



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

Summer 2020

Church in the time of COVID

I think we can all agree that things have been challenging over the last few months ... to say the least. What we thought of as our “normal” way of life has been completely upended, and very little—if anything—feels “normal” anymore.



In the midst of all this up and down, as you can imagine, we at the church have been doing our best to learn and adapt and think and change on our feet as well. Some of those efforts have gone as well as can be expected. Some are still in the “growing and learning” phase. And, to be honest, some things have just fallen through the cracks a little bit. Our regular monthly newsletter has been one of those things, and for the lack of communication and disruption that has caused, we apologize.

However, we are working on righting that wrong. We thank you for your patience with us.

This information is as up-to-date as we have in terms of decisions made by the session, but we will be sure to keep you as updated as possible in the weeks and months ahead.

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Office Admin: Brianna Clement

Organist: Katha Johnson

Church Leadership

Kim Stanton, Treasurer
Mike Rand, Clerk of Session
Lance Sorensen, Ruling Elder
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder

Ellen Warner, Ruling Elder
Janice Ostrom, Ruling Elder
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder
Gail Rucker, Deacon

Ellen Simon, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon
Cindy Luhman, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me. I will be present for you, declares the LORD, and I will end your captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have scattered you, and I will bring you home after your long exile, declares the LORD. – Jeremiah 29:11-14

On my desk sits a desktop labyrinth. It's one of the more intricate labyrinths, modeled on the 13th century labyrinth inlaid in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France. The spiritual purpose of a labyrinth – either a full-sized version that you can walk or a miniaturized version that you walk with your finger – is to meditate on your journey with and to and for God as you follow the path.

It's a contemplative practice.

It's a centering practice.

And Lord knows we could all use some centering right now.

So as I was sitting and working on things today (yes, at church ... still social distancing, I promise), I took some time to wander my way through my desktop labyrinth. It's certainly a path I've wandered plenty of times before, and yet what struck me as I made my way through it this time was the unpredictability of the path.

Looking at it, you think you know which way to go. You think you know what's coming. You think you know where the path is going to lead. I mean, it only goes one way. It shouldn't be that hard to figure out, right?

Wrong.

Every time I thought I knew where the wooden stylus was going to go, it went somewhere different. It looped. It stretched. It doubled back on itself. And suddenly I was in the middle. After spending a few moments thinking and praying, I made my way back out, thinking, "Well, at least I'll be able to anticipate the path better this time. I mean, I just did this. I know it now. I know what's coming and where it will twist and turn."

Yeah ... nope.

I still couldn't correctly anticipate the path.

I still didn't know where the path was taking me.

I still guessed wrong at almost every turn.

And suddenly I was out again.

And it struck me just how accurate this was for the path we're on as a society right now ... because we don't know the path. We don't know what's around the next corner let alone what's waiting for us at the end or when or how that end will come. But we trust that as we follow this path, we are walking it with God.

Day in and day out.

Every minute.

Every twist and turn.

Every unexpected corner.

God is making this journey with us, showering us in compassion and grace and hope even in the face of uncertainty and loneliness and a collective fear that many of us have never encountered before. And so we continue putting one foot in front of the other. And we trust. And we pray.

And today, that is enough.

Pastor Gina



Scripture readings for August

- **Aug. 2:** Isaiah 42:1-9—Liturgy of the Ordinary #7
- **Aug. 9:** Psalm 130—Liturgy of the Ordinary #8
- **Aug. 16:** 1 John 4:7-21—Liturgy of the Ordinary #9
- **Aug. 23:** *guest preacher*
- **Aug. 30:** Isaiah 55:1-12—Liturgy of the Ordinary #10



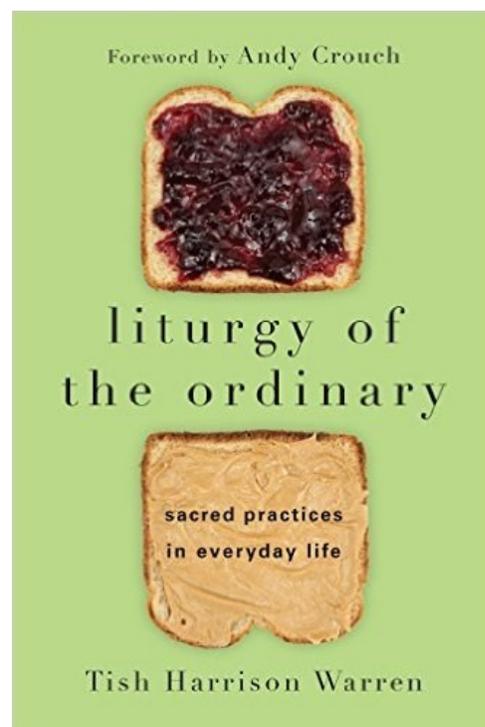
Summer sermon series: *Liturgy of the Ordinary*

As many of you know, I'm currently working on a doctorate in personal renewal and congregational renewal. I began working on it back in Feb. of this year. Fortunately, the majority of the degree is actually designed to be done online while serving in our various contexts/congregations, so the sheltering-in-place and travel restrictions of COVID haven't actually impacted what we're doing that much. So far, much of that work has consisted of reading materials and reflecting on them ... A LOT of materials!

One of the many books that I've read so far really grabbed at my heart and my soul and my imagination. It's a book called *Liturgy of the Ordinary* by Tish Harrison Warren. In this fabulous little book, Warren, who is a priest in the Anglican Church, tackles the most typical, mundane moments of our day-to-day lives and finds liturgy in them. She finds places to worship, welcome God into our most common activities ... whether we like it or not. Each chapter of her book is devoted to a particular motion starting with waking up in the morning and going all the way through a typical day to falling asleep at night. And in those boring, monotonous, habitual motions, she finds God. In the foreword of her book, Andy Crouch says, "Tish dismantles that most stubborn of Christian heresies: the idea that there is any part of our lives that is secular, untouched by and disconnected from the real sacred work of worship and prayer" (Warren, 9).

Even in a "normal world," her words are ones that I would have found profoundly meaningful and inspiring. But God knows we are living far from "normal" right now. The monotony of our days has been magnified by all of the pandemic restrictions we've been living with for months now. So I thought this was a perfect time to examine even the most basic and ordinary movements of our days to see where we can find God. I hope you enjoy it.

(Side note: Her book can be found on Amazon, so if you feel like reading along, I encourage you to do so. You won't regret it ... I promise. And if you choose to read along and would like to discuss anything, I'd be more than happy to have a socially-distanced book discussion with you.)



Next Session mtg.:

**Wed., Aug. 5
6:30 p.m. (via Zoom)**

Next Presbytery mtg.:

**Looking into some sort of Zoom
option in the fall**

Prayer Requests

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” ~ Philippians 4:6-7

And so we lift up **Sandy Bowers, Eunice Markham, Helen Craft, Joyce Rucker, and Linda Sorensen** in prayer.



Together Again?

I know that various businesses around the state and around the country have started cautiously opening up again. And I know a lot of us are wondering when our beloved church will do the same. The quick answer is: we don't know yet. Pastor Lisa and the Session continue to have conversations about this and look into the latest recommendations and resources that are available. Of course, we want to be back together again because we know we all miss one another, but we also want to make sure we're doing what's best and safest for one another's health.



Star Word Prompts

I know that we've missed a number of our Star Word prompt questions, so here's the catch-up:

- * **May: As we prepare for Pentecost, how has the Holy Spirit lit a fire in your/through your star word? What new thing has it inspired you to do?**
- * **June: Now that we're halfway through the year, revisit the initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers you first had with your star word. How have they changed? How have you grown?**
- * **July: How has your star word surprised you so far?**
- * **August: Who have you shared your star word with? What you have shared? Have they given you any outside insight on how you interact with your star word?**



Coronavirus Response

In this unprecedented time, friends, there are many ways that we're attempting to remain connected and maintain the worshipping community that we so love. The session will be meeting (remotely) some time in the next few weeks to discuss further options (fellowship, adult prayer/Bible study, children's story time, etc.). Here is what we have so far:

- Sunday morning worship options:

Zoom: All you need is internet access for your phone, your device (tablet, etc.), or your computer. For a phone or tablet, you will need to download the app. The icon is below (just so you know that you've found the correct app). On Sunday morning, I will send out an email with the necessary meeting ID number (for the app) as well as the direct link (for computer access). I will start the "meeting" (i.e. – worship) about 10 mins. early. I suggest you try to connect as early as you can just to make sure everything is working as well as possible.

Facebook Live: To access worship via Facebook, all you have to do is search for our church page ("Presbyterian Church of Oronoco"). The live feed should be up and running.

Full worship document: On Sunday mornings, included in the email that has the Zoom mtg. ID number and streaming link, will be a full write-up of worship – all the prayers, the readings, and the full text for the sermon. There will also be the words to a hymn. Feel free to sing that hymn – belt it out in your living room! I dare you. ☑ For those who would rather not do that, I will post a YouTube version of that hymn on our church Facebook page following the service for those who would like to enjoy the vocal talents of others. If nothing else, you can read through the service (either as you stream along or on your own).

- Options after Sunday morning:

YouTube channel: As we Zoom our worship, it records the whole "meeting." After worship is done on Sunday morning, I will upload the video to our YouTube channel for viewing whenever you have the chance. All the rest of our online worship services will also be there, so you can go back if there's one you missed. I will also post the link to each week's video on our Facebook page and will include that same link in our Monday morning prayer request email.

For prayer requests, please be sure you get those to Pastor Lisa *before Sunday morning*. There are too many technological elements to be juggling to try to do prayer requests live, so I will need to have the prayer requests sent to me in advance (call, text, email, or Facebook messenger). With everything that needs to be set up and worked out on Sunday mornings, I will not have time to make a last minute check for prayer requests, so please get them to me before that time. (If you do get a prayer request to me on Sunday morning and it doesn't make it into the worship service, I will be sure to include it in the Monday morning prayer email.)

August Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ☪ 8/2—Sandy Bowers
- ☪ 8/3—Katha Johnson
- ☪ 8/7—Annette Glabe
- ☪ 8/7—Mackenzie Luhman
- ☪ 8/12—Ardith Ottman
- ☪ 8/13—Nancy Tiedeman
- ☪ 8/17—Todd Wickre
- ☪ 8/20—Joanne Schenck
- ☪ 8/20—Brenda Longman
- ☪ 8/27—Rachel Stanton
- ♥ 8/15—Dave & Vivien Midthun
- ♥ 8/28—Joy & Steve Bertsinger



Staying in Touch

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Office: 507-367-4711

Email: oronocopc@bevcomm.net

Website: <http://www.oronocochurch.org>

Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Office: 651-357-1150

Fax: 651-357-1141

Email: office@ptcaweb.org

Website: <http://www.presbyterytwincities.org>

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: info@pcusa.org

Website: <http://www.pcusa.org>



Presbytery Guest Preachers



Throughout the summer, the Twin Cities presbytery is providing a video recorded sermon from a guest preacher for one Sunday each month. I look forward to sharing these video sermons with you for a number of reasons. First, you've heard me say a number of times that any chance to get someone else's voice (and perspective) into worship is a good thing. Also, I love that this gives everyone a chance to "meet" some other people from the presbytery. Other than the few session members that make it to the majority of the presbytery meetings every year, I know that "The Presbytery" is a nebulous, far-away entity for a lot of us. I bring it up in announcements from time to time, but other than that, we don't hear much from them. These monthly summer sermons are not only a chance for me to have a slightly less hectic week every now and then (which I absolutely appreciate!), it's a chance for you to see some new and wonderful faces from around the presbytery.

The final presbytery guest preacher date will be Sunday, Aug. 23.

Keeping up with the Smith-Mathers

We've been helping to support Shelvis and Nancy and their family for a few years now. We've been collecting our 2nd Sunday Spare Change offering and lifting them up in prayer for their work in South Sudan and Uganda and for the newest phase of their journey as a family in Oxford, England.



In this time of social distancing and sheltering in place, we have to remember that Shelvis and Nancy and their family are still working and learning and living. They still need our prayers. They still need our support. Clearly, we are not gathering our spare change offering as we continue to meet virtually, but you can still help support Shelvis and Nancy. Visit their Presbyterian Mission Agency page: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/shelvis-and-nancy-smith-mather/>. From there, you can click on the green box under their (completely adorable) family picture that says, "Give to the ministry of Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather." This will redirect you to a page that describes RECONCILE, the organization that Shelvis and Nancy continue to work with in South Sudan and Uganda. If you click the yellow "Give" box on that page, you'll be redirected to the PMA donation page.

You can also click on the blue box that says "Subscribe to our letters" to start receiving Shelvis and Nancy's occasional updates in your inbox. They send a wonderful, entertaining, touchingly personal update roughly quarterly.

Communion During Distancing

I think that one of the hardest things to be apart for is communion. However, we remain the body of Christ wherever we are, and we will continue to celebrate a shortened communion service together on the first Sundays of the month just like we would if we were together.

For the elements of this, I encourage you to bring whatever you have to our virtual table. Bring crackers. Bring bread. Bring bagels. Bring cookies. Bring Goldfish. Bring juice. Bring wine. Bring water. Bring tea. These are truly the elements of our daily lives right now ... just like the elements that Jesus first used were.



So come as you are in all your pajama-ed and coffee drinking, redeemed and beloved glory. For God will indeed meet us as we meet each other, gathered together literally *in every place* to celebrate at the table together.

150th Anniversary

The Presbyterian Church of Oronoco is turning **150 this year!!** That's pretty amazing, friends! Actually, technically, we turned 150 at the beginning of July. But as we're still unsure about gatherings and recommendations and COVID-19 is concerned, the session will be continuing to discuss how and when we will be able to celebrate together. We promise that we **will** celebrate this incredible milestone, friends. The question is when. Stay tuned.



All Around the Campfire

Friends, we know we love our monthly summer campfire gatherings. We know we feel like we got cheated last summer when all but one of our campfires got rained out. And after being apart for so long, I know we have deep longing to get back together and reconnect again. But we need to remain as safe and careful as we can be.

In that vein, we will definitely be cancelling our June and July campfires. The session will be having more discussions about August and September, and we will let you know more as soon as we can.

- ~~June 28: 5:30-8:00 p.m.~~
- ~~July 26: 5:30-8:00 p.m.~~
- Aug. 23: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- Sept. 27: 5:30-8:00 p.m.



Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

P.O. Box 118

Oronoco, MN 55960

507-367-4711



Basic Information

Website: <http://www.oronocochurch.org>

Facebook: Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Instagram: @oronocochurch



Worship—10:00 a.m.
Communion—1st Sunday of the month
Fellowship hour following worship
Confirmation—2nd & 4th Sundays

Rev. Lisa Johnson—contact information:

Cell: 507-995-7310

Email: PastorLisaJ@gmail.com

Blog: <http://pastorlisaj.com>