



St. Thomas News

October 2020 XXXXII, Issue 10

Pastor's column...

A few years ago, in response to some unprecedented world event or another, I asked my online community of friends to help me create a playlist called "Songs of Hope." You can access it [here](#), and I'm always welcome to new editions. Things have seemed hopeless as of late: our deeply polarized political system, our entrenched racism, a COVID situation that seems unending and unchanging. I've returned to my little playlist, often enjoying music I'd never really heard before creating it. Then, a few evenings ago, one of my contributions came on: "The 23rd Psalm (dedicated to my mother)" by Bobby McFerrin. There isn't much to the song; it is a harmonious chant of a modern translation of the familiar psalm, the pronouns changed to their feminine form (a decision I recognize is difficult for some, liberating for others), the final gloria patria rings out, "Glory be to our Mother, and our Daughter, and to the Holy of Holies..." Listening, the tears and grief of these last seven months caught at the line, "She sets a table before me in the presence of my foes." It is a quiet reminder, first, that it is okay to name and face our enemies. We are not granted safety and security by pretending that there is nothing threatening us. Indeed, we cannot come and go in safety right now; depending on who we are those reasons might be simple or they may be greatly complicated by disability, gender, sexual orientation, or race. The reasons may be new, or they could have begun long before we were born. Safety is not created by ignoring the causes of our unease. Like the Israelites on the edge of the sea, it seems, the only way out is through.

But beloved, there is something more in that little verse, that the table is set before us. We have the tools we need to make good decisions when we are unsafe; we have what we need to be as safe *as possible*. Much is out of our control, but much is within our control. We can wear masks, stay informed, make cautious decisions about going out; we can lobby decision makers. We can make others safe. We can pray (tip: set an alarm for the historic monastic hours: 6am, 9am, noon, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm. Take a breath; say a prayer. Rest in God for just a moment.)

Sometimes our anxieties become centered on the fears that this will continue tomorrow. Truly, COVID will be here next week; it will be here next month; and, if we're honest with ourselves, it will likely be here into the new year. Racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism will remain with us for a long time. But the irony of faith is that we trust an unknown future to an unseen God because everything we know about God is that, in the words of the poet Ann Lewin, God's "will and gift is life." My siblings in Christ, consider this line from the Psalm, "Even though I walk through a dark and dreary land, / there is nothing that can shake me. / She has said she won't forsake me; / I'm in her hand."

Beloved of Christ, however this letter reaches you, may you know the peace of God in these uncertain times. May you rest in God's hand.

Playlist link: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7HFoCtwEGCCVrTftdZOCLR?si=OXEozy39Sly-ifqPplwVdA>

Pr. Adrienne

Prayers and Best Wishes to Our Confirmands

Congratulations to our young adults who are completing the requirements for the confirmation program at St. Thomas Church. They have engaged in class work, retreats, memorization, and service to the congregation and community.



Noah Smith and Sophia Watters will be confirmed on Reformation Sunday, October 25th. May God continue to bless them with wisdom, growth in faith, and a spirit of joyful service to the Lord, the Church, and all creation.

VIRTUAL CHOIR at ST. THOMAS

Dear congregation,

I'm very excited to share with you that the adult choir at St. Thomas has resumed their music-making in a virtual format. We are meeting together on Zoom each Thursday night to touch base, and then individual members go to a *top-secret* area of our YouTube channel to practice with rehearsal videos that Katie and I have produced. This week the choir members are recording their performances of our first anthem, and it is scheduled to premiere during the service on Sunday, October 11. Look for our anthem that day, and then every few weeks after that!

We are very grateful to the church council for providing us with the technology we need to make this idea a reality. And as always, we would love to welcome new singers to our ranks! Please email Katie Gardiner (kegardin@iu.edu) or myself (powellam@iu.edu) if you're interested in joining us.

Stay well,
Mike Powell
Director of Music

ST. THOMAS MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

Call for Fourth Quarter Proposals: The Mission Endowment Fund provides funding for special projects at St. Thomas Lutheran Church, local outreach, and missions beyond the local community. If you have a project in need of funding, please submit an application before October 31st. Application forms can be emailed. If you have questions, please contact the church office or Keith Knipstein (kknipstein@gmail.com), Chair of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee.

SOLAR ENERGY at ST. THOMAS



Solar financial benefits: STLC has played a leadership role in the growth of Indiana solar energy since we were one of the first of more than fifty solar churches in the state, seven of which are in Bloomington. (See <https://hoosieripl.org/indiana-solar-congregations/>). With most of the church's power coming from the sun, the electricity budget has been reduced from \$5,000 to \$1,000 while electric rates have increased. Our Duke bills are zero for several months because net metering allows summer energy credits to offset winter bills. As an early adopter of grid-tied solar power, STLC is grandfathered with net metering until July 2047, long after the system will have paid for its initial cost. Solar cells are expected to have more than 80 percent of their original output after 25 years. Early solar cells from the 1950's are still producing power.

-submitted by Darrell Boggess

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY at IU

As I was driving home from Rose House one afternoon, I noticed a man standing on the corner just before the B Line Trail. In the few brief months that I have lived in Bloomington, there have been many people who have rotated through that corner seeking help. On this particular occasion though, something felt different. It took me awhile to pinpoint what that something different was- this individual was smiling, but more than that he was making eye contact with drivers trying to get them to smile too. This small gift from a stranger that was completely unexpected hit deep in my soul. As the light turned green, and I moved on from that space, that smile stuck with me.

Our world can feel so overwhelming sometimes with divisions, with hate, with injustices, hunger, poverty- but something in that smile reminded me that even when the world tells us it is hopeless, Christ gives us a different message to share. Christ gives us the message of hope- God sees us, God knows us, God loves us and has not abandoned or forgotten us. When we share that same hope with our neighbors through our words and actions, we see glimpses of the Kingdom of God.

One of the things in campus ministry that continues to inspire me is the passion and enthusiasm that the students and the LuMin Board have for loving and serving our neighbors. From collecting food for MCUM to painting pumpkins for homebound persons to gathering items for Middle Way House- these young adults have found purpose in doing God's work in the world.

As we continue our partnership walking together, LuMin invites each of you to join with us in spreading Christ's message of hope. For some that may be cleaning your closets to donate winter clothing items for our Middle Way House collection, for others it might be joining us in person for a socially distanced service project outside at Compass moving mulch, for others it might be as simple as being kind to your cashier at the grocery store, writing a letter of hope to someone who is lonely, or sharing a socially distanced smile with someone.

In whatever you choose to do, may God gift you all with compassion, a sense of purpose, and all that you need to share Christ's hope with all whom you meet.

Peace,
Pastor Amanda Ghaffarian †

Announcements:

- 1) A huge THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered with and donated to the LuMin Food Drive for MCUM on September 20. We really appreciate the support and look forward to continued partnerships with both St Thomas and MCUM.
- 2) During the month of October, LuMin will be hosting a special collection of items for Middle Way House. Specific items that have been requested are:
 - Men's large long sleeve shirts
 - Men's winter glove
 - Men's winter hats
 - Women's belts gently used or new
 - Disinfectant wipes

- Sanitizer
- Kid sizes 2-8 fall & winter clothing
- Women's Size Large, XL, XXL fall and winter clothing

There will be a collection box located in front of the garage at the Rose House 314 S Rose Ave from October 1st- October 31st for people to drop off donations. The drop box will be checked at least every other day. If you have any questions, or have a large quantity of items to donate that may not fit in the collection box, please contact Pastor Amanda at lutheran@indiana.edu or text 419-410-7447. Thank you for your help.

- 3) Adopted OWLS Grandparents Still Needed. We have a few students who have not yet been matched with an adopted OWLS (OLDER WISER LIVELY SAINTS) Grandparent. If you meet the following criteria- you are an active member of the faith, over 60 years of age, and willing to walk with a young person on this part of their faith journey- please reach out to Pastor Amanda via email at lutheran@indiana.edu for more information.
- 4) Thrivent Grants- As we enter the final quarter of the year, if you have Thrivent Grants and haven't used them yet, now is the time to do so. If you need help completing the grant or need ideas for socially distanced projects, please reach out to Pastor Amanda at lutheran@indiana.edu.

A CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM the SVEHOLMS in SLOVAKIA

The school year began, in person, on September 2. It was an unusually chilly morning after a full day of pouring rain. After dropping off our children with signed forms stating they had no COVID symptoms and had not been out of the country for at least 2 weeks, we entered our high school to temperature checks and required masks. Students know the first day is mostly catching up with friends and a bit of paperwork and were still trickling in at 10 when I was on hall duty at the school, making sure students were wearing masks properly at all times and not gathering in groups of 3+ outside the classrooms they would inhabit the entire week.



The plan, the hope, is to keep students and teachers at school as long as possible. For the first two weeks, everyone above grade 4 was masked at all times and they did not leave their homerooms, children above age 3 masked while on public transit or indoors and away from classrooms. Lunches were staggered, with students sitting in a zigzag, one chair between them.

In the beginning of September, numbers were still pretty good in Slovakia, country of about five and a half million. Mid-double-digit new confirmed cases most days country-wide (72 on September 1, most in Bratislava), but people were and are understandably nervous in part because many lack faith in their health care system and have their eyes on the situation in other countries.

Of course, they are right to worry. Four weeks after the schools opened, numbers have increased significantly. In the last week, every day has brought over 150 new cases (the approximate peak in the spring), most days over 300, and one day over 550. While this is nothing compared to many other places, the trajectory is troubling, especially since over 50% of the confirmed cases in August were

asymptomatic. Philip's school is a kindergarten that meets in a building with an elementary school (unassociated except for shared facilities) and a positive case closed the cafeteria for a week, though operations have returned to normal now. Several classes at the high school have temporarily shifted to remote learning and we watch COVID become more personal and pervasive.

Still, we are switching classrooms and teachers, sanitizing our hands and doorknobs constantly, and wondering just how long the schools will stay open physically. I struggle to learn the names of my 115 new students from just a swath of skin around the eyes and their changing masks and hairstyles (seriously, I never realized how much I relied on someone's big nose or braces to identify them!) and wonder whether the improved outcomes of onsite learning are worth the risk, as so many others have been wondering in this season, too. We all grow weary of breathing in humid jungles below our masks, though the interest in the collective good is still largely present here and it's a shock to see someone unmasked on the bus or in a shop.

Basically, we join the world in its preoccupations with this virus that has so affected our experience of 2020. Philip's "germ-fighting stick" can only do so much, but our prayers and personal networks can do so much more. We are connected from across the world. And we are so grateful for that connection.

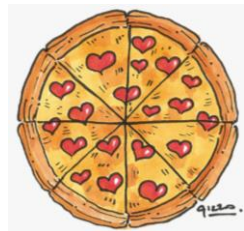
Hope your physical and mental health continue to be strong.

St T members Nick and Naomi are teaching in Slovakia with the kids as representatives of ELCA's Global Mission program. They've asked the people of St. Thomas to contribute towards their continuing transportation, and child care expenses; if you'd like to contribute, just mark SVEHOLM on the memo line of your check to St. Thomas.

MONROE COUNTY UNITED MINISTRIES

The first-ever online auction, Makin' a Splash for MCUM, exceeded their goal of raising \$5,000. Thanks go out to St. Thomas members who participated. Together with MCUM we can continue to alleviate uncertainty for families in Monroe County.

About your food donations: During the initial phase of the pandemic MCUM staff moved to handing out pre-bagged groceries until a protocol was established to ensure both client and staff safety. A new system now enables clients to go through their gym— transformed into a large pantry, to pick out their own groceries. In addition, there is an online ordering system.



ATTENTION PIZZA LOVERS!

MCUM has partnered with Azzip Pizza for their Pot of Dough Fundraiser competition. This fundraiser will run from September 1 - November 30. Five percent of every purchase using the code MONROEUNITED will go toward Monroe County United Ministries.

Additionally, the organization who generates the most pizza-traffic will win \$10,000. Check them out at 2894 E. 3rd Street at College Mall and azzippizza.com.



NEWHOPE
FOR FAMILIES

New Hope for Families thanks the congregation for standing in the gap for those families in our community impacted by homelessness. Any size donation is appreciated especially during these anxious times.

Immediate Needs

- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Disinfecting wipes
- Exam gloves (non-latex, size L-XL)
- Bottled water
- Dr. Brown's glass baby bottles
- 10 Bottle brushes
- Non-perishable food
- Kroger gift cards
- Michael's gift card



Monetary donations- Please make checks payable to St. Thomas Lutheran Church with New Hope for Families in the memo line.

Also needed

- Digital thermometers
- Non-bleach bathroom cleaner, countertop cleaner
- 6 Brooms/mops
- Mattress covers (size: twin, plastic, waterproof, bed bug resistant)
- 4 can openers
- Shower curtains and/or shower curtain liners
- Sponsored food boxes from the [People's Market](#)

The Nest children's books wish list: <https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3RRA49J76PXH9>

Family Shelter wish list: <https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/267UG93RNIZ5Y/>

Donations of goods delivered directly to the New Hope for Families' office are by appointment only by calling their office at 812-334-9840. Alternatively, please call Kim at (317) 840-2577 to arrange for porch pick up.

HOW CAN I GET TO KNOW PASTOR ADRIANNE?

Garden Chats with Pr. Adrienne

Join Pr. Adrienne for one-on-one conversations in the community garden. Individuals, or couples or families who all live together, are welcome to sign up for these chats. There is no agenda, but is a way for you to share a bit of yourself and your life with Pr. Adrienne and for her to introduce herself to you. Please wear a mask. These conversations will be rescheduled if it rains. Sign up at this link:

<https://calendly.com/pastoradrienne/chats-with-pr-a> or call the church office.

Zoom Chats with Pr. Adrienne

Sign up for a time to meet with Pr. Adrienne one-on-one-or-more via Zoom. These chats also have no agenda, and you're welcome to invite your bridge group or your away-at-school college kids. Sign up at this link: <https://calendly.com/pastoradrienne/chats-with-pr-a> or call the church office.

ST. THOMAS VIRTUAL NARTHEX – October 4



Do you miss coffee hour? Chatting with your favorite St. Thomas friends? Lutheran jokes? Join us at 10:10am Sunday, October 4 for a little virtual narthex visit. Bring your coffee, your kids, and - this time - a photo of your favorite place on earth.

The link to join is: <http://bit.ly/stlcvirtualnarthex>



- 10/4 Bailey Arnold
- 10/5 Dan Rademacher
- 10/6 Walt Wood
- 10/9 Leah Iversen, Frank Nierzwicki
- 10/10 Charlene Braun
- 10/12 Randy Nye
- 10/13 Kathy Zellers
- 10/14 Nancy Chadburn
- 10/17 Susan Lehr, Mary Sasse
- 10/18 Paul Leber, Jan Sinn
- 10/19 Marta Deibert Leach
- 10/20 Tim Smith
- 10/21 Lynn Coyne, Isaac Wyatt
- 10/22 Robin Hershberger
- 10/24 Debbie Selk, Noah Smith
- 10/26 Shirley Mingee, Jerry Smith
- 10/27 Karen Cline
- 10/28 Sharon Fawbush
- 10/29 Rey Kante, Rachel Bourkland, Nina Ost
- 10/30 Tish Llewellyn
- 10/31 Stephanie Hulett

ANNIVERSARIES

- 10/6 Rance & Sharon Fawbush, 47 years
- 10/13 Karlyn & Robert Grise, 30 years
- David & Debbie Nixon, 31 years
- 10/23 Mike & Jaydene Laros, 49 years

