



Pastor's Ponderings

We are coming to the end of Lent and hopefully to the continuation of what we have started in our spiritual lives, in our COVID-protecting life (masks, social distancing, vaccinations), and in the new creation life as Jesus promises from the cross. This journey we are on and of which we pursue, is living, failing, and rising again in the arms of Jesus' forgiveness, grace, and presence.



In a devotion I read recently they quoted a film star in the 1920's, Mary Pickford, saying, "This thing we call failure is not the falling down, but the staying down."

Richard Rohr, a Franciscan friar, author, and explorer of the enneagram, wrote a book I am reading called, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. In this book he explores the need to use all our life's successes and challenges not to stay the course, but to change, grow, live, and serve. He sees us in times of failure and despair needing to "fall upward." It encourages the journey of becoming whole and healthy while benefiting ourselves and others selflessly. It is through the work of living and engaging in the challenges of life that lead us to a place and ability to be there for others in their challenges and for ourselves.

Jesus suffered, died, and rose from the dead so that we might have a pathway in which we can die to sin and rise again. It is not a one-time event for us humans, but a daily event of descending and ascending in Christ. The quest in Lent (with the Lenten disciplines of prayer, generosity, and self-reflection) is to move to a place in which our spirituality connects us to the new meanings, solid values, and to a reassuring awareness of God's presence. The journey has no end; but with God, our community, and the knowledge from others who have journeyed before us, we are fully supplied to meet life with energy and to live life to the fullest.

May God Bless your falling and rising in Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

Pastor's Bible Study—Beginning April 9

Friday Mornings 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
at Augustana LC and via Zoom



Explore Joshua

"One of the Bible's greatest testimonies to the mighty acts of God on behalf of Israel."

Pastor Fred will lead an eight-week Bible study on Friday mornings. Each session stands on its own, so come to one or all. The group will meet at Augustana (3143 Eggert Road in Tonawanda) and also via Zoom. If you would like a Zoom invitation, email Pastor at pastor_tol@verizon.net or call the Augustana church office at 832-5720 and leave a message. We look forward to seeing you in person or on Zoom!

Reflections on Respite

I'm sitting here remembering my "first-of-the-month" Wednesdays at the TLC at TOL Respite program. I think I speak for most, if not all, volunteers, that this day each month was a highlight, a blessing, a joy.



If you had been with us you would have seen kindness, laughter, friendship, and care. There was never a dull moment as we ate and drank our way through muffins and coffee and juice to begin the day. Then we played word games, guessing games, wrote poems, enjoyed chair yoga, played bingo, created crafts, and had a beanbag toss, all before lunch!

The lunch ladies always served well-planned, delicious meals as we chatted and shared stories. We celebrated birthdays and holidays, sometimes with a parade around the hall. Often we had a visit from a canine friend and then always there was singing! That's when the room moved to the talents of piano players, guitar strummers and music videos as even the quietest guests joined in. I smile thinking how the rock-'n-roll video inspired some spontaneous jitterbug dancing!

Since COVID-19 has shut us down there is a hole in my "first Wednesdays." There are no more gatherings, for sure, and there is deep sadness knowing that several of our guests have said their final goodbyes and could never be with us again.

It's been a long year for everyone for many reasons. As with all of life there have been ups and downs, joys and sorrows. This year we were taken by surprise and could only realize what we'd lost after it was gone. We've been thrown into a new reality. Who knows if TLC at TOL will ever return. For now it's all in God's hands.

What I do know is that I miss my First Wednesdays...

Diane Schmidtke

Items for the Worship Bulletins

All items for the Sunday bulletins should be submitted to the church office by **9:00 AM on Wednesdays**. Thank you!



Requests for "Christ in Our Home"

The daily devotional booklets for April through June are available in the narthex or through the church office.

If you would like a copy sent to you, please call the church office at 836-4868 and leave your name and address or email your information to trinityoldlutheran@verizon.net.

We would be pleased to send a copy to you!





Holy Week and Easter Worship Schedule (In-church and Zoom)

Holy Thursday, April 1
Trinity Old Lutheran, 7:00 PM (Zoom Only)

Good Friday, April 2
Augustana Lutheran, 11:00 AM
Trinity Old Lutheran, 7:00 PM



Easter, April 4
Augustana Lutheran, 9:30 AM
Trinity Old Lutheran, 11:00 AM

You are invited to join TOL's Hybrid Worship Services

(In-church or on Zoom)!

We continue to follow COVID-19 health guidelines by: wearing a mask at all times, following six feet distancing when possible, cleaning, and sanitizing all areas used.



Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana Lutheran Churches

Inspire us to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. Teach us to give freely of ourselves and to offer our lives in service. Show us your will for the ministries at Augustana and Trinity Old Lutheran. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.

Adult Ed. with Charlie Schmidtke in the Fireside Room and on Zoom

Mondays at 1:00 PM



We started the New Testament with Mary and Elizabeth. The remaining classes are listed below. Also, if you have any suggestions for next year's study, please let me know!

Charlie

- April 12: Women from the Crucifixion to Pentecost
- April 26: Women after Pentecost
- May 10: Lydia and Priscilla

Trinity Tidings

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Karen Mulartrick and Jan Sherman, Co-Editors



March Mission



Thank you for your support of Family Justice Center (FJC) of Erie County. Your donations will help the organization accomplish its mission of ending the domestic violence and abuse that exists in our communities.

FJC Mission:

Provide "services and support to individuals in unhealthy relationships, and the education our community needs to break larger cycles of relationship abuse. Our comprehensive and collaborative service model tears down barriers to service, enabling our clients to heal and cultivate hope."

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April Mission: Augustana LC's Refugee and Immigrant Driving Program



This month we will focus on the "Refugee and Immigrant Driving Program" that has been ongoing at Augustana for over 25 years. During that time, volunteers have assisted more than 100 participants from 30 different countries!

Obtaining driver's licenses will enable individuals to gain better access to employment opportunities, healthcare, neighborhoods and schools, as well as to becoming involved in community activities. In addition to those receiving their licenses, others have earned their driving permits.

Your donations will be used to help defray program costs. Envelopes are located in the narthex or you can mail your checks to the church office (please indicate on the check that it is designated for the "Refugee and Immigrant Driving Program").

For more information, please call 832-5720 (Augustana church office), or visit www.augustanaonline.org.

Online Giving to TOL



Tithe.ly is available for online giving. You can set up your account through the TOL website (www.trinityoldlutheran.com) or download an easy-to-use app to your phone. The site is user-friendly and safe to use.

From Pastor Kopp's Message in the 2020 Annual Report to the Congregation (March 7, 2021)

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us." *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

"Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I write this report after a year of change and adjustment due to the Covid-19 virus. It has been a year of tension and stress for our country and the world. The pandemic to date has killed half a million people and infected almost 30 million in the United States. During this year, the names of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and so many more, made us stop in our tracks to think about racism, our part in it, and how we need to move forward with change. Weather disasters, including an unprecedented number of wildfires in the world and weather events that recently froze Texas and half the United States has brought us to see the vulnerability of the world of which God made us stewards. We experienced the volatile election, which culminated in a violent riot to overthrow its results. The Worst of Times.

It is a year in which we saw for a quick instance, how people can rally together and be selfless when we all wore masks and social distanced. We saw how technology brought communities together despite the call for isolation. We used Zoom for worship and meetings, which helped us maintain a sense of church. This year we were blessed with a government loan that helped us stay open along with the generosity of our members and friends. We prayed more often and directly for people's needs, we studied on Zoom and through hybrid (Zoom/in person) classrooms. We saw births of babies, new people connecting to our church, and we celebrated healings and hope. The Best of Times.

As we look to the future, together we are called to continue to share the good news, work for justice, pray unceasingly, grow in our knowledge of the Word, and Praise the Lord always."

To these aspirations I remain,
Pastor Fred Kopp he/him/his

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13



Looking for a good book, a puzzle or DVD? Please stop by the Book Sale in the downstairs nursery room any day (Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon). The tables are filled with something for everyone—children to adults.

NEW! Proceeds from the book sale go towards replacing the well-worn material on the communion railing kneelers!

"Hearts & Hands"—Assisting the Community during COVID-19



The organization is operating with limited and restricted services as the pandemic continues. No in-home services are currently available. However, by following COVID-19 health and wellness guidelines, volunteers currently assist with the following services:

- Transportation to everywhere it's needed.
- Non-contact grocery deliveries.
- "Friendly phone calls."

More volunteers are also needed and training is available via Zoom or by phone. For more program details and information (and how to become a volunteer), please visit the HNH website at www.hnhcares.org/services or call 406-8311.

TOL is a part of this community of volunteers—Neighbor Helping Neighbor Volunteer Program!

Local Food Pantries

Your donations will continue to benefit the pantries at Good Shepherd LC in Tonawanda and Community of Good Neighbors (CGN) in Buffalo. Please use the shopping cart or the marked boxes for your items or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesdays – Fridays, 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon).



Suggested items that are needed include:

- Canned goods (vegetables, soups, tuna, etc.)
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Jar items (spaghetti sauce, applesauce)
- Boxes of pantry staples (cereal, pasta)
- Paper goods (toilet paper, paper towels, etc.)
- Gift cards (Tops or Wegmans stores) can be taken to the church office.

Operation Christmas Child

Suggested items for the shoeboxes are listed below. Please leave your donations in the marked container located under the window shelf in the narthex.

- Mar.: combs, brushes, hair items
Apr.: small toys for boys and girls (foam ball, slinky, jump rope, small cars, trucks, etc.)
May: sunglasses, stickers, jewelry
June: stuffed toys 10" or smaller, musical instruments or small dolls
July: pens, pencils, small manual pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, pencil cases
Aug.: markers, coloring pads, notebooks
Sept.: coloring books, crayons,
Oct.: watercolor paints, games, puzzles



Prayer Ventures, April 2021

Good Friday Remember the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of God, for our sake and salvation. Give thanks that God looks upon us with concern, gracious love and mercy.

Easter Sunday He is risen! Praise God! Give thanks that through Jesus' resurrection we are no longer constrained by sin and death but can celebrate salvation, new life and God's wonderful grace, which reclaims and changes us.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Look around and give thanks for the people, community, world, wonders of creation and signs of God's presence and work that surround you.

Arab American Heritage Month Remember in prayer the diverse gifts, cultures, heritages and stories of our Arab and Middle Eastern siblings in Christ, who remind us of the rich history and tradition of Christ's church in the world. Ask God to bless and further the work, witness and advocacy of Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries in the ELCA and the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage of the ELCA.

Give thanks for the generosity shared from across our church, which helps us respond to the needs of the world, live out our faith in service to our neighbors and proclaim the gospel everywhere.

Give thanks for signs of spring! Some places still have snow on the ground, yet others show signs of nature blossoming and new life emerging. Give thanks for the good, life-giving work of our Creator, who urges patience and stirs new life and hope in every season.

Pray for Creation Justice Ministries, Lutherans Restoring Creation and other ministries, organizations and networks that deepen our awareness and knowledge of creation and the environment and equip us to care for creation and our communities.

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!" Pray that God will help us better understand what living together in unity requires of us as siblings in Christ and as world citizens striving for peace, justice, reconciliation and mutual care.

Pray that, as we share the gospel and serve our neighbor, we will recognize the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of our siblings in Christ who are also doing God's work in the world.

Give thanks for volunteers of all ages and gifts who serve in congregations, including teachers, assisting ministers, child care providers, committee members, greeters, singers, musicians, people who fix things and those who visit the ill or homebound. Praise God for the rich diversity of gifts, skills and passions we share in the body of Christ.

Earth Day Give thanks and glory to God for the blessings and mysteries of creation, entrusted to us to sustain and enrich all generations. Pray that God will make us wise, generous and responsible stewards of nature and Earth's resources for the glory of our Creator and the well-being of our neighbor.

Give thanks for our church's partnership with Lutheran World Relief to support pandemic emergency response projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In this sometimes lonely world, praise God that we always have Jesus, a loving shepherd who knows us and provides us with care, guidance, renewal, comfort and courage as we face the challenges of daily life.

Pray for the needs of people in your neighborhood and community, give thanks for their joys and recognize how their lives intersect with yours.

Give thanks for national and local leaders, health care workers and volunteers who continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and help us recover physically, economically, spiritually and emotionally. Pray that God will help them persevere and that we will generously express our support and gratitude.

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Earth Day April 22 and Arbor Day, April 30

"Earth Day The earth is a gift and treasure—the handiwork of our Creator—sustaining all life. Ask God for the will and wisdom to care for the earth and all its resources and give us courage to make difficult decisions that may involve sacrifice, changing attitudes and behaviors, and thinking beyond our immediate desires and needs for the sake of the world."



From: *ELCA Prayer Ventures, April 2017.*

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Update: Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Quilts

Although the TOL LWR quilts made during 2019 and 2020 were not able to be collected and sent to Baltimore for worldwide distribution, good news was received that amid the devastating August 4, 2020 blast in Beirut, Lebanon, the three shipping containers containing quilts and health kits were located. (An estimated 190 people died in the explosion and over 300,000 people lost their homes—in a city that was already experiencing a serious economic crisis as well as the spreading COVID-19 pandemic.)

"It took weeks for LWR's staff and partners to gain access to the blast site. In addition to the overwhelming humanitarian need they found throughout the city, the port itself was chaos, and safety and security were a challenge. But once officials were able to dig their way through the wreckage, a blessing arose out of the ashes: they found that the containers full of LWR quilts and kits had been shielded from the blast by a large concrete building. While the containers were damaged, the seals were intact and the materials inside had been spared. In just the right place, at just the right time, hope rose out of the darkness.

Our team and partners rejoiced and acted as quickly as they could to mobilize distribution for the most-affected families. Primarily, these families were refugees from Palestine and Syria, who had already fled harrowing situations in their home countries—only to meet more struggle and crisis in Lebanon.

Tonight, more than 24,000 children, women and men are wrapped in your love, and blessed to know that even in a difficult time, they are not alone."

From: *Lutheran World Relief Quilt & Kit Ministry Guide, 2021*
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