

March 28, April 4, & April 11, 2020

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Stations of the Cross

Throughout this issue of The Tidings, instead of clip art relating to our articles, we will have images of the Stations of the Cross posters our congregation colored throughout Lent. These posters were posted in our Sanctuary during Holy Week.



## Pastor Tim's Article: March 22, 2021

I took my Christmas lights down yesterday. You don't have to say it, but go ahead, you can. Okay, I will say it for you. "Well done!" Perhaps you were thinking, "Wow! You got that done fast! Christmas was only 3 months ago! I am impressed!" Most likely, you weren't going to say or were even thinking any of those responses. I don't blame you. Taking down Christmas lights on the first day of spring is not an occasion for positive reinforcement.

When I was in the middle of taking down the lights, I had 2 neighbors stop by and give me a hard time. Nothing mean spirited, just a couple of jokes. But then one of them said, after the joke, "I never put mine up this year because I didn't have the energy for it, so good for you for even doing it. Who cares when you take them down."

I think my neighbor's reaction, after the joke, is what we all need right now. Because, after 1 year of COVID, I don't know what accomplishment qualifies as worthy of recognition or not. There are days when I don't want to get out of bed and just wish I could blink and we would be at some point in the future and none of this happened. There are other days in which I get right out of bed and my energy is high and I make a list, tackle a new project and actually get it all completed. Then there are days,

somewhere in between, when I wake up, think about what I have to do that day and pray for the strength to do the best I can, knowing I will not get to all of it before Vicky and I will give in to a glass of wine and a show on Netflix around 9pm.

I don't know where you are in the midst of everything. I am assuming you have many days like the ones I described above. Some days you get it all done.



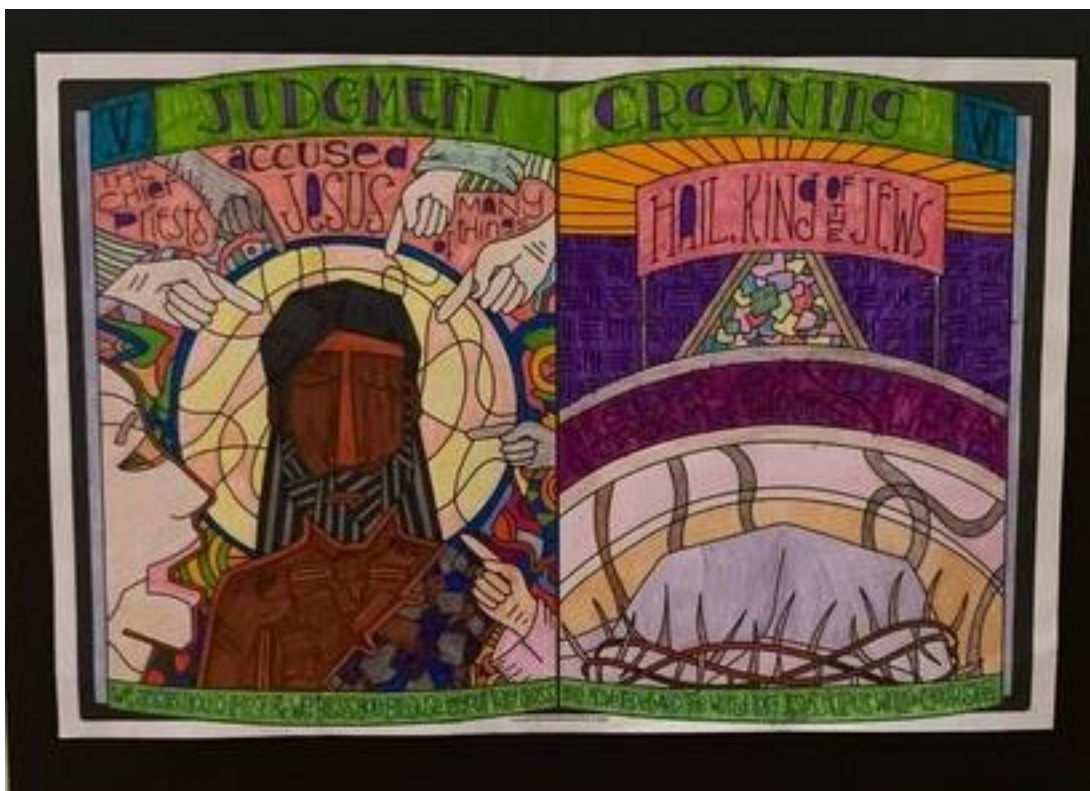
Some days you get nothing done. Some days you get some things done. Wherever you are or however you are doing, let me tell you the following.

“Good job! Keep it up! I wish I could do what you are doing. Wait. What’s that? You didn’t get it done yet? That’s okay, you can try again tomorrow. I trust you will accomplish it by the time it needs to be done. And if there isn’t a set deadline for it, like my Christmas lights, well, if you wait long enough and never do it, people will think you are ahead of the game the next time it needs to be done. Like if I would have left my Christmas lights up, people eventually would have said, ‘Wow you got your lights up early this year! Well done!’ Or if you didn’t get anything done today if you decided you needed a day to watch a show, check out Ted Lasso. It’s awesome!”

Or if that is too long to remember and confusing, try these three words.

Give yourself grace.

Pastor Tim





## Pastor Tim's Article: March 25, 2021

How long, O Lord?

How long will we hear about mass shootings?

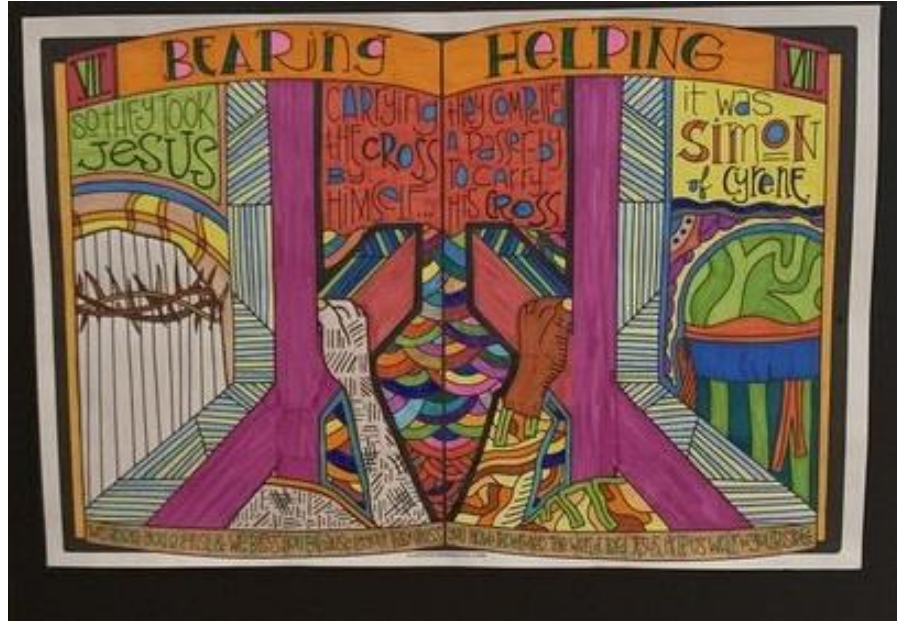
How long will we see people running in fear out of buildings?

How long will we see police and first responders running into those same buildings?

How long will we stand by in bewilderment, wondering why this keeps happening?

How long, O Lord?

If you have ever said or thought those words, you are in good company. They have been said for thousands of years.



One of the Psalmists says those same words in Psalm 13.

*“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?*

*How long will you hide your face from me?*

*How long must I bear pain in my soul,*

*and have sorrow in my heart all day long?*

*How long shall my enemy be exulted over me?”*

You can also hear them in the song, “Sunday, Bloody Sunday” by U2.

*“How long, how long must we sing this song? How long? How long?”*

How long?

I don't know how long.

As we enter Holy Week, we do not hear about how long everything will last. Rather we are given hope that it will not last forever.

As we enter Holy Week, I invite you to look at the cross and the death of Jesus, not as something that God did, but rather, what we did to Jesus and to see the hope that it offers.

It is all too common that when we think about Jesus dying on the cross, we believe we should be the ones there instead. We have sinned and God is angry and wants to punish us. But the sin is so great that we can't take the punishment and satisfy the so-called wrath of God. So, Jesus comes to the rescue and takes our place.

This line of thinking actually continues the violence that we see in the world.

Because if God uses violence to save the world, then we are justified to continually use violence to do the same. If God's answer to sin is violence, then that needs to be our answer also.

What if we looked at the cross and saw not what God did to Jesus, but what we did to God? God came to show us a new way of life and we said that we know better. We said the world doesn't respond to love and kindness and justice and mercy. The world responds to fear and aggression and power and strength.

What if we looked to the cross and saw that despite us doing our worst, God did not retaliate and "give the people what was coming to them or what they deserve?" What if we looked at the cross and saw that what God defeated was the use of violence rather than using violence.

What if we looked to the cross and saw that God took all of that on and defeated it once and for all, took on all the things that lead to death and came out the other side to a new life?



What if we looked to the cross and saw an invitation to reject those ways of sin that lead to death and to live this new life with and in Christ?

The answer to all of those “What if...” questions won’t give us a time frame of when it will stop. That will only be answered when Christ comes again. Scripture is pretty clear that no one knows when that will be.

What we do know is that we are invited into a life that works against violence and hate and as we live this new life, there might actually be less violence and hate in the world. The cross of Christ gives us the hope that our work won’t be in vain.

The cross of Christ gives us hope that in the end, violence and hate and all those things that separate us from God and from one another (sin) will not last, because they have ultimately been defeated.

I don’t know how long. But my hope, and God’s promise, is that it won’t be forever.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tim





## Pastor Tim's Article: April 1, 2021

While the vaccines are rolling out and we see light at the end of the tunnel for the pandemic, we are not there yet. In fact, over the last couple of weeks, numbers of cases, deaths, and positive test rate are actually increasing, including here in New Hampshire and specifically Rockingham County.

Therefore, I don't have a devotion or any "wise" sayings today, just a reminder for our worship gatherings this weekend.



### Concerning all indoor worships

- There will not be any congregational singing. All singing will be done by the worship leaders.
- Please wear your mask at all times, even if you have the vaccine. People singing and speaking will be able to take off their mask, but only at the appropriate time.
- Please observe the 6-foot physical distance rule. You may sit next to the people you came with, but leave space between your group and another group. White tape designates rows of chairs where you CANNOT sit.
- Please do not visit with each other, in the narthex, after worship. Due to the nature of the services, we ask you to depart in silence from the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Service.
- You must sign-up using Sign-Up Genius to attend. The links are available in this email and on the homepage of our website, [www.htelc.com](http://www.htelc.com). We are not accepting walk-ins. Sorry.
- Please "check-in" when you walk in the building with the Greeters. They will have communion and a bulletin for you pick-up.

## Concerning all outdoor worships

- Please wear your mask at all times, even if you have the vaccine.
- There will be congregational singing, and we do ask you to wear your mask for this.
- Please observe the 6-foot physical distance rule.
- Signing up with sign-up genius is encouraged but not required. It will help us have the appropriate amount of supplies available.
- Bring a chair for the outdoor worship at the church. We will be gathering in the fenced in area for the 11am worship. It will have the feel of our Outdoor Summer Gatherings.
- You won't need to check-in, but there will be a table with Greeters with communion and bulletins for you to pick up.
- Unless the weather is a downpour, we will still gather, so please dress appropriately.

**Don't forget, all the indoor worships will be available through a live-stream. You can access it through our website or through our YouTube channel. We have increased our internet at church so the stream should be even better!**

It will be good to be together, even if it is not exactly the same as it has been. Christ still rises whether we are at a park on the water, in the sanctuary, sitting on a chair outside the sanctuary, or watching a worship at home on a screen.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tim

