



THE COMMUNITY CHURCH

On 31st Street between Minnehaha and 28th Avenues Minneapolis, MN 55406 • 612-729-8358 • office@htlcmpls.org • www.htlcmpls.org
Ingrid C. A. Rasmussen, Angela T. Khabeab, and Doug Mork, Pastors

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP EATON

The room was spare and dimly lit. We sat on folding chairs in a circle—young Honduran women and some of us from the ELCA. We had come to Honduras to observe the work of AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). This is the ELCA’s strategy to help youth who have been forced to flee their home countries because of violence, abuse, extortion by gangs and extreme poverty. *Amparo* is the Spanish word for shelter or refuge.

In this case, AMMPARO partnered with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonites to resettle returned migrants—those who had tried to seek asylum in the United States but had failed or had been denied and deported back to Honduras.

One by one they told us their stories of fear and desperation. Not a one undertook the long and dangerous trek north on a whim. They told us about the abuse they had suffered, about family members who had been killed by gangs, about the inability to make a living because of the extortion by organized crime. They talked about the bitter sadness of leaving home and family, and the uncertainty of the future.

I remember one young woman in particular. She was pregnant when she tried to migrate to the United States. She had the baby somewhere along the way. She was far from home, mostly alone and desperately wanted her mother to be with her. None of this is what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new and strange existence. She and her baby were now back in Honduras—but not at home. Home was too dangerous.

Remember last Christmas? Remember all of the preparations, the travel to be with family? Remember the holy beauty of the Christmas Eve liturgy and receiving Christ’s grace and forgiveness at his table? The shopping and Christmas caroling? The in-person gatherings? All that has changed. The pandemic hasn’t forced us from our homes but into our homes, sheltering in place, isolated. Not together, but physically distanced. Not gathered with family and friends, but forced apart because of the threat of infection. Forced by circumstances beyond our control into this strange existence. Oh, there will be Christmas carols piped into grocery stores and other essential services, but they will be painful reminders of how life used to be.

We are reminded of the experience of the exiles in Babylon: “By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land” (Psalm 137)?

(continued in next column)

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

READINGS

Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20;
Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-1-18

ADULT FORUM

SUNDAYS, 9:30 A.M.

Login at zoom.us or call 312-626-6799 or click [here](#)
Meeting ID: 858 5687 1594 / Password: 317879

To view the adult forum from Sunday, December 27, click <https://vimeo.com/495224158>

JANUARY 3 “Minnesota Sanctuary Church Coalition” Daniel Romero

Daniel Romero, Community Minister for Immigration at Lyndale United Church of Christ, consultant to the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration, and organizer for the Minnesota Sanctuary Coalition will present. His presentation will include information on the national and local immigration landscape.

JANUARY 10 “Bridge of Reconciliation” Rev. Richard Coleman

The Rev. Richard Coleman, Pastor of Wayman AME Church in Minneapolis and Executive Director of Hope United Community Development Corporation (HUCDC) will share information about the Bridge of Reconciliation, a growing movement of racial healing in our cities.

I told the young Honduran woman about another young woman who was forced to leave home because of a government decree. She, too, was pregnant and made a long and difficult journey. She, too, was far from home and without her mother when the baby came. She had to find shelter wherever she could. This wasn’t what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new existence. That young woman was Mary and the child was Jesus. Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating. The young Honduran woman, and all of us, can find hope because of the birth of Mary’s child. There is no God-forsaken place and we are never alone—not in hospital rooms, or sheltering in place, or Zoom calls or on dangerous roads.

Many of us will not be physically home for Christmas, but we are truly home in Christ.

PARISH INFORMATION

as we prepare
to turn the page
from disrupted year
to disrupted year

we gather
that which is
worth saving
adaptability
strength
curiosity
courage
love
vulnerability
grit

even as we pack
our knapsacks
we acknowledge
that not everyone
can collect belongings
laid low by
pandemic
isolation
injustice
life
loss

they will need
to be carried
into the new
year
the new
world
the new
beginning
the new

not as ones
without agency
but as those
whose energy
ought not be spent
walking

it's a miracle
to be given another
day
another
year
another
president
another
opportunity
to live into this
calling
to be human
separated
but never alone

Ingrid C. A. Rasmussen
2020/2021

WORSHIP LINK FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

The worship video for Sunday, December 27, can be found [here](#). We worship with Bishop Ann Svennungsen and our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America neighbors on this day.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

To view the recorded Christmas Eve service, click here: <https://vimeo.com/494175709>.

YEAR-END GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Every year Holy Trinity anticipates and relies on a year-end increase in offerings that helps support the ministry of this church. This Christmas season, please consider making an additional contribution to Holy Trinity, or to our special appeals, ELCA World Hunger, Seminary Support Fund, and Wilderness Canoe Base. To donate from your bank account online, click [here](#). To donate with a credit card, click [here](#). **Contributions must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2020, to be counted as a 2020 donation. Thank you!**

BIG MEETING NIGHTS JANUARY 7 AND 12

Committee chairs should let Pam (pwetterlund@htlcmpls.org) know if you plan to meet and which night (Thursday, January 7, or Tuesday, January 12) your committee plans to meet.

2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Unless you have opted out of receiving offering envelopes in 2021, they will be mailed directly to your home each quarter. You may opt out anytime by notifying Pam in the office (pwetterlund@htlcmpls.org).

CONCERNING PEOPLE

Please don't hesitate to contact us with pastoral care emergencies (Pastor Ingrid: 612.875.6679; Pastor Angela: 612.248.9121; Pastor Doug: 612.310.5752). We will do our best to care for you from a distance.

YTD FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2020

Budget Requirements	\$737,136.00
YTD Actual Expenses	\$824,265.34
	<i>(including COVID assistance)</i>
Budget Receipts	\$811,509.78
	<i>(including COVID donations)</i>
Justice Funds received	\$462,810.45
Justice Expenses	\$243,033.15

Special gift in memory of **Steven Fredel** by Rob and Sharon Englund, and in memory of **Carolyn Schurr** by Pam Kildahl
Justice Fund in memory of **Carolyn Schurr** by Carol and David Berg