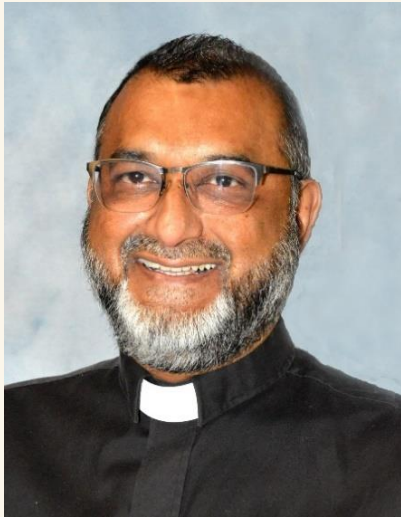


CASL



From The Pastor's Desk **A Time to Celebrate Life**

So here we are into May, a month of much significance for us. As difficult as it is for many, can we all celebrate regardless?

1. About 45 countries around the world celebrate Mother's Day on May 14th this year. We honor all mothers and those who have taken on motherly roles. I pray that we will all remember our mothers and those who have been mothers to us over our lives. Some honor mothers that are alive, or mothers who passed on or mothers they never knew. Even those who did not have kind experiences with their mothers, have had someone – female or male – fulfil the role of mother for them. So we celebrate Motherhood.

2. For the church this year we celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, marking the end of His life on Earth and return to God the Father. It is significant. It affirms the Incarnation, where God becomes human for a season, because “God so loved the world...”; John.3:16. We celebrate God's love.

3. We also celebrate Pentecost, the day remembered for the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the disciples. The Church received the Comforter and the Spirit of Power to be witnesses of the Gospel throughout the world. Jesus had told His disciples that when He goes (to the Father) He will send the “Advocate (or Helper)... who will teach you all (many) things (lead us to all truth) and remind you of everything I have taught you.” [John 14:26 – various translations and other text references paraphrased by me]. The promised Spirit was revealed in dramatic form in the Acts of the Apostles. Luke records in Acts 1:8 what Jesus had said just before He ascended, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

As we celebrate and honor these three days in May, I invite us to reflect on where God has brought us to and journeyed with us over our lives AND especially during the years since the Covid-19 pandemic began. We have missed many celebrations, whether on the Church Calendar, or Celebrations of Life for those who passed on, or celebrating Holy Communion at Sunday worship services on-site. Regardless of how our journey of life has been - pandemic or no pandemic - may we receive the power to give thanks, celebrate, contemplate and bear bold witness because... regardless, God journeys with us! God remains with us, so we have reason to celebrate. Amen.

Peace, Pastor Terrance

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 20– Youth Education Saturday - Pentecost

May 21 – Capital Campaign Kick Off

May 28 – Pentecost Sunday

June 11, 2023 – Spring Semi Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Adult Sunday School - The Wired Word, Sundays at 9:30 am onsite and on zoom

Youth Sunday School – Sunday Mornings before worship in a Zoom Breakout Room

Abiding Savior joins the North Carolina Synod and the Starr family in celebrating the Ministry of a native son, the Reverend Doctor Albert Starr, Jr. Pastor Starr's call to ministry has always included a strong notion to serve God's people. As a pastor and teacher, he takes great delight and special joy in helping to lift up and engage the gifts and talents of people of African descent and others. Pastor Starr served as Director for African Descent Ministries for the ELCA and later became director for Multicultural and Ethnic Specific Ministries. In his work with the ELCA churchwide organization, Pastor Starr had the privilege of seeing firsthand the intersectionality of race, culture, economics, faith and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Abiding Savior is proud of Pastor Starr and extends sincere congratulations.



CONGREGATION NEWS

THE EXPANSION PROJECT

The expansion work on the front of the church is nearly completed. When inspections and approvals are completed, all areas of the expanded area will be opened. There is a delay in getting the exterior lighted cross for left outside of the building. The company originally expected to do this work is no longer available.



THE INTERIOR PLANNING AND DECORATING COMMITTEE –

Since the construction is nearing an end, the design committee has begun accessing decorating needs such as furnishings, updates and upgrades. Some of the doors were removed while work was in progress revealing the need for cleaning and refinishing. The doors from the narthex into the sanctuary were recently completed. All of the hallway doors as well as the doors to the fellowship area will be cleaned and re-stained.

MESSAGE FROM THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Please come out on Sunday and hear about our capital campaign

“EXPANDING TO SERVE”

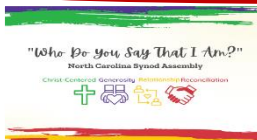
The kick-off is Sunday, May 21, 2023

THRIVENT MEMBERS

THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS AND THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Most Thrivent members are eligible for two \$250 community action grants per year. These grants can be used to “take action to change the world you live in”. There are many Abiding Savior projects that are great opportunities to use your grants which expire at the end of each calendar year. The application process is online.

Thrivent members can recommend where Thrivent should distribute charitable outreach funds by directing Choice Dollars. Abiding Savior, can be designated to receive Choice Dollars. There is an online process for directing the Choice Dollars which accumulate in your account. Please don’t let your choice dollars go unused and expire. Please contact Veronica Johnson or Diana Haywood if you are a Thrivent Member and have questions.



The North Carolina Synod’s 2023 Synod Assembly will be held June 2-3 at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC. Pastor Terrance along with David Johnson, Lula Monds and Frank Reade will serve as voting members from Abiding Savior.

.... CONGREGATION NEWS

YOUTH EDUCATION SATURDAY



The youth ministry has chosen some Saturdays to engage youth in Christian Education. This will be a time to offer faith based topics using crafts, stories, videos and activities which are specifically selected to reach out to youth and help them to know God's love, study the bible and grow spiritually. Pentecost is the focus for May 20th.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

During the year, over 100 students from North Carolina Central come out and work in Abiding Savior's Small Community Garden.

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

The spring semi-annual meeting of the congregation is scheduled for June 11, 2023 following worship. Ministry reports for 2022-2023 will be made available for review prior the meeting. All are encouraged to review the reports and ask council members any questions regarding the details. The congregation council and officers are elected at this meeting. Please prayerfully consider serving on the council. All are needed.

Your voice and hands are important!

ALL MINISTRY MEETING

We are returning to "All Ministry Meetings". Previously, these meetings were held monthly. Council decided to hold these meetings bi-monthly with individual ministries meeting on alternate months. In addition, the format of the meeting was changed to include discussion topics in plenary instead of having breakout ministry sessions.

Discussion was rich and filled with ideas. Volunteers are needed in all activities.

1. Discussion: Ways to maintain community, fellowship, communication and contact with the congregation in a hybrid environment.
2. There was a recommendation from those who viewed and discussed "The 1619 Project" to have a Financial Literacy workshop for the congregation and to extend the invitation to the community. Contact has been made with Thrivent. *Assignment: Volunteers from the meeting*
3. There was discussion and ideas for ways to reaching out to the local community.
4. There was discussion and a strong recommendation to produce a new church flyer to be used for distribution, mailings and social media. *Assignment: Volunteers at the meeting*
5. There were recommendations to use social media platforms like "Next Door". *An account will be set up.*
6. Education/Faith Formation.
 - Recommendation and plans to re-start mid-week Bible study.
7. We will investigate having a small VBS this summer. *Assignment: The Education Ministry with volunteers*
8. Celebrating the opening of the expanded area – We hope to have a special event in June to celebrate and invite the community to come out and see the new area. *The council will begin planning this event.*

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION

For most of its existence, Abiding Savior has had the help of congregational volunteers to provide administrative support. With changes over the past years, the time required to provide bulletins for online and on-site worship services, prepare newsletters, update church records, handle congregation communications and support social media platforms has increased making it difficult to manage the needs of the congregation with only volunteer support. The congregation council has approved a parttime administrative support position. Hopefully, this position will ensure information is processed efficiently, consistently, and timely.

The position is being posted in several places. If you know of persons with good technical and communication skills who are interested in a parttime position, please have them contact Pastor Terrance, the church at (919) 682-7497 or send a message to abiding.savior.news@gmail.com to get more information or to apply for the position.

BISHOP'S REFLECTIONS – MAY, 2023

Maybe it's because just a few weekends ago I led an intensive, nine hours of instruction on the riveting topic of "ELCA and NC Synod Polity and Governance" for our first cohort of SAMs (Synod Authorized Ministry) candidates. Perhaps it's because the NC Synod Assembly—the first onsite iteration in four years—begins in a month. Probably the whole conversation around the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church has something to do with it. Whatever the reason, I'm pondering not the essence so much as the structures under which we operate and to which I am particularly beholden as our, for better or for worse, process. Our polity. Which comes from the same root as *polite* and *politics*.

Polite means showing respect and consideration for other people. *Polity* means the processes by which we govern or constitute ourselves and is most often the term used to describe how a church body operates and makes decisions. You've heard me talk about politics before. While one might eschew being polite, we really have no choice as to whether or not we are political. *Politics* literally means "the affairs of the cities," and I submit to you that we are always and unavoidably political if we are to live together in community. The Israelites who no longer cowered under slave drivers in Egypt in their newfound yet terrifying freedom quickly needed to know how they might helpfully relate to one another in community. The ten commandments were a first step in that political process of how they might live hopefully in right relationship with both God and with one another. It wasn't God's heavy hand so much as God's gracious gift of guidance for a way forward together.

As I've quoted many times (but will say once again for those in the back), quoting Sam Wells and numerous others before him, politics is the process of settling our differences short of violence. Without politics, and admittedly sometimes even through established political processes, the dominant culture can and does enact violence to assure the perpetuation of their being, well, the dominant culture. It's Darwinian, really, in the sense of survival of the fittest—with the fittest implying the biggest army, most fearsome weapons, most unscrupulous leaders, etc.

All of this is to say, we are at least for the next several years in the ELCA, still intentionally organized around three (theoretically) equal expressions as church: the churchwide expression, synods, and congregations. As such, Churchwide Assemblies can urge, encourage, cajole, etc. synods and congregations to do XYZ, but they can't require it. We have numerous "guidelines," but few mandates. Resolutions passed at the churchwide level are binding only on the churchwide expression of the ELCA—not synods, congregations, or individual members. When one joins an ELCA congregation, one is not presumed to have thus signed on to every ELCA social statement, or statement by the synod, or Presiding Bishop.

Synod decisions and resolutions like the ones before our 2023 Synod Assembly next month, likewise, may inform, instruct, and encourage, but they do not and cannot "require." The one major exception to this, it seems to me, are constitutional "requirements" voted on at an ELCA Churchwide Assembly level to which, subsequently, both synods and congregations are bound. If those entities simply can't abide the churchwide "requirement," their only recourse is disaffiliation, which the Churchwide Assembly defines in terms of process, but which ultimately depends on Synod Council approval. In that sense, our polity is more top-down than bottom-up or congregational. Will those processes and rules change? Probably so, but you know as much as I do how that might play out. One thing remains clear: congregations are the basic building block of this church for Word and Sacrament ministry, pastoral care, and service in the name of Christ. I suspect that, with such "a church not of one mind" reality of late, the successor body/bodies of the ELCA might find governance and polity ways to be somewhat more loosely federated and connected with more "power" in the local congregation. I don't know this, but I don't really see a path toward being one church body that moves in the other direction of requiring more of synods and congregations.

Me? I'm looking for a world, a church, and a structure based in the life (including teaching and example), death, and resurrection of Jesus that finds its motivation not in controlling and manipulating people but in doing the right thing, which includes, says Jesus, protecting and advocating for the most vulnerable among us. If I could find that perfectly-structured and faithful church, I'd join it immediately. But then again, once I did, by virtue of my presence, it would surely cease to be the very reasons I joined it to begin with.

A gracious, loving God is up to something, both in—and definitely despite—me and the church. Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to our first onsite synod assembly in four years, June 2-3 in Greensboro. **There's no onsite registration, so register online at nclutheran.org by Wednesday, May 10!**

Walking with you,

NC Synod Bishop

A pastoral message on abortion

This article is reprinted from the ELCA news resources 5/17/2022 12:30:00 PM

Our unity as Christians is through Jesus Christ, the One who embodies God's grace among us. Every day we dive into our baptism, through which God promises grace and mercy and draws us out to love and serve neighbors.

Yet, there are times when, even in our unity, we do not agree. The people of this church and this country have various and perhaps contrasting responses to the Supreme Court's leaked draft opinion on abortion. Regardless of where each of us stands on the issue, the ELCA's 1991 social statement on abortion speaks to all of us.

In the social statement, this church holds both women and "developing life in the womb" (p. 2) as neighbors. This church declares that any person who has become unexpectedly pregnant has moral agency to discern what to do, and this decision-making usually happens in a community — not only the person who is pregnant but with God, family, partners, friends, doctors and pastors. While this church longs for a future with fewer abortions every year, the social statement points out that outlawing all or nearly all abortions is not the way to do this. The ELCA opposes both "the total lack of regulation of abortion" and "legislation that would outlaw abortion in all circumstances" (p. 9).

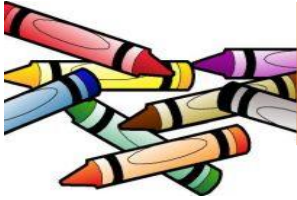
This church's social teaching states that abortion must be legal, regulated and accessible. People who choose to have legal abortions should not be harassed or prevented from accessing abortion due to economic or other factors.

I recognize that the leaked court draft does not represent the Supreme Court's ruling in its final form; nevertheless, it contradicts this church's teaching. This church teaches that abortion and reproductive health care, including contraception, must be legal and accessible. But it also teaches that, as a society and as a church, we must continuously strive to mitigate the factors that make it difficult to bear, raise and nurture children: lack of affordable health care, affordable childcare, paid sick time and paid parental leave; high student debt; and compensation that is inequitable based especially on gender or race.

I urge you to work locally to moderate any Supreme Court decision similar to the leaked draft. Not only would such a decision cause grave harm for many people with unexpected pregnancies, but it could create other problems as well. It has the potential to foster communities of conflict and moral policing rather than complex moral discernment. It will likely endanger or cause the deaths of people who need an abortion. And the legal bases established by any such decision threaten people's access to birth control, same-sex marriage, voting rights and their right to privacy.

Any ruling similar to the leaked draft will upend 50 years of legal precedent in our nation and damage the health and well-being of many. The prospect is daunting. As Christians, we persevere in hope. We must continue to be bold in our prayers and in our public witness for a more just society that cherishes and guarantees the dignity of all. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

In Christ,
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



COLORING PAGE

Pentecost



Dear God,
Thank you for