

Saint Thomas Church News

April 2021 XXXXIII, Issue 4

From the Pastor

In the book of Ezra, the people returned from exile and sought to rebuild the temple. When they began work on the foundation, those who had seen the original temple wept for what they had lost, but those who had been born in exile cheered. The cacophony of sound was such that you could not tell if it was weeping or joyous shouts. I have been thinking about this story as we prepare for Easter worship — outdoors, together in person — for the first time in over a year. Just like the Israelites, we might find ourselves with some mixed emotions.

On the one hand, worship will not be the same as it was before. We will be outside, wearing masks, keeping a safe six foot distance. The service is a bit shorter. Communion will require a great deal of patience. Furthermore, we have said goodbye to a great number of people since we last gathered for worship at St. Thomas. We've said goodbye to staff members. People have finished their studies and moved to new communities. Some members have moved for their health or to be nearer to family. And we have entrusted to the Church Triumphant beloved, long-time friends. As we return to our gathering we will need to be honest about what we still lament.

On the other hand, we will gather together in the same place. We will take communion - together! We will sing - together! We will greet friends we've missed - together! This reminds me of the Songs of Ascents, Psalms 120-134, songs for those going up to Jerusalem for festival worship. One being, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord! Our feet are standing within your gates of Jerusalem'" (Psalm 122:1-2). Will we not be glad to be together? And one ends, "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves" (Psalm 126:5-6).

Beloved, you likely have mixed feelings about these changes. You may also have questions and concerns. First, my door is open, the phone lines are open, my email is open - please let me know. I learn something with every conversation I have about these worship services. Please let me learn or let me set your mind at ease. But second— and just as important— is to acknowledge these feelings. What comes *next* after traumatic events is very important. So give yourself time to feel the full breadth of your feelings. Acknowledge the grief, frustration, and anger as you feel them, and appreciate the joy and happiness as it gently returns.

God bless you,
Pr. Adrienne

Changes in Worship

Beginning Sunday, April 11, we will begin livestreaming our worship service at 8:30am. If you're not an early riser that's okay! The worship service will remain on our YouTube channel immediately after the service is streamed. This is a change in the way we're presenting the service, and we expect to hit a few road bumps. If you run into any problems, please contact the office. We appreciate and value your feedback.

We greatly appreciate your patience and flexibility as we seek to return to in-person worship. As of now, **we hope to add additional in-person worship services in April or May.** We will first add an in-person, outdoor worship service at 11:00am. Then, assuming continued declines in COVID-19 cases and continued increases in the number of vaccinated people, we will add a limited attendance, in-person, indoor worship service at 8:30am. **Throughout this time, we will livestream the 8:30am service** (and this service will remain posted on our YouTube channel). In fact, we plan to continue to livestream this indefinitely, so if you're ever unable to attend worship in person, we will have a quality virtual option.

† Easter Worship

So many people indicated they would like to attend our outdoor worship on Easter Sunday that we added an additional service. Virtual Easter Worship will take place at our usual worship times, 8:30am and 11:00am, on our YouTube channel. There will be an in-person, outdoor Easter Service on the circle and patio by Heritage Hall, held at 8:30am, 9:45am, and 11:00am. Please note the following for the outdoor Easter Service:

- Reservations are required and are available on [our website](#).
- Masks are required.
- Please bring chairs to sit in. A limited number of chairs will be available if you need one. Additional Frequently Asked Questions (and answers) are available [here](#).

2021 Time and Talent

We are so grateful for the gifts our members offer to us. As we begin a slow return to our usual schedule and activities and as we add new ministries, such as our video ministry, we would benefit greatly in knowing both your comfort in serving in various capacities and the ministries that excite and interest you the most. We have prepared an online Time and Talent Survey for [adults](#) and [children and youth](#). These surveys should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Please have each member of your family complete a survey. We will survey you again in 2022, when we are hopefully completely out from the shadow of COVID, so please consider your commitment as it relates to the pandemic. Again, the link for adults is [here](#) and the link for children and youth is [here](#).

Youth and Christian Nurture

Sunday Afternoon Family Fun: The church celebrates the Easter season for fifty days - and we will too! Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 11 and 25 from 2 pm to 4 pm. We will gather folks of all ages to have fun as our St Thomas family!

Sunday, April 11, we will meet at Bryan Park (Woodlawn Shelter by pool & tennis courts) at 2 pm for activities and time to play together.

Sunday, April 25, we will meet at Cascades Park (Lion's Den Shelter) at 2 pm to continue celebrating the Easter Season with Minute to Win It games.

On April 11, we will collect donations for the Beacon, Inc Solidarity Sleep-out and on April 25, game winners will choose who those funds will support. Please [RSVP to Pastor Lecia](#) by the Thursday before each event.

Confirmation class will meet April 18 at 12:15 pm. • Youth Group will meet April 11 at 5:30 pm.

Keep up to date with all things Youth and Christian Nurture! [Subscribe to our new newsletter here.](#)

Mission & Ministry at St. Thomas

Our congregation is teaming up with neighbor congregations, Beth Shalom and University Baptist, in the Solidarity Sleep-out hosted by Beacon, Inc and by the MCUM Spring into Action drive.

SPRING INTO ACTION FOR MCUM

This is a neighborhood thing.....yes indeed! St Thomas will work with our friends from Beth Shalom and University Baptist Congregations to help MCUM BIG TIME!!

This is a Cleaning and Hygiene Drive.....oh so necessary items, but very hard for low-income folk to come by. There are several food pantries. MCUM does a great job helping hungry people, but cleaning and hygiene items are rarely found except at MCUM. Here is a list of most requested items:

- GENERAL CLEANER
- LAUNDRY DETERGENT
- DEODORANT
- RAZORS
- SHAMPOO & CONDITIONER
- DISH SOAP
- KLEENEX
- BATHSOAP

DATE: Sunday, April 25 TIME: 1:00 – 4:00 PM

LOCATION: Parking lot between Beth Shalom and St. Thomas

There will be a booth (thank-you, Halvorsons). Simply place your donation in a container.

VOLUNTEERS from each congregation will work together for one-hour shifts and will take the offering to MCUM. This donation will be joint – not separated by Congregation.....what a great way to work with and get to know our neighbors! We will let you know how many pounds we collect!

Want to VOLUNTEER to **Spring into Action** or do you have questions? Please contact Helen Ingersoll at 812.339.9610 or Email: hingerso@indiana.edu.

Volunteer Shifts: 1:00-2:00; 2:00-3:00; 3:00-4:00. Donations will be taken to MCUM on Monday, April 26 – time to be decided by volunteers!



Beacon is hosting its third annual Solidarity Sleep-out from Friday, April 30 at 8pm to Saturday, May 1 at 8am. People of all ages are invited to sleep out so others don't have to!

Beacon is a vital, leading, compassionate organization which aids and empowers those experiencing need with a full range of support services to reduce hunger, poverty, and homelessness. The proceeds from the event will support Beacon's overnight shelter, Friend's Place. Combined with Beacon's housing and employment assistance, Friend's Place has become one of the most successful shelters in Indiana. To learn more about Beacon, visit <https://beaconinc.org/>.

Members of St. Thomas are forming a team to sleep out as a way to identify with those who don't have their own beds to crawl into at night. You can choose to sleep out that night in your own yard, on your porch, or even on the floor in your home and ask friends or family members to pledge some money to support you. You can join our team at <https://givebutter.com/sleepout2021/st-thomas-lutheran> or pledge support for one of our team members.

If you can't participate directly in the Sleep-out, [you can support one of our 'sleepers'](#) or make a contribution to Beacon, Inc. and earmark your check 'Solidarity Sleep-out.' It is super easy to make a donation. Simply go to: <https://givebutter.com/sleepout2021/st-thomas-lutheran>. There you can make a gift to Pr. Lecia or Peter, who are the current two fundraisers, or become a fundraiser yourself.

There will be a brief service of blessing and sending for our sleepers outside at St. Thomas at 6:30pm on April 30. All participants are welcome to join us.

For more information contact Doug Bauder (dbauder@indiana.edu).

ECHO

Calling all gardeners...It's official—spring is here—and after a year's hiatus due to the pandemic, the ECHO plant sale is back! The date is still TBA, but we're crossing our fingers for early May.



Head out to your garden and take a look. Are your catmint and black-eyed Susans violating social distancing guidelines? Are columbine “volunteers” taking over your garden bed? Are you starting a flat of marigolds or peppers and have seedlings to spare? We'd love to have starts and extras of perennials, annuals, herbs, vegetables, bulbs, saplings, and houseplants (native plants are especially encouraged—let's make garden choices that help our pollinators). Or maybe there's a bare spot in your garden that could be filled with plants from the sale. And don't forget—Mother's Day is May 9! All proceeds go to support ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization) and its mission of combating world hunger through agricultural innovation and education.

We can also use volunteers to help with setting up and running the sale. If interested, please email Vicki Polansky at vwilliam@indiana.edu.

A Message from Naomi Sveholm

Nick and I have been in Slovakia nearly four years because we feel very strongly about the mission of the Central Europe Teachers (CET) program. We're at one of eight bilingual (high) schools in Slovakia and Poland to share in the ELCA's mission. The idea of accompaniment, the primary lens the ELCA uses to visualize mission, can be explained in so many ways, but my mind returns to music, and I expect many in Bloomington can relate. While a pianist and a vocalist can individually make good music, it is often so much greater when they work together. The CET program really works toward that in many ways, using each teacher's talents in a way that works specifically with each school. We are invited, welcomed, and brought in to improve the prospects of the students and make the Lutheran schools more valuable.

In this year with less movement, we are facing the second year in which we are not sure there will be new teachers able to come, and the further departure of teachers who stayed through the pandemic. At this time, we ask for your prayers that the world situation will improve quickly enough to allow us to bring in new teachers to the CET program. Please support the mission of the CET program with your prayers.

Naomi and Nick Sveholm



A letter of thanks:

CHICHIPATE, EL ESTOR, IZABAL, GUATEMALA, CENTRAL AMERICA
December 2020

Dear brothers and sisters at St Thomas Lutheran Church,

We send you our infinite gratitude for the communication and support you have given us in these difficult times. We feel grateful and blessed to have this relationship with you. This relationship has shown us that good Samaritans exist in the world, acting just as Jesus Christ taught us. God lives in the hearts of those who love their neighbors.

We are united in our efforts to help those who are most dispossessed, those who have been abandoned, those who suffer. We send our deepest gratitude for the support you have sent for our community. We join in prayer, asking God to accompany those who are suffering in these times. We ask our Lord to bestow many blessings on all those who have shown love to their neighbor with donations for food.

With gratitude,

Sister Parish Committee in Chichipate – Santo Domingo de Guzmán Church

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND (MEF)

The St. Thomas Mission Endowment Committee encourages and accepts proposals for programs or projects not otherwise funded by the congregation's budget or general fund. The primary purpose of the MEF is to provide funding for special needs at St. Thomas Lutheran Church, local outreach, and worldly missions. Proposals for the next quarter should be submitted by April 30. Contact the church office for an application.

Prayer Chain

Want to join our St Thomas email prayer chain?
Do you have prayer requests? Contact Susan
Colston skcolston@aol.com for more information.





When families with children are experiencing homelessness, one of the ways New Hope for Families welcomes them into their shelter is by supplying them with fresh clean sheets, towels, toiletries and other items they need to make this place feel comfortable, peaceful, and safe.

New Hope for Families relies on donations of new and gently-used items to provide this important support to the families they serve. Bins are located in the church narthex to accept your donations. Alternatively, donations can be dropped off at New Hope for Families where donations are by appointment only. Please call their office at (812) 334-9840 to arrange a drop off time. Continued gratitude for your prayers and generosity.

Immediate Needs

- Pocket expanding file folder
- Baby gate play yard (free standing baby gates)
- Pack 'N Play sheets
- Crib sized sheets
- Pair of curtain panels sized to fit a small window with the dimensions of approximately 31in * 37
- Gift cards or Amazon gift cards to be used for children's bedding
- Diapers (sizes 4 and up) and/or Pull-ups (any size)
- Baby wipes (unscented, hypoallergenic)
- Egg skillets
- Saucepans
- Stockpots
- Baking sheets (cookie trays)
- Laundry detergent, dryer sheets
- Dish soap
- Shampoo & conditioner
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Disinfecting wipes
- Bed pillows (standard size)
- Kroger gift cards

Additionally, checks can be made out to St. Thomas Lutheran Church with New Hope for Families in the memo line.

The Nest children's wish list: <https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2LU7V7N192JJR>

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

Call-Out For Committee Members/Council Members

There are many ways to participate in the mission of our congregation. One of those ways that I would like to highlight is service to our congregation by becoming part of one or more of our committees and service on the Congregation Council.

We have several committees that are always seeking interested and engaged persons. Each committee has its own focus and purpose. Our committees are:

Worship Committee
Mission Committee
Finance Committee
Outreach Committee
Property Committee
Education Committee
Creation Care Committee

If you are interested in joining any of these committees, please contact the Church office. We will put you in touch with the Committee Chair to answer any questions that you may have as to joining.

In a similar vein, we are also seeking persons interested in serving on the Congregation Council. The Congregation Council is the governing body for the Congregation and is comprised of 12 voting members elected by the Congregation to a 3-year term. Serving on Council is an excellent way to learn about the different functions of St. Thomas and to gain a deep understanding of how St. Thomas works as an organization. No experience is necessary. If you are interested in serving on Council, please contact the church office.

Dean Arnold,
Council President

THE ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY GARDEN

Open plots remain in the garden for the upcoming 2021 season. If you've been thinking you would like to grow a few veggies this summer now is the time to sign-up. New gardeners are welcome to apply for these open garden plots, and current gardeners may apply for a second plot. For the STLC Community Garden Contract and a 2021 Registration form, contact Kaye Hill at kayehill48@gmail.com.



Lutheran Campus Ministry at IU

The old saying, “make plans, God laughs” is the best way to describe what Campus ministry feels like right now. Due to the continuing COVID issues, our Rent-A-Puppy event had to be cancelled for this year. Due to that bad weather in the middle of February, our Mardi Gras event had to be postponed until later in that week. Due to scheduling conflicts, our joint service project for Easter with the Methodist ministry on campus wound up having only our students present. Over and over and over again, plans are changed by things outside of our control. Professors have assigned students extra projects on nights when they would normally have a bit of space to breathe, deadlines get missed as work piles up, and people are starting to feel burnout more now than earlier in the pandemic.

The life coach that I have been working with for the past few months gives the advice to “give yourself grace” in these situations. Recognize that some things are just going to fall by the wayside and that is okay. As long as we or others are not being hurt by what becomes low on the priority list of things to get done and may be left undone, then there is no need to burden ourselves with the extra stress in already incredibly stressful times. Perhaps at a later date, the activity or project may be attempted again, but in the present, live in the gift of grace and extend that grace to others as well. Easter is the season of the church year in which we especially emphasize the gift of God’s grace for us. Through Christ’s life, death, and resurrection we have been saved by that grace and nothing we could ever do could earn us that grace- it is a gift. So, if God is really laughing at us making plans, it is likely because our plans often fail to remember that grace in difficult situations, our plans fail to share that gift with others when they need to hear the words, or our plans are not in alignment with what God has planned for our lives.

That in essence means, we do the best that we can in this world showing love to our neighbors and following the commandments because God first loved us, but when we fall short, when we are overburdened and need to let some things go-including the guilt of saying no to tasks- we can fall back into the promise that we are loved by God because we are God’s, not because of how many events we plan, papers we write, or tasks we accomplish.

So dear siblings in Christ, in whatever plans you make, in whatever plans you have to set aside, may God’s grace and peace be with you now and always. Amen.

Peace,

Pastor Amanda Ghaffarian †

Dear LuMin at IU and Friends,

Echoing the hymn of the day (on Palm Sunday), what language shall I borrow to thank thee? Thank you very much for presenting your news broadcast during the service today. I loved the way you brought stories of Jesus to life on this start of the week leading up to his sacrifice and resurrection! Your re-enactments really helped me connect with Jesus and those around him. I appreciate this gift you gave to me and the whole congregation.

B’anyox! (pronounced bahn-ti-osh meaning thank you -- from the Q’eqchi’ language of our Sister Parish in Chichipate)

Sincerely, Ronna Papesh Member, St. Thomas Lutheran Church