

The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

Backyard Wednesdays

Backyard Wednesdays continues on Wednesday, July 28, August 4, and August 11. Arrive at 5:30 PM for dinner, worship with us at 6:00 PM, and enjoy the intergenerational activities and fun at 6:30 PM. This year's theme is "Women of the Bible". All are welcome, no matter if you have kids, grandkids, or if you're a kid at heart. For photos of our Backyard Wednesday event on July 14, please turn to page 8 of the Tidings.



Pop-Up Pantry

This month, we are asking for donations of Washing Detergent. Any donations of detergent can be dropped off in the cardboard boxes in the Narthex and near the Church Office door. Thank you all so much for continuing to donate food.



Walk the Walk 2021

As of July 22, 2021, Team Holy Trinity has a total of 45 members walking to fundraise for Calumet. Together, Team Holy Trinity has walked a total of

2,331 MILES!

That's 1.16% of the total number of miles Calumet needs to reach their final goal. Every week, we will update this number for the congregation to see. Calumet has a total of 35,830 miles from ALL congregations and teams towards their goal of 200,000 miles.



Pastor Tim's Article: June 28, 2021

As I have frequently mentioned, I like to listen to podcasts as I take my dog, Emma, out for a walk. (Yes, I will be logging those miles for Calumet's "Walk the Walk"!) This morning, I got up early to beat the heat and was out the door by 6 AM. After listening to NPR's "Up First," I put on the latest episode from "The Bible for Normal People." Today's topic was about understanding and reading the book of Genesis.

Remember the three key rules when reading scripture? "Context. Context. Context." This podcast was all about the context of Genesis, specifically, what were the authors (yes, plural) of Genesis trying to understand and convey to the listeners (most people could not read) of these stories.



Pete Enns, one of the hosts, who is a Professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University, helped me better understand the context of Genesis in the way that I learned in seminary. He talks about the authors using stories of the past to help explain and understand and make commentary on their present-day situation. Another way of putting it is the following. The stories in Genesis are not written down because they actually happened. They are written down because they are helping people to better understand what was actually happening, in their lives, at that time.

A modern-day example Pete uses is the play "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller. The play is providing a commentary on "McCarthy-ism," a time when people in the United States were being persecuted and accused of being Communists. Miller wasn't trying to educate people about events that happened almost 300 years prior; he was using stories from 300 hundred years ago to comment on what was happening in the 1950's, the time period he was living in. (On a side note, another helpful topic in understanding all of this is by being familiar with two terms "mythicized history" and "historicized myths.")

The time the book of Genesis is helping people understand is from a period known as "The Monarchy" of ancient Israel. This is approximately from the year 1000 BCE to 586 BCE and a little beyond. It was a defining time in ancient Israel's life, when the people

claimed and settled in the land that God was supposed to have given them only to be exiled from that same land after they failed to remain faithful to God and God's ways. The authors use the stories of the ones like Adam and Eve in the garden to help understand what was happening to them.

If you are interested, I suggest you listen to the podcast. I will say, it starts off really strong, but as it goes on, I think Pete gets a little lost in the weeds. (Although, it is still worth your time.) You can find it wherever you get your podcasts, or at this link <https://peteenns.com/podcast/>

I also realize, most people will not listen to the podcast, because they don't have time, or they are not interested. I get it. So why am I sharing this with you? I want to continually encourage us to stretch in our faith and see things in new ways. I will be the first to admit, it would be and is easiest, if I could just read something in the Bible and say, "See, look at what it says. That ends the conversation." The people that I found with the deepest faiths are not the ones who know the most information, but are the ones who aren't afraid to ask questions or who don't settle for the easy answers. Therefore, my goal in all of this isn't to educate you to the point that you are all Bible experts, but rather to help us all keep expanding our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and a child of God. I don't want us to settle for what we have always thought or been told, but to ask ourselves, "Why have we been told or taught this?" Perhaps, to help you in this new way of reading and thinking is to ask yourself the question, "Why was this story written down and shared? Why would these ideas have been passed down to me?"

Sometimes our ways of thinking will be reinforced? Sometimes they will be changed. Therefore, this will be hard at times and it will be challenging at times. I also hope it will be good.

Anyways, as always, thanks for reading my thoughts and giving it some space in your brain and in your life. I appreciate that you do and don't take it lightly.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tim

President's Article

I was in a small city on the northwest this summer for a family vacation. It's a lovely place that seems to be family friendly, offer many outdoor activities, receives one snowfall a winter, and supports public education. I think it's hard to accurately get the pulse of a city when you are staying for a short time, yet I think there is something to be said about ones initial "take" of a place. In this small city there is a significant population who are housing insecure (for individuals and families who are homeless.) There are probably many reasons why this problem exists, but I am guessing the lack of harsh, wintery weather is probably one significant reason. As I was driving through downtown one early evening, I saw a barefoot, unkempt young man looking through trash bins on the sidewalk. He appeared to be disorientated and was talking to himself. I wondered if he had a family? Did they know about his situation? If so, I thought how hard it must be for them to know this? What will he be doing in a year?

The city is actively working on this problem but as we all know; house insecurity involves more than just not having a bed. We know this problem carries wide ranging issues like mental illness, substance use, disease, trauma, domestic violence, and lack of affordable housing. It's really hard to see people in difficult situations because it makes me uncomfortable and guilty that I'm not helping in some way.

Fortunately, at Holy Trinity we have many different ways to support our community near and far. One of the local organizations that will be starting up again in September is 68 Hours of Hunger. This organization began in Dover by Claire Bloom. She saw a need in a Dover public school to provide meals to children between Friday school lunch and Monday school breakfast. Since 2011, this program has spread into over 7 other states and is 100% volunteer run. A bag of food, averaging \$10, is given to children K-12 on Friday. Holy Trinity's Social Ministry Fund supports the purchasing of food along with the monthly packing of bags in less than an hour by Holy Trinity. As you may have read in a recent Tidings, the 68 Hours of Hunger program provided 3,400 meals to Portsmouth children during the 2020-2021 school year. It's hard to imagine that some children worry about food or worse yet, are hungry over the weekend as their parents' work, juggle responsibilities, and prioritize financial necessities. What



great work is being done and as we approach the start of another school year maybe you'll feel the call to pack bags with food. Shortly after seeing this young man on the street, we left to return home. I was unable to directly help him. I hope and pray he can eventually find his way to mental and physical stability.

Pastor Tim's Article: July 15, 2021

It is time we take another step in our progression through COVID and how we gather together for worship. But before I get to that, I would like to say how well I feel the summer has gone. We have had two outdoor worships and two indoor worships since deciding to resume worshipping in-person. Attendance and energy have been great. Singing together and hearing each other's voices has been tremendous. When we sang the refrain of one of our hymns and then "Jesus Loves Me" a cappella, many mentioned how they were moved to tears. It has been good to have coffee and a treat and the ability to linger around afterwards to see people that we haven't seen in over a year. Thank you to everyone who has worked hard to make all this happen.

This Sunday, we will move worship indoors on a regular basis and masks will be optional for those who are vaccinated. Please note, this does not mean we are a "mask-free" facility, and keep in mind, if someone is wearing a mask, it does not mean they are not vaccinated. There are many reasons why someone might choose to continue masking when indoors even though they are vaccinated. Below are just a sample of the following reasons why...

- Lives with someone with a weakened immune system
- Not old enough to get a vaccine
- Has a chronic illness
- Works with a vulnerable population, such as a hospital, nursing home, etc...
- Doesn't want to get a cold
- Cares for a sick parent
- Doesn't want to get the flu
- Feels more comfortable wearing a mask



- Will be vacationing or visiting others soon and taking precautions
- Returning from an area that is at greater risk

Additionally, children under 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccine and it is still recommended for them to wear masks. I know many schools will be requiring elementary aged kids to wear masks in the fall.

In fact, you might consider wearing a mask even if you are vaccinated simply to show support for those whom it is still required. Not only for people in our own community, but for those around the world who still do not have vaccines.

Also, remember we are not through the pandemic. Things are still subject to change and we might need to mandate mask wearing or return worship outdoors.

Lastly, if you want to worship in-person but are not comfortable with these new guidelines, remember, you can join us on Wednesday evenings. For the next 4 weeks, we are worshipping outdoors for our "Backyard VBS." Dinner is served at 5:30 PM, a hybrid style worship (camp/traditional) is at 6 PM, and games, crafts and general tom foolery ensue from 6:30-7:30 PM. We got off to a great start last night with close to 50 people participating throughout the evening. Thank you to our Indonesian sisters and brothers for providing dinner. Next week we will be serving grilled cheese and stuffing our faces with chips. We would love for you to join us.

As always, thank you. Thank you for your love and commitment to our shared faith and how we live it out in our lives. It is our faith that ultimately guides us and helps to determine our actions. Remember, God saves. We serve.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tim

Property Team

Do you take the long view of things or the short range view? I have read somewhere that our problem in dealing with China is our tendency to take the short view, limiting our long range planning to the next presidential election or even the next mid-term election. The Chinese government tends to take the long view, looking decades ahead. Choosing the best approach is way above my pay grade as they say, either in international affairs or at Holy Trinity. But there is a case to be made for long(er) range planning. After all, it can be tough to get somewhere if you do not know where you are going. Over the years I had several conversations with the late, great Len Klein regarding General Electric Corporation and its famous CEO, Jack Welch. Jack was not a fan of detailed, long range plans because he believed they were typically out of date by the time you could develop and distribute them. Perhaps he was right, but he knew it was essential to pay attention to the future.



For better or worse, I tend to take a short range view of things, particularly as I approach my eightieth birthday! When I am at Holy Trinity, Property Team matters tend to drive me into short-term thinking. The new fire alarm system work has been completed! It is tough to think carefully about future needs when lightning knocks out vital equipment or wind and rain take down the tent. Sometimes, when you are trying to see the future, now gets in the way! When I am on the road, I tend to drift into a longer view of things.

As I write this report, Martha and I are in our old hometown in Ohio where we were born, baptized, and confirmed, and where we went to school. It is a shy town of about 1000 or so residents, surrounded by farms, but a relatively short drive to additional job and shopping opportunities. The town's character is unchanged in many ways, and the town has fared much better than many similar rural towns that we see as we drive about the region. I surmise that the town's current circumstance arises from a mix of careful and fortuitous short and long-term thinking by community leaders and residents. Sure, many things have changed. The railroad tracks and the grain storage facilities it

served are gone. Businesses have come and gone, leaving a tenuous critical mass anchored by a successful bank and locally owned and operated phone, cable, and internet company. A very nice library is thriving. The local school has been replaced by regional schools and the old school building is gone. The church where Martha and I were married nearly 58 years ago is also gone. We still have some mementos from the building, a brick and some old forged nails. The remaining churches seem to be surviving. The town appears to have successfully gone with the flow and played the cards it was dealt. In many ways I think other towns, organizations, and companies could benefit from our hometown's history over the past half century or so. Change is inevitable, but the ramifications can be managed to some degree and negotiated. We cannot control change, but we don't have to allow change to completely control us. This is probably true for churches and property teams as well. Time will tell!

David Mercer, Property Team Leader

Photos of Backyard Wednesday – July 14

