



Pastor's Ponderings

Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sunshine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Our world is in the grips of a challenge that will reorient us in new and different ways. I recently watched the Disney film, Frozen II. No spoilers coming, but I did take away a phrase that I think can help guide us in the days ahead. Many of the characters are guided by the principle of "doing the **next** right thing." We can't think too far ahead, and we can't change the past, however, we can do the **next** right thing.

As our Lenten journey continues, this could mean praying for our neighbors, the world, refugees, our doctors, nurses, and aides, the government, the least of these, and you can fill in the rest. We can concentrate on ourselves by eating right, reading, connecting with people through phone, Facebook, email, or text; by taking walks, cleaning our house, or playing games. We can dive into the Word of God—blow off the dust from our Bibles and start with the New Testament and read. If our finances allow, we can support causes that are in need, the church, and organizations that have a direct impact on our neighbors around the world, such as Lutheran Disaster Relief, Lutheran World Hunger or Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to name a few.

Doing the **next** right thing is to keep safe, listen to local news, and check-in on reliable websites like our county, state, and Centers for Disease Control websites to keep informed.

Doing the **next** right thing is to check on our neighbor or fellow church member, wave to the child playing in the yard, be patient and persistent.

Some encouraging words from the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 40:

³¹"but those who wait for the **Lord** shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Jesus said to his disciples, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:20*

God bless and keep you.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

"As we walk into the world, be the light, be a blessing to others."

Pastor Fred

Coronavirus Outbreak

Online Sources of Information

New York State:

www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home

Erie County:

www.erie.gov

WGRZ TV:

www.wgrz.com

WIVB TV:

www.wivb.com/health/coronavirus

WKBW TV:

WKBW.com

ELCA:

www.elca.org

Upstate New York Synod:

www.upstatenysynod.org

Centers for Disease Control:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019

A Message from Pastor Kopp:

Dear All,

We are responding to this coronavirus crisis to stay safe.

Please continue to pray, call your neighbors and connect.

You are in our prayers.

Peace,
Pastor Fred



Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana Lutheran Churches

Inspire us to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. Teach us to give freely of ourselves and to offer our lives in service. Show us your will for the ministries at Augustana and Trinity Old Lutheran. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.



From Pastor Kopp's Message in the 2019 Annual Report to the Congregation

"2020 Vision"

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." *Micah 6:8*

"Recently a person gave the church a sign that reads 'Be Kind ♥.' It is hanging up in our church office. It seems like a simple thing to do, yet many in our world are missing this point. Kindness leads to acts of Love and civil conversations, and considerate decisions being made. Kindness is a part of doing Justice in the world. During our Baptismal service we ask that the parents of the child being baptized be connected to God and the promises of Jesus so that they might empower their child to 'learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others, and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.'

In the upcoming year, we are making an effort to inform our congregation of what the ELCA is doing locally and in the world as it pertains to this call of our baptism. We will be purposeful in our sharing of this information and how we can be involved in acts of love, kindness and justice."



LWR Quilts: 2019 Worldwide Distribution

Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of United States Lutherans that serve communities living in poverty overseas. Quilts were sent around the world to 333,405 beneficiaries in 19 countries.

A partial list of countries receiving the quilts follows.

Armenia:	5,280	Mauritania:	28,050
Bosnia:	14,400	Nicaragua:	10,080
Burkina Faso:	34,200	Peru:	32,400
Georgia:	10,230	Syria:	43,200
Iraq:	24,090	Tanzania:	12,375
Lebanon:	13,200	Zambia:	5,940

Trinity Tidings

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The Lutheran World Federation, A Communion of Churches, has included an intercessory prayer on the ELCA website (www.ECLA.org). The prayer has been condensed for this issue.



Prayer in the Midst of COVID-19

O God our Healer, show your compassion for the whole human family that is in turmoil and burdened with illness and with fear.

Come to our aid as the coronavirus spreads globally, heal those who are sick, support and protect their families and friends from being infected.

Grant us your spirit of love and self-discipline so that we may come together, working to control and eliminate the coronavirus.

Heal our self-centeredness and indifference that makes us worry only when the virus threatens us, open ways beyond timidity and fear that too easily ignore our neighbor.

Strengthen and encourage those in public health services and in the medical profession: caregivers, nurses, attendants, doctors, all who commit themselves to caring for the sick and their families.

Inspire, give insight and hope to all researchers focused on developing a vaccine.

Sustain all workers and business owners who suffer loss of livelihood due to shut-downs, quarantines, closed borders, and other restrictions, protect and guard all who must travel.

Heal our world, heal our bodies, strengthen our hearts and our minds, and in the midst of turmoil, give us hope and peace.

Hold in your gentle embrace all who have died. Comfort their loved ones in their despair.

Remember all your family, the entire human race, and all your creation, in your love.

Amen!

What Grown-ups Can Learn from Children's Sermons!

Recently, during a Children's Sermon about what kind of things would "bug" God, one of the youngsters told Pastor Fred that people shouldn't litter (doing so would "bug" God). With that in mind, here's an activity that would please God. It's called **Plogging!**

Plogging is a combination of jogging and picking litter (plokka upp). The activity began in Sweden in 2016 and spread to other countries in 2018. It was in response to the growing problem of plastic pollution. The practice benefits both the environment and the plogger—the bending, squatting and stretching movements make it a good workout.

It turns out that there are a couple of ploggers at TOL and they would like to share some of their experiences and tips.

Ploggers 1 and 2 are not joggers or runners—simply walkers getting a good workout while helping to eliminate litter.

They have been doing so for many, many years, having begun the activity while dog walking. Carrying plastic bags and kitchen tongs, they were able to pick up the litter before their canine companion could.



Ploggers 1 and 2 continue the activity to this day—recently carrying a much larger bag for collections. They hope to help keep sidewalks and surrounding areas free of debris that could possibly be harmful to dogs or people.

If you are so inclined, it's a good idea to cover your hands with gloves, or use the orange bags from your newspaper, etc. Start with the obvious pieces (fast-food litter, plastic bottles, cardboard, etc.).

And remember that you can't pick up everything—nor should you! You would be surprised at what's out there—even broken glass bottles (not good for dog paws)!! Also, be aware of your surroundings—watch for cyclists, skateboarders, motorists, etc.

If you happen to be plogging along with children, please supervise them to make sure they don't pick up something they shouldn't.

Take time to "Connect to God's Green Earth!"

Earth Day, April 22

Arbor Day, April 24

"The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good."

Genesis 1:12



TLC at TOL Respite Care Program, March 4

Irish eyes were smiling—a beautiful, sunny day greeted everyone!

Eight guests joined us for St. Patrick's Day and Spring-themed activities. Christine was featured in the Guest of Honor word game, and Diane also led us in "Fruit Trivia"—we're always learning something new! Thank you to Leanne for leading everyone in chair yoga exercises—keeping us flexible—followed by a period of quiet time. Guests put together two St. Patrick's Day crafts: cute green shamrocks and also a colorful rainbow complete with a pot-of-gold at the end.



Thank you to Paulette for making the delicious goulash for lunch and to Nancy for bringing in a delicious assortment of cookies for dessert. Thank you to Paulette, Nancy, Sue, Diane and Pastor Fred for helping with the kitchen tasks!

The group played St. Patrick's Day Bingo—thank you, Sue, for calling Bingo! Following that, guests and volunteers participated in a lively round of Ball Toss—lots of smiles!

Anne and her dog, Carma, stopped by for a visit. It's always good to see them and to hear about Carma and how she's doing. She was a rescue dog from Kentucky and she's part Beagle and part Jack Russell Terrier. We were happy that they stayed for the music portion of the program, as well.

We enjoyed Sue at the Piano and all of the songs she played—some of the guests marched around the Fellowship Hall during her last song! A perfect way to end the program.

Jan Sherman and Paulette Hotchkiss



Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the program will be cancelled for April and May. We look forward to when we are able to resume our activities, and we keep our Respite families and volunteers in prayer.