

## *The Epistle*

### **Tri-Lutheran Collaborative**

*Update on our life together*

### **Sunday worship will be at Gloria Dei September through December.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Blessings to you all! This summer has been a busy one as Gloria Dei leaders, in coordination with leaders of King of Kings and St. Peter's, worked with the Collaboration Leadership Table (CLT) to make plans to move our collaboration forward.

A series of information forums was held during June and July, and the vast majority of those participating felt that the best opportunity for sustaining our vision of collaboration was to hold one joint service each Sunday morning at one location. After much discussion, the vote was taken and the decision to begin worshipping together at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church was the result. Each Congregational Council has voted to support this new plan. **I remind you that there are no winners or losers here.** Our main goal was, and is, that our worship be welcoming and inclusive of our entire collaborative community.

Over the next few weeks, you will see some changes happening as we seek to make the space comfortable and welcoming to all. Both the narthex, and the rear of the sanctuary, have been rearranged to accommodate more space for coffee hour and fellowship. A new family area has been added to the sanctuary for families to have a more kid friendly space to worship.

Each week in September we will be adding items from the other campuses as symbols of our new life together. Communion ware, paraments/banners and baptismal water will become part of the mosaic of our new identity. Starting September 10<sup>th</sup>, on Rally Day, you are encouraged to add a ribbon (supplied by us) to our unity cross. Our Ministers of Music are anxious to begin adding numbers to the current music groups. Please consider sharing your musical gifts!

In October the Bishop will appoint me as Interim Pastor for all three congregations and in November he will be visiting us for our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! May God bless us with many more years of sharing God's love and serving our communities.

Please continue to support Gloria Dei with your time and talents. **Come and See!** how our Tri-Lutheran Collaborative has re-imagined our life together. Join us on September 10 (or sooner) for our Rally Day Celebration with Outdoor Worship and BBQ.

Keep an eye out for other important announcements as we move forward. Please speak with a member of the CLT for any questions and concerns. We pray for patience, strength, and empathy for our community.

In His Service,

Rev. Rebecca Pollicino, Intentional Interim Pastor St. Peter's; Coverage Pastor King of Kings,  
Gloria Dei

By Dennis Hood

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Matthew 13:24-30).”

We have been pursuing an understanding of the Kingdom of God to help us get to know Jesus better. It leads us to this question: if Jesus brought with Him the Kingdom of God over 2,000 years ago, why is the world still so messed up?! I believe that Jesus gives us the answer in the parable above. I also believe that it contains an essential message for the church today.

used the King James translation of the Bible today because of the word ‘tare.’ Most modern translations say ‘weed.’ A tare is an insidious weed that resembles wheat. It is not until the wheat is fully mature that you can tell them apart. That’s important when you read further and Jesus explains this parable to His Disciples. Verse 38 says, “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.” So, the world is messed up because there is an enemy, which is the devil, working against God. We, as followers of Jesus, are out there in the world, surrounded by weeds! What are we supposed to do?

In the parable, the servants immediately ask if they should go out and rip out all the weeds. This is often our knee jerk reaction. We want to take matters into our own hands. It reminds me of the story in Luke 9, when the disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven on a city that had rejected Jesus. Fortunately, Jesus has more patience and forgiveness in His heart than we do. In this parable, Jesus tells us what we are to do.

We are to be wheat growers, not weedwhackers!

It’s not our job pull the weeds. It’s our job to plant good seeds, then nurture, grow and develop the wheat. We need to change the way we think! We are not qualified to do the weedwhacking! God sees things differently than we do. He sees our heart. We can’t see what’s in someone else’s heart. I have this image in my mind of a great big reception in heaven. It’s opening night and everyone that has been invited has gathered with great anticipation. When we look around, I think we will be surprised who’s there with us! “That guy is here? I never would have thought that!” And there will probably be a few people we expect to see, but they are not there!

As Christians, and as a church, we need to spend more time and energy cultivating the wheat, and less time and energy trying to whack all the weeds! Too many times, like Jesus said, we hurt the wheat while going after the weed. This has never been more true than it is now, in this unforgiving age of social media. We have this tendency to whack them all and sort it out later. Unfortunately, we do as much harm as we do good. It’s a sad reality that many people have been hurt in and by the church.

We need to focus our time and energy on being that city of light and the salt of the earth! We need to spend more time demonstrating God’s love, and just loving people, in general. All kinds of people. Not just the people we agree with, or who look and act more like us. When we show people what it really means to be a Christian, our hope is that they will want to be one too!

As a church, we need to nurture and develop each other. It’s called disciple building and we need to do a better job of it! We need to make sure that the seeds that grow among the tares have a fighting chance to mature. We need to develop a wheat-growing culture that takes care of each other, then reaches out to our community with that same love. Once again, we need to build something that other people will see and want to be a part of.

And once again, it’s important that, more than anything we say, we need to BE Christians! That’s our job. God will sort out the rest!

We are wheat growers. We are not weed whackers!

## Pastors Update

### August - September

It has been a blessing to see all three congregations and their leaders come together this summer to plan and execute the beginning of our joint worship at the Gloria Dei Campus. While this is still a work in progress, I see a spirit of cooperation and flexibility at play. I ask you all to continue to be patient and flexible as we move forward. There are still many kinks to be worked out.

This month we have made some significant changes, Worship is once a week at Gloria Dei Campus, Sunday School has moved there as well. Our musical staff has gone down from 4 to two. On the last week in August, we had a nice brunch to recognize Rob Boehm for his many years of service to King of Kings. Stephen Goldstein was not selected to move forward as one of our musical leaders. Do we need to do something to recognize his service as well?

The finance chairs met and worked out compensation sharing for the musical staff as well as myself. After much discussion and compromise they worked out a split that is agreeable to all parties. Finances will most likely prove to be the hardest obstacle as we move forward.

The new family area in the sanctuary is being well received. I have had a couple of parents thank me for thinking of them. Sunday School and confirmation are up and running for the year. We are currently looking at relocating SS to lower level (choir room). I am so thankful for the youth that led our service on Rally Day. They did a great job! We need to get them involved more often!

Two new teams are getting together this month: TLC Missions and TLC Worship & Music. Together they will help make plans to move us through the end of the year. Thanks to those who have taken a position on one of these teams. It will be helpful to have council input and voice on these vital teams

I thank you all for your leadership in these most uncertain times.

Blessings

Pastor Rebecca



## Lectionary Readings

**9/10/2023** Pentecost 15 #2-1 Genesis 2:4b-25 God Creates Humans

**9/17/2023** Pentecost 16 #2-2 Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 God Gives a  
Promised Child

**9/24/2023** Pentecost 17 #2-3 Genesis 32:[9-13] 22-30 Jacob Wrestles

**10/1/2023** Pentecost 18 #2-4 Exodus 1:8-14 [1:15–2:10]; 3:1-15 Moses  
and the Burning Bush

**10/8/2023** Pentecost 19 #2-5 Deuteronomy 5:1-21; 6:4-9 Love the Lord  
Your God

**10/15/2023** Pentecost 20 #2-6 Ruth 1:1-17 [4:13-17] Ruth Follows  
Naomi

**10/22/2023** Pentecost 21 #2-7 2 Samuel 5:1-5; 6:1-5; Psalm 150 David  
Becomes King

**10/29/2023** Pentecost 22 #2-8 1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-29 The Kingdom Di-  
vided

**11/5/2023** All Saints' (Pentecost #2-9 1 Kings 18:[17-19] 20-39 Fire from  
Heaven

**11/12/2023** Pentecost 24 #2-10 Hosea 11:1-9 God's Beloved Children

**11/19/2023** Pentecost 25 #2-11 Isaiah 5:1-7; 11:1-5 Israel,  
God's Vineyard

**11/26/2023** Christ the King #2-12 2 Kings 22:1-10, [11-20]; 23:1-3  
Josiah Finds the Scroll

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## Tri-Lutheran Collaborative Collaboration Leadership Table

The Collaboration Leadership Table (CLT) had a busy summer. During that time three information forums were held to explain the options for worship beginning in September. These forums were well-attended with many excellent questions asked.

In late July, the CLT met, along with the Executive Committees of the three congregations, to discuss and recommend a decision regarding fall worship. Pastor Rebecca asked all present to offer their personal “pros and cons” regarding the two proposed sites, i.e., St. Peter’s and Gloria Dei (King of Kings had previously bowed out of consideration). After discussion a vote was taken and Gloria Dei was recommended as the fall worship site beginning September 3, with Sunday School will relocating from St. Peter’s to Gloria Dei beginning September 17. This recommendation was presented to and approved by the three Congregation Councils at their August meetings. Worship began at Gloria Dei on September 3, with 70 parishioners in attendance. On September 10, worship will be held on the Great Lawn with a Rally Day BBQ immediately following. This worship arrangement will be in place at least through the end of the year, with holiday and special services held at the St. Peter’s and King of Kings campuses.

The move to a single-site, single-service format necessitated changes in the music ministry staff. The three existing positions (King of Kings organist announced his retirement) were dissolved and current staff was invited to apply for the new positions: Minister of Music/Organist and Minister of Music/Youth and Family. The CLT established a Personnel Committee from its ranks that reviewed and discussed the applications and made a recommendation to hire Richard Whitten and Laurie Haddock, respectively, effective September 1. Again, all three Congregation Councils approved this recommendation.

At its final meeting of the summer, the CLT began discussing the criteria to be used in determining the success of the single-site, single-service decision. CLT members are available to speak with parishioners regarding their concerns, comments, and suggestions. The CLT will meet in late fall to discuss and recommend a worship schedule for 2024. The next regularly scheduled CLT meeting is set for September 19 at the St. Peter’s Campus.

The committee met Sept 19, 2023 to review progress-to-date on Fall 2023 Worship schedule.

After an opening prayer and scripture reflection on how individuals **together** now shared a **new purpose in unity**, the following was reviewed:

- **Rally Day** reviewed - feedback was overwhelming success.
- **Sunday School** - Sunday School resumed with increased participation.
- **Fostering ongoing worship** of the three church campuses now joined together at one site:
  - ◊ Pastor used WOV Setting 4.
  - ◊ Pastor began new readings utilizing the Narrative Lectionary.
  - ◊ Pastor began bringing items (communion ware, unity cross, altar paraments, banners) from each congregation to honor all our histories.

### **Evaluating the Fall worship schedule at Gloria Dei:**

The TLC reviewed a sample of global ideas suggested by the Synod Consultant to measure success of the one worship service held at Gloria Dei campus. These ideas need to be refined and then defined in order to be measured. It is recognized that the TLC’s ongoing work will necessitate more frequent meetings. The next meetings will be October 2, 7pm at St Peter’s campus and October 25, 7pm at King of King campus.

Please keep the CLT and its members in your prayers as they continue their work. As mentioned above, all members are available to speak with you.

Since its last meeting, changes have been proposed and accepted for the Sunday School location. Beginning sometime in mid to late October, Sunday School will relocate from Lindgren Chapel to the former choir room in the basement of the main church building. A team has been assembled to clean, paint, and generally refresh the room in anticipation of this new usage. If you are interested in helping, please call the church office.

## *Congregation Council Notes*

Your Congregation Council met several times during the summer months. Most meetings were attended by all Council members. In addition to the standing committee and financial reports, agenda items included:

Discussion of the Collaboration Leadership Table recommendations regarding the fall worship schedule and the hiring of a new music ministry staff. The Council approved the CLT's recommendation of a single-site, single-service worship format beginning September 3; worship will be held at Gloria Dei through December 31. The Council also approved the CLT's Personnel Committee recommendation to hire Richard Whitten and Laurie Haddock as the new Music Ministers

Continuing discussions regarding Lindgren Chapel, the Olson Hall gym, and the 18<sup>th</sup> St. parsonage. The Chapel is currently used by our sister congregation, MMIES. They have made some changes to the worship space and have cleaned the building inside and out. Discussions have begun regarding some sort of joint worship/events. Negotiations are on-going for a long-term use of the Olson Hall gym by a local youth basketball program. Finally, the 18<sup>th</sup> Street parsonage continues to be occupied on a month-by-month basis.

Church finances are tracking as predicted

Property Management is keeping the campus in top operational order. Our sexton, Kurt Sobina, has been busy with interior and exterior tasks, primarily overseeing repair of the HVAC system. Kurt also was instrumental in accommodating a CLT recommendation to increase coffee hour seating as he removed the last two pews on each side of the aisle and provided folding chairs. This also allowed the creation of a child area for our younger worshipers.

Your Congregation Council members are available to discuss your concerns and suggestions. Please speak with them if needed. And also keep the Council members and church officers in your prayers as they continue God's work.

At its meeting on September 20 the Congregation Council was advised of two new grant opportunities that Kathy Readinger has volunteered to oversee. The first has already been awarded by the Huntington Township Townwide Fund. The grant will be awarded at a dinner celebration on October 4 at which time the grant amount will be announced. The second grant is a Thrivent-sponsored, food-based grant that will award \$500 to Joseph's Storehouse in return for Gloria Dei collecting 500 items of non-perishable food.

Council also discussed the 2023-24 HiHi Respite program. Family Service League is still deciding what format to take, but Council voted to not host any overnight options due to lack of volunteers for the overnight hours. Council did, however, commit to continuing assistance with food preparation.

Council was advised by Kurt Sobina and Damon Scott that an agreement has been reached with Tim Carr and his Hoop Dreams youth basketball program on a long-term usage of the Olson Hall gymnasium.

## You Can Help Your Food-Insecure Neighbors —

We have a great opportunity to help local families through a Thrivent Northeast Region food grant. Here's how it works:

During the month of October, we will be collecting non-perishable food items like canned goods, pastas, canned meats, beans, etc. Our goal is to collect 1,000+ individual items. When we reach the goal, Thrivent will donate \$500 to Joseph's Storehouse and \$500 to Helping Hands Rescue Mission. These two food banks also receive all of the donated food to be distributed to the community.

This is a great mission for the Tri-Lutheran Collaborative! The challenge is Thrivent is only giving grants to the first 100 churches who complete the program. So, we need to get the required food items gathered as soon as possible to successfully earn the grant. If you can help, please bring your food items to Gloria Dei on Sundays — or to the Gloria Dei Office on Tuesday through Thursday from 9:30 - 1:00. Any questions? Contact Jane Maresco at 631-357-1072 or Kathy Readinger at 631-742-4078.



## Fall Birthdays

### September Birthdays

Carol DeVoti	September 4
Karlene Readinger	September 5
Michael Brennan	September 7
Kole Lemke	September 8
Douglas Fasciano	September 11
Margaret Franko-Filipasic	Sept. 12
Margarete Hansen	September 12
Summer Lemke	September 18
Patricia Mills	September 19
Kristina Brennan	September 21
Carl Grasso	September 26
Eric Jansen	September 30

### October Birthdays

Elise Franko-Filipasic	October 1
Ann Marie Serling	October 6
Thomas Flannigan	October 10
Charles Powers	October 10
Stephanie LaRosa	October 13
Marion Harris	October 16
Sky Lemke	October 16
Kathi Galotti	October 17
Richard Schneider	October 17
Toni Cinquemani	October 24
Arthur Piervincenti	October 24
Gay Frangella	October 25
Tiana Lemke	October 25
Gayle Ruege	October 25
John Dowling	October 30
Beverly Flanagan	October 30

### November Birthdays

Holly Siedlecki	November 2
Megan Hansen	November 4
Zachary Bowden	November 6
Matthew Bradbury	November 6
Lisa Erickson	November 8
Annabelle Seltman	November 8
Shirley Tull	November 11
Denise Sauer	November 16
Amelia Bombace	November 17
Laura DeRosa	November 19
Daniel Frangella	November 22
Michael Daniello	November 30



Deena Scott	November 30
Kevin Smuss	November 30

## **RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE**

– **October 10<sup>th</sup>**

Please prayerfully consider donating blood to the Red Cross. From 1:45 to 7:30 pm at Gloria Dei Campus – Olson Hall.

Sign up on poster in Narthex.



## **SENIOR LUNCHEON**

**October 14<sup>h</sup> @ noon**

Mark your calendars for the next gathering of our seniors for food, fellowship and fun! We always have room for more people! We meet in the Lower Auditorium at the St. Peter's Campus.

R.S.V.P. to Hannelore Born (631) 757-1487.



**Gloria Dei Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

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**Fall 2023**



**STAYING CONNECTED**

**Church Office 631-271-2466 FAX 631-271-0237**

**The church office is open Tues-Thur ( 9:15am-1:30pm)**

**The Rev Rebecca Pollicino, Coverage Pastor (516) 225-6859**  
Email: [revrebeccap@gmail.com](mailto:revrebeccap@gmail.com)

**Jennie Borrelli, Parish Administrator**  
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**Joseph's Storehouse Food Pantry, Olson Hall**  
**Dennis Hood, Director**

