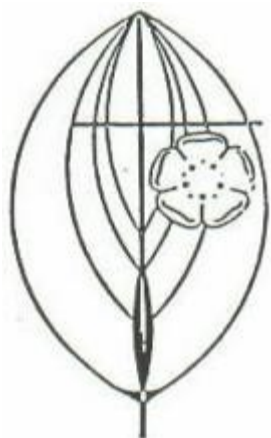


NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH



Messiah Messenger

407 Nassau Street at Cedar Lane

Email: lcmprinceton@gmail.comwww.princetonlutheranchurch.orgwww.facebook.com/MessiahChurchPrinceton

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Easter in an Epidemic

It's not fun. I keep reminding myself that Easter is actually the bigger news, but sometimes it's hard to believe. So I will re-title this letter:

An Epidemic at Easter

Maybe that will help us remember that Jesus risen from the dead, and not a novel coronavirus, is what defines the epoch in which we live. In the Gospel Lesson for the Second Sunday of Easter, John 20:19-31, Jesus comes to his disciples behind closed doors, which is where we're spending more of our time than we'd like these days. This passage is one of my favorites for a couple of reasons. The first reason is that it tells us that Jesus' resurrection body still bore the marks of his crucifixion, which I talked about in the April 19 sermon. Another reason I like the passage is that it's about Thomas, who, like most of my favorite people in the Bible, has a glaring character flaw. In Thomas's case, it's a determined skepticism, a disposition to disbelieve. When his fellow disciples tell him, "We have seen the Lord," Thomas says, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Nice. It's a good thing the disciples weren't telling him anything important. I'm kidding, of course. Thomas steadfastly refuses to believe this epoch-making news. It's too far-fetched, and talk is cheap, right? I appreciate the inclusion of Thomas in the Gospel of John because I can relate to Thomas – to his skepticism, and to his inner empiricist. I can relate to his privileging tactile, in-person evidence over verbal, second-hand evidence. If watching a livestreamed worship service seems to you a poor substitute for being there in person, then I bet you can relate to Thomas too.

Wanting to touch Jesus, to experience him in the flesh, is no character flaw – in Thomas or in us. It's the refusing to accept the witness of others, and other kinds of evidence, that clouds Thomas's judgment and ours.

In 1 Corinthians 13:7, the apostle Paul says, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." "No wonder I'm so bad at it," I think to myself. "Must loving mean being gullible?" If I had to choose, I'd rather be callous than gullible. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents," didn't someone say in Matthew 10:16? Life is difficult, and a life of Christian discipleship can be especially so. God expects so much from us – belief and wisdom, blamelessness and courage, talk and touch.

(continued on p.2)

THE REV. DR.
MARTIN K. ERHARDT
PASTOR

THE REV. DR.
JOHN MARK GOERSS
PASTOR EMERITUS

JANICE HOFREITER
ORGANIST AND
CHOIR DIRECTOR

ALLY PEXA
OFFICE ASSISTANT



The symbol in the upper left corner expresses by means of candle and messianic rose the worship of the Messiah and the Truth of Christ. The cross signifies His central deed and the five crosses in the rose the sacred wounds.

PASTOR'S LETTER (CONTINUED)

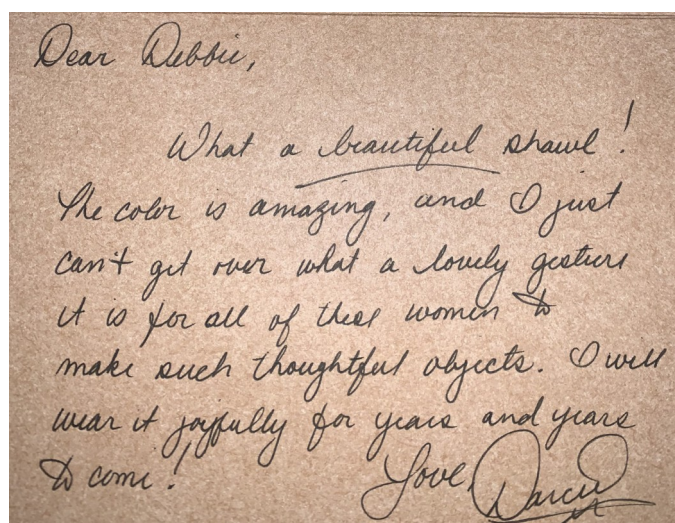
Which is good practice for this epidemic that requires a lot of us – we want to gather for worship, to touch one another, to receive Jesus bodily, tactilely in Holy Communion. At the same time, we want to care for ourselves and for each other by minimizing the risk of virus transmission. We want to be free, and also respectful of our neighbors and government. We want to trust and also to verify. Difficult. These desires hold us in tension, pulled between laudable goals, and it's not comfortable.

But God did not put us into the world for pleasure only, and he walks with us through discomfort and dilemmas. With our sin and guilt, God takes our worry and anxiety on himself, and our inability to get it all right. Jesus bore them on the cross for us, and when he was raised from dead, he left them in the tomb. In Holy Baptism, we are baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection, and are freed from having to get everything right or always to be having fun. We can thank God for his gift of life even when it isn't comfortable or safe, knowing that he is with us and that we are his.

Thanks be to God, even in this epidemic, for Thomas, for touch, and especially for Jesus, crucified and risen from the dead.

Pastor Erhardt

DEBBIE'S FRIEND DARCIE SENDS THANKS FOR PRAYER SHAWL



CHURCH CALENDAR & ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY UPDATES

- Sunday School is temporarily suspended. Adult Forum is meeting online via Zoom.
- The monthly community book group is on hiatus and will resume meeting once libraries start to re-open.
- Worship time changes to 9:30am beginning June 7th.
- Keep an eye on Messiah's online calendar.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 7, 7 pm
Executive Board Meeting



Saturday, May 30, 9 am
Men's Forum

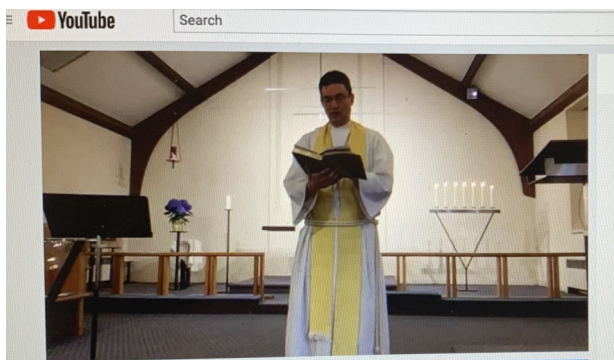


Saturday, June 27, 9 am
Men's Forum



JOIN US FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

Sunday Mornings at 10:30am on Messiah's home page or via Facebook
(www.facebook.com/MessiahChurchPrinceton)



Our worship services are posted on YouTube weekly.



FAREWELL FROM THE HARTLS

Dear Messiah,

We are leaving for Spring, TX, 25 miles north of Houston, on May 10. We have purchased a house and we sold ours.

Our daughter Katie and her husband Jordan will be around the corner, from where they can walk to work. The only place so far for my afternoon coffee break within walking distance is a Marriott Hotel, which will work fine until someone sitting in the lobby for one hour every day drinking coffee becomes problematic. Perhaps I can open my own coffee shop on our porch.

I hate goodbyes. Believing there would be a formal one, I thought about what I might say and imagined the following: "After many, many years of experiencing and dealing with the world, I would like to pass on what I have learned." Long pause. "If our sins are forgiven, as Pastor assures us, then we will see you again in this life or the next, then goodbye is really until next Sunday or the next time."

My feelings are the sum total of my association with the congregation for 50 years.

In Christ,

Werner and Karen Hartl

Pastor's note: Can you tell which of them wrote this?

We will be so sorry to see you go, Werner and Karen, especially now, when we can't say goodbye as we'd like to. What a blessing you are to us at Messiah. Go with God's blessing and our warmest wishes.



LUTHERANS ON ICE AT MERCER COUNTY PARK: MARCH 7



Oh for the halcyon days when we could get within six feet of each other!



LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MAY

EASTER YEAR A	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
The Fourth Sunday of Easter May 3, 2020	Acts 2:42-47	Psalms 23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
The Fifth Sunday of Easter May 10, 2020	Acts 7:55-60	Psalms 31:1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
The Sixth Sunday of Easter May 17, 2020	Acts 17:22-31	Psalms 66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
Ascension Sunday May 24, 2020	Acts 1:1-11	Psalms 47	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
Day of Pentecost May 31, 2020	Acts 2:1-21	Psalms 104:24-34	1 Corinthians 12:3b-13	John 20:19-23



LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JUNE

EASTER PENTECOST YEAR A	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Trinity Sunday June 7, 2020	Genesis 1:1-2:4a	Psalms 8	2 Corinthians 13:11-13	Matthew 28:16-20
Second Sunday after Pentecost June 14, 2020	Genesis 18:1-15	Psalms 100	Romans 5:1-8	Matthew 9:35-10:8
Third Sunday after Pentecost June 21, 2020	Genesis 21:8-21	Psalms 86:1-10, 16-17	Romans 6:1-11b	Matthew 10:24-39
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost June 28, 2020	Genesis 22:1-14	Psalms 13	Romans 6:12-23	Matthew 10:40-42



May 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 10:30am Holy Communion	4	5 4:30pm Adult Forum	6	7 7pm Executive Board	8	9
10 10:30am Holy Communion	11	12 4:30pm Adult Forum	13	14	15	16
17 10:30am Holy Communion	18	19 4:30pm Adult Forum	20	21 Ascension Day	22	23
24 10:30am Holy Communion	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30 9am Men's Forum
31 Pentecost 10:30am Holy Communion						

June 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
June - August: Worship begins at 9:30am.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 <i>Trinity Sunday</i> 9:30 (not 10:30) <i>Holy Communion</i>	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 9:30am <i>Holy Communion</i>	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 9:30am <i>Holy Communion</i>	22	23	24	25	26	27 9am <i>Men's Forum</i>
28 9:30am <i>Holy Communion</i>	29	30	A decorative footer featuring a large watermelon slice and two small red hearts. The watermelon slice is a large wedge, and the hearts are small and red.			



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF THE MESSIAH

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RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED
