



## Pastor's Ponderings

I, maybe like you, am filled with sadness, anxiety, and an overwhelming sensation that I am not in control of much. We are in the sixth month of adjusting to COVID-19, a very contagious and dangerous virus. I am concerned about the weather, and creation as it groans. Earth issues seem to be escalating with a derecho (on-land hurricane) hitting Iowa; hurricanes battering the United States' coasts and causing great injury, death, and destruction; fires burning out of control in California making many homeless; earthquakes in Iran and Turkey; locust infestations in Ethiopia, Kenya, and other African countries, and other groans too many to name. I am troubled especially in these last months as we have been made aware of how much further we need to go in addressing racism in the United States: from police and their training and use of lethal force, to inequities in the system that seem to benefit unequally those who are white and discriminate against black, brown, and other people of color. I am bothered by the seeming lack of human decency when refugees and immigrant families seek only to better their lives and live in safety and they are treated like criminals who have committed egregious felonies. On top of hearing the daily struggles of people around the world, there seems to be a disintegration of kindness, ethical behavior, and decency.

I named some large concerns, and there are many more that weigh on me and maybe on you. To keep my sanity, I sometimes escape into a fantasy novel or turn to watch and listen to sports. Yet voices of athletes I respect are sharing that struggles with racism are too important to ignore and therefore games have been canceled in order to emphasize their struggle. Where do we turn?

To meditation, counseling, family, and community.  
To Jesus and Biblical stories of comfort and action.

Jesus said to his disciples as he prepared to leave earth and ascend into heaven, that they will have an advocate—the Holy Spirit—to give them hope, courage, and strength. Jesus also said, "I will be with you to the end of the age" Matthew 28:17. WE ARE NOT ALONE.

We are to love our neighbor as ourselves, and who is our neighbor? It is a range from those we know and those we meet along the way of life, even those we may have been taught to despise and ignore. In a story Jesus told, a Samaritan aided a critically injured Jewish man and supported him with his time and finances, and Jesus said this Samaritan acted like a neighbor. WE ARE TO BE A NEIGHBOR TO ALL.

We are to pray unceasingly as the apostle Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica, or as Jesus showed again and again as he "went away and prayed." WE ARE TO PRAY.

We are not to let our hearts be troubled, instead believe in Jesus. WE ARE TO HAVE FAITH.

We are to rest before and after action is taken, so that more action can be taken. In other words, to be effective taking care of others we need to take care of ourselves. LOVE OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

And as Jesus, tortured on a cross, proclaimed, and as we pray in the Lord's Prayer, forgiveness is key. WE ARE TO FORGIVE.

By attaching myself to a God of Love, a God with humility, who shared Jesus with us, a God that empowers and expects us to sacrifice and use our gifts to the Glory of God, I am feeling less overwhelmed and more at peace to act in a manner that is pleasing to God and to humankind.

Jesus said, "... everything is possible with God," and Paul writes "nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord," and on the Rock of Jesus, we can assemble our lives and move from the feeling of sinking in sand, to a sure foundation in order to address the challenges we face.

I hope that sharing a little part of my journey helps you.

Peace,  
Pastor Fred he/him/his

## 2020 Alzheimer's Walk Join Team TOL for a Walk in the Neighborhood!

**Saturday, September 12; meet at the church at 10:00 AM!**



Hope you can join us! Also, it's not too late to make a donation in support of Team TOL! Please visit the Alzheimer's Association website at [act.alz.org](http://act.alz.org) and look for Team

TOL—or mail a donation to the local office. (Please indicate on your check that it should be credited to Team TOL.)

Alzheimer's Association, WNY Chapter  
6215 Sheridan Drive, #100  
Williamsville, NY 14221

Thank you!  
Earlene



## TOL Annual Chiavetta's BBQ Chicken Dinner

**Sunday, September 13, 2020  
12:00 Noon to 3:00 PM**

**Dinners: \$12 (includes two salads, roll and butter)**

**Note:** We will be serving outside only as a drive-through service.

**We need volunteers** to do various tasks such as serve, cashier, help with salad making, and be a "runner" to bring the salads up from the kitchen and/or get the chicken from the grill. Please call Earlene at 860-9345 if you are available to help in any way. We will do our best to social distance and be as safe as possible.

Thanks so much!  
Earlene

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Community of Good Neighbors in Buffalo and Lutheran Disaster Response.

## 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.

The [Prayer Chain](#) is available to anyone having a prayer request. Please contact Carol Diana at 634-5282.

### From Pastor Fred's Letter Tuesday, August 18, 2020

Dear Folk,

"Worship the Lord with Gladness" Psalm 100

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. On behalf of the Church Council, I bring you greetings and a plan to move forward in this time of a pandemic. For over 5 months we have been isolating, staying safe, and dealing with the very real and unpredictable coronavirus pandemic. Thank you for your prayers and patience as we navigate CDC guidelines, New York State regulations and Denominational suggestions.

Our committees have worked hard to come to a decision to **open for worship**.

... we will begin **indoor worship service on Sunday, August 30 at 11 am**, including our Zoom congregation.

We look forward to this **hybrid** worship and seeing some whom we have not seen. Even with precautions, we advise those who feel they are sick or compromised to stay home and to join us on Zoom, or attend the Lutheran service Sundays on Me-TV on Cable Channel 5 at 10 am.

Yours in Christ,  
*Pastor Fred Kopp, he/him/his*



### "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, September 13

Pray that our congregations, together with neighboring congregations, ecumenical and interreligious partners, community organizations and Lutheran agencies, will respond daily to the endless opportunities for serving our neighbor and addressing critical social needs, loving our neighbors and making our communities stronger, healthier and more hopeful.

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### Mission for September

The focus for September will be in support of ELCA Disaster Response. Please use the pew envelopes or mail your donation to the church (indicate Lutheran Disaster Response on your check). Thank you.

"Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need." (from: [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org))

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## Trinity Tidings

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### Prayer Ventures for September 2020



Give thanks and take comfort in knowing that God is trustworthy and unwavering in remembering and accompanying us every moment of our lives — in our joy, suffering and complicated situations.

September often marks a time of beginning, with students starting school, congregations launching programs and creation transitioning into a new season. But due to the pandemic, this year is different, presenting challenges we have not faced before. Pray that the Spirit will grant us wisdom, creativity and patience as we seek new ways of being church together, attend to the needs of children and youth, care for one another and fight the spread of COVID-19.

There is no better time than right now for us to hold on to what is good, treat one another with respect, extend hospitality to strangers and those different from ourselves, seek peace, and care for our neighbors, including our enemies. Pray for strength, empathy, compassion and boldness in our faith and daily life as we follow Jesus.

Pray for farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers as they struggle through the pandemic. Ask God to bless every aspect of their work, from planning and planting to tending crops and animals to harvesting and distributing their bounty, which feeds the world.

Pray that the Spirit might help us understand and follow the ways and commandments of God for the well-being of humanity, and that our life together might shine with justice, compassion, unity, care for those who suffer and a vibrant faith in Jesus Christ.

Give thanks for the good we do together through ELCA World Hunger and our partners, responding to the critical needs of people everywhere. Pray that our work will bring hope and relief to communities in need and will foster sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.

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### August Mission

Thank you for your donations of non-perishable food items for the Food Pantry at the Community of Good Neighbors ministry (formerly Resurrection Lutheran Church, Genesee and Doat Streets) in Buffalo. Pastor Miranda Hammer leads the ministry.

"Kind words can be short and easy,  
but their echoes are truly endless."

*Mother Teresa*