

The Trumpet

October 2020

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Pastor Mike's Mash:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept, when we remembered Zion.

² There on the poplars we hung our harps,³ for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

⁴ But how can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?—Psalm 137

The book of Psalms is the prayerbook of the people of God, for in it, we find the words, the thoughts, the tears of both exuberant celebration and brokenhearted abandonment, not just of those original ancients who penned these words, David, Solomon, and such. We find the thoughts, words, and tears of countless generations of God's people who found their rootedness in the Word of God and the common experience of those ancient celebrations and suffering.

Psalm 137 is the plaintive song of one of those people who remembers what it was like to be in exile in Babylon. Jerusalem lay in a shambles, stone from stone torn down from its mighty walls and piled up from its broad promenades and scattered by the victorious Babylonian armies. Solomon's Temple, the House of God, which had stood for over 400 years, the very place, it was assumed, where God himself lived, reigned, and protected God's people, was rubble. Its intricately carved wood work was ash. The precious metals that adorned it had been looted and taken as plunder back to Babylon. And while there in Babylon, the psalmist remembers, *"We wept when we remembered what we had lost and left behind on Mt. Zion, where the Temple once stood. Our Babylonian captors asked us to sing the songs we used to sing in worship. But we only hung our instruments by the trees next to the rivers there, because how can we sing the Lord's songs in a foreign land?"*

If you've ever seen the musical *Godspell*, you would remember the melancholy song, "On the Willows There," which is sung during the Last Supper scene. (You can find that beautiful version on YouTube.)

Bob Marley sang "By the Rivers of Babylon" as a song sung by his once enslaved people.

My heart, mind, and spirit have been drawn toward this psalm throughout the pandemic. A friend and col-

league of mine who teaches at Luther Seminary opined, "We're all first-call pastors again." Nothing that we thought we knew about how to lead and serve as a servant of Christ fits anymore. And it's a pretty daunting and demoralizing situation.

"We shouldn't kowtow to what the government tells us to do," some have said to me.

"You should've opened the church sooner," others have said, "And with no limitations! At least that's my opinion."

"I won't come until it's safe," said most of our respondents to our poll last summer as we began to gauge how to return to in-person worship safely, or at least with as many safety boxes checked as possible.

"I won't come if I have to wear a mask," others say.

"Sing us the songs you used to sing..."

As the Psalmist puts it: "How can we sing the Lord's songs in a foreign land?"

How do I be a pastor when nearly everything I once knew and almost all the tried and true tools I once wielded are no longer at my disposal, at least not in the same ways? The best and brightest minds in epidemiology—some of them followers of Jesus themselves—have told us and continue to tell us that the things we've relied on are precisely the potentialities for the spread of the virus. They have told us that while not perfectly, masks slow the spread. These same scientists continue to tell us that there is much to learn about covid, that we don't know—even within the statistics of who is most susceptible—who will and who won't get sick or worse.

I particularly feel all of this weight as we seek to protect our beloved and deeply missed grandparents this season.

I particularly feel all of this weight as we anticipate Christmas and the expectations that each and every year be the Christmas card experience that we had from years previous.

And I particularly feel the gratitude of Christian community among those who have offered their gifts, skills, flexibility, and cooperation in these times! THANK YOU!!

The rest of the story for Psalm 137 is that eventually Israel did get to go home. But what greeted their return was not "the way things used to be" and certainly no Christmas card of years past. What greeted their return was hard, intense collective labor of the whole people of God to rebuild their once glorious capitol and to discover a new normal for the way they worshiped and lived as God's people. **NOTHING** was the same as it once was.

And to be sure, there were casualties that accompanied this new normal. Some of God's people never

came back. They found the comfort of a new normal in Babylon. Or Syria. Or elsewhere. Others took potshots at their leadership, certain that if the governors and priests did it “this way” or “that way” they’d be back to normal in no time. Still others actively opposed and even sought to sabotage Jerusalem’s rebuild. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah narrate the opposition and complexities of the Psalm 137’s “rest of the story.”

But the bottom line—both in Psalm 137; throughout the Babylonian Exile; and throughout Scripture—is God’s promised faithfulness, especially as the people of God seek to echo the grace, mercy, and love to which God has always called God’s people and that we see reflected most clearly in the words, the ministry, the life, and yes, even the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Here is the only place we will find solace—not in personal opinion about the pandemic; not in the politicization that has now surrounded good, sound, scientifically-based efforts to address the pandemic; not in reckless bravado. We will only find comfort, consolation, and direction in Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

Pastor Kari and I have been crystal clear in leading our congregation’s response:

- We cannot and will not be involved in each person’s particular opinion about pandemic response, especially if those opinions are not connected to epidemiology or public health responses.
- We will not play politics with this.
- We will listen to recommendations from epidemiologists and public health officials.

And most of all...

- **We have and will continue to make decisions for the sake of the care and well-being of our neighbors and especially the potentially most vulnerable.**

When Jesus is asked which commandment is greatest, his reply is not “A commandment” but “TWO commandments”: “Love the Lord your God with all that you are” AND “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22)

There is actually an aspect of Lutheran heritage and history tied up in epidemiology. In 1527, a resurgence of the bubonic plague, the Black Death, swept across Europe, including Luther’s town, Wittenberg. Luther’s prince, John the Steadfast, undertook drastic measures to stem the plague’s tide, including ordering Luther and his colleagues at the University of Wittenberg to relocate. Most did. Luther did not, instead staying at his post of parish pastor to care for the sick and dying, preaching and administering the Sacraments.

When the plague had subsided, Luther found his response soundly criticized from all sides. On the one hand, he was criticized for his perceived recklessness in staying behind. On the other hand, Luther’s opposition in the Roman Catholic leadership accused the Lutherans of abandoning their flock in their greatest time of need.

In an open letter, *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*, Luther responded to these critiques. His main point was this: those in vocations with responsibilities to serve the common good—this would include city officials, doctors, and pastors, among others—are bound to remain in place. Perhaps this echoes how our government early on sought, imperfectly at times, to delineate “necessary workers.”

But he also responded most harshly to those who refused to do what was being ordered by government and doctors:

They are much too rash and reckless, tempting God and disregarding everything which might counteract death and the plague. They disdain the use of medicines; they do not avoid places and persons infected by the plague, but lightheartedly make sport of it and wish to prove how independent they are. They say that it is God’s punishment; if he wants to protect them he can do so without medicines or our carefulness. That is not trusting God but tempting him....

No, my dear friends, that is no good. Use medicine; take potions which can help you; fumigate house, yard, and street; shun persons and places where your neighbor does not need your presence or has recovered, and act like a man who wants to help put out the burning city. What else is the epidemic but a fire which instead of consuming wood and straw devours life and body? You ought to think this way: “Very well, by God’s decree the enemy has sent us poison and deadly of-fal. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, ad-minister medicine, and take it. I shall avoid persons and places where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person

but will go freely, as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."

You can find the whole letter here: <https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogLW.pdf>

I only have ideas of what Christmas is going to look like this year. I only have ideas of what our budget is going to look like next year. The things we have attempted—in person worship; small group Bible studies; in person FaithWalk—have met both with fruitfulness and frustration. But I know for certain we have good, faithful followers of Jesus who are working at least to provide us a direction. **We will find ways to sing the Lord's songs, someday, somehow, even if they don't quite sound the same as they have in the past. We will continue to care for people's health and especially the potentially most vulnerable. And most of all we will trust and believe that God will be faithful to the promises God has given us in Christ.**

See you in worship—Pastor Mike

OFFICE HOURS

- **Monday: 9am – 1pm** Liz only, except for Council Mondays (2nd Monday of the month), when at least one pastor will be present. (Mondays are typically the pastors' day off.)
- **Tuesday – FRIDAY: 9am – 2pm** Liz will mostly be present in the office. At least one pastor will be in at least TWO of those days.



OTHER THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT OUR MODIFIED OFFICE HOURS:

- After posted hours, your call will be directed to a voice mail box, and someone will return your call as soon as is possible.
- We will continue to encourage you who might be in higher risk categories to stay home and conduct business by phone.
- Pastoral emergencies can still be directed to either Pastor Mike or Pastor Kari by contacting them directly on their cell phones.
- **PLEASE, out of care for our staff, do not come to the office for any reason.....if you are feeling ill or exhibiting any kind of respiratory symptom (coughing, sneezing, etc.);...if you have knowingly been exposed to Covid-19;...if you have a compromised immune system (chemotherapy patients, etc.); or...if you are at a higher risk of exposing others (i.e., nursing home employees, etc.).**

IF YOU DO COME TO THE OFFICE...MASKS ARE REQUIRED.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING, PATIENCE, AND SUPPORT

PLEASE BE FLEXIBLE AS WE SEEK TO BE AS "NORMAL" AS POSSIBLE DURING THE PANDEMIC

It is distinctly possible that schedules and events will need to flex as we encounter quarantining and testing. We try to communicate as effectively as we possibly can. Most of the time we get it right. Sometimes we overlook things. **Weather and pandemic-related postponements and cancelations will be communicated through email, our website, and our Facebook page.** Please make sure you are connected there in order to get the most update changes that might need to happen! Thanks!!

Just a reminder of the variety of opportunities for worship

SUNDAYS:

- 9am Livestreamed--right on our Facebook page. Holy Communion is offered both **IN YOUR HOME** during this service, as well as by drive-up immediately following this service.
- 10:30am In-person--in the sanctuary. Worshipers do need to be masked and physically spaced. Holy Communion is a part of this service, as well.



WEDNESDAYS:

- 6pm In-person--in the sanctuary. We have added an additional worship opportunity on Wednesdays, 6pm in the main Sanctuary. While the service falls at a convenient time for many of our FaithWalk families, *it is not tied to FaithWalk*. Nor is it tied to our Sunday services. **This is a stand-alone service of light, devotions, and the Lord's Supper.** As you can see from the picture, it held in low light with lots of candles. It is quiet and contemplative. **All are invited to take advantage of the quietness of this service, to take a midweek rest, to "Be still and know that I am God," as Psalm 46 reassures.**

Please note: there won't be a Worship on Wednesday on **Wed., Nov. 25**, the week of Thanksgiving, as the pastors will be on vacation that week.

All of our covid protocols are in place—masking; physical distancing; keeping our air flow moving out the open door; etc. Our aim is to care for people AND to provide an atmosphere in which all can worship with confidence and to be at peace with the safety at which we are aiming. Quiet. Contemplative. Prayerful. Candlelit. Holy Communion is offered, as well.

Remember, our livestreamed service is recorded and available for later viewing and worship. That recording lives BOTH on our Facebook AND on our YouTube channel: If you "Like" the video recording there and "Subscribe" to the channel, you'll be notified when a new video is posted there.)

The church is not nor ever been closed! See you in worship!

Due to the pandemic, this year's auction will begin online with auction viewing and bidding available BEFORE we finish with LIVE final bidding beginning at 1 PM through Zoom. Register and Bid NOW at www.Camponomia.org!!

We recommend that you give us your best bid before the live auction begins, especially if you are uncomfortable with the online ZOOM format we will be using (remember, this is a benefit auction for

Camp Onomia) .Join us at 12:30 PM on November 21 for some pre-event music and activities. We will give further instructions at that time. All online bidding ends at 2:30 pm. Don't be afraid... this will be FUN!

**Please note that all bidding ends during the live auction show via ZOOM on Saturday November 21st which begins at 1 PM. We will be showing quilts, reviewing how bidding is going, and talk with several guests. You may continue to bid via this site through the afternoon until the specific item closes at 2:30pm. Items with a reserve, if not met, or other unsold items, will be auctioned off after the online bidding closes at 2:30pm. If you are uncomfortable bidding virtually, please email us your Proxy Bid (highest offer) and contact information by November 15th and we will submit your offer manually. We offer free quilt delivery in the Twin Cities, free quilt pickup at Camp Onomia, or free shipping thanks to a friend of Onomia. All quilts will be available, delivered or shipped the week after the auction ends.



In person viewing of the quilts will be held at Christ Lutheran Church in Blaine on Friday, November 20 by appointment only. Call Mickey to set up your time (763)234-0541. Use this ZOOM link if you want to join the auction presentation that day!

The Care for Creation Team is offering regular suggestions and information about how we can be stewards of our environment. Please use the information that is helpful to you to care for what God has given us.



- Use Fair Trade products to support local artisans and farmers and protect the environment.

Small Group Bible Studies Believe it or not, most of our small group Bible studies have continued even through the pandemic. Most of those have, of course, taken place via Zoom. But, since we do have guidelines in place for the return of in-person small groups:



Women's Bible Study--The third Thursday of the month at 9:30am--Join us for women's bible study in-person. Please join us in fellowship hall. We look forward to seeing you there!

Men's Breakfast (2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8am)—THIS SATURDAY--Men's Breakfast will be held on November 14th & November 28th-- location to be determined. If you are still not comfortable attending in-

person, please let us know and we will accommodate you via zoom.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study—Each Tuesday morning at 10 - 11am a group of anywhere from 3 to 8 men and women gather. Join us TUESDAYS in the court yard weather permitting and talk about the next Sunday's Scripture reading. If you are still not comfortable attending in-person, please let us know and we will accommodate you via zoom.

Evening Adult Bible Study to be Offered

Wednesdays at 7pm—By request, we will be offering Adult Bible Study beginning at 7pm at the Church, the precise location is TBA with some Bible basics (different literature within the Bible; what am I supposed to read? HOW am I supposed to read? Etc. etc. etc.), and then after that we'll begin to apply those skills by reading together the following Sunday's text(s). This is a study that is open to any and all, but those who are newer to reading the Bible or who perhaps haven't been a part of an adult Bible study before are particularly invited. There will be a variety of Bible translations available to try out, if you don't have your own Bible. But at least to start with, bring the Bible you have. High school aged youth are also welcome as young adults! Masks must be worn indoors. Questions? Contact Pastor Mike.

Help a family's holiday table through the Princeton Pantry

Annual Thanksgiving and Christmas basket drive for Princeton Pantry During the month of November the Princeton Pantry is asking the community to contribute to Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas baskets. These baskets are given out in addition to the client distributions.

Please donate or fill a bag of holiday food such as stuffing and gravy mixes, canned fruits and vegetables, applesauce or cranberry sauce or other non-perishable holiday treats such as cake mixes, cookie mixes, etc. Frozen turkeys may also be donated directly to the pantry (but not at church please), or contribute cash to purchase them.

Bring non-perishable and cash donations to Trinity Lutheran Church. The shopping cart will be inside the first door for donations during open hours. A red bin is under the table outside the door for other hours. Cash can be labeled and placed in the mail slot. You can also make donations directly to the Pantry during hours, Mon. & Wed. 1-3 pm & Fri. 9-11 am or at High Tech Auto on Rum River during normal business hours. This is not a fund raising drive so there are no matching funds associated with this drive.



Thank you for your generosity.—**The Princeton Food Pantry**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY TO THE MISSION & MINISTRY GOD HAS GIVEN OUR CONGREGATION!!

We continue to be astounded and grateful for your generosity!

Our faithfulness to God's calling, even in this time, is to be responsible for our financial commitments, not least of which include our ministry partners (like the Synod and Camp Onomia); our buildings (including, of course, our mortgage on Trinity Crossing); and of course, our staff! Be we cannot be faithful to that calling without your trust and faithfulness in your generosity.



There are still any number of ways to give:

- **By Mail**—we have a reliable process for making sure that all offerings are out of the building every single day and deposited right way. It is safe, even with our mostly shuttered building.
- **Drop Off**—If you are out and about, there is a mail slot to the right of the front doors. You can safely and securely drop your gift off there.
- **On-line**—go to our website (www.trinity-princeton.org) and look for the picture of the offering plate like the one above. This is THE most efficient way of signing up for Simply Giving, which is administered by Vanco, one of the most secure e-commerce companies in the industry.
- **Automatic Withdrawal**—Contact your bank.
- **By App**—Both the Apple and Google Play app stores have a free app called "GivePlus." Once downloaded to your device, *simply search for "Trinity Lutheran Church, Princeton, MN"*: follow the directions for registering; and set-up your giving in whatever way works for your faithful generosity, one time, recurring, or whatever.

Prayer List Members

Dorothy Bergstrom
 Jeri Ann Bredemus
 Jim Dery
 Susan Deyle
 Katey Donais
 Dale Dunham
 Marlene Foss
 Adolph Hamann
 Marlys Hanson
 John Heins
 Phil Knapp
 Bruce Lacher
 Tad Larsen
 Del Liestman
 Donna Liestman
 Chellis Matz
 Sharon Matz
 Anikka Miller
 Jean Miller
 Emily Nelson
 Kenny Neumann
 Ed Peterson
 Bev Reed
 Warren Reed
 Dina Scandinato
 Cindy Schmatz
 Loren Schroeder
 Carol Skare
 Matt Skarohlid
 Brenda Smith
 Anne Stevenson
 Eric Strandberg
 Joyce Tessmer
 Prudence Tessmer & family
 Ardy Tourville
 Carol Warner
 Chuck Warner
 Barb Wicktor
 Russ Wicktor
 Dean Winslow
 Ginny Winslow

Family Members & Friends

Peter Berry (Mary Berry's son)
 Isabella Borunda (Roger & Jan Gale's grand daughter)
 Diane Boser (Friend of Dan & Jean Anderson)
 Gene Brown (Pastor Mike's uncle)
 Jean Carlson (Chuck Warner's sister)
 Virg Carlson (Chuck & Carol Warner's brother in-law)
 Caitlin Christenson (Kenny & Joy Christenson's daughter in-law)
 David Doerfler (Pastor Mike's uncle)
 Rachel Fadden(friend of Ron & Judy Peterson/Jim & Jan Dery)
 Jan Gale's daughter Jamie
 Joan Gessar (Courtney Hoppe's mother in-law)
 Cindy Gregorius (Heather Lee's mother)
 Marian Grow (LaDonna Olson's sister)
 Shirley Heyns (Chellis Matz sister)
 Dale Kannegiesser (Elaine Storck's friend)
 Evelyn Kingma (June Kunkel's sister in-law)
 Carol Kint (Ron Peterson/Jan Dery's sister)
 Drew Litecky (Jan Wittnebel's brother)
 Randall Lundgren (Debi's Pederson's nephew)
 Bryce Murphy (friend of Marlowe Miller)

Esther Neussendorfer (Danette Scepurek's grandmother)
 Barbara Newton (Mary Newton's daughter)
 Janice Omtvedt (Ingrid Bavier's mother)
 Elliott Pancoast (Pastor Mike's dad)
 Tracy Pidde(Princeton 3rd grade teacher)
 Justin Poorker (Jim & Jan Dery grandson)
 Amanda Ridout (friend of the Pancoast Family)
 Rob Savage (Friend of the Keller family)
 Robin Schmidt (Jan Gerth's daughter)
 Andy Struthers (Maria Barlage's brother)
 Patty Thul's Sister Sheri
 Stacy Turner (Marlowe & Jean Miller's daughter)
 Scott Wallin (Char Kraemersmeier's son)
 Eric Webster (friend of the Morisset family)
 Ronda Wetzel (daughter of Andrea & Ron Sandusky)

Serving in the Military

Andrew Anderson
 Andrew Barthel
 Claire Barthel
 Jacob Benver
 Brady Beauchamp
 Eden Betzler
 Ronald Duresky
 Riley Forland
 Derek Hanson
 Hunter Lestrud
 6Anthony Mandt

David McCarney
 John McCarney
 Zachary Morisset
 Ben Noard
 Parker Pedersen
 Jaden Thimmesch

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, November 8

9am Livestreamed Worship
 10am Drive up Holy Communion
 10:30am In Person Worship

Monday, November 9

6pm Fellowship/Finance/Property/ Music & Worship Committee Mtgs
 7pm Council Mtg

Tuesday, November 10

10am Camp Onomia Committee Mtg
 10am Bible Study
 11:30am Staff Mtg
 12pm Princeton Area ELCA Pastors

Wednesday, November 11

9am TOPS
 6pm Worship
 6:35pm FaithWalk Large Group
 6:55pm FaithWalk Small Group
 7pm Adult Bible Study

Thursday, November 12

7pm AA Group

Saturday, November 14

8am Men's Breakfast

Sunday, November 15

9am Livestreamed Worship
 10am Drive up Holy Communion
 10:30am In Person Worship