Dear Members and Friends of Christ Church Lutheran,

As I write this June Courier cover letter, we are leaning into the season of Pentecost when we celebrate the Holy Spirit as God’s presence within and among us. Normally we would be preparing to gather in the sanctuary of Christ Church, decorated with red fabrics, red geraniums, and ourselves – dressed in red to celebrate the life of the church.

We will live in the season of Pentecost through November – a church-year season also referred to as “ordinary time”, although this season is far from ordinary! Ten weeks ago, we made the difficult decision to suspend in-person worship and congregational gatherings in order to care for one another and our neighbors. We moved to on-line worship twice a week through Lent, four times during Holy Week, and weekly throughout the seven-week season of Easter. We chose to worship and shelter at home to reduce the risks of spreading the highly contagious and life-threatening coronavirus.

The pandemic was not on our radar three months ago. Since March we have been navigating this new reality one day, one step, and one week at a time. We have relied on the knowledge of others, including the CDC, the Minnesota Department of Health, The Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA, and other faith leaders in the Twin Cities area. Their collective wisdom has allowed us to make faithful decisions related to health and safety, congregational care, and community service.

After several meetings and thoughtful conversations in which we raised questions and looked at this pandemic from a variety of perspectives, Christ Church council, pastors and cantors have decided to continue our current practice of “Worship at Home” through August. We do not plan to host in-person small or large group gatherings through this same time period. In August, we will reassess the situation and make a new recommendation, using all of the aforementioned counsel.

Our way of living as church over the past ten weeks has changed significantly. We experience many losses in not being together, and yet, we believe safety and physical distancing is the call of the church in this time and place. We also believe the Spirit of God is moving among us in these times. As we live into the summer months, we will explore ways that we might strengthen the online vitality of our life and faith, as well as expand programs that support congregational life, vision and values.

The past ten weeks of congregational life have been surprisingly full. We have adopted Zoom video conferencing and used the technology for staff, committee, council and small group meetings. We have hosted congregational coffee hours and a congregational meeting. Pastor Haaland has learned how to mix sound recordings and make videos that support our shared worship life.

Christ Church staff created home offices from which we could work; we have worked on-site, as possible and necessary. Church Administrator, Laurel Jacobson, is activating the new church computer: installing and upgrading all needed software, and transferring existing data into the new computer and operating system, which will support and enhance many ministries of Christ Church.

With congregational approval, the Property Committee and Council leadership of Christ Church will implement all aspects of the old boiler demolition and installation of a new boiler for the church, inclusive of the new and improved air circulation system. Chuck Merrell has retired and a cleaning service has been temporarily contracted to provide basic cleaning.

Small groups within the congregation continue to nurture relationships and ministries – Stationery artists are making cards at home, weavers are connecting and weaving at home, knitters are gathering as a Zoom group with conversation and companionship, B.A.S.I.C.s are connecting with each other by phone. The racial justice task force presented a report that synthesizes the interests and passions expressed by congregational members at the March Forum. They will continue to lead, equipping us to learn and grow as people of faith committed to racial justice.

This summer, Pastor Jensen will facilitate a participatory review of the Christ Church Children’s Ministry Program. Tyler Egge, Children’s Ministry Director; Pastors Jensen and Haaland, the children’s ministry committee, teachers and volunteers will design a plan to serve the increased number of children whom we anticipate will participate in the program. A confirmation program will be designed as an addition to the existing children’s ministry programs of faith formation.

With the support of Mary Bode, staff will design a phone network of congregational members that will ensure every congregational member receives at least one “friendly visitor” phone call every month. Pastoral care needs will be referred to the pastors, who will also make calls to keep in touch with members.

(Continued on page 3)
June Birthdays
6/5 John Buegel, Yi-ru Chen-Sarkanen
6/8 Harvey Leuning
6/10 Melody Pauling
6/19 Pr. Haaland
6/20 Roger Gomoll
6/22 Bethany Schowengerdt
6/24 Marge Meffert
6/25 Sarah Brunsvold, Tressa Niermann, Ken Schoenike
6/26 Tatum Nooney, Jim Strom, Laurel Jacobson
6/27 Edward Lief
6/29 Stamatis Zeris
6/30 Brad Hubert

Happy Birthday, everyone!

Lectionary Readings for June

June 7
*The Holy Trinity*
Genesis 1:1-2:4a
Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

June 14
*Second Sunday in Pentecost*
Exodus 19:2-8a
Psalm 100
Romans 5:1-8
Matthew 9:35-10:8

June 21
*Third Sunday in Pentecost*
Jeremiah 20:7-13
Romans 6:1b-11
Matthew 10:24-39

June 28
*Fourth Sunday in Pentecost*
Jeremiah 28:5-9
Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18
Romans 6:12-23
Matthew 10:40-42

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Treasurer’s Update

Our financial position remains good through April 2020. Member Giving is ahead of budget for the month and YTD; thank you for your continued faithful giving. While other income sources are lower than budgeted, expenses continue to be lower than budget for the year as well. We are also grateful for the flexibility that the Congregation provided via its recent approval of the Paycheck Protection Program loan - that may be fully or partially forgiven - offered by the Small Business Administration as well as the Boiler Replacement financing plan of a loan from our Endowment Fund. These measures - coupled with your continued support and our leaders careful use of our financial resources - will help us as we continue to support the ongoing mission and ministry of Christ Church Lutheran. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

~Bradford C. Hubert, Treasurer

Council Report for May

Colin Watkins led our devotion by reflecting on the coming of Pentecost and the multitude of ways that God is eternally present through the many seasons of our lives.

We began the meeting’s agenda by reviewing the important decisions during our virtual Special Congregation meeting, when 62 members joined online and through their telephones. Meeting in that way was necessitated by the Covid-19 stay-at-home order. The congregation voted to approve three important recommendations: 1) entering into a forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loan to support staff payroll and utilities costs; 2) replacing the boiler and making other energy-efficient upgrades to the heating system; and 3) paying for the boiler replacement project by borrowing from the church’s endowment fund through a 10-year repayable loan. The Council shared its gratitude for the congregation’s careful and thoughtful support for these important issues.

We received an update that a cleaning company will be contracted to support our limited cleaning needs during this time of the church’s closing. And we briefly discussed planning that will need to be undertaken over the summer to enhance children’s ministry and education, in preparation for the fall’s programming—including the church’s first confirmation class in over a decade!

We received an important report from the Racial Justice Task Force that shared its reflections on the congregation’s engagement with difficult issues at a March forum. The congregation expressed an openness and eagerness to continue exploring multi-faceted racial justice issues within our society and the church. The Council discussed its intention to support and promote these conversations.

Finally, the Council deliberated about impacts of Covid-19 on church operations and our worshipping life and ministry. Unfortunately, it does not appear that gathering for in-person worship will be safe for the summer season. We expressed a general consensus to support the recommendation of our pastors and cantors to continue worshipping from our homes. While it is difficult for us all to be away from Christ Church and our community, we will continue to seek ways to minister to one another and to find God’s presence in our lives. We adjoined with the Lord’s Prayer.

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~Bradford C. Hubert, Treasurer
Call Committee Update

After the Zoom meeting with the congregation and Bishop Svenningsen on April 26, the call committee made a couple of changes to our Ministry Site Profile and then resubmitted it to the Synod. The MSP will be available to anyone who would like to review it. To make that request, you can leave a message at the church office or contact the committee by email at callcommittee@christchurchluth.org. We have received a few nominations from congregation members which have been sent on to the Synod. If you would like to nominate anyone, now is the time to do it. Please contact Bob Victorin-Vangerud for a nomination form by email: vicvang@yahoo.com.au.

We believe that the Synod will be vetting and starting to suggest pastoral applicants to us in the next few weeks. We are not quite sure how we will proceed once we have reviewed the applications and decided who we would like to interview. Initial interviews could possibly be conducted by Zoom or with face-to-face meetings while physical distancing. We are also aware and expect that we may receive applications from outside of the Twin Cities area, which will present additional concerns. These are all problems that we will be tackling as they present themselves. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Courier Closeup – Sharon Kambeitz

This month’s Closeup features Sharon Kambeitz, who has been a member of Christ Church Lutheran for two years.

Sharon, when did you start attending Christ Church Lutheran and what brought you here?

I started attending Christ Church Lutheran in October 2018. A few weeks prior I had met a church member, Steven Seltz, at the Ordway Music Theater. We had adjacent season tickets and became good friends. When I learned he attended Christ Church Lutheran I asked to join him on Sunday. I was born and raised a Catholic and attended Catholic schools from grade school through graduate school. I joined Christ Church in the spring of 2019 and became Lutheran. When I walked out of church that day I thought how great it would be to share this with my mom, but she had died a year prior. To this day I think of all the good things I want to share with her. (Of course, I do not know how she’d handle that her daughter would convert!)

Do you live in the neighborhood?

I live in Eagan, Minnesota.

What about our church keeps you coming back?

The overwhelming sense of community, the loving, nurturing friends I have made, the stability of the community, the solid worship program, the music, the cantors, and the organists make me feel welcome every Sunday.

How does Christ Church help you live and share your faith?

Christ Church is so welcoming that I feel the love and want to share it.

Boiler replacement prep is underway!

Darrell Anderson and Ken Schoenike were recently busy cleaning out the boiler room in anticipation of the asbestos abatement project, demolition and removal of the old boilers and installation of the new one. (Funny how stuff accumulates in the church basement as much as it does in our home basements!) Thanks for your good work, Darrell and Ken!

A special thanks to Cathy Sieving

Cathy is a Christ Church Volunteer in several ways, but most recently she took on the big task of laundering the choir and assisting minister robes, as well as washing and ironing the large white altar cloth. Cathy is also a Meals on Wheels of South Minneapolis coordinator. Thank you for all, Cathy!

My former husband died in 2013. Losing a loved one like that makes you realize that loss takes away some of the things you take for granted. Without him I did not, until much later, receive and give hugs regularly until I came into new friendships and communities like CCL. I did not know if I still had love and faith in my life. Now I am certain the answer is yes.

What do you do when you’re not in church?

I read novels, play Scrabble, walk the trails.

What can you tell us about yourself that we may not have known?

In mid-life I earned a masters in library and information science from Dominican University, focusing on health and medical research. I worked in a local health care system, assisting health care providers to find the best practices to treat a particular medical condition. I shared my love for learning by tutoring medical and nursing students in searching for evidence-based literature. I also managed a library outreach program in which I traveled to about twenty small and rural health care institutions in Minnesota and western Wisconsin, underserved communities that could not afford to hire a professional medical librarian. Through my employer we outsourced our work to young nurses and caregivers who would not have been able to afford the coaching and mentoring I could provide. It was the highlight of my professional employment.

“Closeup” is a Courier feature to help us get better acquainted with our fellow members. If you would like to share your story in “Closeup,” call Donna Lindberg at 651/552-8499.
Mission Partner Updates

Though so much in our life together has changed, this much has not changed: we remain connected to wonderful organizations doing important work in our community! What follows are updates from some of the community service organizations we are most connected to as a congregation.

**Safe House** is a shelter in St. Paul, run by Lutheran Social Service of MN, for youth experiencing homelessness. A large portion of the benevolence giving from our last capital campaign ($30,000) has helped and will help Safe House in the future for needed facilities updates. Christ Church has also delivered monthly meals there for many years, and that ministry continues. In May the meal was delivered by Melinda and Fred Quivik. Thank you, Fred and Melinda! One significant change for Safe House during this time of COVID-19 has been their decision to keep their doors open 24-7. Typically they are not open weekdays, as they expect the youth to be busy with school or work. Now, of course, all of those normal routines have been altered and LSS has found a way to provide staffing to allow the youth to stay at Safe House throughout the week.

In order to support Safe House and other LSS programs, some members of Christ Church attended an online fundraising event for LSS Youth Services on Tuesday, May 19. The theme was Journey toward Possibilities, and the event raised over $300,000 for LSS’s work with youth throughout the State!

**Our Saviour’s Housing**

Another important community partner for us is Our Saviour’s Community Services—especially Our Saviour’s Housing. At the beginning of the pandemic, Our Saviour’s responded by opening their doors to their guests 24-7 (for the same reasons listed for Safe House above). Initially they were still receiving meals from volunteer providers, and Elena Hilding organized a small crew to deliver our regularly scheduled meal in March. Recently, however, we learned that Our Saviour’s is now sheltering all of their guests in local hotels. (This allows individuals to have their own rooms and bathrooms, and so avoid the risk of a widespread outbreak of COVID-19.) Because of this change, our regularly-scheduled meal for May was not needed. Instead, the Mission Committee sent the funds we would have spent on that meal directly to Our Saviour’s.

We have learned from Our Saviour’s that they have secured sufficient public funding to cover the first month of costs related to housing their guests in hotels. However, they will need to rely on a combination of public, private, and community support to sustain this model of service in the months ahead.

If you would like to help Our Saviour’s Housing’s respond to COVID-19, please consider making a financial donation https://oscs-mn.org/covid-19-donation/.

**Community Emergency Service**

We also know that the work of Community Emergency Service is as essential as ever. Recently, we received the following update:

“People are working from home, businesses are closed, church services are online and the kitchen table is the new classroom. Not everyone has the option of riding out this virus the same way. Some don’t have pantries of food or closets of toilet paper or Netflix subscriptions. Whether it is a dad, school-aged girl, grandma, single man, homeless woman, newly laid-off restaurant server or airline worker, they are all people in need of the CES food shelf. The Coronavirus is affecting all of us.

In response, CES has expanded to triple our daily food shelf visits. We are delivering to those too sick or fearful to travel out to get food. We are bringing meals to seniors and disabled adults through Meals on Wheels. Our staff and volunteers are out on the front lines daily.”

We need your time and your funds. Have you been wondering what to do? Who to help? CES is the answer.

If you would like to give to CES or offer your time as a volunteer, please go to [www.cesmn.org](http://www.cesmn.org).

**Meals on Wheels of South Minneapolis**

volunteers continue to deliver meals, and there has recently been a sharp increase in the numbers of new recipients. If you can give your time and/or treasures to this important organization, go to [https://www.southmplsmealsonwheels.com/](https://www.southmplsmealsonwheels.com/)
A send-off to Chuck Merrell

April 30th was Chuck’s final day as the Christ Church custodian, though he continued to help out with various projects through the month of May. Pastor Jensen and Laurel presented him with a beautiful card made by Stephanie Gustafson and signed by as many people as possible before the church closure.

In the card was this blessing:

For Retirement

This is where your life has arrived,
After all the years of effort and toil;
Look back with graciousness and thanks
On all your great and quiet achievements.

You stand on the shore of a new invitation
To open your life to what is left undone;
Let your heart enjoy a different rhythm
When drawn to the wonders of other horizons.

Have the courage for a new approach to time;
Allow it to slow until you find freedom
To draw alongside the mystery you hold
And befriend your own beauty of soul.

Now is the time to enjoy your heart’s desire,
To live the dreams you’ve waited for,
To awaken the depths beyond your work
And enter into your infinite source.

~John O’Donohue

Racial Justice Task Force Update

The Racial Justice Task Force of Christ Church held a forum on Sunday, March 8, 2020. The forum was designed as an open discussion of congregants’ energy, interests, and concerns about engaging with issues of racial justice. The task force has been meeting for several years and has conducted a series of primarily educational events for the congregation – forums, book discussions, and workshops. The results from the March 8 forum discussion were very helpful in determining future directions for engagement with racial justice issues.

Through a large group exercise, forum participants indicated in which areas they had energy, curiosity, and concerns about engaging in racial justice work. Then, through small group discussions, forum participants expressed more specifically what excited them about racial justice work, what they had learned about themselves and the congregation so far regarding racial justice, and what reservations or concerns they had about proceeding with this work. Forum participants shared many ideas about activities and actions we might pursue, both within the congregation and in the broader community. These ideas were in such areas as education and personal growth, prayer and worship, congregation policies and practices, and partnering with other congregations for learning and community projects or programs.

Three important takeaways from the forum are as follows:
• There is interest and enthusiasm for engaging with racial justice issues
• There is a need to determine a clear direction for our racial justice efforts
• Congregation members vary widely in their knowledge, interests, and perspectives on racial justice issues

The Racial Justice Task Force has developed recommendations from the results of the forum for Church Council consideration. A full report of the forum results will be available soon.

Devotional booklets available

If you’ve been missing the “Christ in Our Home” and/or “The Word in Season” quarterly devotional booklets, you can find them in the silver mailbox in the courtyard and help yourself! The mailbox is found on the inner courtyard wall nearest the main sanctuary doors. The April through June editions are in there now, and the box will be replenished with the July through September editions on June 15.
Jesus said, “Let the children come!”

At Christ Church Lutheran, we welcome children and their families to the font, to the table, and to worship.

Signs of new life

As we wrap up this season of Easter, Christ Church members were invited to find new life blooming and growing around them in their neighborhoods. Here are the photos people sent in, and some that Tyler took:

Time together continues in new and creative ways

Elena Hilding, Pre-Confirmation guide, encouraged Prince, Isis, and their grandma Donna to paint cheery and topical rocks, which they plan to lay in the courtyard for all to see and find. Good work!

Baptism Birthdays

Joseph, Elliot, and Carmina were all baptized in the month of June. Be sure to wish them a happy baptism birthday this month! If your child has a baptism birthday in May and is not in the list above, send Tyler an email at childrensministry@christchurchluth.org, so he can add them to his records.
Welcome is a top priority for Christ Church Lutheran of south Minneapolis. “Our welcome reflects Jesus himself, who welcomes us,” explains Associate Pastor Erik Haaland.

Christ Church was founded by newly-arrived immigrants in 1911. Their current home in the Longfellow neighborhood, designed by two renowned Finnish-American architects, father and son Eliel and Eero Saarinen, has been designated a National Historic Landmark.

But the congregation’s hospitality reaches far beyond their walls. Members of Christ Church give and serve generously to support Safe House, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota’s (LSS) emergency shelter in Saint Paul. Youth between the ages of 16 and 20 can come to Safe House for a nutritious meal, a hot shower, a safe place to sleep and guidance from trustworthy adults.

Christ Church also collaborates with LSS to welcome refugee families starting new lives in Minnesota. Their compassion echoes the congregation’s own origins among newcomers yearning for a community to call home. Their partnership embodies our shared mission to express the love of Christ for all people.