

The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

Summer Worship Schedule

For information on our Summer Worship Schedule, including Outdoor Sunday Worship, the return of Wednesday Evening Worship, and the last Zoom Worship service, please turn to *Page 6* of this issue of the Tidings for Pastor Tim's article



Backyard Wednesdays (Vacation Bible School)

We are excited to announce our plans for VBS this summer. Instead of doing 5 nights over one week, we are going to do 5 nights over 5 weeks. The dates will be July 14, 21, 28 and Aug. 4, 11 (all Wednesdays).



We are combining VBS with our Wednesday evening worship those weeks and are going to call it Backyard Wednesdays! This will be an intergenerational evening consisting of dinner, all ages worship, and VBS (open to all ages). You are welcome to participate in the whole two hours or only a portion. We are looking for volunteers to help facilitate the 5 evenings. You can sign-up to volunteer by contacting the Church Office and we will reach out with more details on scheduling times/dates and what is needed as we get closer to July.

Graduation Sunday

Graduation Sunday is Sunday, June 13. On this day, we'll celebrate all of Holy Trinity's youth who have graduated High School & College, and award the 2021 Faith & Service Award to one of our High School Graduates.



Pastor Tim's Article: May 10, 2021

A couple of weeks ago, I wrote about my new favorite TV show, Ted Lasso. If you aren't familiar with it, the premise is as follows: Ted Lasso is an American football coach who is hired to coach the Richmond Football Club (soccer) of the English Premier League, by the owner, and recently divorced, Rebecca. She does this with the hopes that Ted will fail spectacularly and force the team into relegation (demoted to a lower league) thereby hurting her ex-husband where she believes it will hurt most. This is revenge for all of the hurt he caused her in their marriage.

There are many themes to write about that the show addresses, but one that seems to occur repeatedly is how to give and receive an apology. Normally, it seems in life, apologies can be brief, general and even sarcastic or without feeling. Think about a child, rolling their eyes at their parents while saying, "Sorry", not because they have regretted their actions and realized the hurt they caused, but solely because their parents said they cannot have dessert until they apologized. Or perhaps, think about it in a relationship between two adults. One says, "I'm sorry" but they don't really know what they are sorry for and are just saying it to get the conversation over with because they know it is the right thing to say.

What about the responses to many apologies? What do we typically say? "No problem." "Forget about it." "It isn't a big deal." Although much of the time that isn't the case, is it. "It" was a big problem, that is why someone was hurt. One might say "forget about it" but is the person saying that actually going to forget it, also? Lastly, it is a big deal, that is why there was an argument.

If that is the way many of our apologies and acknowledgement of them go, is it any wonder why many of us have the same argument over and over.

This is what I love about Ted Lasso. When someone apologizes, it is specific and genuine. The person apologizing understands why the other person was hurt or upset. They don't try to justify their prior behavior, instead they have compassion and empathy toward the other person. They acknowledge what they did and name it.

In return, the other person does not try to diminish the apology or the hurt that was caused by it. The apology is acknowledged with a simple "Thank you for saying that." Another response is "I forgive you." There aren't any lingering affects wondering "Did they really mean that?"

Now, I understand this is TV and it doesn't represent real life. When we are hurt deeply, it generally isn't something that we can just name and move on from, but I do believe the way Ted Lasso represents apologizing can be a blueprint for us. We have all hurt someone and been



hurt. When we hurt someone, do we really understand how our actions might have been the cause of the hurt, or are we too busy trying to justify our actions so we don't have to admit our mistake. When we accept someone's apology, do we still hold onto a grudge? Do we let our anger linger, and even though we say we accepted their apology, we act as if it was never offered?

Remember, when we apologize and accept an apology and offer forgiveness, it doesn't mean everything can always go back to the way things were. Sometimes, proper boundaries are needed and the relationship changes. Too often though, I think we don't think we are willing to do the work that is needed. We apologize insincerely and accept apologies with the same insincerity right back.

Apologizing and forgiving is hard work. I get it. I have not been very good at either in many instances in my life, but I can think about the times in which I have done the work of both and I am glad that I have.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tim

Pastor Tim's Article: May 13, 2021

A week or two ago, I used a video clip from the tv show Ted Lasso that featured a scene in which the main character, Ted Lasso, quoted Walt Whitman by saying, "Be curious, not judgmental. I bring it up again, because there is some disturbing news going on in the world today. The conflict and violence between Israel and Palestine has again bubbled over into violence, with 32 Palestinians and 3 Israelis being killed in the last couple of days.

I have heard about the violence between the two groups for years but never understood it. The main point I thought I knew or understood was, which is what I believe most of us know, the land they all want to occupy is extremely sacred land to the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The more I learned about it, the less I saw it as a simple religious war and learned how complicated and multi-faceted the conflict really is. In almost everything I read or watched, if someone was trying to give an editorial or attempting to explain it, I would hear or read the words, "I know I someone is going to disagree with me about..." There does not seem to be a coherent narrative. Depending on who one listens to or talks to, different points are made and explanations are given.

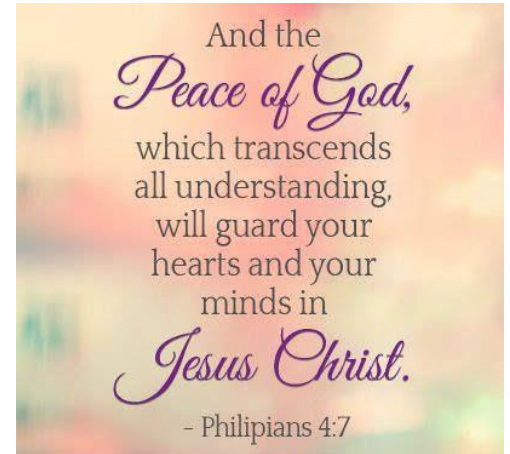
The best I have found I can do is not approach this by trying to determine who is right and who is wrong, but only to learn about what is at the core of the conflict and try to understand and empathize with all that is happening. To go back to Ted Lasso, I believe I am being asked to "Be

curious. Not judgmental.” (I think this is going to be my new motto in life. It sure seems to be coming up often and I have watched the above scene a good 20 times.)

In the end, I don't have a solution and I won't attempt to offer one. To think that I could suggest one that someone hasn't thought of before after watching and reading about it for a few hours would be arrogant and diminish the hard work that others have poured into it. Rather, I only offer my compassion and empathy for all of those lives of people who have been caught in the middle who are only trying their best to live a life of wholeness and happiness.

A scripture verse that continually comes to mind for me during times of conflict, unrest, turmoil and war is Philippians 4:7. It reads, “May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and mind in Jesus Christ.”

What I like about this verse is the phrase, “...peace of God which surpasses all understanding...” I don't know what the answer is, all I know is that it is currently beyond our understanding and perhaps we need to pray to be opened to ideas and ways of thinking that we are currently unaware of or think impossible.



I think it also opens us up to praying for the innocent people who are caught in the middle who live in constant fear. We pray for peace that is beyond their understanding and, more specifically, beyond what they are currently experiencing.

So let us pray.

Creator of all nations and people,

We put up boundaries and walls.

We keep people out and keep people in.

We trust our own sense of peace and distrust others.

Currently there is violence going on in the world that needs to end.

This is happening in Palestine and Israel and in many other places which don't make the news.

We pray for your peace which we don't understand.

We pray for your peace which seems beyond our grasp.

We pray for your peace to come upon those in positions of power which will bring peace to those caught in middle.

Simply, we pray for your peace in all of our lives.

Amen.

Dover Friendly Kitchen

Our May Dover Friendly Kitchen meal is next Tuesday, May 25th. We serve at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Dover which is located on the corner of Locust Street and Hale Street. We begin preparations now at 3:45 PM in order to be ready with our take-out meals by 5:00 PM. We are presently preparing a hot baked ham dinner. In the last two weeks the number of guests has increased so we will be planning for 110 or more meals!

I am asking for cookies again, 360 of them, now that we know our need has increased. One faithful baker has already delivered two bags to church for us, and they will be kept in the refrigerator until next week. Please let me (Bonnie Sanders) know if you can bake cookies for next week, and for planning purposes, how many cookies. Also, if you can volunteer to work that day with us, I can be contacted by email at larbonsand@comcast.net or by text at (603)767-6186. I would appreciate hearing from you by this Friday, May 21st.



There will be similar needs throughout the summer when our meal dates are June 22nd, July 27th and August 24th. Please check your calendar to see if any of those dates are good for you in case folks who regularly come to help are going on vacation. For instance, my daughter Lara and I will be gone on vacation June 22nd and that will mean Jill Schock will need more help for our summer ham sandwich meal on that day. It would be great if I knew well in advance that she was all set for help and cookies.

This Holy Trinity ministry has continued to meet the needs of the Dover area homeless and struggling community during the preceding months of Covid. I want to thank those of you who have come out regularly to make God's work happen, in your masks and gloves. It has been a huge blessing to me to serve with you, Jill, and Jerry, Lara, Jeff, Pam, Kristen, Noah, Rich, and Rich's friend Jen, Paulette, Scott, Angi and Genesis. See you next week.

Lara, Jill and I have been baking every month, with help over the years from faithful bakers like Nancy Johnson, Linda Johnson, Judy Evans and many others. During the pandemic, once we were again permitted to do so, we received cookie help from Margareta, Jo, Gisela, Nina, Dot, Jessica, my friend Joan and a friend of Jill's. To all of you, and to anyone I have missed or not known of, thank you so much for this service. If we have any cookies left, Lara brings them to the Pop Up Pantry. At the same time, Lara brings any leftover meals to Crossroads House in Portsmouth.

Pastor Tim's Article: May 18, 2021 & Summer Worship Schedule

Here we go. What follows is our proposed worship schedule for this summer. But, before I get to that, let me remind us all that everything could change. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that what we do one week may not necessarily be what we do the next week.

The following were the guiding factors that went into the church council's recommendation:

- Find a way to bring as many of us together, at one time, in as safe a way as possible.
- Continue an online option for those who are still not able to meet in person.
- Be mindful that children 2-12 years old are still not eligible for the vaccine and are still encouraged to wear a mask indoors in public settings.
- Act in the best interest and show solidarity with those who are still at-risk, both within our congregation and around the world.
- Respect the fact that we have a congregation of mixed opinion regarding the COVID vaccination and best practices.
- Move toward having as full a worship service as possible.
- Use the question of Bishop Hazelwood, from his blog, "How does our often-stated phrase, 'All are Welcome' engage with the phrase, "All should be safe here"?"

What this means...

From now until June 6th, our worship schedule will not change, but we are adding the following for the 8:30am indoor/in-person worship service.

- Increase the amount able to attend from 40-65.
- Resume congregational singing.
- Require masks to be worn by everyone, vaccination status does not matter.



We will continue a zoom worship service at 9:30am for the next 3 weeks, with our last zoom service being held on Sunday, June 6th.

Beginning Sunday, June 13th, we will begin the following...

- One worship service at 9:30am, held outside, under the tent and the surrounding area.
- We will sing.
- Return of the children's sermon.
- Masks are optional.
- You do not need to sign-up or check-in.
- Please bring your own chair, but one can be provided for you.
- Coffee and Cookies will return after the service
- For inclement weather, we will move inside (rain, heat, humidity). If we move inside, masks will be required but we will not limit the amount of people who can attend. We will make this notification as soon as possible, but it might be a "game-time" decision.
- The service will be live-streamed on our YouTube channel and posted to our website immediately afterwards.
- The building will be open for people to go into the sanctuary to sit and reflect.

Please know there was good and strong conversation at council regarding these recommendations. There were a variety of opinions and it was hard coming to a consensus. Also, I just completed a zoom call with the other ELCA pastors in New Hampshire. I can tell you that we are being the most aggressive, concerning the resuming of "pre-pandemic" worship, from those pastors who participated in the meeting.



As you read the upcoming schedule, some of you might be elated, because that is exactly what you were hoping for and fully agree with the decisions. Some of you might be disappointed because you believe it is unnecessarily too cautious. I, and council, understand that we are not going to please everyone.

The more I think about this, I believe this is a really good option moving forward. While we are planning on primarily being outside, New England weather is rarely fully cooperative to our plans. I have to imagine, there will be several Sundays, throughout the summer, in which we will be forced to move inside. If you desire to be in the sanctuary for Sunday morning worship,

I hope this will suffice. If you are still not able to be indoors but long to be in the physical presence of your sisters and brothers in Christ, we hope this will suffice.

I will never say that we have made all the correct decisions throughout the pandemic. I am sure there are things that could have been communicated better. I am sure there are ways in which we could have incorporated more people into what we are doing. I am sure there are...well, you could probably list off a couple of items that you wish we would have or could have done differently. I hope you know this, we have always made decisions based on what we believe is best for the health and safety of our immediate church community and the wider community in which we live. Sometimes that is what we personally want, sometimes it is the opposite of what we want.

I do think outdoor worship this summer will be fun. I loved gathering outdoors for Easter just last month. Outdoor worship has a different feel to it. Perhaps a lighter, more energetic and renewing feel to it. After all that we have gone through this past year, we could all use some new energy and a lighter feeling.

One last thing, Wednesday evening worships will begin again on Wednesday, June 16th. We will hold them under the tent and outside, and when weather dictates, move them inside. In addition, look for information about VBS soon. We are going to combine it with the Wednesday worships during the end of July and beginning of August and call it "Backyard Wednesdays." We plan on having a cook out, worship and then VBS-style activities. It should be a lot of fun and hopefully reminiscent of backyard bbq's that you have with friends and families over the summer.

Thanks for your patience and prayers.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tim