



The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH

From the Pastor's Perspective

Separate but Together!

*“Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together.”
- Hebrews 10:25*

We celebrate Easter and the new life it proclaims! Even though we celebrate it separately, we are still together! Sheltering at home has not stopped our church - it has prompted us to respond creatively and to adapt! Here are some of the creative ways we continue to be the church: separate, but together:

- Our church remains open, and staff are on site! The state agrees that we are essential!
- We are offering video recordings of our Sunday worship experience. You can view this at home or come to the church sanctuary Sundays at 10 a.m. to watch it on the screens (we ask any attenders to practice social distancing). Ms. Sue also offers a worship video for little kids, too. (Virtual worship attendance is about 140.)
- We mail out the worship and Grow Group scripts to those without internet access.
- We offer our weekly grow experiences (Grow Groups, youth group, confirmation, children's grow group) via recording or Zoom gatherings. (Weekly grow experiences have been having an attendance of about 60.)
- We've been providing daily devotional videos. (Viewership of about 40.)
- We created "Caring Circles," dividing our church family into groups of about 6 and asking hosts to connect with each person on a weekly basis.

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Monthly Church Events

Daily	Daily Devotional videos posted
Wed.	Grow Group, Youth Group, Confirmation, and Kids videos posted
May 10th	Mother's Day 10 a.m. Worship (Drive-in Service)*
May 15th	Unload Truck (various Times)
May 16th	6 a.m. Community Care
May 17th	Outdoor Prayer Walk Worship service 10 a.m.*
May 24th	Outdoor Tent Worship Service 10 a.m. *
May 25th	Memorial Day
May 31st	Possible indoor service at 10 a.m. *
*	Online worship service at 10 a.m. will continue to be available

Pastor's Perspective Cont'd

- Easter: We distributed 60 Easter at Home bags for Holy Week virtual worship experiences. This included Holy Communion for Holy Thursday and the Easter Prayer Vigil. We offered a “drive up” Easter Sunrise worship experience in the church parking lot, and we had a special baking activity (video) for kids.
- Staff have made personal connections to those grieving and struggling, when possible (delivering flowers on Easter, drop off prayer shawls, candles, on-site visits, etc.)
- Weekly “call-ins” to those on our prayer chains
- Community Care has switched to a “drive through” food distribution (we served over 400 the last two months)
- Offerings continue to come in by mail, on line, and drop off at church (please keep giving as the ministry of our church continues!)

We hope we can gather together again soon! Currently we are planning to re-start on-site worship, but we are starting with a drive-in service for Mother's Day (May 10). Return to social gatherings will be a stepped process for our community. Church folks who need to be more careful are encouraged to stay home as long as needed (but still use the remote resources our church makes available). We will continue to offer a recorded worship experience throughout the summer.

We need to “be” the church, and we need to “be in” the church—the gathering in worship, the fellowship with one another, the accountability in our discipleship. We cannot grow spiritually without it. This means that as we social distance ourselves, we must all the more put in the effort to access the resources our church is providing for our continued spiritual health. “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together!”

Pastor David



Summer Message Series: Got Questions?

For our Sunday messages this summer, I'll speak on whatever you've been wondering about! You've been sheltering at home for a month and a half, have been worshiping on line through our videos, and have not had the opportunity to talk about your faith questions or discuss with others what you've been wondering about. Therefore, this summer we'll address whatever it is you've been wondering about! The Bible applies to ALL parts of our lives, so there is no issue or topic off limits! Simply email, call, or write to the church office about a topic, question, Bible passage or issue that you would like to hear more about. We'll do our best to preach during the summer on whatever you submit. Submit your requests early, however, as we will need some time to prepare. It's up to you to set this summer's message series!

Graduation Sunday:

June 7 will be Graduation Sunday, specially honoring our 2 high school graduates this spring: Armando Lorenzi and James Richter (we also include Max Thompsen, remotely!). If you know of other graduates in your family (either high school or graduate) please let the church office know so we can include them in our blessings.

May 2020

AMT Update

The Action Ministry Team recently had a one-day retreat in March. Our goals for the retreat were to spend time “away” to seek God and be filled with the Holy Spirit, build relationships with team members and continue visioning for 2020.

Our grounding scripture was Isaiah 30:21- “If you stray to the right or the left, you will hear a word that comes from behind you: “This is the way, walk in it.”

We have found that the voice from behind us is not always loud or noticeable and sometimes its so close to us we can't hear it. This is when we turn from the “world's way” to Christ's way.

To turn from worldly ways, we need to assess where we are in our relationship with God. We also must assess what kind of leaders we are. This includes knowing how to get along with others, lead beyond our own preferences and set others up for success. For the visioning part of the retreat, we discussed how to groom new leaders, how to turn a guest from being welcomed to being plugged in and how to take information to inspiration to application to transformation.

Since that retreat two weeks ago, our world has dramatically changed. We have been warned to practice distancing our selves from others, no touching, no Sunday morning worship at church and yet God continues to give us new ways to reach out. Have you noticed hearts posted in people's windows, cards sent to the elderly, virtual choirs singing inspirational songs, people watching church services online, food and toilet paper being shared with those in need?

Yes, We cannot stray to the right or the left for God says “This is the way, walk in it.”

Please join us as we discover new “ways” to connect with God, to connect with our neighbors and show all that Christ has given us hope and salvation.

God is good, all the time!

Marilee Leonard, Lay Leader

Spiritual Self-Assessment Tool - UPDATE!

This has been a season of unexpected surprises and testing of our faith, so due to some technical difficulty on the tool's website, we are going to postpone the Spiritual Self-Assessment Tool at this time. Thank you so much for your patience. The Action Ministry Team is determined to press on ahead and will give you an update soon.

James 1: 2-4 “2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Marilee Leonard, Lay Leader

A Word from Worship

By now we are all pretty good at cancelling plans. But, God forbid our current circumstance dull our sense of ministry or passion! People must still hear our message and God must still be praised. So despite the unknown, we are forging ahead with plans to re-assemble on Mother's Day, May 10th with a drive-in service! This is a fitting date as we celebrate a reunion with one another as well as acknowledge the women among us whom God has called to nurture and protect. We also want to let the surrounding area know that we are not dormant. Forest Hills is alive and active even in the midst of societal shut-down!

Along those same lines, we also want to dedicate Sunday, May 17th entirely to prayer. We will gather outside once again, but instead of a normal service, we will engage in a prayer walk. Using stations and guided prayers, we want to collectively lift up our church, our city and our world before God. On May 24th (Memorial weekend) we plan to hold our worship service outdoors on the church lawn. This will allow us to distance ourselves appropriately, but also to enjoy the beauty of creation.

Our ongoing worship plans for June 2020 should be noted as well:

- June 7th: Graduation Sunday. We will present gifts to honor and encourage those who have finished high school.
- June 14th: Confirmation Sunday. We will make official church members out of those who have gone through two years of confirmation.
- June 21st: Father's Day/Camp Sunday. We typically gather in shorts and camp shirts as we send a contingent off to Red Rock at Camp Koronis. Unfortunately, the camping ministry of the UMC has closed all camps for this summer. Even though we will not be able to get away for the week, we want to celebrate camp anyway. We will again meet outdoors and hold our service with a little bit of camp flavor. Come with an old camp t-shirt and help us celebrate this summertime staple.
- June 28th: MN Adult and Teen Challenge Choir. People who have struggled with drug and alcohol abuse, jail time and broken relationships are finding new life and joy in Christ! We celebrate with them as they share their stories and lead us in worship.

Despite viruses, despite weather, despite cancellations, we are excited about what this summer will hold and thrilled to be a part of God's work in Forest Lake! Of course, in light of announcements from our state government, we may have to adjust our plans. Please stay abreast of emails from the church office so you can be informed as to any changes that may arise. In the meantime, we stay calm and carry God beyond our doors to worship and proclaim his good news to the world.



KIDS

For the past few weeks, we have introduced a new curriculum for our kid's small group. It is entitled, "Trackers of Truth". The lessons span the entirety of the Bible and use a group of cartoon characters to track down God's truth throughout. The lessons are interactive and designed to meet the needs of different age groups and learning styles. I have found it to have a strong biblical foundation and it allows for students to connect dots between sometimes confusing Old Testament stories and New Testament events. Each week includes a repetitive "Bible Tracker Challenge" and a "Tracker's Prayer" that help instill the importance of biblical truth. Also

included are short and memorable Scripture songs that pertain to each lesson. "Trackers of Truth" is published by Seedbed Kids. Our church has previously used Seedbed resources (Epic of Eden, 1 John study) and have found them to be faithful to scripture and high quality in presentation. Their goal is to "equip people to live out the second half of the gospel".

Pastor Andrew

“As If” Day

The word for Sabbath in the Hebrew means intermission according to the Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance (1995) #7676. I like to think of the Sabbath as “As If” day. On “As If” day we get to rest, play and be spiritually fed AS IF all of our regular work was already done. I got the idea to call the Sabbath “As If” day from a video featuring Pastor Tim Gilligan of Ocala, Florida. Exodus 20:8 states “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Holy means set apart. As Pastor David preached recently the Lord’s Day is when we “work a different work.”

The Jewish people observe the Sabbath from sunset Friday evening to sunset Saturday evening. I don’t follow the Jewish customs of observing Saturday or sunset to sunset, but I use their pattern of resting from afternoon or evening of one day until afternoon or evening of the next day. I find it especially helpful for getting in a full 24 hours of “As If” time. It gives me a chance to do a little bit of necessary tasks before and after “As If” time, usually without having to rush; for example, making lunches on Sunday evening for Monday.

Often times on the Lord’s Day when I walk past something in the house that needs to be done I tell myself, “Right now I get to rest, play and be spiritually fed just as if that was already done” and (if it is a repetitive task, “just as if SOMEHOW it was STAYING done for the rest of my [by faith] long, fulfilled life on earth.”) It is a time when I make procrastination really work for me! It takes some imagination to picture “what would I do or not do if all of my work was already done?” It gives us a taste and a glimpse of the type of rest in heaven. It is particularly restful to go to sleep that night with an “As If” day mentality and wake up the next morning with an “As If” day mentality. Recently, I have been writing what time I started “As If” time (and what time it will end the next day) on a little whiteboard on the refrigerator so my family knows what to expect.

Resting on the Lord’s Day is like a best-kept secret. It is a source of inner strength that we can get no other way.

By Jennifer Berglund

Mother’s Day Devotional Videos

The week before Mother’s Day (and again the week before Father’s Day) our daily devotional videos will have “mothers” (and then “fathers”) as our theme. We are seeking people to record videos on your parents for those weeks. Please contact Cassi in the church office if you are willing!



Youth Group

Youth group has been meeting via Zoom this past month. Today, we are finishing up our series on the Holy Spirit. Next week, we will start our last series for the school year on Jonah. Let's be honest: we all run from what God tells us at times. But God is relentless in His pursuit of us and those who have yet to hear the gospel. In this three-week series, we'll dive deep into the story of Jonah and discover what's going on beneath the surface.

This summer is still a bit up in the air, but our hope is to meet like we have in the past, every other week on Wednesdays for a devotion and games. There is no Red Rock Camp this summer so that changes things a lot for our group of teens, some have been going their whole life. We are still planning our mission trip this summer.

Cassi Betker

Director of Youth Ministries

Scheduling Changes:

- Feed My Starving Children food pack on location in Forest Lake at Hosanna Lutheran (originally April 16-18) has been postponed to...
- Confirmation Sunday (originally May 3) has been moved to June 14.
- St. Andrew's Family Shelter hosting (originally May 17-23)...
- National Day of Prayer (May 7th at noon)...has been moved to...
- Summer Grow Groups will be cancelled. Next Grow Group session will be in the fall.
- Red Rock Camp (June 22-28) has been canceled.
- MN Annual Conference (June 10-12) has been postponed.

Note: Ireland Travel Seminar (July 9-23), and the Summer Mission Trip (August 8-14) are all still on the schedule!

We will host a Summer BBQ on the church lawn (with food, games, activities for all ages) in August as a way for our community to come back together again! Be sure to invite your neighbors for this big evening of fun!

May Birthdays

May your special day be blessed and filled with joy! If your birthday isn't listed, please call the office and let us know so we can add you to the list!

Jason Keintz 5/14
Avery Yetter 5/17
Morgan Lindholm 5/21
Julie Hovey 5/27
Conner Keintz 5/30

