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Ingrid C. A. Rasmussen and Angela T. Khabeb, Pastors

## LIVING AND INNOVATING OUR WAY THROUGH THIS—TOGETHER

*A reflection by Laura Bolstad Grafstrom, Holy Trinity Member and Interim Leader of HTLC's Innovation Team*

I am usually not a homebody, so these last several months have been quite a change for me. I am pregnant and have a mild case of asthma, so I have been pretty much living in a bubble because I'm in a higher risk category. I drove the other day and realized it had been a whole month since I had driven! March 13th was the last day I ate in a restaurant, saw all of my co-workers in person, or gave my sister a hug. After that, it was like a switch turned and I've been in a different world. We all have.

*In this new world:* What does it mean to be a church? What does it mean to be a neighbor? How can we reduce our isolation and build deeper relationships? How can we meet our spiritual needs and our desire for social connection and belonging?

These are questions Holy Trinity's Innovation Team has been thinking about for a couple of years now, and now that work has become even more relevant and complex. We had been hearing from people about feeling isolated and lonely prior to the pandemic, and now that sense is even more acute. Social distancing is forcing us to rethink how we do church, and how we connect as a community.

We've been challenged by Augsburg's Riverside Innovation Hub to learn how to listen and be responsive to our neighbors within and outside the church walls—to respond to God's changing call rather than create fix-it-and-forget-it programming. They've given us grant money to help us find another way. So we are experimenting and seeking ways to support one another and stay connected during this time of isolation.

If you are missing fellowship with the Holy Trinity community, we have an event planned that is a first step to help reconnect us and explore innovative ways to fulfill our needs for community. Join us for **Dinner Together on Friday, June 5, at 7:00 p.m.**, where HTLC members and friends will break virtual bread together and share in conversation that goes beyond the surface level. The Innovation Team is hosting this event to help bring our community together during this isolating time.

**Register now!** Dinner is paid for by the Innovation Hub Grant! Use this [RSVP](#) link to order your choice of street tacos from Habanero Tacos (our friendly immigrant-owned restaurant neighbor on Lake Street). The RSVP asks you whether you prefer to pick up your meal or if you need a volunteer to deliver your meal to you. (Feel free to participate in the Zoom conversation even if you'd prefer to provide your own dinner!) We'll use Zoom break-out groups to keep the conversations dinner party sized. Please complete the [RSVP](#) by May 30 if you plan to participate.

**Want to help Innovate?** If you are interested in the Innovation Team's work, have ideas to share, or want to help or join the team, please email me at [laurabolstad1@gmail.com](mailto:laurabolstad1@gmail.com). In particular, we'd love to hear from younger members or visitors about what would make their church experience more fulfilling and life-giving. What have you been wanting to get from your experience in our church community and perhaps haven't encountered yet?

We are living through a transformative time. Let's make the most of it and see if we can find new ways to walk *together on this spiritual journey*.

## PENTECOST

### READINGS

Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b;  
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23

### FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL: A WORD ON THE PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Payroll Protection Program (PPP) was established by the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the wake of COVID-19's significant economic disruption. The PPP offers small businesses, nonprofits, and churches the opportunity to apply for a loan of up to 2.5 months of personnel expenses. The loan, if used for the intended purposes, can be forgiven after 8 weeks. The goal of the PPP is to keep workers working.

In early April, the Minneapolis Area Synod hosted an information session about the PPP and encouraged congregations to consider applying. (Our own Ty Inglis, the synod treasurer, co-facilitated that conversation!) The Church Council, knowing that the pandemic will affect all areas of congregational life in the weeks and months to come, thoughtfully deliberated and swiftly acted to apply.

We received the loan (read: grant) in early May, for which we are grateful. These funds offer: (1) employment assurances to both salaried and hourly staff at Holy Trinity; (2) budgetary room for Holy Trinity to be generous with our building partners (Metro Work Center, Bright Prospects Cooperative Preschool, Minnesota Swahili Christian Congregation, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and the Building Dignity and Respect Standards Council), should their financial situations disallow them to fulfill their rental commitments (which account for over \$80,000 in our annual budget); (3) peace of mind to congregants, who have suffered significant economic hardship because of COVID-19 and who can no longer give at the levels they were prior to the pandemic.

We thank you for your continued generous giving! We are overwhelmed by the ways that this congregation has risen to meet the needs both inside our walls and in the wider community. When it would be easy to succumb to a narrowed vision, we have instead seen Holy Trinity embracing God's expansive vision for the world. With the Spirit's guidance and with the support of one another, we will continue to show and to receive mercy, grace, love, and abundance.

### A CELEBRATION OF ANN SCHROOTEN'S CYF LEADERSHIP

Join us for Pentecost worship (online) this Sunday, May 31, as we celebrate Ann Schrooten's faithful and creative leadership of our Children, Youth, and Family ministries since 2016. On June 1, Ann passes the baton for these programmatic responsibilities to David Rojas Martinez (pronounced DAH-VEED), our new Community Engagement and Education Coordinator. Ann isn't leaving; we are grateful that she will continue to lead the Children's Choir, *Cantate!*, and the Gloria Ringers!

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION

Pastor Ingrid hosts a Zoom call each Tuesday from 12:00 to 12:50 p.m. This conversation allows participants to see and to share with one another. The time closes with prayer. More information can be found in Pastor Ingrid's weekly email. Please note: Pastor Angela is on vacation until June 1.

## PARISH INFORMATION

### WORSHIP LINK FOR SUNDAY, MAY 24

In case you missed the worship video for Sunday, May 24, it can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/421655820>. We welcomed Bishop Ann Svennungsen as our preacher and Assistant to the Bishop, Craig Pederson, who led the service of installation for Pastor Doug Mork.

### BIG MEETING NIGHTS BEGIN IN JUNE

Beginning in June, on the first Thursday and the second Tuesday of each month, we will be hosting Big Meeting Nights. The purpose of these evenings is to gather our committees and working groups in one place (on Zoom) to build community and to foster collaboration between committees and working groups.

The schedule is as follows: Pastoral and Council leadership will provide a very brief update at 6:45 p.m. to interested persons. All participants will be together for this update. The meeting time will be held from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Committees and working groups will be in their own break-out rooms for their meetings.

#### ***Why encourage this change?***

Our congregation coordinates much of our ministry through the work of committees and working groups. We currently have over twenty committees and working groups engaging in meaningful and faithful work. In the past, pastors and program staff members have acted as the hubs of the wheels—each spoke representing a different committee or working group. We are moving to a new model to encourage inter-committee/working group communication and cross-committee/working group collaboration. Council leadership also believes this new model will help to fend off burnout for our pastors and program staff members, who are currently averaging 8-15 nights of work a month.

#### ***What other benefits might be realized?***

- It allows pastors and staff members to circulate between meetings.
- It invites new members into the work and play of this church with a very low barrier for entry. All meetings (with the exception of Personnel) are open to the public.
- It means that congregants can only serve on one or two committees or working groups at a time, which reinforces healthy boundaries and promotes power that is shared widely throughout the congregation.
- It means that committee and working group members get to see and appreciate the work of others.
- It means that zero time is spent in Doodle polls and endless email threads trying to find a good time to meet.
- It frees up evenings for *ad hoc projects or neighborhood events that would benefit from Holy Trinity's presence.*

#### ***What if our committee cannot meet during this time?***

We know that our new plan won't work for every member of the congregation. We hope that committee and working group members will experiment with the new model. If a committee or working group decides to meet at another time of the month, there is no guarantee that a pastor or program staff person will be present.

#### ***Does this change affect all committees and working groups?***

Almost! Church Council will continue to meet on the third Monday of the month.

#### ***Do all committees and working groups need to meet monthly?***

No, some committees and working groups prefer to meet every other month or a couple of times per year. We encourage committees and working groups to meet as often as their particular ministry demands.

#### ***How do I join the meeting?***

Your committee or working group chair will soon send out more information about joining the meeting.

### 2020 JOHNSON SYMPOSIUM

After thoughtful deliberation, we have decided to cancel the 2020 Johnson Symposium on Faith and Society. We made this decision to exercise an abundance of caution, in keeping with our deep and abiding love for the neighbor. We pray that we will again be able to welcome participants to the Johnson Symposium in 2021.

### THE CHURCH HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

We are working with Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha (CTUL) to ensure that the communities they support (low-wage workers) have access to personal protective equipment (face masks, gloves, sanitizer, and know-your-rights flyers). Last week, we sent \$3,000 from Holy Trinity's Coronavirus Assistance Fund to help meet the need. (Donations to the Coronavirus Assistance Fund and to the Church's General Fund can be mailed to the church or given electronically from your [bank account](#) or by [credit card](#). We thank you all for your compassionate giving.)

### MINNESOTA: NO EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING

It takes less than three minutes to go the website, fill out the online form, and request your ballot. And you can do it both for the August primary and the November general election! Three minutes. No lines. No hassle. Your ballot mailed to you! To order your ballot, go to: <http://mnvotes.org>.

### FROM NICKI HINES, COUNCIL PRESIDENT

This weekend Governor Walz signed an executive order allowing places of worship to open at 25% capacity, and up to 250 people, at services, so long as they follow public health guidelines. This announcement comes one week after the Church Council, in partnership with the pastors, made the decision that Holy Trinity does not plan to host any in-person small or large group gatherings until *at least September 13*.

We wish that the coronavirus followed our rules and orders, but the one thing we can say for certain about the virus is that it does not. Cases and deaths due to the virus continue to increase in Minnesota, public health guidelines of physical distancing and mask wearing remain, and even though we are now allowed to meet, the Council continues to believe that it is the faithful, prudent, and wise decision not to meet until at least the fall.

That is hard to hear. I, for one, would much rather be talking with you face to face, singing loudly, sharing the bread and wine together in community rather than watching from my futon in my upstairs T.V. room. But more important is the safety and health of our congregation, including our most vulnerable members. So I will continue to drink my liquor store wine, cajole my kids into watching the service with me, connect on Zoom with members when I'm able, and pray for patience, perseverance, and strength, until we can gather safely and sing loudly, moved by the Holy Spirit.

One theme that I hear each week in the virtual services is that God is with us and that God is much bigger than this virus. We will come through this, with God walking beside us.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF APRIL 30, 2020

Budget requirement	325,934.00
Budget receipts	338,734.53
World Hunger	1,951.00
Disaster Relief	2,100.00
Opening Doors	2,890.00