

October 6, 2020

A letter about our changing times.

Good morning, folks. This week your leadership is meeting to 'hammer out' the last details for a worship we plan to have inside our building, at Holy Cross this coming Sunday, October 11, 2020. That service will begin at 9:30 am (Our traditional morning start time for indoor worship). You SHOULD CALL 503 364-6041 and RSVP how many will be attending from your family.

Details are finalizing at tonight's (Tuesday) council meeting, with a team working out logistics following that decision.

Your email blast on Wednesday will have details. IF YOU are NOT getting the email blast, please call Janet at 503 364-6041 and get on the list. Please. Otherwise the weekly mailing is our only way to connect in a regular way.

I don't have all the details yet, but this much I know – YOUR Safety, and the safety of OTHERS is the main point of our planning. This week we all got a wake up call on how important masks and social distancing continues to be. Your Leadership is making your safety their priority.

What if you aren't comfortable returning to worship indoors yet? That is fine. It's your choice, and we are planning Drive Up Communion to commence very soon for those of you who wish to stay even safer but receive prayer and Holy Communion from the Pastor.

If there is no way you can safely come to either of these options, please continue to avail yourself of the 5 worship options that I am committed to posting each week – Readings, Prayers, Children's Sermon, Sermon, and Music (thank you Choir). These can be found on the website www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org and the facebook page Holy Cross Lutheran-Salem and on YouTube on the channel I created – Pastor Patricia Hughes (there's a picture of the great cloud of witnesses for my logo).

We mail these packets every Tuesday, so that you can be sure to get it before the weekend.

So, there's the nuts and bolts for the week, but I'd like to chat about something else, ok?

Are you all feeling down? I keep hearing about "Pandemic Fatigue" and I think's it's a real thing. The political rancor isn't helping us either. As your pastor, I really want to help you find a way to God's peace and comfort in these times of Covid-19. Sometimes, though I think the changes are almost too much for us.

Here's something I've been doing – making of list of things I miss, that I haven't been able to experience since Covid-19 became a 'thing'.

Here's this week's list –

Things I miss because of Covid 19

1. Seeing people I care about
2. Singing hymns in church
3. Hugging people in the narthex
4. Being able to 'plan ahead' like I used to

You get the idea, right? Have you got a list like that? But I have another list

Things I am sad about because of Covid 19

1. 1.03 million deaths worldwide
2. Thousands dealing with lasting illness and repercussions
3. Families who have lost jobs, and income

I know you have this list too, with even more things on it.

I'd like to sit with each of you and mourn, and pray. I'd also like to sit with each of you and sing Beautiful Savior at the top of our lungs. We have each other, my friends, in this hard time, even if it's not quite the way we would like.

Pray, friends. Pray like crazy. Cry if you need to. Kick clods of dirt in the garden if you need to. And find a way to rejoice. I am so grateful for my health, for the opportunity to get a flu shot, for the weeds that I need to pull in my garden. I am grateful for telephones and internet and all the ways I am still able to connect with people I care about. I am grateful that God's presence continues in my life, even though so much has changed. I am grateful for you.

God bless you,

Pastor Patricia+

Praying together at Holy Cross – October 11, 2020

A season of “God’s Work: Our Hands”

With open hands and open hearts, let us pray for the needs of all the world.

Generous Provider, renew the strength, energy and courage of your church. Through our acts of service, may your love overflow and your grace be proclaimed for us, for our neighbors and for all the world. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Generous Provider, we delight in your creation. Help us to enjoy the autumn changes, and the opportunity for rain. Show us how we can work to preserve this earth, our island home. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Generous Provider, be a beacon of hope to all who lead our nations, our states, our cities. As we prepare for another season of voting, give us each the willingness to register and vote, as our participation in democracy. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Generous Provider, you have been abundant with us. Help us to see how we can use your abundance for others, whose needs are great. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Generous Provider, be with all who are ill, especially with the President and Mrs. Trump. Help us all to be good stewards of our own health, and protect the health of others. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Generous Provider, as you give us this life on earth, we know that one day we will leave it to join you in heaven. Be with all who have lost loved ones, and show us how we may learn from their lives, and grieve appropriately their death. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

We commend these and all things to your gracious care, trusting in Christ Jesus, our Savior. **Amen.**



Sermon for October 4, 2020 -This summer we have been hearing the readings from Genesis and Exodus about the forming of the people of God – the Hebrews – through good times and bad, through calamity and through joy. Last week, I talked to you about how the Hebrew people were being transformed on their journey from Egypt to the promised land. This 40 year journey is about their transformation from being an enslaved people, to a nation focused and devoted to their God. We study this journey in this time, particularly, my friends because we are on a journey of transformation. Our time in the desert is all around us – this pandemic time we find ourselves living through is heartbreaking, and, I propose to you – an opportunity for reinvention. We turn to the epic journey through the desert to find inspiration, to find insight and, to find indictment of our own behaviors which get in our way as we journey together. Picture in your mind the moment in Ancient history when the Lord God gives Moses a set of commandments at Mt. Sinai. I always picture mount hood when I think of Mt Sinai – snow topped and with clouds clinging to the top. From this lofty peak, where God speaks to him at length, Moses journeys down the mountain to give the exhausted, frazzled people a plan for the journey forward. I don't know about you, but in these days of covid exhausted and frazzled is a good description of me and my life. What next? Is something we are almost afraid to speak, for fear there will be even more hardship ahead. But maybe this passage in Exodus comes to us at just the right time, much like the moment at Sinai came at just the right time for the Hebrews. Tired, but fed by God continually by manna and quails every day, they are at the right moment to be given a vision – not a vision of what God can do for them, but a vision of how they can change their lives, in daily choices, that will make their lives better, will make them a nation devoted to the God who is actively protecting and caring for them. See what I mean – this could be the right moment for you and I to find a vision as well. Or to hone a vision – do you know what I mean by that? When you maintain your good knives, by honing them – you take the knife and 'refine' the angle with the honing steel. This is different from sharpening which actually removes part of the blade, to 'rework' the edge. If you get your knives professionally sharpened frequently, eventually, you'll wear the blade right off. But the honing is about keeping that edge in alignment so that it cuts through the skin of that tomato you're slicing. What if God is offering honing to the Hebrews in exodus? By helping them align their behaviors to a pattern that will offer abundant life? What if God is offering honing to you and I and to Holy Cross to align our behaviors to a pattern that will offer abundant life? Holy Cross is a church that does service. I knew that when I interviewed with you 7 years ago. And the opportunities for service have changed. Picture with me now how many service moments we have been involved in that simply cannot function any longer, or outlived their usefulness. What does this mean? Does it mean we're done with service? Does it mean we are done as a church? I can't help but think that this pandemic and the seismic changes it has brought to each of us and particularly the church is an opportunity to reorient our blade together. What will that look like? It's emerging right now. Holy Cross has been finding opportunities to respond to wildfire evacuees right now. For a time we will host a few families in our parking lot. That will surely change things for us. We have other opportunities arising as we speak. The needs are out there – the question before us is will we be able to adapt to the new opportunities to serve or will we let concerns about the building, or the minutiae of church life distract us too much to see the new things God is bringing before us? The exodus reading today ends this way - ⁸When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, ¹⁹and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." ²⁰Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin." The people are afraid – the hardships and trouble they are experiencing is hard- they want to cover their heads and hide under the desk. But Moses comforts them. Do not be afraid. This is the opportunity to trust God, and choose ways that keep us each safe, yet connected to God – through each other – through service to our neighbors. Amen. – Bless you, **Pastor Patricia Hughes**

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2020 – NINETEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, One God, who creates, redeems and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Faithful God, have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Let by the Holy Spirit, live in Freedom and newness to do God's work in the world with our own hands.

GATHERING HYMN –

We Are Called

- 1 Come! Live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God.

Refrain

We are called to act with justice,
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.

- 2 Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless
so hatred and blindness will be no more. *Refrain*

3 Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other
as sisters and brothers united in love. *Refrain*

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Exodus 32:1-14

The Israelites forge a golden calf

Psalm 23

You prepare a table before me, and my cup is running over. (Ps. 23:5)

Philippians 4:1-9

Rejoice in the Lord always

Matthew 22:1-14

The parable of the unwelcome guest at the wedding feast

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.***

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (see attached prayers)

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. As you worship in your homes, we remember the gift of communion that we share.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

Communion Blessing The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

COMMUNION BLESSING

God of the welcome table,
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness
and have been united by your presence among us.
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING

The God of compassion, hope and joy,
Our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
Bless your feet to carry you into places of need.
Bless your lips to proclaim love and mercy.
Bless your heart to love and listen to those you encounter.
Bless your hands to care for the needs of your neighbors.
Bless you to be a blessing to others.
Now and always.

Amen.

October 6, 2020 News about Holy Cross Happenings –

Friends, here's just a few things happening at Holy Cross –

We have Wildfire Evacuees staying in our parking lot (They have RVs). The Huge response by Red Cross and many other local agencies to our wildfires in Oregon, was scaled back last week, and churches stepped up by offering parking spaces for folks living in vehicles since they were displaced from the fires in Oregon. This is a coordinated response with Salem Leadership Foundation, and the Church at the Park, who have been hosting homeless in their vehicles for a long time and know how to do it! So we have a porta potty and electrical cords from our building to their vehicles. Karen Halvorson has stepped up as Disaster Response Chair, which is a position the council had just begun to imagine, when it was suddenly needed! Gary Bogstad, and Jerry Barker and the whole property committee have stepped up to help. It's a very needed outreach right now, and Holy Cross is trying to do our best! Talk to any of these folks if you want to help.

Bible study continues in two ways – zoom on Thursdays at 5 pm, and in person (socially distanced) at noon on Thursdays. We continue to learn together. Here's the zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78252959541?pwd=NVps>

Better together conversation about Racial Equality continues on Zoom. You can participate in an important conversation about Racial Equality with the 3 ELCA churches in Salem, on Wednesday October 21, from 6 to 7 pm. Here's the Zoom information -

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84759278812> Meeting ID: 847 5927 8812 On the 21st we will be talking about Chapter 2 in the book we have committed to read, "White Fragility". Come prepared to share your insights from the book!

We celebrated "Blessing of the Animals" Online on Sunday, October 4th at 3 pm with all 3 churches! I enjoyed the opportunity, and I hope you all did as well!

Just a little note to help you – Friends, every zoom meeting has a different log in unless it is a recurring meeting – please check out the information for the meeting you are trying to attend, ok? Thanks!

