

THIRD CHURCH NEWS

STAYING CONNECTED WHILE STAYING APART

May 21, 2020

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Summertime and the Livin' is Still Weird (and hot under those masks)

—AMY LUNN, CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

I love spring and early summer in Holland—it's beautiful almost everywhere I look outside. Everything is blooming. And it's not too cold and not too hot (although sometimes it's too wet).

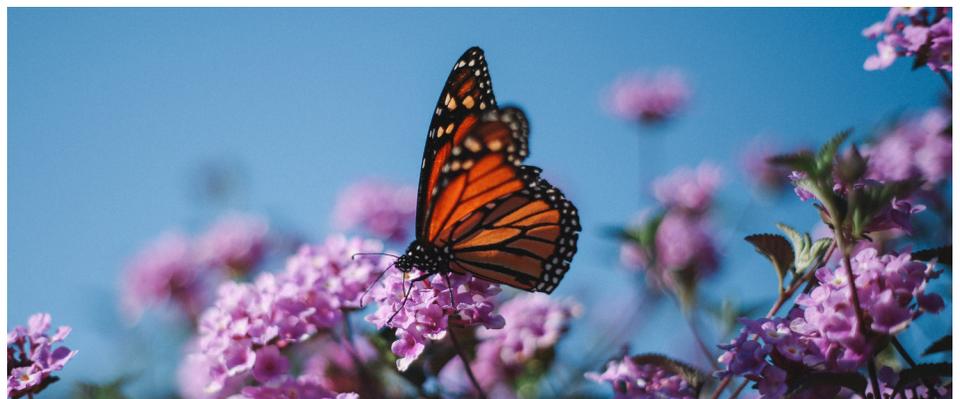
This time of year I also love the end-of-the-school-year markers we usually experience. And now everything seems different. But there is one that is staying the same: starting Sunday, May 24, we will meet at 10:00 a.m. for our summer worship services. So don't forget to tune in an hour earlier! Joyce's Children's Time will be at 9, followed by the service.

While life as we know it is still far from what we are used to, some things are going on like normal at the church. Our sprinkling is ready to go; we're preparing for Buen Pastor (though they will function in an amended manner this year due to COVID-19 restrictions). The grounds have been edged. Our faithful mowing and landscape volunteers have once again been working

outside the building. Soon we will have some tree maintenance, and also begin the task of assessing the outside to see if and where we may need paint touch-ups.

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And so things are both normal and different all at the same time. I go to the store and buy enormous amounts of food for my kids (normal), and I do it wearing a mask (hot and sweaty). I relish the family games and ensuing laughter; I grieve for all the special things our Andy, a senior, is missing. I miss seeing people at church, at the store, at work. I miss my mother-in-law's cooking! I miss hugging my mom. It all feels weird. Mostly it feels like we're just waiting, waiting, waiting—and really, that's what we're doing. Waiting it out. Separate but together. See you on Sunday (at 10)!



The Ascension of Jesus, and Our Current Darkness

—PASTOR KENT FRY

Sunday, May 24th is Ascension Sunday. The account of Jesus' Ascension is in a summary form in Luke 24:44-53 and a more detailed form in Acts 1:1-11. Pastor Kama will preach on the subject of the Ascension this Sunday.

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I must confess that the story of Jesus going up into the clouds has always been for me a bit of a strange story. Maybe it has to do with the scientific world that we live in of light years. We know in the modern age that up and down are all relative. The famous painting of the Middle Ages with Jesus' feet sticking out of the clouds, reflects something of my curiosity with the story in the Bible. And yet we have only spatial language to talk about God. It helps when I think about God to think of God as 'up there' or beyond the created order, transcendent and Lord.

In a day and time when we live in a period of historical darkness battling a pandemic, the account of the Ascension of Jesus and reigning at the right hand of God certainly speaks in a time of distress and disorder. There is one who sits on the throne in heaven ultimately guiding the world. With the Ascension, St. Luke

is making a strong theological claim. The crucified one is now fully exalted and vindicated. Yes, Jesus came into our midst and taught and healed; suffered and died. He understands our pain and suffering. But you have not told the whole story of Jesus until you are confronted with the story of the Ascension of Jesus.

But of course, while Jesus reigns in heaven, we continue to feebly struggle here on earth. We wait for the full fusion of earth and heaven coming together into a new heaven and a new earth. But for now, as Jesus' followers, we go about the business of bringing renewal to the entire creation until Jesus comes again, and then all will be one in the Lord.

In the spirit of the Ascension of Jesus and our hope in God's future, I would like to share just a few items before us as a congregation:

1. The consistory has appointed a task force mainly of members of the congregation with a medical background to advise the church board about how we would come back into worship and education in the life of the church building. We currently believe that no decision for worship or church programs will take place in any form until some time in July, and that of course all depends on advice from Ottawa County Department of Health, the governor's office, and the direction and extent of the current pandemic. For now we will continue to broadcast (*con't*)

MISS JOYCE'S JOTTINGS

I wondered if you have been hearing your child(ren) saying, "I'm bored!" recently. This time of physical separation is difficult for all of us, but thankfully we can keep connected through technology and zoom! I invite all Third Church kids (and their friends) to zoom with me on Sunday mornings (9:00 AM) and Thursday mornings (11:00 AM) [Please note the new times] Not only is this a time to connect and share faith, but we also have lots of fun! This is a great way to beat "boredom" and gives you, the parents, a little free time! A win-win for all!

New plans for summer are in the works. Stay tuned in future weeks for our new and unique summer ministries for children!

(The Ascension of Jesus, Cont.)

our worship on Zoom. And moving forward in the future for the next year, we will likely not only have worship in the sanctuary but simultaneously using our Zoom platform for online worship. Quite frankly some will not be able to come back to worship in the sanctuary until a vaccine is found.

2. Summer ministries for children and youth are being designed for online sorts of experiences. There may come opportunities to do ministries outside in the church yard with a small number of children. We will have information about a virtual VBS and youth ministry in the very near future. We are currently readjusting for a different way of carrying out ministry.

3. A key focus of the Spanish ministry and the deacons are to respond to the needs of families in our church who have economically been impacted by the pandemic. We have resources to meet the needs of those in our congregation and some in our community who are most vulnerable. The deacons and Sunrise Saints are appropriating funds for Lubna in Pakistan and Linn in India to meet the needs of Christians that are at the bottom of their economic system in their respective countries. In Pakistan we can feed a Christian family for \$25.00 per month.

4. Congregational leadership is implementing a succession plan for leadership pastoral transition. Pastors Kent and Kama are planning retirement for the summer of 2021, a

year from now. Three committees—a pastoral care team, a vision team, and a search team have been established. Pastors Kent and Kama are working with the rest of the staff and lay leadership seeking to hold our congregation together in the midst of the pandemic and even reach out to the community with the good news of Jesus in word and deed. This was shared at the congregational meeting on Sunday, May 17th with 122 computers logged on to the meeting, or over 200 people in attendance.

Summer Worship Information

Summer Worship Schedule begins This Sunday, May 24th at 10 AM.
Worship will be via Our Church Web Site on the Computer.

May 24	Ascension Day Biblical Story <i>We will have Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons</i>	Acts 1:1-11.
May 31	Pentecost Sunday "The In-House Spirit, Commissioning Spirit" <i>Wear some red and let us join together in the Spirit from our homes!</i>	John 20:19-23,
June 7	Trinity Sunday "Authority to Command" <i>We will celebrate the Lord's Supper</i>	Matthew 28:16-20.

Summer Series: "Good News for a Troubled World"

Using the Revised Common Lectionary Passages, we will choose the scripture text that is most applicable to a disordered and chaotic world. We will continue to design worship that reflects our traditional liturgy, inclusive and interactive with the congregation, creatively adapting our corporate worship for the internet in a time of the pandemic.



9:00 AM Sundays - Children's Time via Zoom.
10:00 AM Sundays - Interactive Worship via Zoom.
Visit www.trcholland.org to connect with us!