

May 20, 2020

Dear Trinity Family:

I have several things to relay to you all, concerning some comings and goings in the Trinity staff, and about our summer plans for worship.

### **STAFF CHANGES**

Our own **Laura Brubaker**'s last day in her position as Trinity's Minister for Children, Families, and Middle School Youth will be Tuesday, June 2, 2020. We will celebrate Laura and her ministry at Zoom Church, on Sunday, June 7, 2020 at 9:30 am (summer worship schedule). It's Trinity Sunday on June 7<sup>th</sup> so it will be a wonderful and fitting time to celebrate Laura. Laura and her family will remain active (and much beloved) members of Trinity.

Laura gave Trinity five months notice of her desire to take a step back, take some time, and be a parishioner instead of a staff member at Trinity. I asked our Vestry to appoint a Personnel Committee to investigate and recommend leadership options for our children's and youth programming for 2020-2021 (almost like an interim year) and then permanent leadership. Our Personnel Committee is: Devon Anderson, Laura Brubaker, Chris Commers, Sally Hockinson, Denise Reilly, Anne Vogel, and Sam Wiant. We will begin meeting in June.

I am organizing **a parish gift** to Laura in honor of her big heart, creative ministry, and all the gifts she has given families, children, and youth these past two years. If you would like to **contribute**, please contact Sarah Kimmelman ([office@trinityexcelsior.org](mailto:office@trinityexcelsior.org)) at your earliest convenience. We will need to have been informed of all intended contributions by Tuesday, June 2, 2020.

In other news, our beloved deacon, **Chip Whitacre**, will be enjoying a well-earned sabbatical. Chip's last Sunday with us will be Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup> (he will preach that day at Zoom Church) and he will be on sabbatical through the end of the calendar year. Chip will work with the Outreach Team before his departure to keep our mission initiatives running in his absence.

### **RE-ENTRY AT TRINITY**

This past week the governor lifted Minnesota's Stay-at-Home order and deployed a new set of guidelines called [Stay Safe Minnesota](#). In it, the governor indicated certain businesses and offices could open up, including the possibility of faith communities worshipping in groups of 10 or less. Subsequently, our bishop Brian Prior and bishop-elect Craig Loya sent an e-mail to all Minnesota parishes saying that while essential staff may, if they choose, record or live-stream Sunday services in a church building, we will not have any small gatherings until Minnesota has seen a two-week decline in coronavirus cases. Following these e-mail communications, the bishop and bishop-elect held a Zoom meeting for rectors of Episcopal parishes in Minnesota. The bishops are urging all Minnesota congregations to err on the side of caution and safety. As our bishop-elect Craig Loya told the rector, "Our standard for making decisions is a theological standard. It's based on a sacrificial, abundant love for ourselves and our neighbors, which at this point is a love that looks like us staying at home." Both bishops commented that this new phase (which they characterized as Phase 1.5) will last awhile.

On Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, I had lengthy discussions with both the Trinity staff and the Vestry in which I solicited their opinions, concerns, and thoughts about Trinity, specifically as it pertains to our Trinity Office, Sunday worship, and small group gatherings. I loved the way the discussion consistently moved toward making sure our top priority is the care of each other and our community, that all decisions clearly reflect our spiritual values, and the desire to select options that keep us most connected to each other relationally. I am extremely grateful for the careful advice and thoughtful conversation from our parish leaders, and I am very comforted by it.

For June and July the Trinity staff will continue to work primarily from home. The Trinity building will remain closed and Trinity will host no gatherings of any size. In this spirit we will continue to:

- worship Sunday mornings on Zoom (at 10:15 am through Sunday, May 31, then switching to the 9:30 am summertime)
- offer weeknight Compline services at 8:00 pm
- gather on-line in many of the small groups that usually meet during the program year, including Adult Forum, Sunday morning virtual coffee hour, Women's Circle, Centering Prayer, and Tuesday morning Men's Bible Study
- operate the Trinity Care Circle Ministry
- be present and show up for each other and stay connected no matter what

In addition, the Adult Faith Formation Team is launching a "Wednesday Lunch Date" offering starting next Wednesday. Throughout the summer, every Wednesday at 12:00 pm Trinitarians can join each other on Zoom for a short noonday prayer service and then have lunch together.

All you need to fully participate in Trinity's worship and virtual gatherings can be found on our website: <https://trinityexcelsior.org/connections>.

Going forward, the Vestry has committed to discuss re-entry at every monthly meeting from here on out. Additionally, the Vestry is forming a small team to develop guidelines and procedures for safe worship and ministry during the evolving phases of the pandemic. This team is headed by Vestry members Margaret DiMarco and Julie Campanelli.

As always, I am here. The Trinity staff and Vestry are here. We are available to chat, discuss, listen to your opinions, and (to the best of our ability) answer your questions. We are all flying without a net these days, but even as we hang suspended in liminal space, we are always held in, and guided by, the ceaseless love of God. It's a rich spiritual time, and we explore what it has to give and teach us together.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Devon".

The Rev. Devon Anderson  
Rector