

St. Thomas Lutheran Church News

June 2021

XXXXIII Issue 6



From the Pastor

In this period of fading COVID, our congregation has adopted the word “encourage” as the guiding principle for the decisions we make on the road to in-person worship, meetings, and activities. We encourage our members to wear masks in the building and at meetings until everyone present is comfortable removing them. We encourage our members to get vaccinated. Most importantly, we encourage our members to care for one another and our community.

I love this word, encourage. Of course, at the time, we primarily use the word encourage to mean that we endorse or condone these certain behaviors. But, I love that this word asks so much more of us. It asks us to face uncomfortable situations with courage. It isn't the most pleasant experience to get a shot, and it can be nerve-wracking to get a shot that didn't exist two years ago (though the science behind it certainly did). It isn't a pleasant experience all the time to wear a mask. It also takes courage to get consent from one another to remove our masks, say, in a small meeting. It takes courage to care for our neighbor and to put their best interests above our own. It takes courage to approach one another with curiosity. It takes courage to lay aside our assumptions that everyone needs exactly what we needed, or that everyone else's hopes match our own.

I do want to briefly remind our community that *caring* takes on many forms. It means we continue to check in with those we do not see, asking, “Who is not here?” Remember that we have new staff who have not yet met everyone, and who may not be aware of who is not here. You can help by both following up yourself with those who are absent, and by checking in with the staff about those whom you are missing. You can also help by introducing yourself (again and again). Everyone looks different with masks on, especially someone you don't know as well. We have also received new members during the time since we last worshiped together

and many others used the pandemic to connect with our community for the first time.

The courage to care also means checking with one another to do what is most comfortable for everyone. Small groups and committees should make the decision to return to in-person meetings only once the vast majority - if not all - of the group are ready to make that shift. Currently, St. Thomas is *not* able to offer hybrid meetings (such as a computer in a meeting space so some members can participate via Zoom). If a member of your group has the ability to create a hybrid solution, then, by all means do so, but first check in with the group. How will it actually feel having some people together and some people at a distance? What if there is a delay? How will you make everyone feel welcome?

The courage to care also means taking care of our space. If you stop in at St. Thomas through the week, sign in at the welcome desk when you arrive. Please remember to clean up after yourself when you are here for meetings or worship. Turn on HVAC fans when you arrive and turn them off when you leave. Turn off lights and firmly close doors behind you.

Julian of Norwich, a medieval mystic and anchorite once said, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well." The poet Ann Lewin reflected on this quote and wrote, "The courage that says / all shall be well / doesn't mean feeling no fear, / but facing it, trusting / God will not let go." This is the courage that can undergird this time. This is the heart of our understanding. We move forward together trusting that the source of our courage isn't something we ourselves produce, but something given to us by God. It has taken courage *not* to worship in person, and now, it will take a considerable amount of courage to be together again, still in the midst of uncertainty, trusting that the One who calls us is faithful. In the name of the Faithful One, may we encourage one another throughout the days to come.

God bless you,
Pr. Adrienne

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee has met several times to rewrite the job descriptions for our Parish Administrator and Bookkeeper/Office Assistant positions. The job descriptions were approved by the Executive Committee. We have posted the position to [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) and shared it on our website and Facebook page. We are grateful for the referrals of members of St. Thomas. If you know of someone who would be a great fit in our office, please encourage them to apply.

From the Minister of Youth & Christian Nurture

Welcome to the River of Life! Jump right in!

I am excited for this Vacation Bible School! (More information about registering and volunteering below.) Our theme will be the River of Life, a curriculum produced by ELCA World Hunger.

I love the image of the River of Life. From a biological perspective, we know that water is essential to life. From a biblical perspective, it brings to mind the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God (Revelation 22:1).

Aaron Niequist uses the image of a river whenever he teaches about a "practice-based faith" rooted in spiritual practices which help us grow in discipleship. (Check out his book and [podcast](#) *The Eternal Current*.) He reminds us that we are already in the river - whether by baptism, being created by God or by the fact that Jesus chose us - but we choose how we experience the river.

Do you stay in the shallow part, where the water barely laps at your toes?

Do you try to stand in place or swim upstream?

Or do you dive right in and have fun swimming and playing?

Are you ready to see where the current takes you?

In the work of Christian nurture, I believe this invitation is the goal. All that we do is with the purpose of inviting folks of *all ages* into a deeper faith and experiencing abundant life in Christ. In a way, as the church, we offer swimming lessons.

In the last fourteen months, we have had to find different ways to encourage each other in lives of faith and teach what it means to follow Christ. As we slowly begin to regather, those methods will continue to change, but the goal is the same - *inviting everyone into an awareness of the river of life and helping them experience joy and swim more boldly.*

Come on in - the water's fine!

Pastor Lecia

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 Sunday, June 6, 13, 20 & 27 from 12-2pm for some VBS fun! Come for all the weeks or just one when 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.

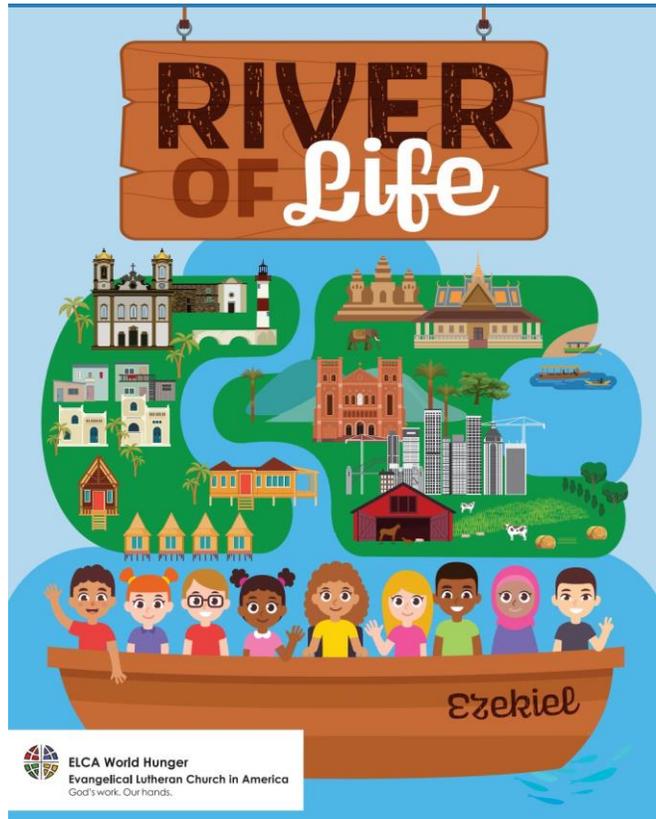
The majority of activities will take place outside and families will participate together to reduce the mixing of households. Because children are not yet able to be vaccinated, we ask all participants to wear masks.

Please register each child who will participate at <https://vbsmate.com/events/stlc/20054>. 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) and include which dates you are available!

Vacation Bible School Mission Project

VBS this summer includes a service project for Beacon, creating bags to help people experiencing homelessness keep hydrated and support their comfort in the heat. Please bring items on Sunday, June 6, 13 or 20. We will compile the bags at our last VBS on Sunday, June 27th. Thank you!

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|---------------------------|--|
| 1) Reusable water bottles | 6) Foot powder |
| 2) Sunscreen | 7) Candy bars |
| 3) Bug spray | 8) Lip balm |
| 4) Deodorant | 9) Socks (ones that will not wear quickly) |
| 5) Razors | |



Solidarity Sleepout

Thank you to everyone at St Thomas who supported our team for the Solidarity Sleepout. Beacon was able to exceed their goal of raising \$100,000! Altogether, this translates into the funds to shelter 196 people and 8,791 nights of rest and care for the coming year.

We especially thank the St Thomas team which included Sarah and Irene Fogelman, Sarah Ratzburg, Peter Iversen, Pastor Amanda Ghaffarian and Pastor Lecia Beck. Thank you also to Doug Bauder for his service on Beacon's Development Committee.



Reflections from team members:

I was so tired that evening that I didn't really feel like getting things set up to sleep outside: it was Friday, the end of a long week, and all I wanted was to crawl under my covers and go to bed. Thinking of all of the support from friends, though, helped us find our energy to get ready for the Beacon Sleepout. Not everything went to plan. Isaak (11) really, really wanted to sleep outside too, and without enough sleeping bags for everyone, he and Irene (14) agreed to switch. Irene instead slept on the floor inside, but she said it still gave her the chance to think about the discomfort of not having a bed or a cozy place to sleep at night. Isaak hadn't been part of our discussions about this before, so it was good to hear his thoughts and observations. He ended up donating \$12 from his allowance money to help us meet (and exceed!) our personal fundraising goal of \$1,000!

We've gone camping in the cold as a family before - I love sleeping in the cool air - so we knew what to do to keep warm: heat up the barley bag, bring out the extra wool blankets, get the wool socks on. Get the dog - he brings tons of warmth! What was different from our happy camping experiences was the intention. Behind every decision we made, we wondered: could we do this if we didn't have a home? What would it be like if we were in a city and on a sidewalk? Where would we store our blankets in the morning? How would we heat up the barley bag? Where would we get a glass of water if we couldn't run inside the kitchen? The next morning my back ached from sleeping on the thin camping pad, and I thought about how I would get through a busy day at work if I needed to, night after night of sleeping on the hard ground.

It was a very meaningful, thoughtful experience to sleep in solidarity with those who sleep every night without a bed, without a home, without shelter, without a home to take solace in

after a long day. I am very thankful to everyone at St. Thomas who so generously supported and encouraged us to experience this sleepout!

— Sarah, Irene, & Isaak Fogleman (and Bandit)

I have students who experience homelessness and it breaks my heart to think there is a chance they may have to sleep in less than safe and warm conditions. I am in solidarity with them tonight in hopes all children, all people, have a warm and safe place to sleep every night.

— Sarah Ratzburg

Word in the Woods

On **Tuesday, June 29**, we will gather for a different way to worship at the **Griffy Lake Boathouse Trail**. We will meet in the parking lot at **7pm** for a **1.5 mile** hike woven together with worship. We look forward to spending time in God's presence in creation and plan to do this on the last Tuesday of every month. Adults, middle school and high school youth are welcome to join on their own or children are invited to participate with their families. If middle school or high school youth will participate without a parent, please make sure you have a student information form on file with Pastor Lecia.

More Family Fun!

Join us on **Tuesday, July 6** at the **Switchyard Park Spray Pad!** We will be there from **6-8pm** hanging out between the spray pad and the playground. Come play with us and bring a picnic dinner if you want!

COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

At the May 16 Annual Program Meeting of the Congregation, a new council member was elected, Sarah Fogleman.

Council members are: Ronna Papesh, Liz Gaskins, Gretchen Moehlmann, Dawn Bakken, Dean Arnold, Drew Watters, Amy Bartleson Balcam, Tom Sinn, and Tim Smith, along with new officers: Frank Nierzwicki, president; Kari Esarey, vice-president; Sarah Fogleman, secretary.

St. Thomas Mission Endowment Fund Call for 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 July 31st. Application forms can be emailed. If you have questions, please contact the church office or Keith Knipstein, Chair of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee.

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY AT IU

June 1st, 2021, marks one year since my husband and I moved to Bloomington, IN and I began serving full time in my current call as Campus Pastor at Rose House Lutheran Campus Ministry at Indiana University Bloomington. Reflecting back on this past year, many life lessons were learned. Here are a few of the more significant insights that I gleaned so far from my ministry walking with young adults:

1. **Young adults are seeking a spiritual connection-** They are often looking for some deeper meaningful relationship with something/someone greater in the universe.
2. **Young adults are eager and willing to have deep and difficult discussions-** Life doesn't always make sense, the Bible and our theology don't always make sense, and where the Holy Spirit is working in the world doesn't always make sense. The young adults though are brave enough to ask those tough questions and to start diving deeper to discern causes of issues in the Bible, life, and the world in ways that they may never have been given the chance to before.
3. **Young adults don't want to settle for the status quo, they want to change the world-** Through both actions (small and large) and words, young adults are making their voices heard that they do not want to stand aside and let injustices in this world continue. They are working hard to identify issues-systemic and otherwise- and to come up with alternative solutions that create a more equitable space for all.
4. **Multigenerational relationships with other people of faith are vital to their own faith lives and spiritual growth-** Young adults not only crave community with their peers, they also seek spiritual guidance from those who have lived longer and experienced more of life than they have, as well as relationships with those whom they have the advantage of more life experience. Each generation has insights to gain from one another and help guide each other on their faith journeys.
5. **The message of God's grace and love for them is a lifeline-** Young adults are often stressed out, anxious, financially burdened, and having to navigate adulthood in a whole new way from previous generations. The message of God's unconditional grace and love is a beacon of hope and comfort that reminds them that no matter the test grades, the places they fall short, and the stuff that is not going right- they are not alone, that God has a purpose for them, and that Jesus Christ has already saved them so nothing they can do can separate them from the power of that love.

Please feel free to reach out to me at Lutheran@indiana.edu if you ever would like to talk more about Rose House Lutheran Campus Ministry and ways that you might wish to become involved in impacting the lives of young adults. May God bless you all.

Peace,

Pastor Amanda Ghaffarian †

MONROE COUNTY UNITED MINISTRIES

...and the need continues - MCUM/MONROE COUNTY UNITED MINISTRIES

Deep appreciation for your generosity. St. Thomas is committed to helping MCUM serve people who deal with low incomes. In April we did a bang-up job contributing cleaning and hygiene items.

On Saturday afternoon, June 12th, St. Thomas will participate in the annual EACH ONE FEED ONE Drive. Please donate nonperishable food items. I will let you know results in the Weekly Announcements following the drive.

WHERE: ST.THOMAS PARKING LOT

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 12

TIME: 1-4

I would appreciate volunteers for 1-Hour shifts.

- Helen Ingersoll

HUNGER IS HORRIBLE!!!

BREAD FOR THE WORLD OFFERING OF LETTERS SUNDAY

On Sunday, June 27, please join in to write our Congress people to help with hunger in our country. Many of you have done this so many times together. Thank You! Unfortunately hunger does not go away. Hunger worldwide has shrunk considerably since we have started doing this work. Thank You!

This time we are writing to thank for the COVID Relief many families needed, but also to keep the child tax credit permanent. This child tax credit has given many families the needed income during COVID to feed their families. The child tax credit makes sure families at or near poverty keep more of their earned money instead of paying as many taxes.

So come in to Heritage Hall after whichever service you attend, and we will have spaced tables and letters partially written (you only need to add a sentence). I will even address the envelopes.

See you June 27. Thank You for all your support😊

Kari Esarey