

Generosity in Motion ~ May 13, 2020

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.' ~ John 14:18



Figure 1: Rev. Blake Scalet and Rev. Gladys Moore of St. John's Lutheran Church in Summit, NJ

In this verse from the Sixth Sunday of Easter (Year A) we hear many truths named and promises made; we hear aspects of our Lutheran faith being expressed. And yet how do people hear and know? They hear and know...*we hear and know*...through the proclamation of the Word in the worship we share. And while we currently do not worship in the form that we have been used to -gathering in a central location as opposed to now gathering before a Zoom/Facebook/YouTube screen during a quasi-sheltered diaspora- these promises continue to be proclaimed to us bringing life, hope and comfort while stirring our hearts and minds towards faith in Christ.

This is one of the central aspects of the faith we share; it is called 'The Office of Preaching (Article V of the Augsburg Confession);' and it continues in such faithful, creative and meaningful ways across and through the NJ Synod. This proclamation is God's gift to us. And it is mediated through human souls who had a sense of 'inner call.' And then that inner call was examined and cultivated leading the way to an 'outer call,' that is, the church through its ecclesiological processes saying, 'Yes, we believe you are called to pastor a congregation.'



Figure 2: Rev. Pete Hutchinson of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Holmdel, NJ

The mission we have shared is still being shared. That mission is rich and varied; the fancy word we use for this is 'contextual.' But at the base of it all...the source of it all...is being told again and again, as often as our fallen self needs to hear, that we have been made children of God through faith in Christ; and to be made a child of God means being held in God's gaze and life forever. This essential mission continues and is on display all across the synod. And it is through being church together...through *being* synod...that God makes so much more of us than would be possible if we sought to witness and proclaim alone. And it is precisely what Christ reminds us: we are not alone. We have been given Christ's Life. And we have been given each other.

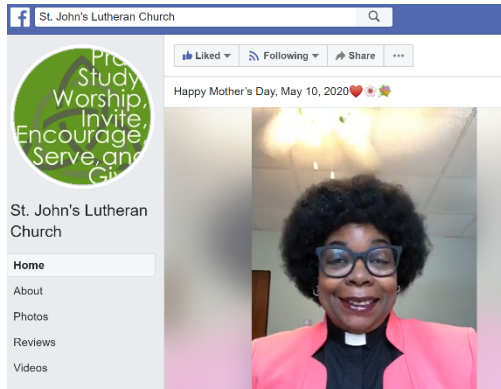


Figure 3: Rev. Mona Fitch-Elliott of St. John's Lutheran Church in Jersey City, NJ

Please continue to remember your individual congregations in your offerings. For some of our members, the total amount of our giving may decrease. But perhaps in that example, the proportion of giving may remain the same or even increase. For others, the impact may not affect one's giving and there may even be the possibility discovering the capacity for even greater generosity. And then of course generosity is not limited to what we give but those ways we reach out to one another and do the work of church together which clearly goes on. Finally, please continue to remember the mission we share as the NJ Synod holding one another in your prayers while embodying your prayers

through the Mission Support your congregation shares in this way. God is -through you!- raising up while forming leaders, that is, creating community while speaking the Word of Life upon which we so profoundly depend. Thank you for your partnership in the proclamation of the gospel that all may know and believe.

In the name of Christ,
Rev. Dean Brown
Assistant to the Bishop