



On 31st Street between Minnehaha and 28th Avenues Minneapolis, MN 55406 • 612-729-8358 • office@htlcmpls.org • www.htlcmpls.org  
WORSHIP SERVICES: 8:45 and 11:00 a.m. • EDUCATION: 10:00 a.m. • Ingrid C. A. Rasmussen and Angela T. Khabeb, Pastors

## BUILD A BIGGER TABLE

About a year ago, I left the church for a visit with a member who is in a care facility and forgot to pack my communion kit. I showed up at the facility, had a great chat with the congregant, and then it came time for communion. I looked in my purse and found no communion kit. I told the member that I must have forgotten it in my car and ran out to check. Nothing. I came back in and sheepishly admitted that I did not have bread and wine and was unable to provide a meal that she so deeply wanted, needed.

I think it was the congregant's idea—that is, to ask the care facility staff if they had anything that could take the place of the elements that I had forgotten. I went out to the nursing station and asked an aide if she could help me. She was genuinely interested in attending to my unique request. She said, "I'm Muslim, so you're going to need to help me understand what you need for your ritual." I explained that we usually used bread or crackers and wine or grape juice. She said, "Give me a minute; I'll be right back."

About five minutes later, she returned, saying, "I found these saltines, but I couldn't find any juice. Will this ginger ale work?" I smiled widely and said, "Absolutely." I brought the crackers and soda back to the room where the Holy Trinity member was waiting for me. I held up the gifts and explained that this was as close as we were going to get. Was she okay with that? She laughed—a deep belly laugh that is now an indelible memory—and emphatically nodded her consent. We continued with the Words of Institution and then shared the feast. It was one of the holiest moments at Christ's table that I've ever experienced.

Holy Communion is central to our worship at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church each week. In this time of social distancing for the sake of the neighbor, the worship staff decided to include this sacrament in our worship video this past weekend. These are unusual times, destabilizing times, and we feel the need to gather around Christ's table of comfort and courage, love and mercy, grace and forgiveness, even as we experience physical separation.

Martin Luther, the namesake of our tradition, said that people should be offered the sacrament in both kinds—both bread and wine—as often as they request it. Theologian Jon Pahl argues that behind Luther's approach was a commitment to an egalitarian meal that resisted systems of inequality, systems that said communion was only for some, only some of the time. Luther asserted that through simple food and simple drink, the "real presence" of Jesus Christ was made accessible and available to all. It was a new kind of sacramental economics.<sup>1</sup>

(cont. in next column)

## FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

### READINGS

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

Had you asked me two weeks ago if I had thought about sacramental theology within the context of a pandemic, I would have said, "Um, no." As Pastor Angela likes to say, "I had 50-11<sup>2</sup> other things to do." And hypothetical thinking about the church's response to a disease-driven societal shutdown wasn't high on my priority list. But now the situation has changed, and it calls all of us—in light of a reality that few of us ever expected—to draw on our tradition, and, at the same time, not be bound by it. As the virtual commons becomes the embodied, incarnational space we regularly inhabit together, the Spirit is at work renewing our communal practices as we seek to be faithful.

By Sunday afternoon, after we worshiped by video<sup>3</sup>, many of you sent pictures of your home communion tables, which featured candles and bibles, bread and Wheat Thins, wine and juice, and at least one household made do with a cookie and plain ol' tap water. You used what you had available, trusting in the promise of Christ's real presence among us in ordinary things. As I looked at these gorgeous images, the aide's question rang in my ears, "Will these work for your ritual?" Absolutely. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

—Ingrid Rasmussen, pastor

<sup>1</sup>Pahl, Jon. "An Economic Reading of Luther on the Eucharist, or How a Sacramental Economics Made Matter Matter in New Ways." *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*. 1 April 2019. Web. 22 March 2020.

<sup>2</sup>"A large number or long list. An infinite or uncountable quantity of. Intentionally implausible quantitative description used to exaggerate."

<sup>3</sup>Our community has quintupled since we began worshipping online.

### DONATING

Even in the midst of uncertainty, we are called to be generous. Did you know that you can contribute to Holy Trinity electronically? Click on one of the two buttons on the Holy Trinity website (htlcmpls.org) to:

**Donate by Credit Card**, or

**Donate from Your Bank Account**, or you can

**Text a Donation** to: 612-249-7279, enter "\$" and the dollar amount you want to give (the first time you text a gift, you'll be asked to enter your name, address, email, and credit/debit card information).

## PARISH INFORMATION

### PRAYER

Compassionate God, the wind of your Spirit is the very sign of life for all who long for you. One breath from you and we are rescued from the arid valley of dry bones, given muscles and sinews and joy with which to praise you, and filled with the holy hope you grant to all your faithful children. Let our whole lives be filled with the life-breath of the Spirit, that what has lain dormant may burst into bloom, and what looks to us to be death may be revealed as but sleep before the emergence of new life. Amen

### CONCERNING PEOPLE

Please pray for the family of **Sharon West (Fuzzy)** who died last week. Fuzzy worked at Holy Trinity in the daycare center for 28 years. Pray for those who are providing care to everyone affected directly or indirectly by COVID-19.

### COMMUNITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER MOVES ONLINE

The COVID-19 outbreak means that our staff needs to make adjustments to our communication methods. We have begun *emailing* the Community Church. All member households will receive the email automatically (if we have your email address). A link to the Community Church can be found on our website ([htlcmpls.org](http://htlcmpls.org)). If you are a regular reader but not a member, and would like to continue receiving the Community Church Newsletter, please send the following information to us by email ([sroberts@htlcmpls.org](mailto:sroberts@htlcmpls.org)). We would be happy to include you!

\*Name(s)

\*Email address(es)

\*Mailing Address

\*Tell us about your connection to Holy Trinity (e.g., former member, live in the neighborhood, interested in the ministry).

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### PARISH EVENTS March 29-April 4, 2020

All events are canceled for this week.

### MARCH 22 SUNDAY WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

Physical distance does not mean disengagement. God has given us creative capacities for such a time as this. To view a simple Sunday worship service (recorded, not live), type this link into your browser: [vimeo.com/399320921](https://vimeo.com/399320921).

### EXCITING NEWS

We welcome Kaia Ellis as our new Financial Administrator! Kaia began training with Vicki Mann last week. We wish that her beginning at Holy Trinity could be under different circumstances, but are, nonetheless, extremely happy that she will be our new Financial Administrator. We know her gifts will benefit this community! Please send Kaia a welcome message ([payables@htlcmpls.org](mailto:payables@htlcmpls.org)).

### REACH OUT

The pastors and staff are going to use this period of time to connect with all member households by phone or by email. We invite you to check-in with your Holy Trinity pew mates, as well. Have you been curious about someone with whom you share the peace? Send them an email. Have you admired someone's gifts? Send them a note of encouragement. When the disease clears, let us look back at this time in our congregational history as a moment when we grew in vulnerability, trust, and relationship. We may be immobilized, but the Spirit is on the move. This Lent, let's be attentive to where she's leading us.

### HELP FROM OTHER MEMBERS

Do you need help with an errand? Please let us know. A few members have volunteered to assist those in need. On your computer, go to [forms.gle/X1m9Q8LM3Gdrb6Li8](https://forms.gle/X1m9Q8LM3Gdrb6Li8) and fill out the form or call the church office (612-729-8358). Someone will contact you within 48 hours.