

THIRD CHURCH NEWS

STAYING CONNECTED WHILE STAYING APART

August 13, 2020

Volume I . Issue 9

Where We Are, Where We are Going, and Where We have Been

—PASTOR KENT FRY

We thank the **Discipleship Team** for the August series on discipleship, **"The Jesus Shaped Life."** The team has participated in training events in Colorado, shared in many on-line events, and formed a strong team with each other. We appreciate the group sharing their experiences with us during the weeks of August worship. Of course, because they have directly had the experience, it has led to significant spiritual growth for each of the members of the discipleship team. Our hope and prayer that some of their explanations and experiences are rubbing off on us as we shift from consumer Christianity to being disciples. Social Time following the worship services has reinforced the main lesson each Sunday morning.

Beginning September 13th, we will launch the **Narrative Lectionary** making a journey from Genesis to Revelation. Our theme will be "Sharing Together in God's Story." Our intention as we continue in virtual worship is to have a fair amount of lay participation, the use of one Joel's art pieces each Sunday, and creative ways to communicate the biblical message.

Education materials will complement the theme in church each Sunday. So, we are prayerfully anticipating the Fall worship series.

I asked our church historian, Mark Walvoord, to research what happened to Third Reformed Church during the **Spanish Flu of 1918**. This epidemic probably originated on Midwestern farms and then was spread across the United States and world-wide by American World War I soldiers. See "Going" page 2

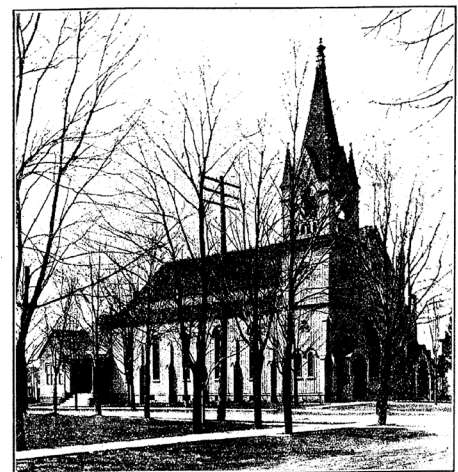
**Summer Discipleship Series;
Fall Narrative Lectionary from
Genesis to Revelation;
Pandemics Then and Now**

Third Reformed Church Bulletin

Corner Twelfth Street and Pine Avenue

Sunday, November 10, 1918

Morning Service 9:30. Evening Service 7:30.



REV. M. FLIPSE, Pastor

Our Missionary, MRS. HENRY V. E. STEGEMAN
Meiji Gakuin, Tokyo, Japan.

JOHN VANDERSLUIS, Director of Music. MISS JENNIE KARSTEN, Organist.
J. GREVEL, Caretaker.

Congregational Prayer Meeting Thursday Evenings at 7:30.

A Chair & the Future

—HUNTER BRUMELS, YOUTH DIRECTOR

I will be very candid. I am a pretty anxious person, and all the uncertainty entering into this programming year has not helped! During a global pandemic, in which even the experts seemed stumped, I imagine that I am not the only one who is quite on edge. It would be nice to have some certainty.

Think of the chair you are sitting in.

I bet until this moment you weren't consciously aware of the chair holding you up. However, it was holding you up whether you were thinking about it or not. The chair remained consistent, but our awareness or focus was the thing that shifted.

For me, this thought has helped greatly during this time of uncertainty. When my mind wanders towards the "what-ifs" or the "how-comes" of this COVID time, I need to consistently remind myself of the consistency of God. In Isaiah 45: 5-7 it's said, "I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things." I think, as an anxious person, my goal during this time should be to live into the consistency of the "chair."

"Going" continued from page 1

War I soldiers. It was a strain of flu that particularly attacked people in their twenties, thirties, and forties with good immune systems. The problem was that the immune system over-reacted leading to pneumonia. It was eventually called the Spanish Flu because the Spanish government was the first government to acknowledge there was any sort of a health crisis. Like today, governments were slow to acknowledge that there is a problem and respond with strong public health policies.

According to current data about the Spanish Flu of more than a century ago, an estimated twenty-eight percent of 105 million Americans came down with the Spanish Flu, and 500,000 to 850,000 Americans died.

Third Reformed Church, along with other congregations in Holland, were closed at times during 1918. They understood that flu spread through social proximity and therefore creating social distancing was necessary to limit the spread

Who knows what this upcoming year will look like? Though I imagine the anxiousness, and confusion will surely still be present, but one thing that is unquestionable is whether God is present during this time. My prayer during this season is for each of us to recognize and be present in the space that we are in. Whatever this semester might look like, God is consistent even when the pieces of life around us are ever-changing. Let's live into this upcoming year day-by-day, and be reminded of the consistency of a God who never changes!

of the disease. Here is a bulletin announcement from Sunday, November 10th, 1918:

We are grateful to God that the state ban on public meetings on account of the influenza epidemic has lifted and that we again are permitted to assemble in the sanctuary on the Sabbath. Our people obeyed the edict of the state authorities willingly, although churchless Sundays proved very unsatisfactory, and our prayer is that the epidemic may now have run its course. We are profoundly thankful that so few deaths resulted in our city. May we all pull together for greater services for Christ and His Church.

Maybe the language is a bit different than we would express today but notice that the people of the congregation responded to government direction. History helps us to gain a perspective on our present ordeal and time, and we are reminded that other Christians have faced pandemics in the past. We have better scientific understanding and better means of communication, and yet perhaps we have less trust in government and the institutions of society to carry out our public life.

Sympathy

To Marilyn Lantay in the death of her brother, Donald Schreur, on July 28; and to JoAnn Bremer in the death of her daughter, Brenda Klein, on July 26 in St. Louis, MO

New Addresses

- Kathy Foster 3345 Starboard Dr. Holland, 49424
- Sharon Bos, Appledorn S #F-14, 727 Apple Ave., Holland, 49423
- Carol Cox 50 W. 8th St., Ste. 302, Holland, 49423 (after 8-19-20)

Prayer and Fasting

WEEKS 2 AND 3

Friday, August 14: Covid-19

Scriptures: Psalms 34, 65, 103:3, Exodus 15:25b-26

Dear Heavenly Father,
 Be with your children everywhere as we struggle to follow the medical experts who are advising us to wear masks, wash hands frequently, and socially distance when we are in public. Just as you gave the Israelites laws for food and sanitation to protect them from diseases, may we listen and willingly obey our medical experts during this pandemic. For those who have contracted the virus, may Christ's healing light shine through them and bring a release from their symptoms and healing for their lungs and bodies. We give thanks for the healing that we see and the healing yet to take place. For those who have lost their jobs and are struggling to survive, we pray for help and assistance with their needs. And for those who have been blessed with much, may we willingly support the organizations who are equipped to help those who are unemployed and struggling.

Friday, August 21: Immigration

Scriptures: Matthew 25:31-46, Psalm 22

Spirit of the living God, come!
 We look for you in our midst, we need you. We are far from home, we long to be close to you. In our pilgrimage some of us are already at the other side of the border, feeling bad, regretting that we could enter, and others could not. We grieve and worry for those who have to wait longer, for whom time goes slowly. We are obsessed with being so close to our dream, and so far from home. We come to you, and lament. Heavenly Father, look on us and listen to us. Be gracious to us as we wait or as we run, as we hope that tomorrow will be a better day. Hear our prayer that somebody will give us water, food, and work. Keep our hope strong that you God who understand that leaving our family, house and community was not easy, and it will never be easy to return to our first home. We pray that you never leave us, never leave our families, our children, our loves, our dreams. We pray for another day for compassion, for life, for a home.

August Series: *A Jesus Shaped Life.*

Join us and the members of the 3DM Discipleship Team as we explore *A Jesus Shaped Life* by Rob Rognlien.

- August 16 "Repent and Believe: A Liturgy for Life" Psalm 51; Mark 1:14-15
- August 23 "Rhythm of Life" Genesis 1:26-28a, 2:1-3; John 15:1-10
- August 30 "A Guide to Prayer" Luke 11:1-4



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!