



July 10, 2020

To the Holy Trinity Community,

Greetings and thank you for your faithfulness to God, your church, and your community. This is not an easy time to remain patient and faithful but **you have maintained a commitment to welcome all, continued to make worship a priority, and listened to community needs so we can respond as we are able.**

The most frequently asked question during this unique time is, “when will life get back to normal at home, school, work, and at church?” The only way we can honestly respond to this is, “we don’t know.” One thing we do know is that God is with us and the church remains alive during this time regardless of our external circumstances. Paul’s famous words that encourage the church in Corinth come to mind, “Love is patient” and “Love is kind.” It is our hope that when we look back at this time, we remember how we showed love and kindness to each other and to our neighbors.

Worship is central to who we are as a community of faith. You have probably heard that churches have been given permission to open their building to 50% capacity. So, you may be wondering: what does that mean for us and our worship this summer? We continue to approach this question informed by and in communication with the counties we serve, MDOH, CDC, WHO, neighboring congregations, the ELCA, and our Risk Management Team. Here are our current plans:

- Worship online/radio: We will continue to offer worship online and on the radio at 9 am on Sundays (also available any time after). At this point, we are not resuming in-person worship.
- Live-streaming equipment: Church Council approved the purchase of live-streaming equipment. This will allow us to begin preparing for when we can provide both a meaningful in-person worship experience and simultaneously a high quality online worship experience.
- Life celebrations: We are currently prepared to offer private outdoor baptisms, weddings, and burials with a broader online community participating.
- Vacation Bible School Online: We exceeded the number of students that participated last year and had a faith-filled and fun week online!

While we know worshipping online is not the same as worshipping in person, we want to thank all who have been involved in worship leadership for their flexibility and commitment to provide meaningful worship. We are doing all that we can to stay connected in creative ways including our new weekly emailed/mailed newsletter (HTLConnections), our newly formed Connections Team (reaching out to the whole congregation), our New Prague HTLC Community Facebook Group, and our online/radio worship engagement. Thank you for your care for one another.

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We also give thanks to God for your continued care shown through your generosity as we respond to the needs in our community. Many of you have switched to automatic giving and we thank you. You have kept the Little Free Food Pantry stocked with in-kind gifts of food, personal care items, and homemade masks while it has continuously been used. In fact, it has become such a needed resource, Jon Bergquist has built two more pantries making it a “Trinity” of Little Free Pantries. This is to be able to provide personal care items without impacting the food provided (we didn’t want our soup tasting like soap). Your monetary gifts have also made a big difference.

- You heard the need for food and supplies in Minneapolis after the recent rioting and we were able to respond by sending \$1,500 to Holy Trinity and \$1,500 to Calvary in Minneapolis to support their pop-up food shelves.
- You heard the need for mental health awareness and support and we were able to respond by sending \$3,000 to Duck-cup Memorial to support the mental health needs in our community.
- You heard the need for housing for those experiencing homelessness in our county and we are preparing to respond by sending \$10,000 + whatever VBS students contribute to Beacon Interfaith Housing.
- You heard the need for mental health support for young people in our area and in response, we were able to provide The Well \$2,500.

We commend your commitment to remain strong in faith and we praise a God who has been faithful to us in these challenging times. We care about you, we are thankful for you, and we are praying for you.

In God’s love,

Co-Pastors Alicia & Ben

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