



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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May 3rd, 2021

Dear People of Trinity,

As the spring weather gradually warms the earth, the rains quench, and the blossoms fade, we too here at Trinity are growing in potential and hope this season. It is wonderful to see so many different parts of life slowly appearing familiar, and our worship is headed in the same direction.

Beginning June 6th, Trinity will move to outdoor worship services at 9am each Sunday, with the first two Sundays of each month being a Sunday with the whole congregation singing, and the final two Sundays being non-singing services. We know that so many have longed for this opportunity, and we are happy to finally be in an appropriate time to offer it. We will continue to mask and physically distance, following the most recent recommendations from the CDC. Should inclement weather move the service indoors, we will not sing that Sunday.

This May and June, the What's Cookin, EIMI Confirmation, and Sr. High Classes along with the John's Meals feeding program that we participate in jointly with our neighboring congregations have concluded or will conclude their 2020-2021 programming. I would like to deeply thank all the parents, mentors, teachers, packing teams, delivery teams, and supporters of these programs. It was not an easy thing to create a space where our children could continue to learn and grow and be fed throughout this past year. Bumps and all, it has proven well worth the effort. Thank you!

Like these programs, so many of us have found ourselves worn out by the pandemic conversation, myself included. While I am hopeful that familiarity is on the horizon, I am also aware of the current conditions our congregation finds itself in. Many of our relationships are stretched thin, and our attachment to one another has weakened for some.

Our giving has faltered, and our expenses are mounting, even as we receive help from the government. Part of me, and perhaps you too, feel scared even hearing these things. Though not the first time, this is a thankfully unusual place for Trinity to find itself. I am grateful for the financial gifts of the past that sustain us now, and hopeful that all of us currently called as Trinity will provide financial gifts for the present.

I believe the truth makes free. These scary details are a part of our truth. And yet, so is the overwhelming support that we have seen in so many of our members throughout this pandemic, the persistent care of our Council and Council President, the gracious willingness of our musicians to play and sing us through each service, and the wellspring of hope in each member who repeatedly hears the latest change in worship or programming or plan throughout this time and responds with "What can I do to help?" I have hope, because the Spirit has blessed me to see and hear you, and though worn and weary we still sound like the Trinity I have come to love. We still echo the love planted in our hearts by the Spirit.

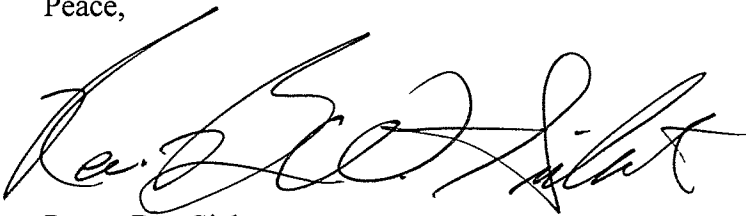
The church in Colossae was once similarly worn, similarly stretched thin, and similarly tempted. To them, and to us, is written:

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.¹

It is in compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience that I believe we will find the Spirit rebuilding us, rebinding us to one another. It is in honest conversation and forgiveness that the seed of trust and relationship grows. It is in active, selfless love that we find harmony, and in wisdom we find the context for teaching and admonition. Our songs are sung by the grateful heart, and our lives rise out of the word of Christ.

Let us take these days to rebuild, rebind, and recommit ourselves to one another and the work of God in our world. Let us be bold to say when we are ready to talk, and honest to say when we need a few moments to collect our thoughts. Let us remember the needs of our congregation financially, relationally, and skillfully. Let us remember the needs of our congregation prayerfully. Let us be kind to listen, and wise in our response. Let the Spirit move among us, nurture us and sustain us, and bring us together in lifelong worship once more.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Siebert', written in a cursive style.

Pastor Ben Siebert

Joining Sunday Worship Online:

To join at 9am for Sunday Morning Worship, you can use any computer, tablet, or smartphone with the link provided on our homepage at trinityarendtsville.org.

OR

Use the following steps for any type of phone (landline included):

1. Dial: 1 301 715 8592
2. When asked, enter the Meeting ID: 868 3849 4181
3. If asked, enter the passcode: 271040
4. To be able to speak, press *6.
5. To stop speaking, press *6 again.

¹ Colossians 3:12-17