

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

June 2020

When we cannot meet in our building – we use our parking lot!

Drive-By
Holy Communion

and
Pastor Scott's
Birthday Celebration



This is just the beginning! See more photos elsewhere in this newsletter!

The Rev. Scott M. Anderson, Pastor
Susan Esposito, Parish Administrator & Editor
Jacqueline Nappi, Minister of Music
Amanda Stoen, Preschool Director
Anna Carter, Vicar
Jackie Fryt, Bookkeeper

The Rev. Amanda Highben, Associate Pastor, Duke Lutherans

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Huggins, Pastor Emeritus

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From the Pastor...

When are we going to worship together again, pastor?
 What about Wednesday night suppers?
 What's happening with summer camps?
 How can we still hold VBS?
 How can we overcome white privilege?
 I miss everyone. I want a hug. I want to look someone
 in the eye and not from the lens of a camera. I am
 angry that we are still a racist society. I am angry that
 looters destroyed the things I love.

Sound familiar? All things I've heard lately. All
 things I have struggled with.

Guess what, I miss you, the staff misses you. I
 miss the sound of our preschool children pounding on
 the wall below my office. I miss their laughter and
 their crying. I miss the routine of people peeking into
 my office for a quick chat or a wry comment. I lament
 Pastor Ali leaving. I rejoice in Pastor Amanda coming.

Life is different and it will be for some time to
 come. Know that the council and staff have been
 working to plan for what is next, whatever next is. We
 have determined we can have up to 90 people in the
 back lot for worship and are working to get a sound
 system in place for that eventuality. We can have up to
 100 in worship between the sanctuary and Trinity Hall
 when we can gather in doors. But even under these
 circumstances, our time together will be different.
 Pews will have to be empty, bulletins handed out by
 gloved ushers after you have had your temperature
 checked. We will be sanitizing everything. Doors will
 be open and bathrooms cleaned regularly while people
 are here. We may even have to open the exterior doors
 of the bathrooms on a semi-permanent basis. And on
 and on.

They don't teach this in seminary or during
 council training workshops.

Yet I was reminded this week, that we are still
 church together, if differently. We are still the people
 of God that have a purpose and mission here in this
 place.

Our Purpose: "To inspire and engage one another
 to do what is just, show love, and fulfill God's word."

Our Mission: "The Mission of St. Paul's Lutheran
 Church as part of the family of God is to share God in
 Christ with the world by equipping one another
 through worship, learning, witness, service and
 support."

In the face of crisis, we have continued to live our
 purpose and mission and my prayer is that we will
 continue to do so.

I encourage you to participate in zoom meetings,

the coffee with pastor and vicar on Monday mornings,
 Bible study on Thursdays, and the multiple small
 groups that meet via zoom each week.

Pray for our Stephen Ministers and the phone
 calling team. Pray for our nurturing committee and all
 those striving to keep us connected.

But, I want you to know that the Vicar and I are in
 the office Monday through Thursday and are available
 to talk or listen. Call the church, call our cell phones.
 Reach out to one another. Picnic in back yards, come
 and spread out in Trinity Hall with friends over lunch
 (call to schedule a time with me or the Vicar).

What will happen, how will life change?

I don't know all the answers yet, but when I have
 some I will share them.

May the peace of Christ which passes all
 understanding guide our hearts and minds in Christ
 Jesus.

Amen.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

When we were sent in peace to love and serve the
 Lord on Sunday, March 8, none of us could have
 imagined the weeks and months that have now
 followed. However, we have been faithful to our
 charge. I am deeply humbled and grateful for the
 myriad of ways that we have and continue to faithfully
 and creatively love and serve the Lord and therefore,
 love and serve one another.

The Holy Spirit has kept us united in heart and
 mind as we continue to worship together online, as our
 brothers and sisters offer daily devotions for us to
 ponder, as some of you are able to come to drive
 through communion, and as we all pray for one
 another, the church, and the world. You are living
 examples that the church is God's people, not a
 building.

I miss you and long to be with you in person
 again. Until then, know that I pray for each of you by
 name and that you are loved by God and by me.

Peace be with you Dear Church,
 Vicar Anna

Christina Nesslage is
 working in our library this
 summer to get it in shape.
 She is cataloging new and
 donated books and
 organizing shelves.



Preschool Pitter Patter

by Amanda Stoen



When the country began shutting down in mid-March and we suddenly transitioned to being at home, I think we expected it to last 2-3 weeks. Our preschool teachers got together and made plans to connect with their classes and

provide resources for parents at home. We offered a daily story time on our Facebook page, weekly class zoom calls, individual calls, regular emails and individual mailings. We then learned that our time at home and away from each other physically would be much longer than anticipated. We asked parents what they needed from us. The teachers worked together to provide as much support as possible from a distance. As we moved from looking at this time apart as less of a sprint and more like an Ironman, we have shifted our focus to thriving. We cannot function on adrenaline for months as our bodies are not made to survive and function properly that way. We must learn coping strategies to help us manage our feelings and emotions during these long months.



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We have shifted to hope. What can we do to care for ourselves, our preschool children and their



families? We continued reaching out, supporting and connecting our families so they can meet with each other virtually. We are part of the church and this is the church doing what it does best. We are reaching out and staying connected. We provided resources such as outdoor activities, process art ideas and all kinds of science and sensory experiments. While our preschool doors were closed, we too stayed open like the church. We celebrated our teachers for an abbreviated Teacher



Appreciation Week with a Car Parade through the church parking lot. We also celebrated our four year old class who will be moving on to kindergarten with a staff car parade by their homes. Both of these events brought us laughter and joy. These moments bring us together, even though we are at a safe distance. Together we will thrive.

Now the preschool is making plans! We hope to reopen in July to offer a few weeks of summer camp, if it is safe to do so. Otherwise, we plan to reopen in the fall for the school year. Whenever we are able to open, preschool life will look different. As a preschool staff, we will be meeting virtually to discuss new safety protocols, ways to address the social and emotional needs of our children and their families as well as checking in with each other. Gathering together is needed and it may be virtual until we can be together in person safely. We appreciate the care and concern from the congregation as we all navigate this long journey together. God's blessings to each of you.

Council Corner

by Tina Bessias
President, Congregation Council

As so much about the world is changing, many of the activities of St. Paul's continue, albeit in different form. Worship services are recorded and made available on the Vimeo website (<https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham>); data suggest that viewership is even higher than typical Sunday attendance. Numbers are up, too, for Bible Study on Thursday mornings. Financial contributions have been steady so far, and income is slightly ahead of budgeted as of May 31. Pastor Ali Tranvik was sent off with video messages and a car parade, and we called Amanda Highben to be our new Lutheran Campus Pastor. In our first ever virtual congregational meeting,

121 members voted out of 190 who are eligible.

But of course, there are other ways that we are missing out. Drive-through communion is not the same as gathering at the altar rail. Holding the hymnal, singing with Jackie, and hearing our organs through computer speakers bring comforting echoes of familiar experience, but who would choose them over physical gathering? The preschool is closed and our building is empty. We are isolated and lonely.

When and how will we be able to gather again as the church? That is the question on all of our minds. Linda Foreman, past president of the Congregation Council, has agreed to lead a task force to explore that question and make recommendations to the council. At its first meeting on May 26 (by Zoom, of course), Dean Redmond, Joan Albright, Janet Seiz, Tina Bessias, Vicar Anna Carter, and Pastor Anderson met to start working towards answers. They focused on executive orders from the governor and the mayor of Durham, guidance from the synod and the ELCA, and health information from several sources. They identified the health and safety of congregation members and staff as a primary consideration. They also recognized the need to plan for long term ambiguity, recognizing that this is not the sprint it initially appeared it would be. The task force will strive to plan with flexibility, resilience, and wonder.

Some goals emerged from the discussion:

- To focus not on just maintaining, but growing during this time of extraordinary need
- To continue to live out our core values: worship, compassionate service, hospitality, teaching and learning
- To develop a continuum of activities such as prayer, meditation, and Bible study in addition to worship services in outdoor as well as indoor spaces
- To continue offering recorded or live streamed digital versions of congregational activities for those who can't participate in person

Since that first meeting of the task force, the NC Synod has issued recommendations (<https://nclutheran.org/re-gathering-task-force/>). They include refraining from in-person gatherings of more than 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors until the NC governor approves Phase 3 (<https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/NC-3-PHASE-PLAN.pdf>) of the statewide plan.

Members of the task force agreed to develop an annotated bibliography of resources, explore logistics of worship and management of people in spaces, and develop a plan for clear communication with the congregation. Please submit your ideas and resources

to council@stpaulsdurham.org. The task force will meet again on Wednesday, June 10.

St. Paul's Readers

The group will discuss the book, Why Religion: A Personal Story, by Elaine Pagels, at the zoom meeting, Thursday, June 18, at 3:00 pm. There will be no book or meeting for July and August.

Farewell and Godspeed to Ali and Isak

On Friday, May 29 in the evening, the rains stopped and we wished Pastor Ali and Isak a farewell and Godspeed as they were getting ready to depart Durham. Pastor Ali has accepted a call to be the senior pastor of Cross of Glory Lutheran Church in Brooklyn Center, MN. You may see other Godspeed wishes to Ali on our vimeo page -

<https://vimeo.com/424108301> as well as her Farewell and Godspeed parade in the parking lot. <https://vimeo.com/425632323>

Ali's new email address is: alexandra.tranvik@gmail.com



Daily Devotions

New dates through Saturday, July 4 for the daily devotions have been added to the Devotion Sign Up. If you are willing to write a daily devotion for the congregation please sign up at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044eabad28a3fd0-daily>. Please submit your devotion to Vicar Anna at least two days in advance of the publish date.

What happens when James Jefferson, our custodian, has an empty building? He and his crew have time to do a great job on ALL the floors (among his other tasks)!



From the Minister of Music

You must be faithful over a few things

To be ruler over many things.

Be thou faithful, unto death

And God will give you a crown of life.

If you have a song to sing, faithfully sing that song.

If you have some love to show, show it the whole day long.

If you have a kind word to say, try to say it each and every day.

If you have a prayer to pray, pray on in Jesus' Name.

Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of God.

Know that your labor is not in vain, you shall receive a just reward.

Be thou faithful, and God will give you a crown of life.

Well done, good and faithful servant, well done.

Our St. Paul's choir sang these words not too long ago in the anthem *Faithful Over A Few Things* by African American composer Glenn Edward Burleigh. Burleigh, an accomplished pianist, wrote numerous works for the church music ministry, many of which are at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago and at the American Music Center in New York City. Slow and with those familiar echoes of American gospel, Burleigh's anthem and its words remind us that we are called to be faithful.

Like many Americans, I have been overwhelmed by the loss of life from COVID-19 and the insidious nature of racism in America exposed at the death of George Floyd. I find myself searching for music that centers around faith, justice and peace; hymns that reassure and remind us that we are saved through God's grace. I find myself thinking



about what it means for us to be ministers to one another and to faithfully serve. Our congregation at St. Paul's ministers to each other and to the community in numerous ways: through the Race & Reconciliation group, Stephen ministers, South Durham Connections & the Parktown Food Hub. And through worship together. In worship we sing together, we speak the Nicene Creed and the Lord's Prayer together, we come to the table together for communion. Pastor Scott's drive-thru communion and the Vimeo worship videos have been wonderful ways to experience the togetherness of worship at a distance. But what comes next? Do we start planning for worship outside in the next phase of reopening? Do we try to social distance inside the sanctuary and sit every other pew? Or do we continue what we've already been doing with videos and drive-thru communion? These are all good questions. Listening to each other and working together seems to me the right way to come up with ideas and solutions. We must be faithful and continue in the hard work of listening and problem solving for our labor is not in vain. And can we please all keep praying too!

Words from one of my favorite hymns: *We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly; we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

Jackie

music@stpaulsdurham.org

Finance Committee Update

In spite of our not being able to worship together, we have been a faithful congregation in giving. Through May, the contributions have totaled \$278,539 which is in line with what was budgeted.

Our expenses have also been in line with what was budgeted with a few exceptions. The total expenses through May were \$279,230.

The endowment funds amount did drop some due to the fall in the stock market in March but are close to being back to earlier values with recovery of the market.

I encourage everyone to remain faithful in giving, depending on your circumstances, especially as we head into the summer months which typically lead to a dip in contributions.

John Foreman

Finance Committee Chairperson

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, ELCA
1200 West Cornwallis Road
Durham, NC 27705-5731

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Coffee Hour

Pour a cup of tea or coffee and join the Pastor and Vicar for Coffee Hour on Mondays on Zoom from 10-11. We are looking forward to seeing you, chatting, and catching up. Here is the info:

Topic: Coffee Hour with the Pastor and Vicar

Time: 10:00-11:00 am on Mondays

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91351103753?pwd=WVVCRlgrSUhLzJWN3pPYnlyL25LZz09>

Meeting ID: 913 5110 3753

Password: 292680

Update on Virtual Food Drive

by Nancy Dewhirst

The generous congregation of St. Paul's, contributed \$6,047 to the Urban Ministries of Durham. They are thrilled to receive this and are working on their plans to use it. It likely will be used to restock the food pantry so it will be ready when they open again to the community.

Thanks be to God that we are people who are willing to help those in need whenever asked. This is a true display of the congregation's willingness to help our neighbors in need. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!

Dear Fellow St. Paul's members,

Social Ministry is giving you the opportunity to continue with the annual Christmas in July opportunity through the ELCA's Good Gifts Program. Throughout the month of June, you may write a check to St. Paul's or donate money in another way, indicating this is for "ELCA Good Gifts." The first of July, the money will be tallied and a "gift" will be selected. You will be notified of the amount and the "gift" selected. If you want more details on the ELCA's program, visit

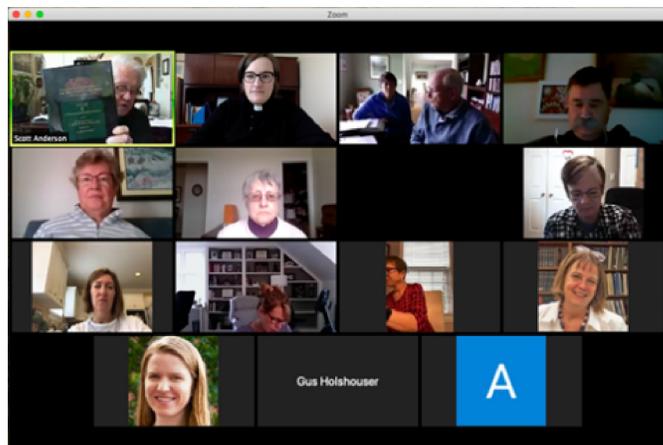
<https://goodgifts.elca.org/>. Give as you are motivated to do for this program. There are many ways to support those in need during these challenging times. This is only one.

Thank you.

God's work. Our hands (and hearts!).

Social Ministry Committee

Thursday Morning Zoom Bible Study



Scott Anderson is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom Bible Study on Thursday mornings. Topic: **Bible Study - Acts** – You may download the lessons ahead of time by going to the home page of our website (stpaulsdurham.org)

Time: 10:30 am on Thursdays

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/946532621?pwd=UTJqYjV0V3laMmpROStMdGRvTGhUT09>

Meeting ID: 946 532 621

Password: 402561

From Durham Congregations In Action

Faithfully Our Hearts Are Open: A Letter of Solidarity from Durham Faith Leaders

As faith leaders we are accustomed to fulfilling our duty by congregating, by gathering for worship in prayer and song. We realize, however, that promoting and facilitating physical proximity, especially through songful worship, poses a potentially lethal threat to the health and safety of our families, friends, and neighbors.

Our responsibility to promote physical distancing during this pandemic is a sacred duty. Our traditions are diverse, yet we share a faithful devotion to the preservation of lives. Our obligation to promote public health during this pandemic is part and parcel of our core beliefs, inextricable with our sense of what God demands of us.

For this reason, we reject the notion that houses of worship ought to be exempt from orders that limit large gatherings. Lest our churches, temples, and mosques become incubators for COVID-19, houses of worship are the very places that must model safety and promote wellness.

In our hearts there is no greater desire than for us to gather in peace. We recognize, however, that at this moment – and likely until a vaccine is available – human behavior in group settings is our greatest asset or liability. We are gravely alarmed by the widespread, reckless move to reopen institutions that put human beings in close proximity to each other. When reopening buildings to large groups, the fast-track is the lethal track. The life-affirming track, which our faiths call us to follow, is one

that adheres, at every stage and with utmost prudence, to measures that reduce the risk of transmission and fatality for the vulnerable.

As we pursue our obligation to promote physical distancing, our shared religious values demand that we draw near to each other in other ways. We do not distance ourselves from harsh realities and human dignity, and we are particularly cognizant that COVID-19 is not a “great equalizer.” This pandemic attacks our citizens disproportionately, along fault lines of racial and economic inequality. Closing buildings does not mean closing hearts and hands to the sacred work of caring for our African American, Latinx, and immigrant communities. The hour calls for urgent action. While our stance regarding the timeline for safely regathering may not mirror that of our government officials, we believe that our primary responsibility during this unprecedented pandemic is to the public health and safety of those whom we have been divinely called to serve. We urge all civic leaders to lead with moral fortitude and steadfast devotion to the dignity of those most vulnerable to the health and economic impact of this pandemic.

Lastly, we invite our clergy colleagues whose views differ from our own into conversation with us. We share our convictions with humility, with a listening heart, and with full appreciation for the complexity and uncertainty that challenges all of us in this moment.

In Fellowship and Peace,

- Rev. Scott Anderson, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
- Rev. Dr. Jonathan C. Augustine, Senior Pastor, St. Joseph AME Church; National Chaplain, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- Rev. Donna Banks, Lead Pastor, McMannen United Methodist Church
- Rev. Betty Berghaus, Honorably Retired, Bridge Interim at Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church
- Elder James A. Blake, Pastor, Fisher Memorial United Holy Church
- Rev. Spencer Bradford, Executive Director, Durham Congregations In Action
- Rev. Allen Brimer, Pastor, Farm Church
- Dr. B. Angeloe Burch Sr., Executive Director, AADE
- Rev. Clarence Burke, Pastor, Beacon Light Baptist Church
- Rev. Dana Cassell, Pastor, Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren
- Rev. Deborah Cayer, Lead Minister, Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- Rev. Dorisanne Cooper, Pastor, Watts Street Baptist Church
- Rev. Dr. Katie Crowe, Pastor, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church
- Rev. Dr. Herbert Reynolds Davis, Senior Pastor, Nehemiah Church, COGIC
- Rev. Crystal DesVignes, Pastor, CityWell UMC
- Rev. Dr. Mindy Douglas, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church

- Rev. Lakesha Bradshaw Easter, Pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Rev. Dr. Matthew Floding, Director of Ministerial Formation, Duke Divinity School
- Rabbi Elana Friedman, Campus Rabbi, Jewish Life at Duke
- Rabbi John Friedman, Emeritus Rabbi, Judea Reform Congregation
- Franklin Golden, Pastor, Durham Church
- Rabbi Daniel Greyber, Beth El Synagogue
- Rev. Tommy Grimm, Associate Pastor, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church
- Rev. Margaret E. Herz-Lane, Interim Pastor, Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
- The Rev. M. Jonah Kendall, Rector, St. Philip’s Episcopal Church
- Rev. Ben Johnston-Krase, Farm Church
- Bishop Clarence Laney, Monument of Faith Church
- Rev. Curt Lowndes, Lead Pastor, The Gathering Church
- William V. Lucas, Senior Pastor, First Chronicles Community Church
- Superintendent Wil Nichols, Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ
- Rev. Monnie Riggan, Deacon, St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church
- Rev. Prince R. Rivers, Senior Pastor, Union Baptist Church
- Rev. Heather M. Rodriguez, Lead Pastor, Duke Memorial UMC

- Rev. Dr. Sharon Schulze, Pastor, South Durham Connections, ELCA
 - Rabbi Matthew Soffer, Judea Reform Congregation
 - Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber, Rector, St. Luke's Episcopal Church
 - Rev. Laura Thompson, Pastor, Pleasant Green United Methodist Church
 - Rev. Chris Tuttle, Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Rev. Kristen D. Williams, Minister of Adult Formation and Witness, Duke Memorial UMC
 - Rev. Melinda Keenan Wood, Senior Pastor, Pilgrim United Church of Christ
 - Imam Abdul Hafeez Waheed, Masjid Muhammed
 - Rev. Molly Brummett Wudel, Pastor, Emmaus Way Church

"HOW LONG, HOW LONG?"

A Statement and Call from the Board of Durham Congregations In Action Inviting endorsement and support from Durham area faith-communities and ministers.

How long, oh how long.

Our hearts are breaking. The pain seems everywhere. Frustration mounts and out of frustration people act in ways that cause more pain. Where is the healing? How can we help become the change we hope for?

As members of Durham's diverse faith communities, we mourn the destruction and death being caused by Covid-19 and by racism. The sudden spread of this new virus has brought widespread death, suffering, and unemployment. The enduring presence of white supremacy has meant that people of color and especially Black people have been hit disproportionately hard by the disease both medically and economically.

And along with the pandemic came in shocking succession the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. This last killing of an unarmed Black man by police broke open the long-festered wounds of racism and surfaced again the ongoing experience of racial oppression in criminal justice systems.

In grief, solidarity and determination, we deplore and denounce White supremacy and systemic aggression against Black and Brown members of our society, along with the escalating violence that has resulted in their injury and murder. Institutions of authority that cannot solve and eradicate patterns of systemic injustice and abuse not only fail in their responsibility to the public they serve, but also risk losing their own legitimacy.

Many have grown frustrated with limits on behavior taken to control the spread of Covid-19. People need to get back to work. People want to be with friends and family. People want life to be "normal" again. But as the virus continues to spread, maintaining physical distance from other people remains the best way to reduce infections and limit deaths.

Many have grown frustrated with racism. People need to be respected and treated with dignity by others. People need an end to oppression by police and other public officials. People need opportunity and support to fulfill their humanity. But demonstrations also put people in danger of infection by the virus as some demonstrators are careless about wearing masks and rallies have often failed at social-distancing.

Witnessing the #ICantBreathe protests in Minneapolis, across North Carolina and the country, we share in the

pain and passion for change of organizers. Alongside necessary reform of law and custom that are long overdue, it is vital that we hold and maintain safe spaces in which people may express grief and outrage, and work for transformative change with hope.

Witnessing police over-reactions and provocations in response to legitimate public protest in other communities, we recognize and appreciate the responsible conduct of law enforcement personnel in Durham during the past week's local public actions. We also recognize that some peaceful demonstrations in some communities have been used as occasions for violence and vandalism, often as a result of outside agitators who want to incite violence and property destruction in the community rather than protest racist police practices. As Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi did in their public actions for social transformation, we condemn such destructive action, as well as provocative threats and violence by police on the streets, as corrosive and poisonous toward democratic community and social change for greater shared justice.

We renew our call with advocates from the Durham FADE Coalition in 2014 that the Durham Civilian Police Review board be strengthened and reconstituted to conduct independent investigations with subpoena authority, as in San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington DC. We call on the NC Legislature to make the changes in state law necessary to permit municipal governments to institute this tool of accountability and reform. Systemic change such as this is required to root out the legitimization of racialized social violence by our criminal-justice institutions.

We also call on the City of Durham to invest additional resources and funding with the Durham Human Relations Commission for pursuing and advancing anti-racism work in our community.

Our faith commitment leads us to say: "behind every human face is the face of God." That means we weep with all those who weep. And we hope for an end to this pain. It also means that we commit ourselves to becoming healers: to work to limit the spread of Covid-19 and to struggle to end racism as it infects our own lives and the lives of our community.

We pray you will join us in that healing.