

# *Saint Thomas Lutheran Church News*

**May 2021      XXXXIII, Issue 5**

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## From the Pastor

Most snow days were not terribly magical for me when I was a child. We lived in Lebanon, in Boone County, but my folks both worked in Indianapolis. They could only stay home with us if there was a snow emergency in Marion County - a rare occurrence. Most of the time, my sister and I were carted to work with my mom, where we'd have to entertain ourselves for *hours* in the consultation room of the pediatrician's office where she worked. As terrible as it was for us, I now can only imagine how torturous it was for her to be constantly interrupted by our request for snacks and "can we go home yet?" So, most snow days were no fun at all. But sometimes, something magical happened. We'd get an early morning phone call from Barb, the neighbor who lived behind us. She was a home care nurse, and if she didn't have to go to work, she'd open her home to three families for the day. *That* was magical. There would always be something amazing to do. Most of the time, somehow, she'd have the true treasure of childhood: a refrigerator box. Little was off limits at Barb's house, but there were a few things we had to ask to play with: her player piano and her glass kaleidoscopes. She had two kaleidoscopes, one with the delicate glass tube, filled with glitter and confetti, and one with gorgeous stained glass circles you would spin to make the whirling colors. Every time I was able to get a peak, I marveled at the ever-changing view, seen once and likely never again in the same way.

In the church, Holy Communion is a lot a kaleidoscope - there are many meanings. Every time we come to the table we may be drawn in by a different image. As we live our lives, beset by grief and buoyed by joy, we bring more and more to the table, and God responds. Right now, my kids simply enjoy "the crackers." It is very meaningful for them to be *included* in this ritual. A colleague's daughter once told him that communion was like the holiday table at grandma's where they made room for everyone. At times in my life, the Eucharist has been the meager ration of a desert journey, enough to sustain me when there was little else around. The Sunday after Matt's grandma died, I relished in the communion of saints, connecting my morsel at the communion rail with the eternal feast at which she had surely been welcomed. And in the times when I hunger for something more, communion is a foretaste of the feast to come.

It is weird to write about this meal when our Easter celebration was the first time many of us celebrated together in more than a year. Even when we begin regular, in-person services, many of us will still be unable to attend for some time. Some of us will watch and not

consume, some of us will celebrate in homes, or come together at St. Thomas for small gatherings. Communion in person this summer will not be able to be exactly like it was before. But, in the coming weeks and months, maybe this one little kernel will form greater meaning for us: this is a foretaste of the feast to come.

I will be completely honest with you, these last months of the pandemic seem harder than the first. It was easier to close down than to open up. I am fighting warring feelings within me: the desire to be completely safe and the need to be with others. I know, on the one hand, that I am responsible for the wellbeing of those around me. On the other hand, I also have learned (the hard way) that living itself involves a great deal of risk. As my St. Thomas colleagues and I have worked to coordinate plans to maintain our ministry while we are apart and to return to some semblance of normal, we have kept before us this idea of what is yet to come. What was and what is here that is too beautiful to lose? What might yet be? What might flower out of some seed we sow today? The way we exit this time of being apart together will show its greatest yield in generations yet to come.

God bless you,

Pr. Adrienne

## **WORSHIP**

### *Easter Sunday*

A great many thanks are due to those who made our *five* Easter services possible. Debbie Selk planted and tended the garden beds around the worship space. Debbie, Karen Rohlfing, and Gayl Laughman prepared the paraments and other decorations. Karen and Gayl came back on Monday to completely the tear down with Debbie. Barb Unger, who has taken over as chair of Altar Guild, along with Jean Brown and Mary Sasse prepared the communion elements. Mike Powell and Katie Gardiner and the choir prepared a gorgeous virtual choir piece and a wonderful arrangement of "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." Adam Carroll continues his tireless work making our video ministry happen. Mike Powell and Matt Meier set up the sound system for outdoor worship. Many people (Marlyn Saum, the Thomason-Smith family, Susan Krieg and Walt Wood, and many others) helped set up for outdoor worship. Barb Unger stayed all morning, made more communion elements when we needed them and helped orchestrate the tear down with Debbie Selk. Tear down involved nearly everyone who came to the final service. We had visitors! A runner stopped and listened to the whole 9:45am service and someone took her communion. A hawk perched on the steeple for the first service. Pr. Lecia and a gaggle of kids chalked the walk, and Pr. Lecia took pictures throughout the morning and generally was the Gal-Who-Made-Things-Happen (she handled a lot of issues as they came up). In total, we had 162 people attend our three in-person worship services and 110 unique views on YouTube before noon. Online attendance is figured by multiplying the views by 1.6 (to account for more than one person watching in many cases), bringing our total Easter attendance to 338.

We are still learning from our experience on Easter. **If you attended the Easter service, we would appreciate your thoughtful feedback in this four question form:**

[stlconline.org/feedback](http://stlconline.org/feedback)

### *The Road to In Person Worship*

We greatly appreciate how flexible St. Thomas members have been throughout the last year. After a great many months pre-recording our service, we have moved to livestreaming our service. If you tune in at 8:30 am on Sunday morning, you're seeing what's happening in the sanctuary with about a seven second delay. Several people have reached out to let us know what problems they're

experiencing - thank you for your help. **If you encounter a problem - especially problems that occur from week to week - please reach out to any member of the staff to let us know.** We intend to continue providing quality digital worship *indefinitely*. Even as we return to in person worship, and even as the threat of COVID subsides, we will continue to provide this service. We think it will be valuable to our members and unchurched people in our community, so we will continue to provide it long into the future.

In person worship tentatively scheduled to begin **May 30**:  
8:30am - Indoors  
10:15am - Outdoors  
Masks required  
Register to attend at [stlconline.org](http://stlconline.org)

Cases were rising in Monroe County in April, but, they've started to flatten out. **Assuming cases begin to decline again, we are preparing to worship in person beginning Sunday, May 30.** At least for the first several weeks, you will need to register for the services in advance. All services will have limited attendance in keeping with the guidance and rule of the Monroe County Health Department. At 8:30 am, we will gather inside, in our worship space. We will begin by welcoming about 15 households to the service, adding households as we can safely do so. The second service, at 10:15 am will be held outdoors. While we anticipate having this service rain or shine, if severe weather threatens, we will cancel the service via Facebook and e-mail to registered attendees. We do anticipate that it could be quite warm some mornings, so please be prepared for the weather. We will have communion at all services using prepackaged elements. We will also have singing at all services, so it will be imperative that everyone wears a mask.



### *Communion Gatherings in May*

It was such a delight to be together on Easter. We do not feel it is yet safe to gather that number of people each week, but we still long to be together. Throughout the month of May, we will continue our livestream services on Sunday mornings, but **we will also gather together in small groups to celebrate communion and enjoy Christian fellowship.** Some of these gatherings will include time to just sit and chat, others will have more structured activities. If a certain gathering occurs twice, we do ask that you only sign up for one occurrence. You may bring your own bread and wine/grape juice, or we will provide it for you (please indicate if you intend to bring your own when you sign up). We are still scheduling several gatherings, so please watch the weekly emails for a flier with dates, times, and sign up links.

### *Lutheran Basics*

Are you a new-ish Lutheran? Do you love St. Thomas, but are confused by the “Evangelical Lutheran” part of our name? Are you a life-long Lutheran but the last time you thought about what it means to be a Lutheran was when you memorized Luther’s Small Catechism for confirmation? Did your eyes just glaze over with that last question? Are you hoping to connect with more people at St. Thomas? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then do I have something amazing for you!



**Throughout the month of May, join Pr. Adrienne a faith formation series on Lutheran Basics.** Each week I will post a playlist of sorts – different videos, articles to read, a podcast I’ve created, and so on – to [stlconline.org/lutheranbasics](https://stlconline.org/lutheranbasics). You can do as little or as much as you want. I’ll try to moderate a lively discussion in comments throughout the week. Then, you can join me for a Zoom conversation on Tuesday May 11 and Tuesday, May 25 at 7:30pm. The Zoom link for those conversations is:

<https://zoom.us/j/99871580423?pwd=VnFxbVZkSWNIT2ZjWjdoSWQ2OThCQT09>

### **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

### Confirmation:

Exciting things have been happening with our confirmation students! Students and their families gathered for an Easter vigil as we anticipated celebrating Christ's resurrection. Just as Christians have for generations, we gathered around a fire to tell the stories of God's faithfulness and salvation through history. Students were invited to help tell these stories, so we heard the stories of Creation from Audrey Knipstein, the Flood from Braelyn Dimick and the Fiery Furnace from Irene Fogleman in addition to hearing about deliverance at the Red Sea from Pastor Lecia and the Resurrection from Deacon Allison Ward. Thank you to the Rust/DeGraaf family for hosting our vigil!

We will have our last two classes of the school year on Sunday, May 2 and May 16.



### Sunday Afternoon Family Fun:

Sunday Afternoon Family Fun has been a hit! It has been wonderful to meet so many of our families and to enjoy time together! Thank you to Kristin Marsh for coordinating our April events. Mark your calendars - we will also gather for fun in May. On May 2, we will gather at Olcott Park from 2-4pm. On May 23, we will gather at Park Ridge East Park from 2-4pm. Join us for any part of that! All ages are welcome to join us and connect with others!

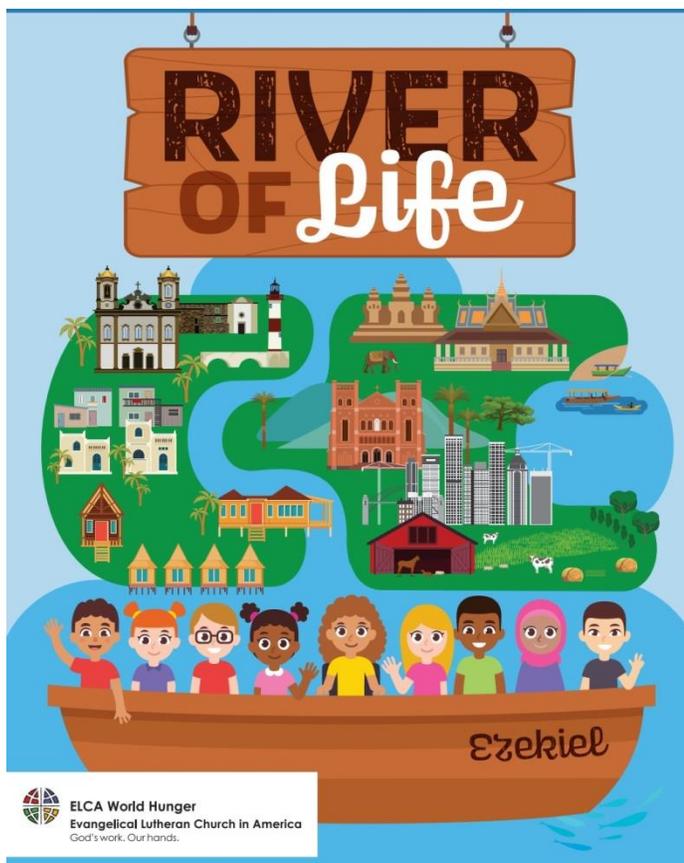
# FUN!

## Vacation Bible School:

Welcome to the River of Life! Join us as we journey down the river to learn about God's gracious gift of water. From the waters of baptism to the waters that sustain farms and gardens, water is life!

We will gather on Sundays in June (June 6, 13, 20, & 27) from 12-2pm for some VBS fun! Come for one week or all of them. We will explore a Bible story and learn about the importance of water. We will also hear about communities working to restore watersheds, to protect rights to water and to ensure safe water for everyone.

You are welcome to worship outside with us at 10:15am and bring a sack lunch to enjoy outside before VBS. For safety, the majority of activities will take place outside and families will participate together to reduce the mixing of households. Participants are asked to wear masks. We will continue to monitor COVID metrics for Monroe County and adapt as necessary.



You can register each child at <https://vbsmate.com/events/stlc/20054>. Please register each child who will participate. While adults are intended to participate with their children, adults do not need to register. Anyone who wants to volunteer - adult, youth, or confirmation student - can contact Pastor Lecia ([pastorleciabeck@gmail.com](mailto:pastorleciabeck@gmail.com)) and include which dates you are available!

## **St. Thomas Women's Bible Study**

The May session of the Women's Bible study will be held outside in the Prayer Garden on May 16 at 10:00am. Woo Hoo! We are able to meet in person. 😊 I will provide a few chairs, but if you don't want a blue church chair, you may want to bring your own! Anyone who would like to join in is welcome. We have just had an amazing 4 sessions, the past 4 months, on angels.

The group of women who meet regularly, really wanted me to advertise more, because they think this is a wonderful group and the bible studies, from the ELCA church, are very good.

So please think about joining us, especially next fall. We will start up again in September and meet at the church. The usual time is between services, during the education hour, on the second Sunday of the month.

Peace and Blessings,  
Kari Esarey  
[kesarey@mccsc.edu](mailto:kesarey@mccsc.edu)

## **May Friendship Day: Friday, May 7, 11:00am**

All are welcome to join Church Women United/Women of Faith at our spring celebration! As our theme says, there is room at the table for all, and we have made a move beyond ecumenical to multi-faith inclusion. We will hold a service and serve a light luncheon at the outdoor pavilion on the east side of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 4235 W. 3rd St, 47404. No cost, no rain date.

## **Mission & Ministry**

### **MCUM Cleaning and Hygiene Drive**

What a beautiful and enjoyable day it was! Thanks to St. Thomas, Congregation Beth Shalom and University Baptist, a bountiful donation of cleaning and hygiene items was delivered to MCUM on April 26!

Volunteers from each congregation greeted donors and helped get gifts to the collection site. Special thanks go to St. Thomas volunteers: Kaye Hill, Sacha Arterberry, and Kathleen Boggess. Also, major thanks to Tom Sinn for setting up his canopy and to Peter Iversen for taking it down!

#### NEIGHBORING CONGREGATION DRIVE RESULTS:

Pounds: 900

Monetary Contributions: \$300

Lots of homemade cookies and good visiting happened, and I heard talk of more joint ventures! St. Thomas continues to be a valued advocate for MCUM... all your effort and care is appreciated so much!!

Helen Ingersoll  
MCUM Board Member

## Lutheran Campus Ministry at IU

We have reached the end of the Spring Semester at IU Bloomington. Graduation is days away and we will be bidding farewell to some of our beloved members. It will be both difficult and exciting to see them move on beyond this place to new adventures elsewhere. No matter where they go though, they will always remain part of our Rose House LuMin family. I am extremely proud of all of our students this year- those graduating, those who have done difficult discernment discovering that their place is not at IU but that God is calling them elsewhere, those who have worked diligently throughout the semester to gain academic honors, and those who show up and shine the reflection of Christ's light in the world. Each student has impacted the ministry in different ways and those experiences will help shape and guide its future and their own.

As we transition to the summer season and start making plans for the fall semester, I would like to pause and take a moment to say thank you to our St. Thomas family who have graciously supported us this year with your time, talent, and treasures. We really appreciate all of your prayers, volunteer hours, kind notes, and care for the students. Going forward we will have more opportunities to make connections between the congregation and the campus ministry and are always open to new ideas.

For now, may God continue to bless and guide our graduates, may the Holy Spirit lead all of the students safely to the places that they are going this summer, and may the light of Christ be reflected in each of your lives to shine brightly in the world for everyone to see. Amen.

Peace,  
Pastor Amanda Ghaffarian †

## Prayer Chain

Want to join our St Thomas email prayer chain?  
Do you have prayer requests?  
Contact Susan Colston [skcolston@aol.com](mailto:skcolston@aol.com) for further information.



**ANNUAL  
PROGRAM MEETING**  
Sunday, May 16 at 1:00 p.m.  
via Zoom

At the Annual Program Meeting of the Congregation, the following members are up for election to a three-year term on our Congregation Council: Sarah Fogleman, Liz Gaskins, Frank Nierzwicki, and Tim Smith. Ronna Papesh is to be elected to complete the final year of the late Judy Bush's term.