



Life of Faith

Early Winter 2021

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PASTOR'S BLOG

A new year has begun and honestly, it doesn't seem much different to me than 2020! Our democratic election is still under assault; we have no idea what is going to happen next. A vaccine is on the way, but it will take time for distribution. There is the question of the vaccine's efficacy against the newly discovered strains. Sounds dark, I know. The new year will be the same if you and I are unchanged by our encounter with the corona virus and its impact on our lives.

The virus has opened my eyes to see and appreciate my life of privilege. A year ago, I was negligent in acknowledging the gifts of food, water, shelter, employment and health care. Since the virus, they have changed categories, from entitlements to blessings. The things I missed most were not available at the mall. I longed for hugs, smiles, singing, friends and family.

Let us begin the year by sharing the love of God with family, friends and neighbors in need. We are called to feed the hungry, visit the imprisoned, clothe the naked: to be active in the world. The light of Christ will not be overcome by the darkness. God said so.

hope

DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 14, 2021 at 6:30 pm: Church Council meeting
- January 31, 2021 at 11 am: Faith Lutheran Church Virtual Annual Meeting. The congregation will be invited to vote on a slate of church council members and hear reports on the budget, endowment fund allocations from the past year and updates on property improvements.
- Monday mornings at 9:00 am via Zoom: Book Study - The current book is *Separated, Inside an American Tragedy*, by Jacob Soboroff. The next book will be *The World is About to Turn* by Rick Rouse and Paul O. Ingram. Please contact Margaret Neighbors at 548-0166 if you would like to join the discussion and also how best to get the book.

BEHIND THE COVID CURTAIN by Peter Spiegel

It must have been on my birthday, Nov. 9 that I became infected with the virus. I'm not sure where I contacted it, at school, shopping? As a loving spouse, I shared the virus with Marcy. Within four days I felt a bit achy and lethargic. A trip to Wenatchee for swabbing confirmed my fears, I had it (Marcy was tested a couple of days later and was also positive).

Our symptoms were never severe. We were able to continue teaching remotely while we recovered. We did lose our sense of smell and taste but beyond that, we feel as though we were fortunate. Here are the lessons we learned:

1. Let people know you are sick! We did try and let those around us know about our Covidness. If anyone had been in contact with us, we wanted them to take necessary precautions. For the safety of others we wanted to let people know. We understand that there is a certain stigma to testing positive. However, it is not just the non-maskers who contract the virus. Any of us can, and many of

us will be infected. Lesson #2 goes with lesson #1:

2. Lean on your community. Your texts, prayers, meals, phone calls, grocery deliveries, emails, cards, packages, thoughts and heaven knows what else nurtured our health and souls. These expressions of love let us know that our family and community were with us, even though we were in quarantine. My mother said, "You were held in the light". And that is what it felt like.

When I first got sick I talked with Pastor Nancy. She asked if she could ask people in our church to pray for us. I told her she could but that they should say a small prayer and keep their big prayers for those who were more in need. Thanks for all those little prayers and thoughts, they made a big difference. We are grateful to be on the other side of this and looking ahead to better times for all.

LIFE DURING COVID

During this time, there is a need to stay connected with one another. Please consider joining Peter and others in sharing your "Life During Covid" stories or anything else about your life that would keep us connected. These stories will be published in the newsletter.

Please send your "Life During Covid" stories to Mary Schramm at schramm@nwi.net

WORSHIP DURING COVID

During Advent, the worship committee used Zoom and looked ahead to the new year.

The live, Wednesday night Zoom services were well-received with anywhere from 19 to 29 households joining us, including those far away such as Werner Janssen, Trudy Leverenz, Mary Carol Nelson and Rosemary Dickinson. There were



candles in hand and mics off, we sang boisterously in our homes the Holden Evening Prayer led by Dawn Kranz and Mike and Grace Camp. Thank you for leading us in this strange time.

We are grateful to the Camps for maintaining our online services. *(Amy Carlson)*

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

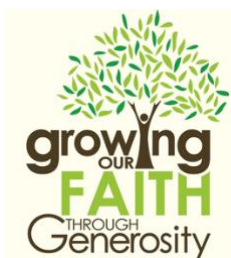
A lovely, insightful Christmas greeting was delivered to our door several days before Christmas and I would like to share a portion of it with you.



*It's Christmas again and we wish you well
As we come to the end of this year that fell
Flat on its face, oh my God please be near
As the world staggers on through the loss and the fear
We distance from others, we mask and we glove
Depriving this virus that travels on love
It's the same mighty tempest where we are all caught
Some have a raft, while some have a yacht.
So here's to the front line, the nurse and the grocer
Let's help keep them safe till we all can be closer
In the hopeful new year, twenty twenty-one
With thanks for all our scientists have done
Staying closer to home as we're told that we ought
We discover the treasures that we've already got..... Dawn Kranz*



TREASURER'S REPORT



Thank you to all the people who gave extra at the end of the year. November was better than it had been for months and December was the highest giving for the year. Even with this, we were

still \$17,000 below our budgeted giving for 2020. The Payroll Protection Program monies of \$12,000 helped immensely and we were able to keep expenses below budget so we managed to finish the year in good financial shape even though we spent a lot on deferred maintenance on the church building. We will

most likely need to work on some deferred maintenance on the fellowship hall in 2021. I anticipate a smaller budget for this coming year as we most likely will still not be having in-person worship until at least mid-year and that has definitely affected benevolence. More information will be presented at the annual meeting on January 31. Your generosity is appreciated. (Greg Steeber)

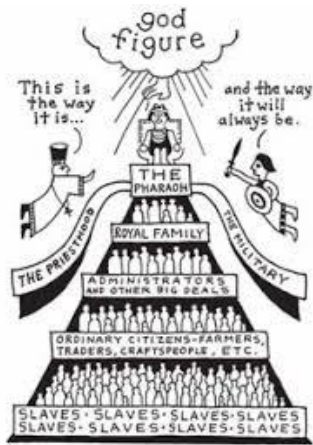
Thank you

MANNA AND MERCY: Teaching With Dan Erlander's Bible Drawings

One of the joys of teaching seminary classes remotely from Leavenworth this past Fall was using Rev. Dan Erlander's illustrated textbook *Manna and Mercy* for my "Bible Survey" class. Dan pictures the Exodus story as a lens for reading the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

"Pictures, like stories, are Dan's way of sneaking beneath people's radar "says Tom Witt about Erlander's books. "Dan thought most people had a trap door in the back of their head and that stories and pictures—and humor, but not necessarily doctrine or dogma—could sneak through this trap door into people's hearts."

Dan's sneakiest and best-known picture may be the pyramid of Pharaoh's Egypt economic system. Slaves and ordinary people at the bottom are exploited by ruling "big deals" at



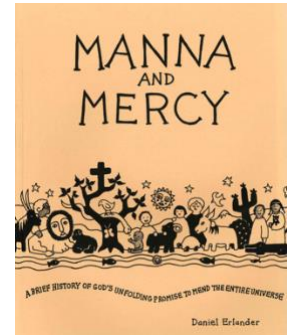
the top, while a god figure and priests claim "this is the way it always will be." In Jesus' time, the Roman Empire's system of debt and painful occupation reprise the same pyramid.

The antidote to empires' economic abuses is what Dan calls a "manna economy," where



hoarding stinks and everyone has enough. God's gift of food to hungry people teaches a manna way of life that Jesus also embodied in the New Testament.

Manna and Mercy takes us through the entire Bible. Dan critiques exclusivistic voices in the Bible, such as Ezra and Nehemiah, by showing how the books of Ruth and Isaiah embrace a more expansive vision towards foreigners. With gentle humor Dan embeds radical inclusiveness in unexpected voices, including a pair of chipmunks whose wisecracks enliven the Bible stories.



God's radical vision of manna for all critiques the "crabby people" and "big deals" of our world by inviting us into a counter-story that is daring and fun. Women and the whole creation are central to the story, including Miriam's song at the Exodus, the women at the empty tomb when God raised Jesus and a banquet where Jesus hosts all creatures.

Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Plan to Mend the Entire Universe (1992) draws on top-notch scholarship and served as a great textbook on Zoom. I recommend it! (Barbara Rossing)

ABOUT US

Maragret Neighbors is a member of the Upper Valley Historical Society which has relocated to the Greater Leavenworth Museum in the downtown area. Margaret has made a special donation to the museum – a *drehorgel*, which is a barrel organ built by her father in England. To play the instrument, a roll of paper with a punched out tune is inserted. When the crank is turned, bellows of air create music as they blow over 25 wooden pipes. When the museum opens after the pandemic, be sure to visit the museum and acquaint yourself with a *drehorgel*.

Evan Butruille has been helping the Immigration and Justice group by tutoring some of the Hispanic children. Thank you so much Evan.

Dr. Karl Kranz retired from his medical practice at the end of December.

Liz Caemmerer continues to be in Hospice care, surrounded by good support from her family. Cards and prayers are helpful.



ENDOWMENT REPORT

Danny Thomassen, Leesa Broker and Lisa Therrell are the Endowment Committee members. They received proposals through December and will meet during January to review, discuss, and make decisions based on the parameters of the Endowment Budget provided by Church Council.

All of the endowment proposals and results of the committee's reviews will be presented at FLC's annual meeting on January 31, 2021. During February 2021 endowment checks will be sent out to the various organizations that have been awarded endowment funds.

THANK YOU, GOD, FOR THE COMUNITY CUPBOARD

Laurie Peak is a faithful helper at the Community Cupboard and sends this report

When the staff counted the food worksheets for December, they discovered over 225 Upper Valley families received food this past month. This included a choice of ham, turkey or chicken, plus a pie for Christmas.

Families with children received gift cards of \$20 - \$50 per child to be used at local businesses. We gave out a small number of toys and games and director Bob Mark was able to buy many winter coats and snow pants for distribution to families with children.

As always, the community was very generous with food and cash donations so that we have been able to continue to meet our neighbors' needs!





LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

The FLC group which works on immigration and refugee issues met in December regarding the State Legislative agenda for Faith Action Network (FAN). FAN lobbies our state legislature for issues of justice and equity for families as well as creation.

There was discussion and action on using the grant money from our Synod and other sources. \$4650 was distributed for living expenses, educational programs, rent, unemployment and medical issues.

The group continues to work with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) and FAN to lobby our state legislature on issues regarding refugees. They are a vital and active group and would welcome anyone who is interested.

For more information, you can learn about LIRS in a one-hour webinar "Beyond Borders and Barriers: Creating an Equitable World for Migrant Women and Girls" found at LIRS.org

Call Alex Schmidt at 548-7012 if you are interested in joining this group.

A MESSAGE FROM ACTIVIST PRIEST RICHARD ROHR.

If religion and religious people are to have any moral credibility in the face of the massive death-dealing and denial of this era, we need to move with great haste toward lives of *political holiness*. This is my theology and my politics:

It appears that God loves life—the creating never stops....We will love and create and maintain life.....It appears that God is love—the enduring, patient kind.We will seek and trust love in all its humanizing forms....It appears that God loves the variety of multiple features, faces, and forms.....We will not be afraid of the other, the not-me, the stranger at the gate.....It appears that what God loves is beauty. Look at this world!... Those who pray already know this. Their passion will be for beauty.



JANUARY

- 7 Liz Caemmerer
- 14 Stacey Barnhill
- 15 Mary Bywater
- 21 Laurie Reister
- 21 Christine Morgan
- 23 Jim Haberberger
- 30 Rosaleen DickInson
- 31 Bill Moody

FEBRUARY

- 1 Lisa Therrell
- 3 Beth Pratt
- 6 Mary Carol Nelson
- 13 Leesa Broker
- 14 Geoff Richardson
- 18 Sean Keenan
- 20 Joshua Brulotte
- 23 Nancy Bywater
- 24 Dottie Smallbeck
- 25 Danny Thomassen
- 26 Carson Rieke
- 27 Doris Nierman

