

*The Epistle*

Summer 2023

Vol. 51, No. 6

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Blessings to you on this gorgeous spring day! I write this on the cusp of Pentecost, our annual celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit with wind and tongues of fire. Disrupting the gathering, causing all the gathered to know that they are one in Christ; the Holy Spirit was up to something grand and marvelous on that day.

How appropriate that this year's celebration of Pentecost leaves us on the cusp of disruption amidst our oneness in Christ. Beginning in June, we will be gathering as one community each Sunday with our partners in the Tri-Lutheran Collaborative. Gloria Dei, King of Kings, and St. Peter's will all be joyfully disrupted from business as usual, joining together for prayer, singing, God's Word and fellowship.

We were blessed to have Vicar Jean with us for a few months to help with the transition from two Interim pastors to one. I know that we will all miss her joyous spirit and her endless energy! We wish her well as she begins the process of looking for a permanent call to Word and Sacrament. I will keep you posted as to her plans and the date of her ordination.

Please join us this summer for our forums and monthly Wednesday evening prayer and conversation. Be part of the process for determining how best to meet the needs of our worshipping community and the community at large. Transitions are not easy, but together, led by God, we will handle it with love and grace.

I continue to be in my office at Gloria Dei on most Wednesdays, please stop in for a chat or to say hi (mornings are best)!

I look forward to moving forward in our work together. This continues to be an important and exciting time for Lutheran ministry in the Huntington community.

Yours truly,

*Pastor Rebecca*

Rev. Rebecca Pollicino



**Thoughts on The Kingdom of God****By Dennis Hood**

We continue our journey to gain more understanding of Jesus by digging deeply into what He said about the Kingdom of God. There should be an urgency about our pursuit of the Kingdom. After Jesus was raised from the dead and before He ascended back to the Father, He spent those last precious forty days on earth showing Himself alive after his passion by many miracles and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). The urgency of His heart was the Kingdom of God, so it's incumbent upon us to apply that same urgency in our pursuit of knowledge of The Kingdom. If it was important to Him, it should be important to us!

We arrive at Matthew 5 and we get to Jesus' first recorded teaching. Because of that, we know that it must be important. It is also important to look at who Jesus was speaking to. We get the answer looking back to the end of chapter 4. In Matthew 4 we learn that Jesus traveled over all the region of Galilee, an area like many parts of the world today with a wide mixture of religious beliefs. The whole place held a reputation as a hotbed of subversive activity. Conservative elders in Jerusalem regarded Galilee as a heathen province riddled with religious cults where strange and "modern" religions were popular. It was apparently the kind of place Jesus loved to make His proclamations of the Kingdom. He spent most of His time ministering there. It is there that he began gathering His disciples. The first words He spoke to the men He was choosing are recorded in Matthew 4:19. They are, "follow me." The words were strong. They left no room for halfhearted commitment. While this calling means different things to each of us, the first four dropped what they were doing, left everything and followed Him. (We are going to learn that following Jesus is not without cost, but the reward is so great.) So when Jesus sat down to address the crowd in chapter 5, part of that crowd were His first disciples.

Reading further, in Matthew 4:23—"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." This is what made up most of the rest of the crowd. Sick people. People hurting from everything you can imagine. The word sickness is from the Greek *nósos*, a word indicating ailments that begin in the emotions, or in the mind of a person. The same verse says that He healed all manner of disease. This word disease is from the Greek *malakia*, indicating ailments that could be inherited from one's family line or from an accident, or disease of earlier years. We also find in Matthew 4:24, in addition to the sickness and disease, six more terms that indicated the rather horrible existence the people who lived in that era endured. Perhaps the worst part of it was that these people were separated from the rest of society, considered marginal and unimportant. They were poor and powerless. No one cared who they were or what they thought.

This is who Jesus was talking to, and among them were his first disciples. Jesus cared about these people and He wasted no time in demonstrating that. And this is what Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5)

The very first thing that Jesus does is to bless these people who are so unimportant to everyone else! This is the first huge revelation of the Kingdom! It is a Kingdom of blessing! The term Jesus is using for 'blessed' means a state of current happiness and contentment. He is speaking into existence this promise once you enter His Kingdom- not that you won't experience hurt and pain and oppression and injustice, but that while enduring it you will be happy and content. At peace. Now, not when it's over!

Becoming a disciple of Jesus does not mean you are going to have an easy life. It means you will have a victorious life. It means you will have eternal life! Not an easy life. Jesus immediately offers this crowd, who we just described, the first chance at the Kingdom! "Their's is the Kingdom of God!" The second huge thing we can take from the first words out of His mouth is that if these people are so important to Jesus, then they ought to be that important to us! That is who we serve and that is why we serve. The same kind of people who were in that crowd are in the crowd that comes to Joseph's Storehouse. We'd be in that crowd, too, if it weren't for Jesus. We are honored and privileged with the opportunity to serve the people who He holds so dearly.

To understand the next three blessings, let's look at them in the reverse order that they are presented. Blessed are those who mourn, the meek and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. You are blessed if you are someone who sees what God sees -that all is not right with the world! You have a longing to see right relationships among people and you cannot simply ignore it! In the book of Proverbs, it says that everything God does is just and fair! God cannot stand injustice. And neither can you, and this is what you mourn over! Injustice and the lack of doing right by people. Meek? You are unimportant in your own mind. In Numbers **12: 3**—(*Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.*) Take note of the word *meek*. It is from the Hebrew *gah-nahv*. It means afflicted and humiliated, worn down by the processes of life, to the place where one feels he, or she, cannot go on. Moses was a man who had been brought down to the place where he had no more stature in life than that of taking care of his father in law's cattle. But God saw value in him and sent him to lead His people out of slavery. "Some of you reading this article have come to such a humble position in life that you feel utterly humiliated and worthless. That's what the word *meek* means. But, God is preparing you to lead people out of their own slavery, the slavery of sin." - Ed Corley

And Jesus proclaims you blessed! And furthermore, you are blessed if you perform acts of care and compassion for those who are hurting (merciful), if you don't care about status and what people think- but care only what God thinks (pure in heart) and if you insert yourself into conflicts to bring about reconciliation (peacemakers). God is all about right relationships between people and He is all about blessing those with who have a heart after His! And God is all about reconciliation, another important attribute of the Kingdom! Jesus' last blessing here is for those who are persecuted for trying to do the right things. Do you see what Jesus is getting at here? These are the things that Jesus came to fix! Jesus is bringing the Kingdom of God to Earth, and injustice does not exist in the Kingdom! Man's injustice towards other men has always been a sore spot with God. We can look back to the Old Testament to gain more understanding.

Take a look at Isaiah 61:1-3, a prophecy which Jesus himself told us He fulfilled. "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor." Isaiah prophesied it and Jesus confirmed it when He got here, not just with words, but with actions. Jesus was sent to proclaim good news to the poor, and as we read His first recorded public message, He is doing exactly that! And not only that, He wastes no time in telling us what our role is! Remember, part of the crowd He is speaking to are His very first followers. And He says, this is what I expect of you... You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Jesus understands that this is not going to be easy, He tells us so right from the get go! But He also tells that it will be worth it! Matthew puts this right up front, in the beginning of Jesus' ministry, then bookends it with the Great Commission at the end of the book. Go into ALL the world, including the dark places, and be a light. In between these two assignments, Jesus teaches us how to do it. The first thing we have to do is get our hearts into the proper place, then we are to demonstrate God's love with our actions, not just our words. This is the same plan that He had in the Old Testament. Israel was supposed to be a nation set apart and blessed by God, demonstrating for all other nations what it's like to live in God's goodness. Jesus updated the plan and got the wheels rolling again. Our job is be examples of God's goodness so that others can see what He has done in our lives so that they will want the same for themselves. Our job is not just to tell everyone that we are Christians, but to be one!

## ***Scriptures for June 2023***

### **Sunday June 4—The Holy Trinity**

Genesis 1:1-2:4a      Psalm 8      2 Corinthians 13:11-13      Matthew 28:16-20

### **Sunday June 11—Lectionary 10 (Pentecost 2)**

Hosea 5:15-6.6      Psalm 50:7-15      Romans 4:13-25      Matthew 9:9-13,18-26

### **Sunday June 18—Lectionary 11 (Pentecost 3)**

Exodus 19:2-8a      Psalm 100      Romans 5:1-8      Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]

### **Sunday June 25—Lectionary 12 (Pentecost 4)**

Jeremiah 20:7-13      Psalm 69:7-10 (11-15)      Romans 6:1b-11      Matthew 10:24-39

## ***Scriptures for July 2023***

### **Sunday July 2—Lectionary 13 (Pentecost 5)**

Jeremiah 28:5-9      Psalm 89:1-4 15-18      Romans 6:12-23      Matthew 10:40-42

### **Sunday July 9—Lectionary 14 (Pentecost 6)**

Zechariah 9:9-12      Psalm 145:8-14      Romans 7:15-25a      Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

### **Sunday July 16—Lectionary 15 (Pentecost 7)**

Isaiah 55:10-13      Psalm 65:(1-8) 9-13      Romans 8:1-11      Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

### **Sunday July 23—Lectionary 16 (Pentecost 8)**

Isaiah 44:6-8      Psalm 86:11-17      Romans 8:12-25      Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

### **Sunday July 30—Lectionary 17 (Pentecost 9)**

1 Kings 3:3-12      Psalm 119:129-136      Romans 8:26-39      Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

## ***Scriptures for August 2023***

### **Sunday August 6—Lectionary 18 (Pentecost 10)**

Isaiah 55:1-5      Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21      Romans 9:1-5      Matthew 14:13-21

### **Sunday August 13—Lectionary 19 (Pentecost 11)**

1 Kings 19:9-18      Psalm 85:8-13      Romans 10:5-15      Matthew 14:22-33

### **Sunday August 20—Lectionary 20 (Pentecost 12)**

Isaiah 56:1,6-8      Psalm 67      Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32      Matthew [10-20] 21-28

### **August 27—Lectionary 21 (Pentecost 13)**

Isaiah 51:1-6      Psalm 138      Romans 12:1-8      Matthew 16:13-20

*Summer Worship Schedule: all services begin at 10:00*

- *June: St. Peter's*
- *July: Gloria Dei*
- *August: King of Kings*

*In addition, there will be three mid-week worship/study opportunities. The format for this is TBD:*

- *June 14: St. Peter's*
- *July 12: Gloria Dei*
- *August 9: King of Kings*

*There will also be a Tri-Lutheran Collaborative BBQ on a Date TBD*

**Please Join us on July 9 at Gloria Dei, as MNYS Bishop Paul Egensteiner will be preaching.**

**A welcome coffee hour will follow the service**

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## ***Congregation Council Notes***

Your Congregation Council met on May 17. The meeting was held in person in the Upper Room. All members were in attendance including Kevin Smuss (Vice President), Pat MacKay Bombace (Treasurer), Kurt Sobina (Financial Secretary), Kim Potzinger (Secretary), Kathy Readinger, Janice Colonna, Joyce Moore, Damon Scott, Karen Phillipson, and Peter Teichmann. Also present was Pr. Rebecca, who again opened the meeting by sharing a reading from the book *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*. The meeting included:

- All standing reports (Pastor, President, Treasurer/Financial Secretary, and Property Management) were accepted as presented
- A clergy cost-sharing proposal beginning June 1 was presented and accepted (King of Kings and St. Peter's Councils also approved). St. Peter's will pay 50% of Pr. Rebecca's compensation; of the remaining 50%, Gloria Dei will pay 75% and King of Kings will pay 25%. This represents a savings over the current budget, which was based on our former clergy arrangement between Pr. Amanda and King of Kings
- The Collaboration Leadership Table continues to meet twice per month. Under discussion now is formulating a worship plan for after the summer. The Council was updated on those discussions and asked for input of their own. The next step will be to hold informational meetings in June and July to gather input from all three congregations. All input will be evaluated and used to formulate the Fall worship schedule
- Building Usage:
  - Lindgren Chapel - Pastor Angel and his congregation will begin usage June 1. They have been making many updates to the facility and will be installing a new HVAC system at no cost to Gloria Dei
  - Olson Hall - Damon Scott continues negotiations with Tim Carr from Hoop Dreams for a more permanent basketball usage of the gym
- Plans continue for the 90+ Anniversary Event continue
- Pat MacKay and Pr. Rebecca gave a short synopsis of the recently-held Synod Assembly. Pat mentioned that Pete Teichmann was elected to the Synod Council.

The next meeting of the Congregation Council will be on Monday, June 12 at 7:00 PM in the Upper Room. Submitted on behalf of the Congregation Council by Pete Teichmann

## ***Collaboration Leadership Table***

The Collaboration Leadership Table (CLT) of the Tri-Lutheran Collaborative met on May 15 at St. Peter's. All members were in attendance. Peggy Hahn and Vicar Jean were excused. In addition, the presidents and vice presidents of the three Congregation Councils were in attendance.

The main topic for discussion was the Fall worship schedule. The CLT had opened this discussion at its previous meeting and was now including the presidents/VPs in the discussion. Many options were put forth and will be further discussed at Council meetings and in informational forums during the summer. These forums are your opportunity to have your voice heard, so please attend. Forums are scheduled for:

- June 21 at 7:30 PM at King of Kings
- June 25 following worship at St. Peter's
- July 25 following worship at Gloria Dei.

**HIHI 2022/2023 End of Season Review May 10, 2023**

We are happy to report that we were able to provide 24/7 shelter to the men for four months. Your generous monetary donations, as well as gift cards, daily dinner delivery, and clothing & supplies provided the guests with comfort & dignity. They were able to enjoy sleeping in a bed and showering regularly. They took pride in the possessions they were able to keep with them. While the winter was mild, it was still wonderful to know they were not out in the elements. While the exact numbers have not been computed yet – still outstanding bills – we estimate that this season cost approximately \$17K/month. Additional costs will include a prosthetic leg repair for Hector, visits to the Dolan and medication expenses.

We certainly had great optimism going into this season that many of the men would take advantage of certain programs & services we could offer, as well as achieve some personal goals. Unfortunately, we realized from day one that their overall condition was far more damaged than we could have anticipated. Our goal shifted to getting the men stabilized and to address their medical issues.

We ultimately rented nine rooms, rather than our original plan of 8. This allowed us to accommodate 3 in a room with the additional room going to Jorge Linares, who had his leg amputated in late October. We had concern about his open wound and the risk of infection and determined he should have his own room. For a short time, we housed another person with him, someone who continues to be homeless in Greenlawn. This person was very helpful to Jorge, and he stayed for a short time. Peggy worked with the hospital and the Dolan to arrange for Jorge's wound care and payment for his visits and medication, including those needed for his diabetes. Due to his open wound and our concern for his well-being, Jorge was allowed to stay on at the motel. We are exploring the possibility of housing Jorge at a FSL shelter, and we are encouraged by the feedback from the state & county.

The men were assigned to rooms on the day they arrived, based on their relationships with the others. Peggy gave much consideration to the assignments and did not switch anyone unless she felt it was necessary. Of course, there were some personality conflicts, but the men were encouraged to work through them. We faced many challenges this season. As you know, many of the men suffer from severe alcoholism and their health continues to decline, despite our best efforts to provide treatment. 3 men did go into treatment and managed to stay sober for a brief time. Sadly, they have not been able to maintain and are now drinking again. Alcohol has played a major role in poor personal behavior, conflict with other guests, non-compliance with the rules, and significant property damage to the motel. We were very fortunate that the motel management was able to waive any costly repairs we thought we would have to pay for.

There were a few new faces this year and some were placed. Many just showed up and were given entry. Even though the guests received clear instruction not to allow other people into their room, it happened on a regular basis. We will certainly address and avoid this issue next season. On a positive note, Peggy has been in conversation with Sal Farro & Joan Cergol to explore the possibility of a day location that could provide respite to the men. If it feasible, the men will have access to an indoor restroom. This will also open the opportunity for volunteer interaction such as conversation & coffee. We will provide information as it becomes available. We are happy to report that 4 men worked together to rent a room after the season ended.

What worked incredibly well this year was the daily delivery of dinner. By eliminating extra bags & plastic, we were able to cut down on waste & garbage in the rooms. Thank you to all your generous volunteers for all their hard work! The gift cards were a wonderful resource to fill in breakfast & lunch and get them out and about. We will be relying heavily on them again next season and look forward to your continued support. We will be reviewing all the challenges we faced this year and begin working now on ways to overcome many. No decision has been made as to the model next year, but we can assure you that we are already discussing different options. We believe that the single site model has worked well but would like to expand our volunteer roles on site. .

In closing, we would like to honor three HIHI partners we lost this year. Their many years of dedication to HIHI positively impacted the homeless men we serve. We thank them for their service & friendship. They will be missed.

*Buzz Murray, Shirley Hardy-Reeves and Dick Thyden*

**June, July & August**

Kristine Accordino	June 1	Karin Erickson	August 2
Anna Edwards	June 2	Jonathan Karl	August 4
Tyler Phillips	June 2	Barbara Callahan	August 9
Jessica Bansbach	June 3	Joanna Hansen	August 11
Dante Palmieri	June 4	Savannah Scott	August 16
Connor Flaniagan	June 5	Joseph Thomas	August 16
Betty Ann Jacobsen	June 5	Patricia Draser	August 21
Grace Edwards	June 7	Beth Grasso	August 21
Edith Pape	June 9	Damon Scott	August 23
Grant Siedlecki	June 9	Ellen Bourquin	August 24
Jeremy Bombace	June 11	Nathaniel Sobina	August 26
Dorothy Del Gaudio	June 14	Janet Hitschler	August 27
Erica Schneider	June 15	Kevin Bradbury, Sr.	August 29
Olivia Karl	June 16	Patricia McKay	August 30
Gail Manley	June 16	Janet Powers	August 30
Ruth Kroeger	June 19		
Matthew Edwards	June 20		
Emily Butera	June 22		
Rose Milillo	June 26		
Ellen Denis	June 28		
David Mohr	June 29		
Sophia Karl	July 2		
Kristi Calderone	July 2		
Jessica Daniello	July 4		
Samantha Cohen	July 7		
Ryan Pascucci	July 9		
Marilym Miltner	July 13		
Louise Palmieri	July 13		
Shane Brennan	July 13		
Steven Schneider	July 15		
Carter Phillips	July 16		
Michael Readinger	July 16		
Lisa Del Gaudio	July 17		
Kaitlyn Ruege	July 18		
Nancy Schneider	July 18		
Joseph Pascucci	July 19		
Patricia Pantazis	July 25		
Nicole Schneider	July 29		
Jessica Bowden	July 31		

**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

**Jennie Borrelli, Parish Administrator**

Email: office@gloriadeihuntington.org

**Kurt Sobina, Sexton, Finance Secretary**

(631) 241-9641

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**Peter Teichmann, Church Council President**

(631) 988-5843

Email: pwteichmann@yahoo.com

**Stephen Goldstein, Organist & Choir Director**

Email: inspanctus@gmail.com

**Joseph's Storehouse Food Pantry, Olson Hall**

**Dennis Hood, Director**





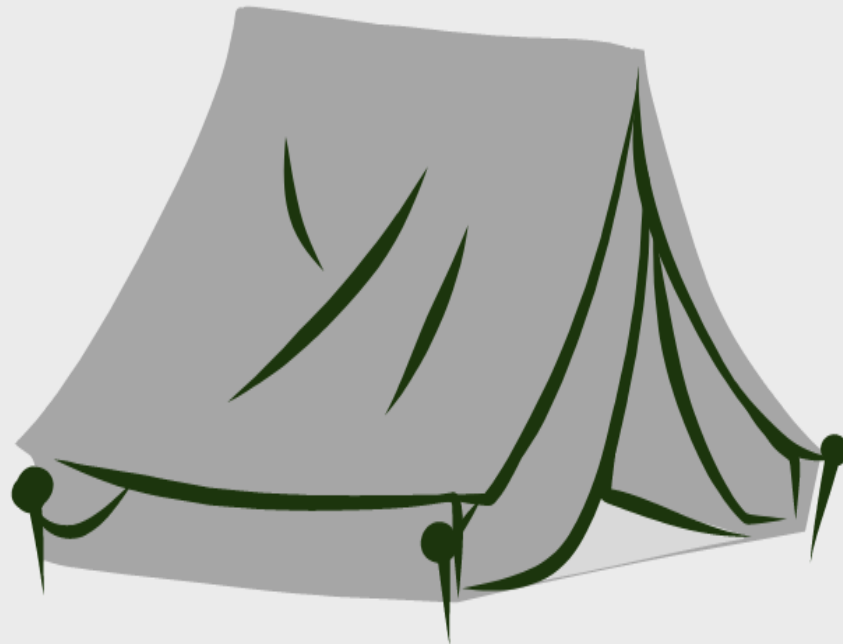
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**Summer 2023**

