members are encouraged to listen and worship in that way.

The seminaries, primary, and secondary schools of the church have been closed, with students returning home. Those institutions – including Onesimus Nesib Seminary – are struggling financially.

In some of the outlying areas, the church has been vitally involved in sharing health information about protecting against the coronavirus, so important where other health education is not necessarily available.

EECMY President Yonas has said, “Currently, we are witnessing that human power and technology are not able to stop the pandemic. . . . During this time we are combatting this disease



Student leaders in Nekemte, Ethiopia, provide a hand-washing station as well as sharing crucial information on counteracting COVID-19.

with all we have – including prayers, teachings, awareness-raising activities, and supporting the needy.”

Aira Hospital has been designated by the government as a regional center for coronavirus patients. The hospital has determined they will care for those patients at Onesimus Nesib Seminary, leaving the hospital available for other patients. Up to this point, no one has been diagnosed with the virus in Aira, although they are aware that travelers from Aira to Addis Ababa have been in contact with a COVID-19 patient. They are working to get personal protection equipment. The Aira Hospital Task Force here is reconvening to address their needs.



Tim & Elaine Matyi worshipped at Nuestro Salvador in early March.

Uruguay. Pastor Octavio has written to us: “All activities involving the presence of people are suspended in Nuestro Salvador, La Resurrección, El Sembrador, and Jaureguiberry. The work on the roof also has been suspended. Some people must go to work, but most of them remain at home.

“We thank God that everyone is in good health, including health professionals like Ricardo, Virginia, and Daniela.

“Every Sunday we post a service on our Facebook page, devotionals on Wednesdays (during Lent, on Wednesdays and Fridays). During Holy Week we posted services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter. We have also Bible studies via Zoom.”

He concludes, “We pray for you, and ask you to pray for us.”

Each site brings its own challenges and restrictions, and in each location the church is working to be a force for health and hope. Please remember our global partners in prayer during this time of uncertainty and fear. They are praying for us.

Ministry Changes Here Due to COVID-19

ONGOING

- Good Shepherd will host and serve **Camden Promise Hot Dog Dinners** in their parking lot on June 17, July 15, and August 19.



Serving them may look a great deal different than past years as we meet state feeding guidelines. We'll work with Camden Promise to make the necessary adjustments. People in the Camden community depend on these weekly dinners.

- The **Camden Promise Parking Lot "Sale"** is scheduled for Saturday, August 15. Please save your gently used home goods and clothing – especially children's back-to-school clothes – for this "sale." Your donations may be delivered to the South Multi-purpose Room



after July 19. We will be looking for volunteers to sort and pack those donations on August 13 and 14.

- **Midrash on France** continues to meet via Zoom each Tuesday morning, beginning at 7:00. Contact John Mendesh (john.mendesh@genmills.com) to get on the Zoom list.

- **Vacation Bible School** will be held online in June.

DELAYED

- The **Good Shepherd Fundraiser & Celebration** scheduled for May 29 has been postponed until later this summer.

- The Edina Art Fair has been postponed until August 21-23. Our ministry of welcome, **Refreshments & Restrooms**, will take place at that time. Watch for host signups closer to the event.

SUSPENDED

- **Feed My Starving Children** has suspended meal packing through at least July 31. Currently, they are partnering with Karlsburger Foods Inc., a longtime supplier of vitamin powder, to use their facility to package bulk meals for orphanages, schools, and hospitals. They are working to find even more ways to pack meals until volunteers can safely return.

- **Urban Homeworks** has suspended their monthly Saturday work days until further notice.

CANCELLED

- **Summer Musical Theater Camp**, scheduled for June and July, has been cancelled. Refunds will be made to registrants.

- For the first time in 51 summers, **Appalachian Service Project** (ASP) will not host groups for their summer home repair ministry. High School youth from Good Shepherd were scheduled for a week of service in July. However, for the first time in many years, our youth and adults will not be traveling to those hollers. As the next year unfolds we will be open to new ways of service outside our assigned summer week, most definitely including those high school seniors who are missing out this time around.



Stay tuned for additional adjustments in our ministries as we live out COVID-19 precautions.

Caring for Yourself, Reaching Out to Others

BY DOROTHY ELLERBROEK

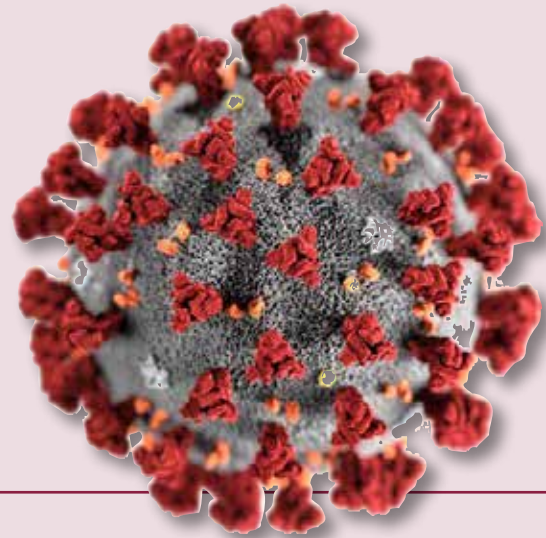
Long ago in my years of confirmation study, there was (maybe still is) a recurring phrase: “This is most certainly true.”

The trials of life in society since my confirmation have included tumultuous challenges to society – such as the Vietnam War and the 9/11 attack against our country – but generally life has meant prosperity and the working toward that prosperity. Positive effort yielded positive results, as some have said, “If you just try hard, good will come of this.” Sadly, those platitudes don’t hold up in a pandemic, which really has just begun to be felt in a personal sense. But confirmation affirmation of truth is further stated in Isaiah 26:4: “Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock.”

In that setting of reassurance, we ponder together here how to adapt to the changes in our lives in a pandemic of unknown duration. Have you noticed that, amid all the changes of these past few weeks, life goes on? Household chores still need to be done, meals prepared, laundry tended to, dogs walked, and then – perhaps, hopefully – restful sleep at the end of the day.

So why, then, is life so changing, so challenging, so difficult? Why is sleep elusive? Why is worry so prevalent? There is much uncertainty for all. We haven’t experienced a pandemic in our lifetime, so we don’t have a manual on how to set priorities. In speaking with others, of various ages, about how they are learning to cope, let me share some collective wisdom.

- 1) Maintain a degree of physical exercise each day. Enlist family members and friends to join in, if not physically in person, checking in with one another by sharing your success of the day;
- 2) Maintain a shopping list. Prioritize your needs without hoarding.
- 3) Check in with family members who live elsewhere, to get a “real” answer to “How are you doing?” When possible, stop by the elders among you even if simply to wave in the window; or establish an online check-in to physically see them regularly. Be alert to unusual observations or subtle changes that may indicate ill health. Remember that “ill-health” may be something unrelated to the COVID-19 virus.



- 4) Set aside a cache of foods and health remedies for the possibility that you and your immediate family may become ill. Things to include might be several cans of chicken noodle soup, crackers, facial tissues, refills of prescription drugs, over-the-counter remedies such as a fever-reducer, throat lozenges, something non-narcotic for pain relief. Don’t “borrow” from that cache, but keep it aside for illness, as this pandemic virus can come on rapidly.
- 5) If one of your family members becomes ill, that person should be tended in a private room of your home, and all family members/housemates then should be quarantined for a minimum of two weeks. Contact your medical facility **BY PHONE** for more detailed instructions. Your clinic staff will direct you as to when or whether you should come to clinic or hospital.

It is always appropriate to phone those known to you who may be ill with other conditions, and/or those who live alone or in a care facility where they may be worried and lonely, unable to remain independent. Extend a word of care and concern, assure them that they are not forgotten, and share remembrances of activities of our faith family in years past. Those shared times bring to mind the hymn: “Blest be the ties that bind our hearts in Christian love. . . .”

Pray with me: God of all comfort, quiet our minds that we may make room for your healing forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Serving in the Healthcare Profession

BY MARY MEESTER, RN

I graduated from Augustana College (now Augustana University) in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 1978 with a Bachelor of Arts in Nursing. I really believe in the value of a liberal arts education. During summers I worked at Abbott Hospital in Minneapolis as a PCA (patient care aide). My first job as a RN was also at Abbott on a medical-surgical floor. After six months, I moved to Hawaii and started my career as an obstetric nurse at Kapilolani Medical Center for Women and Children. After two years, I missed the change of seasons and returned to Minnesota and went to work at University Hospital in the labor and delivery unit. Later I went back to Abbott Northwestern Hospital where I still work today in the Mother Baby Center.

You ask what kind of nurse I am? Pretty good, if I do say so myself! Oh, you mean what area I work in! High risk obstetrics, specifically the Antepartum Unit/Maternal Assessment Center. I have experience in clinical research, home care, insurance case management, and a private OB clinic, as well.

I have the privilege of caring for women and their families during a special time – the birth of their child. Every birth is truly wondrous. Most of the time it has a happy outcome, but not always so. Those families that have lost their babies are very dear to me, and I still think of them.

My job has become more difficult due to COVID-19.

My job has become more difficult due to COVID-19. I am working longer and more hours, getting fewer breaks, having trouble staying hydrated, and wearing a mask all day is hot and uncomfortable. I worry about getting infected with the virus. Emotionally, I am stressed.

Use of PPE (personal protective equipment) is paramount. Hand washing is crucial. We are doing lots and lots of it. Decreased physical contact and distancing from co-workers is necessary. I wear hospital-laundered scrubs at work, and many of us are taking extra showers before and after work.



Care providers wear all the PPE, including mask, gloves, goggles, face shield, hat, and gown.

The Mother Baby Center is one of the rare areas of Abbott Northwestern Hospital that allows visitors. One visitor (who is screened on arrival and every 24 hours) is permitted for the patient's entire hospital stay. For deliveries and Cesarean sections, care providers wear all the PPE, including mask, gloves, goggles, face shield, hat, and gown. Patient and visitors are given cloth masks made by the community to wear during their entire stay.

On the home front, my mom, Marge Meester, is a long-time member of Good Shepherd. I talk to my mom frequently by phone. I minimize visits and wear a mask when I see her. She has learned to use FaceTime on her iPad. Sadly, no physical hugs or kisses are allowed!

I know that I was called to be a nurse, and I love being a nurse. But these are scary times. I am comforted in my belief that God will help us through this. Indeed, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Continuing Student Ministries – at Home

BY MARK HALVORSON, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Who would've thought last September as we rolled out a new way to do a Confirmation ministry on Sunday mornings and re-engaged high school ministry every Wednesday night that less than half a year later we would have the rug pulled out from underneath us?

What began as a weekly confirmation program, using the time between worship services to dig into the content as well as engage in service to others, laugh and play as we build our faith and deepen relationships with each other has abruptly changed paths and forced us to think about different ways to engage middle school students and their families in faith conversation.

In an effort to capitalize on those wonderful conversations that had begun, families of middle school students were invited to continue those discussions at home. Guided by a four-part, in-home tool kit, parents were invited and equipped to carry on some of those topics where had only scratched the surface.

Nothing can really take the place of the conversations that happened down in the youth area though. The weird and crazy side comments and getting off track are as much a part of middle school ministry as any content ever will be. However in this time of being apart – to set adults up for some of those meaningful conversations has been important and, I hope, well received.

A COMMENT FROM A PARENT:

I think the cards are fantastic conversation starters.

We had a great discussion last night and I am sure we will have more based on them.

The end of these discussions is an invitation to create a family faith statement, something that puts into words the shared faith and goal and mission of their family.

High school ministry has also adapted to meet kids where they are now, which is online. We continue to meet via Zoom with leaders and kids alike, doing our best to share those highs and lows, the things that are going great and the struggles that we're experiencing.

Sending students around their own homes on a scavenger hunt or playing online bingo sounds silly at first pass, but it's the



QUOTE FROM ERIENNE NELSON:

It has been hard not to see each other face-to-face, especially since the transition was so abrupt and the disruption to these kids' lives is so dramatic. I'm grateful for God's way of connecting us in new and old ways – we still laugh, joke, play games, and talk about the serious stuff.

things that we do to stay connected that remind us of how important community is, and how important we are as individuals to the communities we are a part of.

There's a tricky balance and providing things online for students, giving families discussion starters and options, while still being very aware of not wanting to add to the chaos and the noise that we're all feeling.

Until we are able to gather face-to-face we will continue to stay connected and present in each others lives through all sorts of ways, and while the education and the support and camaraderie look a little different right now, never has it been more clear that Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd cares deeply about its kids and their faith.

Please worship as a family if you are able. There are not a lot of shared experiences we get to have, and hopefully worship can be one of the ways that our middle and high school students and their families stay as connected to this faith community as ever.

QUOTE FROM PARENTS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL ZOOM:

My kids loved getting to connect with church last night!!

TabLET Talk Connects Us

BY PASTOR KARL N. JACOBSON

When God finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).

Our new devotional is written not with the “finger of God,” but with the fingers and hearts and faith of our members. It is not written in stone, nor even printed out on the paper that defeats stone, but is digital. And yet these devotions, too, are signs of the covenant – God’s covenant at work in the lives of your friends and neighbors at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Our Covid-19 inspired devotional was introduced like this:

Welcome to TabLET Talk, our daily devotional, written by members of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. Our goal is to send these out every weekday. These will be stories shared by people you have worshipped and served and coffeed with. And they will be stories to inspire, comfort, and strengthen your faith.



Why is it called TabLET Talk?

For two reasons. First, because in this time when we cannot worship together side-by-side, we are turning more and more to computers and phones and tablets to connect. And second, because it is a play on one of the most famous Reformation practices of Martin Luther. Luther would often meet with students and fellow pastors and teachers, and, sitting together at tables over dinner (or more likely, over a pint), they would talk. Many of the stories and faith-insights that Luther shared at those gatherings were written down by his students and friends, and collected in a volume called – you guessed it – “Table Talk.” We thought, LET’s do something similar, but share in it together.

I have been thrilled with the positive response to this congregationally-based devotional, both in terms of how it has been received – it is meaningful to people, and looked forward to – and in people’s willingness to share their stories of faith – these have been varied, and unique, and a real blessing.

This is what the Christian life is all about, sharing in the covenant promises in relationship with God and with one another.

If you haven’t submitted one yet, please do, and we will keep them coming.

Image courtesy of Thursday Jacobson [and Gustave Dore].

SUMMER WORSHIP THEMES AT GOOD SHEPHERD

WORSHIP IN THE EASTER AND PENTECOST SEASONS

These are, to say the least, interesting times in which to live and to find our way, and that is true of the way we have been thinking about worship. But, we remain convinced that it is in worship that we can find some of the best and most faithful ways to find that way.

With that in mind, we are shifting our worship themes and texts here in the Easter and Pentecost seasons. We are doing this, not knowing when we will be able to worship together in-person again. And we do it so that we can worship in and speak directly to the times in which we are living.

On Easter Sunday our scripture reading is what is called the “short” end of Mark. In that short ending, the women leave the empty tomb in fear and “tell no one” what that have seen and heard. That short ending serves to heighten the tension and the intensity of the invitation to faith in Christ Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

The readings that we will worship around in the weeks and months ahead are intended to allow us to lean into that tension, which heightens/echoes the feeling of this present COVID-19 pandemic. We will name the isolation that we experience as a congregation – that we are in a kind of exile or diaspora. We will, as we worship, also prepare for the time when we are restored to one another in worship, fellowship, and the (together) life of faith.

SERIES 1

Our first series (April 19-May 3) asked the question, “What now?”

Even after the empty grave and the impossible good news that Jesus has risen (!), there are uncertainties in life, and there are trials. In our first post-Easter worship series we listened for more good news, and asked the question, “What now?”

What now, that Christ is raised?

What now, that we have his promise?

What now, for us and from us, in the trying days?

SERIES 2

Series 2, May 10-June 7, will ask the question, “How long?!”

We wonder how long we will linger in these uncertain times, and turn in our worship to hear how God has answered people’s hard questions in the past, and what kind of new reality our God is preparing for us.

May 3 Romans 8:18-39

The sufferings of this present time:
“What then are we to say?”

May 10 Lamentations 1:1-4, 6, 11

When the “church” is empty:
Look, O Lord, and see!

May 17 Jeremiah 4:23-28

When life is chaotic:
“A formless void”

May 24 Psalm 74:12-17

Hope comes from of old:
“Waiting for God to act”

May 31 Joel 2:28-32

A vision for the future:
“We shall dream dreams”

June 7 Revelation 21:1-7

The home of God is among mortals

SERIES 3

Series 3, June 14-July 19, which we are calling “Christ’s Day,” will focus on the Apostle Paul’s earliest writing, in his letters to the church in Thessalonica.

The church in Thessalonica faced uncertainties of its own, and Paul wrote to them to offer encouragement, exhortation, and a vision for how to remain faithful in the midst of hard and uncertain times. We will “read with them,” the words the Paul would have us here today.

Circlets of Hope

On Easter Sunday, congregation members were invited to visit the parking lot to pick up a token of resurrection joy created by the liturgical arts team.

BY PASTOR KARL N. JACOBSON

- June 14 **Thessalonians 1:1; 2:17-3:5**
Reading with the early church:
Paul's encouragement and exhortation
- June 21 **1 Thessalonians 1:2-10**
- June 28 **1 Thessalonians 4:1-12**
July 5 **1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**
- July 12 **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**
- July 19 **2 Thessalonians 2:13-17**

SERIES 4

The final series of the Summer, Series 4, July 26–August 30, is “The Way.”

“The Way,” which was the name of the early Christian movement (see Acts 18:25), will explore the many dimensions of worship which are a part of the Book of Psalms, which is sometimes called the “hymnbook of Israel.” We will be taking pages from that hymnbook, and exploring how our worship can be shaped, and, how worship can shape us, not just in the sanctuary, but in our daily living.

- July 26 **Psalm 1**
Worshipping with God's people:
from lament to praise.
- August 2 **Psalms 13 & 23**
How lament/trust go hand-in-hand
- August 9 **Psalm 46**
Trust
- August 16 **Psalm 81:1-10**
Liturgy - the God-centered life
- August 23 **Psalm 136**
Liturgy—history and
God's steadfast love
- August 30 **Psalm 150**
Praise



Girasol Preschool at Good Shepherd Is a “Blessing”

BY LIDA ETEMAD

Every morning when we walk up, we are greeted with a warm smile and, “*Buenos Dias. ¿Cómo está?*” I have finally gotten confident enough to respond with a hearty, “*Muy bien!*” And that is how I feel dropping off my daughter, Natalie, every morning – very good. I know that for the next eight hours, she will be safe, intellectually challenged, physically active, have time to rest, and, most importantly, loved.

Girasol (Spanish for “sunflower”) Montessori School opened in the former “Petey” room of the Sunday School wing last November.

I remember attending the congregational meeting where the topic of leasing space to a preschool was discussed. There was a lot of great discussion, questions, and comments. Truth be told, at the time I was unsure of my feelings regarding the proposal, but as the parent of a toddler, I knew preschools that meet the needs of working families were difficult to find and realized it would be a service to the community. Girasol has far exceeded my wildest expectations.

Sharon Estrada is the director of the school, but it is truly a family affair. Rajinder Dhillon, her husband, can be seen at church most days, and her daughter Alyssa attends the school as well. We were all provided with a good laugh when the kids were amazed to find out that the Estrada family (which also includes their older daughter and two dogs) did not actually live in the church, but went home to their house every evening. But that is because their family pours their heart into the school, and it truly is a labor of love. Raj has built the fantastic play equipment in the schoolyard, and Alyssa has taken Natalie under her wing and quickly become a close friend and teacher.

And that is what Montessori education is all about – kids of different ages in the same classroom, helping each other and serving as role models where appropriate. This benefits everyone. The younger kids learn both academics and social skills from the older kids. The older kids have a chance to practice their academic skills and learn to help one another, all while developing self-confidence from assisting others. I didn’t know



Natalie enjoys the art activities at Girasol Montessori School, located at Good Shepherd.

much about Montessori methods when we first enrolled Natalie; I was mostly interested in the bilingual aspect of the program, but I really have come to appreciate the philosophy and what it can do to enhance standard education practices. The school focuses on the children’s emotional and social development. The rationale is that when children are placed in a loving and safe environment they learn to self-regulate and care about others and the community as a whole. This leads to greater confidence, exploration, and academic achievements.

While Natalie has only been there a few months, I’ve started to see this in action. She has certainly reached some academic milestones, but she is also developing in other ways. She wants to help set the table and be part of the pre-dinner activities rather than playing in another room. Tonight her father asked her to join him outside and she responded with, “Just a minute.



Teacher Sharon Estrada, with Natalie and Alyssa Estrada, Natalie's new best friend.

I need to clean up my ‘work’ (her Legos) first.” (I almost fell out of my chair!) She has started taking responsibility for making sure she has what she needs in the morning – like her lunchbox and shoes. Some of these things come with age, some with having a forgetful parent like me, but I know some also come from the wide range of skills she is being taught every day.

COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives, and Girasol has not been immune to the disruption either. The school was closed for two additional weeks during the spring break time frame. That was tough on the kids who were missing each other, but I also think tough on the school as they were trying to figure out how to operate in these new times. Sharon got creative – sending home packets on which the kids could work. Our older kids got a taste of home-schooling as they helped Natalie do her reading, writing, and counting every day. Sharon also set up Zoom meetings three times a week when the kids were able to sing songs and have storytime. They say necessity is the mother of invention, and all of our school teachers are being quite inventive right now.

Fortunately, the school was able to reopen in mid-April with new protocols in place. Parents are no longer allowed in the building; guides meet us at the door with a thermometer and a list of questions about any symptoms. Handwashing (which

has always been prevalent) is now automatic. Cleaning and disinfecting are constant activities. Despite all this, some things haven’t changed – the basic philosophy around a loving and nurturing environment in which to learn and grow.

Sharon and the team really focus on creating a community among the families that attend Girasol. While it has been a short time, we have had the chance to connect and get to know one another a little bit. I believe having the school has been a great outreach for Good Shepherd. Almost all of the families are aware that Wednesday is “pizza night.” At a breakfast the school held for the families back in February, I was able to let many of the other parents know that we have the single best preschool choir program in the state, if not the country!

I know we are not the only family that appreciates all that the school has brought to our lives. When I’m dropping off Natalie, I see other happy families with their kids. Some are native Spanish speakers, thankful for a bilingual program for their kids. Others value the open and nurturing environment. However, I think one father really summed it up. Natalie and I ran into him and his daughter one weekend in January while ice skating at Linden Hills. When I mentioned how happy I was with the program, he said, “Yes, this school is such a blessing.” I couldn’t agree more.

A Traveling God

BY PASTORAL INTERN
DUSTIN HAIDER

EZEKIEL 10 & 43

Let's play a little word association game with some of the people we find in the Bible:

When I say Daniel you say . . . lion's den!
When I say Esther you say . . . queen!
When I say Ezekiel you say . . . dry bones!

At least that is what my 4-year-old daughter Aislynn said (echoed by Everett, her 2-year-old brother) when I asked her about those stories. Many of us know the broad strokes of scripture; we know the main stories of our favorite characters. During our current directives to stay at home, we have been digging a little deeper into the narrative arc these people experienced (age appropriate of course!) with the hope of enriching our understanding of the Bible. I would encourage you to do the same.

One of the stories that has stuck with me is from Ezekiel, and it wasn't the whole scroll-eating thing (which is gross). Instead, it was Ezekiel's vision of God and the temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel lived through the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem and went with God's people as they were exiled to Babylon. For around 400 years before Ezekiel, the temple in Jerusalem was the central place to make the sacrifices required by the Torah. The temple was called the house of God, the place where God was dwelling on earth. Ezekiel's vision from chapter 10 is startling:

¹⁸Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house and stopped above the cherubim. ¹⁹The cherubim lifted up their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight as they went out with the wheels beside them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD; and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

²⁰These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim. ²¹Each had four faces, each four wings, and underneath their wings something like human hands. ²²As for what their faces were like, they were the same faces whose appearance I had seen by the river Chebar. Each one moved straight ahead.

Ezekiel saw God leaving Jerusalem, the center of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. The vision looks

as though God is abandoning the covenant God made with Abraham, abandoning the people to the fate of the Babylonians.

I get the sense of that abandonment every week walking into church to tape services for Sunday. The Good Shepherd building is too dark. Too quiet. Too . . . echoey. It's cold, locked up, and empty. So empty. It feels like the glory of the LORD hopped into a car and was carried by some cherubim right out of town.

As scary as it sounds, just as God went out of the temple in Ezekiel's vision, God has gone out of Good Shepherd – because it was never about the location; it's about the people. During the Babylonian exile God left Jerusalem and went with the people to exile. Our God goes with us too. We are staying at home, and God is staying home with us – in our homes, not in the “home” we have built for worship. The church building should feel empty because no one is there!

Matthew 18:20 tells us, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Our gatherings look a little different than Matthew envisioned, but we gather nonetheless. We gather digitally, centered around the word and promise broadcast through a screen and some speakers. We gather asynchronously, in different times and different places. Yet because we gather in the name of Jesus, God is with us. Neither time, nor place, nor social distance can keep God away from us. We are God's people.

In the 43rd chapter of Ezekiel, he receives another vision of Jerusalem:

¹Then he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. ²And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory. ³The vision I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. ⁴As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, ⁵the spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.



"The Vision of Ezekiel" (1630) by Francisco Collantes

Being in exile and receiving such a vision must have excited Ezekiel and those with whom he shared the vision. To be so far removed from a place you grew up – a place you love, a place from which you were banished, and then – hope! Hope that God would return to that place, that temple where you experienced the glory of God! If God goes back, surely you would get to go back too, right?

The promise of God's covenant with Abraham was not forgotten. God's people would once again worship in the temple in Jerusalem – and they did! Ezra tells us how God's people

rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem, being allowed to return after the Persians conquered the Babylonians. One day we too will return to Good Shepherd.

Aislynn and Everett ask us constantly, "When can we go back to church?" They like the space and getting to shake hands and give hugs at the end of service. I always just smile and tell them that we will get to be together with our church family soon. Until then we will read Bible stories together to remind us of how much we love being at church together. My hope is that scripture will provide that comfort for you too.



LUTHERAN
CHURCH
OF THE
GOOD
SHEPHERD

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Minneapolis, MN 55410

THE PROMISE

ISAIAH 43:1-4

But now thus says the Lord,
the one who created you, O Jacob,
the one who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

Because you are precious in my sight,
and honored, and I love you.

Faith That Works

