HOLY TRINITY TIMES

**APRIL 2020**

**S P E C I A L E D I T I O N**

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*The Holy Trinity Times is the official monthly publication of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH [www.holytrinitymarshall.com](http://www.holytrinitymarshall.com) + (608) 655-4246

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**PASTOR’S COLUMN: Bind us together in…awe**

“Be not afraid.” We know these words from scripture, but do we believe them?

Let’s look at the two kinds of fear in the Bible. One is fear of enemies, as in these verses:

*In God, whose word I praise— in God I trust and am not afraid.  What can mere mortals do to me?* Psalm 56:4 NIV

*They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them.* Psalm 112:7 NLT

*For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.* Psalm 91:4-6 NRSV

*Do not tremble; do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim my purposes for you long ago? You are my witnesses—is there any other God? No! There is no other Rock—not one!* Isaiah 44:8 NLT

*O Most High, when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.*Psalm 56:3 NRSV

What is consistent among these passages? Yes--the rock-solid confidence in God’s presence, and in Isaiah the prophet’s absolute assurance of God’s compassion and care! These verses remind us that one of the best places to go in times like these is to the In the midst of tremendous uncertainty, now is the time to turn to the Book of Psalms. There, you’ll find this conviction woven into every one (with one possible exception, Psalm 88—but I contend that because the psalmist is still talking to God, confidence remains).

The other kind of fear is better described as awe, as in these verses:

*The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.* Psalm 34:7 NIV

*Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him.* Deuteronomy 13:4 NLT

*But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love.* Psalm 33:18 NLT

*Fear the Lord, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need.* Psalm 34:9 NLT

*The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.* Psalm 103:13 NLT

*Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom….* Proverbs 9:10, Psalm 111:10 NRSV

*He will be your sure foundation, providing a rich store of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear of the Lord will be your treasure.* Isaiah 33:6 NLT

It is vitally important that we continue to nurture our sense of awe in God’s presence. Anthropologists have argued that awe is one of the cultural universals of humankind that bind us together.

This is yet another way in which we are bound together as the church. Awe lifts us out of our usual frame of reference by quieting our self-interest and making us feel part of a larger whole. It’s the feeling that we have in on a spectacular sunset and witnessing God’ majesty. It’s what we feel when we ponder all the ways God is active in our lives through the Son and Holy Spirit. And it’s what we feel in the face of a natural disaster like a hurricane or the current virus—awe that a force, once set in motion, could have such destructive power. It is a peculiar truth that the current crisis seems to have bound the world together in suffering like no other in human history.

Fear of our enemies, of this virus, is real. Where can we turn? These words from our liturgy may have already flashed into your mind; we sign them every week: “Alleluia! Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!” Thanks be to God!

Even though it’s still Lent, maybe we need to recover these Alleluias now. On the last night of his life Jesus knew his disciples were afraid for what was going to happen to him. So he said to them, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (John 14:27)

Jesus brings us that same enduring peace now. He knows how we suffer. He knows many live in fear, that many are ill, and that many have died, leaving loved ones bereft. But he tells us that these things have no power over us:

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have [*tribulation*](https://www.crosswalk.com/who-is-jesus/jesus-christ-and-salvation/jesus-christ-explains-the-tribulation-and-end-times-11573798.html). But take heart; I have overcome the world.” ([John 16:33](https://www.biblestudytools.com/john/16-33.html))

What greater assurance do we need than this? Jesus overcame the devil and we will overcome this time of trial. Be smart. Remain faithful to all rules and recommendations that will restore health to our world. Quiet your fears. Cultivate your sense of awe in God’s presence, majesty, and eternal glory. And pray without ceasing. God hears everything that is in your heart, even before you voice it, and is there with you in the midst of it all. What joy it is to know that!

Peace and prayer for our world,
Pastor Raabe



**CHURCH CLOSURE**

Due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 threat, Holy Trinity is now closed to all gatherings, including worship, until that time when we are able to gather again. We do not know at present how long that will be.

Our building may be closed, but our web site, [holytrinitymarshall.com](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnancy%5CDropbox%5CAA_Holy%20Trinity%5CNewsletter%5C2020%5C4.2020%5Cholytrinitymarshall.com), is open for business. Think of it as your virtual church building during this time. Come in through the main entrance; stroll around, see what you find, open the doors and drop-down menus. There’s a lot there, and it’s all for you! I especially invite you to go to the “Virtual Worship” page, where you will find our Sunday services and other videos, including children’s sermons. You can also go directly to our YouTube channel on youtube.com by searching for “Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Marshall WI” (all those words are needed because there are a lot of other Holy Trinitys out there!).

COME ON IN!
holytrinitymarshall.com



**WAYS YOU CAN STAY CONNECTED**

* Follow our worship services and other videos on the “Virtual Worship” page of our web site.
* Receive occasional church-related communications, like the one below, by email. Notify Pastor Raabe by email if you are not already seeing these.
* Read Pastor Raabe’s daily reflections on the web site under “In the Wilderness.”
* Join the Pastor’s Coffee Hour by Zoom on Mondays and Thursdays shortly after 12 noon. You must first download zoom at [zoom.us](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnancy%5CDownloads%5Czoom.us). It’s free and easy! Send [Pastor Raabe](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnancy%5CDownloads%5CPastor%20Raabe) an email if you’d like to join and you’ll receive an invitation. Have your cup of coffee or tea handy!
* Join the Psalms of Lament class Wednesdays at noon, also by Zoom. This will resume next Wednesday, April 1.
* As always you are welcome to join our Council meetings. These will be held on alternate Tuesdays at 4 p.m. on Zoom, starting March 24. Notify Pastor Raabe know if you’d like to listen in. If there are guests we’ll allow time near the end for thoughts and ideas.



*The following communication is the latest of four updates on our life together that have been emailed to all members for whom we have email addresses. If you have not received these and would like to, please send an email to pastor@holytrinity-marshall.com.*

Dear friends, March 21, 2020

One of the greatest challenges in these coming weeks and possibly months is going to be finding ways to create meaning in our lives. Of course our family is the foundational structure in this way and will remain ever more so. But many of us think of ourselves mainly in terms of what we do--what our job is. When people are introduced to one another typically the first question asked is: “So, where do you work?” No hiatus from work can change our vocation. But without the workplace to give our daily lives meaning, what are we to do?

I invite you to use this time as an extended Lent—a lengthened period of renewal in which you can devote yourself to spiritual disciplines that just weren’t possible when you were working full time and always running from here to there. God *never* wants us to suffer but *always* works through our suffering. In this time of social isolation, hear God calling to you: “Now is the time! Return to me! Remember me!” After all, isn’t that the call of Lent? “Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful….” Now we have time to do just that.

As your pastor I am also your spiritual leader. So I entreat you, if you love God and love the church, make use of all the avenues for worship and connection Holy Trinity is providing:

* Children’s sermons and Sunday worship services (March 22 is up) are posted on our web site under “Virtual Worship.” The bulletin is there too. The link takes you to our YouTube page In the spirit of the house church in which the earliest Christians gathered, I am recording all services from home. Please become familiar with using our web site! It is our central hub of activity during this time.
* Join me in the series of daily reflections based our favorite hymns on our web site under “In the Wilderness.” Most include a link to that hymn being sung in worship.
* Create a corner in your house for devotion and prayer. Light a candle, put your feet up, and breathe deeply. On the Prayer Resources page of our web site, you may use the Brief Order for Morning Prayer and also the set of assigned readings for daily meditation and Sunday worship. There are links on those pages to all the readings mentioned.
* Join me by Zoom for the Pastor’s Coffee Hour every Monday and Thursday at noon, beginning this Monday. Zoom is free and easy to use; download it at zoom.us. And don’t forget your cup of coffee!
* Check Facebook and the News page of our web site for all the latest. ‘

I am no further away than a phone call, email, or text. Please reach out for any reason. With me, I hope you will be convinced that, after we’ve come through this together, we will be much the stronger for it.

Grace and peace, Pastor Raabe



**CHURCH NEWS**

**The Council has determined that Holy Week and Easter will be held on the actual dates.** Plan on joining those services from our Virtual Worship page. Materials will also be sent out by which you can mark these high occasions in the church’s life at home. Now is a great time to begin home worship practices that can continue into times of better health.

**Second Harvest Mobile Food Bank** will continue to be held on the last Friday of every month with a pre-boxed drive-up distribution, until the COVID 19 restrictions are lifted. We still need volunteers, especially for parking control. Early parking will take place only in the high school lot.

**Continue your regular giving:** If you are not giving electronically, we urgently ask that you continue to make your regular offerings using your envelopes. At this time these must be mailed to us at PO Box 52, Marshall, 53559. We thank you most sincerely for your faithfulness.

**Thrivent Choice Dollars -- Attention all Thrivent members**: You are now required to register for Thrivent Choice annually. If you are a Thrivent customer, Thrivent Choice Dollars have been accumulating throughout the year. Please direct Choice Dollars several times during the year to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church by simply following these steps:

1. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice
2. Click on “Choice Dollars” and log in
3. Search for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Marshall
4. Click on “Direct Now” or
5. Call the Thrivent Member Center at 800-847-4836

When prompted say “Thrivent Choice”, then say “Choice Dollars,” and a representative will process your request.

**Electronic newsletter** To save paper, you may prefer to receive this newsletter electronically if you do not already. Just e-mail htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com and let us know that.

**Our web site, holytrinitymarshall.com**, is regularly updated with all the latest news and information that you might need. Please use it in this time of daily changes due to COVID19. Write to us with suggestions.

**The Church Council will be meeting electronically until the virus threat is over.** Please feel free to email Council members with questions or suggestions. Meeting highlights will be posted in the next newsletter.

**YOUR 2020-2021 CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Gary Waalkens, President** 608-655-4989 gwaalkkens1952@yahoo.com

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**Stephanie Woodley**  608-371-7233 swoodley1@outlook.com

**Kayla German, student rep**  608-655-4422, kaylgerm@marshallschools.org

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

**Quilts for LWR** Please continue to gather new fabric that can be cut into squares for making quilts. Our quilters are thankful for all who have supported Holy Trinity’s mission to make quilts that are sent around the world by Lutheran World Relief.

**Please use this time away from church to ponder our need for Sunday worship helpers (greeters, ushers, lectors, communion assistants).** When we are back in business you may sign up in the narthex for these vitally important roles, or let Pastor Raabe know ahead of time.

**Marshall-Waterloo Food Pantry** The Marshall/Waterloo Food Pantry is continuing its operation also using a pre-boxed distribution and outdoor registration. There will be no contact with recipients. Our remaining date this month is March 29 from 9-10 am. Please help those who need it most! The food pantry is located in the lower level at 117 E. Madison Street (Hwy. 19) in Waterloo.

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**Our thanks and gratitude to those who gave so much of their energy and time in March for the sake of this body of Christ!** These include our secretary Kathy Schluter, our organists Carol Johnson-Hohol and Candy Lauby, Altar Guild members, those serving on Council or other leadership teams, Women of the ELCA, and our Sunday School staff. Many thanks to our hard-working Second Harvest Food Bank volunteers and to those preparing for the Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction fundraiser. Thanks to our Property Committee for all the work they do to maintain the church and parsonage. Thanks to everyone who supplied paper for newsletters and bulletins, prepared the newsletter for mailing, ordered supplies and cleaned the church, watered the plants, kept track of church finances, counted money, took photographs, brewed coffee and provided weekly snacks, baked bread for communion, provided assistance at worship such as ushering, reading, or helping with communion, put information in the Courier, handled fellowship hall rentals, and took out trash.

Apologies to those who may have been missed. You know that each of you is valued and needed.

**Contact the church office at** 608-655-4246 (voicemails will be returned) or htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com.

--To schedule weddings, baptisms, or other events when we are able to meet again

--If your name is spelled incorrectly, your address has changed (post office charges church when things are sent to an old address), you no longer wish to receive the church newsletter, or you wish to have the newsletter e-mailed to you

--Especially to let us know if a member of your family is admitted to the hospital or a nursing

 home or will be needing surgery, or if anyone needs special prayers

--A baby arrives in your family

--A death occurs in your family

--You know of someone to be added to the prayer list

--A member of your family is deployed

**HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Find us on Facebook and keep up with all the news. Links are posted there to additions to the web site.