

1301 Mowry Ave.
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 797-3724

ctkfremont@sbcglobal.net

TABLE TALK



PASTOR'S LETTER

Happy Halloween!

I have long fought Halloween because it's on Reformation Day and that means worship services in Germany. Usually, in the evening, when everyone is out trick-or-treating, Pastors will hand out "Luther candy" and carve pumpkins with Luther's rose as a sign of protest. Of course, kids just avoid the parsonage.

The great question is: should Christians oppose this originally pagan, crazily consumerist holiday? Not only most German Lutherans think so; many Evangelicals in the U.S. agree as well. (Google it!)

Well, I don't think we have to. On the contrary, I actually believe we have good reasons to embrace it. (And that's not just a mom speaking who gave up on fighting her kids over trick-or-treating. This is also the theologian speaking. And the pastor.)

Our 11-year-old neighbor across the street set up a haunted front yard and performed a chicken-dinosaur-dance-fight every Friday and Saturday together with his friend. He has even been handing out treats for the last 6 weeks on those 2 nights. We don't celebrate Halloween; it's an entire season. It's also been the main source of happiness for all the kids in our street for weeks. You've got to love it.

During the last weeks, more and more skeletons inhabited our neighborhoods. Skeletons sitting at a table, playing cards. A skeleton hanging out on a bench in solitude, others guarding an entry. Death is never as visible and mocked as it is around this time of the year. Just before we remember our Saints, all the people who have gone before us and who we miss dearly.

To make death visible and mock it. That's the most Christian thing in the world. Or, like Paul writes:

"When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55)

I mean, isn't that exactly what Jesus did at the cross and in his resurrection? He died the most public death, exalted on a hill, visible to everyone who felt like watching. And he took death's sting and swallowed it up in victory. That's what we celebrate at Easter every single year. (Maybe, it's not a coincidence after all, that Halloween and Easter involve way too much candy for kids...).



And because we know that death doesn't win over life, that death doesn't separate anybody from God, we can celebrate All Saints. We mourn our loved ones and know that they are with God. We mourn lost chances and remember all the good times and wonder about the hard ones. And we trustingly put our memories in God's hands. Assured, that God is stronger than death, that death can't frighten us to death.

So, the mom and the theologian in me fully embrace Halloween. And the pastor agrees. Sure, it's easy to grumble about money wasted on sweets. (But then, no money is ever

wasted when it comes to candy.) But think of it: when else does the entire community (apart from some German Lutherans and Evangelicals) spend an evening together out in the streets. When else do our front doors swing open to so many strangers? And when else are so many gifts given out - often by strangers, to strangers - just for the sake of delight? At its best, then, Halloween portrays what "neighborhood" actually looks like. That alone is worth celebrating. And it's probably what the dead would wish us to do. To have fun, peacefully together for once.

Stay sane, stay safe and go in peace, dear Saints, Pastor Tia!

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The clocks are falling back tonight – “can the year 2020 get any longer?” (a friend of mine said jokingly). In some ways, I can't believe we are already stepping into November but in other ways, I feel battle weary from many things, as I'm sure you all do as well (as does my friend) – when will “it” be over – “it” covering a broad spectrum, not just the coronavirus, elections, social unrest and discord throughout the world, natural and man-made disasters, etc. And then, for this newsletter, I receive a picture of the Advent wreath with a plan for making them, pictures of children engaged on Zoom with Pastor Tia talking about music, religion and their heritage, an advertisement for a Christmas pageant and I see visible progress in the sanctuary repairs. We, as a Congregation, have done much this year and we have some great opportunities moving forward. Stay hopeful and feel joy!

Yours in Christ,
Peggy Claassen, President

Make your own Advent wreath!



and give one to a friend

Who would have thought that 2020 ever came to an end?

Well, it does, and Christmas is just around the corner! And what's Christmas without Advent? And what's Advent without an Advent wreath? No worries, Christ the King Lutheran Church has you covered!

This year, you have the choice.

- 1. DIY at home:** You can pick up a bag with all the supplies and make a wreath at home. You will need to arrange for greens though. **Kris will graciously send out a “How to”- video** in late November. If you can't arrange pick up, let us know and we will find someone to deliver it to you. If you are in a bubble with others, get a second kit and invite them over, too. Or ask a neighbor to join you in your backyard or on the front porch. Whatever feels most comfortable and safe for you to spread the Advent JOY!

2. **Attend a workshop.** If you feel like joining a **socially distanced Advent-wreath-workshop**, we invite you to come to visit us at 1301 Mowry Avenue on Sunday **November 29th at 2:00** on the CTK patio. Join us for some fellowship and Advent merriment.

We will have 8.5” oasis foam wreaths, candles, and greening pins for you (and some surprises for kids). **You must bring your own fresh greens.** Also suggested are **clippers and gloves** if you don’t like sappy fingers.

Do you already have a wreath? Make or order one for a friend or a neighbor.

This Advent time will be different from last years and we will all need a little extra joy for sure!

Please register through this **sign-up form.**

A \$10.00 donation is suggested but not required. Just pay what you can. We are here to serve everyone. If you can give more, please consider paying for someone else who might not have the means.

FIRE REPAIR UPDATE



The Office



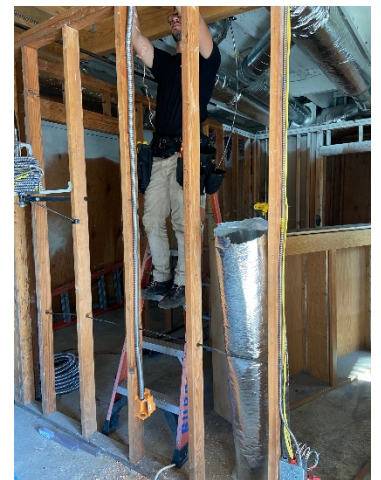
Finally!! Some visible changes. Exterior stucco and rock are near completion. The electrical and mechanical duct systems are anticipated to be inspected next week. Insulation can then be installed followed by interior drywall, painting, carpet and other finish work.

The sanctuary and library have been painted.

It has been a year since the fire – many of the delays were a result of restrictions because of Covid19 but the end is in sight. Completion of the construction is expected in January. Questions? Contact Peggy

COVID-19 UPDATE & WORSHIP

While the weather is still relatively mild and thanks to many hours of brainstorming and hard work by a handful of volunteers, we will be having our first outdoor and socially distanced worship service on November 1 at 10:15 am. You will also have the option of celebrating in your “home church” via zoom. Worship Service will continue via Zoom on **Sunday mornings at 10:15 am** until further notice. Stay safe and stay tuned...



WHERE MUSIC MEETS KIDS:

Lutheran Music Ministry with Youth from Good Shepherd

One of our many goals at CTK has been to develop stronger relationships between the ELCA congregations of the Tri-Cities. This has been especially challenging these past few years although progress has been made – shared Lenten services and more recently, shared devotionals, sermons and the creation and sharing of educational opportunities such as the Racial Justice Circles. We now have a new opportunity thanks to the creativity and collaboration of the pastors to add youth to our services, while learning about each other. Pastor Tia writes:



“Why do we sing at church?” and “Who was Martin Luther?” Nine excited youth stare back at me from my Zoom screen. It’s our first meeting and it’s chaotic. Computer issues, frozen faces. I try to learn their names and totally mispronounce them. We laugh a lot and relax.

All the kids are Lutheran and of South Asian heritage. Their church home is at Good Shepherd in Fremont. And they asked me to spend 30 minutes a week with them. To teach them about Luther and Lutheran music and culture and traditions. I agreed. But under the condition that they also teach me about their heritage.

They have beautiful Indian names like Makuta, which means “crown” or Sresta, meaning “precious”. In the last 3 weeks I have learned so much from them and about them. What kind of music they like, which holidays they enjoy, what traditions they cherish? It’s a true joy. And the reason why I have run late to our worship rehearsal! (Sorry, Alan, Patricia, Jim, Jason, Barney, Pat...) Our goal is to learn songs and record them, so that we will be able to listen to them at both CTK and Good Shepherd worship services.

And keeping in the theme of youth, mark your calendars for 11/29 and 12/24:

the Best Christmas Pageant Ever

The best Christmas Pageant ever is being rehearsed and recorded every Sunday November through December. Pastor Barbara Caine of Holy Redeemer is putting together this most famous and fabulous play with kids from Holy Redeemer and Toni and Theo. We will have the privilege to watch it exclusively on **November 29 and December 24**. The Link for the Pageant will be sent out closer to the dates. Stay tuned...

RACIAL JUSTICE ACTIVATION CIRCLE – concluded but not over

Eight weeks of hard work lay behind the 11 people who ventured through the Racial Justice Activation Circle together. Some of us were unsure at the beginning if this was a good idea. Some of us were a little scared. Some of us were totally up to it and the more surprised how much there still is to learn and to think about when it comes to racial justice in this country as well as in the ELCA.

Somebody told me at the beginning of this summer: “Every time a Black person gets killed by the police in this country, White people join a book club to learn more about it.” In a way we proved this to be right. We certainly did a lot of reading, watched videos and talks and listened to podcasts (see our [syllabus](#) here). But we try to go further. That’s why the circle has this long and complicated name “Racial Justice Activation Circle.” We, as individuals, as a church and a country, want to take action to become truly anti-racist people.

It’s a long, windy road. We were blessed to have Trudy Franzen and Linda Boston from the SPELCA Synod join us for one meeting. They are the leaders of the 2009 Synod approved and put into place Racial Ethnic Ministry Strategy Discipling Team (<https://spselca.org/index.php/racial-ethnic/>). Both of them have been working against racism for decades. Linda was the first African American woman ordained on the West Coast. Trudy has been hosting Racial Healing circles for many years in her congregation at St. Stephen’s in El Dorado Hills. For an hour, they shared their experiences and concrete ideas about how to become a more open and diverse church. Ideas like, “invite guest speakers, build ecumenical and multicultural relationships, read the bible from different perspectives,” really resonated with us. And they welcomed us warmly into this joined mission. There was no, “Why didn’t you join us earlier?” or “Where have you been all these years?” Just an open smile and gratefulness for us to start the work at our own pace now.

Inspired by their stories we have come up with ideas of how to widen our hearts and minds in the future and how to not only welcome but celebrate diversity. We figured that even though our circle work is accomplished, we are just at the beginning of this. **Stay tuned!** And don’t hesitate to get involved. Nobody will ask “Why didn’t you join us earlier?”. We will just welcome you with a great, big smile and open arms! Promise. – *Pastor Tia*

DID YOU KNOW?...

Many of you may be familiar with long time CTK member, Jim Sepeda, who is a man of many talents. Jim has graciously agreed to share a short bio with us:

I recently retired from CVS Health where I was a Strategic Account Executive negotiating and managing contracts with major health insurance companies. He was a veteran of 43 years in the Home Care Home Infusion & Specialty Pharmacy Industry. I am Past President of the San Francisco/East Bay Chapter of the Case Management Society of America, and a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and the California Association of Healthcare Leaders. I have spoken extensively on numerous topics affecting health care and health care delivery.

At Christ the King I am a member of the Praise Ensemble (guitar and vocals), and also on the Worship Committee. I also have served as lector and assistant, and occasional lay preacher. My love of music comes from my family. My parents were talented ballroom dancers and I followed (literally) in their footsteps. Like my parents, I met my wife at a dance. My formal introduction to singing came in college where I minored in Theater Arts, and played Sancho in the production of Man of La Mancha.

In addition to ballroom dancing, my other hobbies are SCUBA diving and playing Texas Hold ’Em poker. My son, Doug, is married and lives in San Leandro. – *Jim Sepeda*

The Currency of Relationship: Stewardship365



- Gracious Leadership
- Relationship

- Truth
- Wellness
- Time and Place
- Money

This month we'd like to introduce you to the Currency of Relationship, the core of the Stewardship365 program. The fundamental belief that we are connected to God through Jesus is the reason why we need to pay attention to and develop relationships as a currency of exchange. When we make real connections, both within CTK and local ELCA churches (internal) and the community and other faith churches (external), we create a network of relationships that are the foundation of a sustainable ministry that is relationship, not task driven.

If we are to fulfill Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves, we must learn how to connect and develop constructive relationships within the Tri-City community to include racial/cultural/ethnic groups, community and civic organizations/leaders, local businesses, ecumenical/interfaith partners, plus people in need and those with resources.

“A relationship driven ministry focuses on listening. Building relationships is not a linear process, but a circular or spiral one, in which we encounter another person at least a few times. Each time we get to know a little more about another person as we listen to his/her story. Each time we encounter each other, we build a little more trust.”

Being an effective listener is an essential skill needed to create new or strengthen existing internal and external relationships. The goal is to gather information that will allow us to know what is important to others, their truth which is one of the other Holy Currencies. For many, this skill needs to be developed.

The below process is one that you can practice while communicating with fellow CTK members and others you talk to.

1. Create formal and informal opportunities for interpersonal conversations
 - ➔ Be prepared to engage in meaningful dialog
2. Start or strengthen a relationship
 - ➔ Pay attention
3. Be curious and discover the person's self-interest
 - ➔ Listen without judgement
4. Help the person clarify/discover his/her self-interest
 - ➔ Say tell me more or ask clarifying questions such as:
 - Why do you think...?
 - What do you need...?
 - How would you...?
 - If you could, would you like to...?
5. Let the person know that you are listening
 - ➔ Provide feedback such as:
 - I hear that you said...
 - It seems important to you that...
6. Gather information and if appropriate, note for future reference

Remember: If you had a boring conversation, it's probably not because your partner has nothing to say. But you might not have asked the right questions. Wishing you lots of exciting conversations, the Stewardship Team!

– Melinda Kufeld (Chair), Kris Adams, Cam Bauer, Alan Claassen, Linda Paschal, Pr. Pelz, Debbie Pollak

UPCOMING/ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADOPT AN ANGEL: Each year, **Adopt an Angel** calls on the community to help provide for children who, through no fault of their own, are in shelters, group homes or foster care under the auspice of Alameda County Protective Services (ACPS) and Terra Firma. These children hope Santa will make a visit and fulfill a Christmas wish. Your help is needed to make their wishes come true. This year, Adopt an Angel is hosting a **\$25 Gift Card Drive** in lieu of physical gifts due to safety restrictions from Covid-19. Donate a \$25 gift card from Amazon, Target, Walmart or Visa and sponsor a child this holiday season. Distribution will be through ACPS and Terra Firma to needy children. Text, call or e-mail **Pat Cote (510) 928-1317** or pacote99@gmail.com for more information. Gift cards will be needed no later than **December 1**.

BACKPACK PROJECT: Social Ministry continues to work with Compassion Network to identify needs where CTK can help in this extraordinary year of coronavirus and distance learning. Donations are still needed. Please send checks to CTK 1301 Mowry, Fremont, CA 94538. We hope to have an online donation option soon.

BIBLE STUDY Update: Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:30 am via Zoom (will continue through the end of the year). Each week, the focus is on the upcoming Gospel or scripture identified by Pastor Tia. The Bible study format follows our **Stewardship365** program (Kaleidoscope Institute) which focuses on beginning with prayer, reading and discussing the selected text. If you have any questions or would like to be added to our email distribution, please contact Pastor Tia or Patricia Bauer, cell 510-825-8547 or bauerin83@gmail.com.

BOOK CLUB: Will resume in January.

CTK COUNCIL MEETING: Tuesday, November 10th at 7:15 pm via Zoom.

DEVOTIONS: Pastor Tia, Pastor Barbara (Holy Redeemer Newark), Pastor Tim (Holy Trinity Fremont) and Vicar Anand (Good Shepherd Fremont) will be sharing devotional messages on Tuesdays and Thursdays via e-mail.

GET TOGETHER AND DEVOTIONS WITH BETHESDA: Join on Zoom **Fridays from 2:30 – 3:00 pm.** for a lively half an hour. Catch up with our friends, sing, dance, listen to a biblical story and pray. All are welcome! Pastor Tia to facilitate.

INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE MOVES ONLINE: The 59th annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held via Zoom on the Monday before Thanksgiving, on **November 23, at 7:30 p.m.** Advanced registration is required.

To register for the service, go to: tinyurl.com/tcicTS2020.

The service will include prayers, readings, recorded music, and dance offered by several different faith and spiritual communities in the Tri-Cities. It will also include a brief sermon by TCIC President, the Rev. Jeffrey Spencer, which he has tentatively titled “Chairs and the Table.”

Jeff is the Senior Pastor at [Niles Discovery Church](#). The service is expected to last about one hour. You can download a flyer for the event at bit.ly/TS2020flyer.

LUNCH BUNCH: Wednesday, November 11th, at 1:00 pm via Zoom. BYOLB! (Bring you own lunch and beverage!)

SEWING BEES: Donations of material, money and vounteers are still needed and welcome as the demands for masks continues. Please contact Linda Pearson.

SOCIAL HOUR: Bring your own beverage of choice, snacks or dinner, sign in to Zoom and join us for a relaxing social hour in your own home on **Wednesdays (11/4, 11/18 and 11/25) at 7:00 pm.** All are welcome!

SOCIAL MINISTRY MEETING: Monday, November 9th, at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

TRICITY VOLUNTEERS FOOD BANK: Tuesday – Friday, 9:00 – 3:00 pm, drop-off times for urgently needed brown paper grocery bags used for food distribution @ 37350 Joseph Street, Fremont.

ZOOM WORSHIP: Total attendance continues to be strong: 44, 42, 42, and 39 attendees for the respective Sundays in October. Zoom service will continue to be **10:15 am on Sundays**. Reach out to friends and neighbors as a safe and easy way to share in worship, separate but together.

2020 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

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Bob Kufeld, *Vice-President*

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Patricia Bauer

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CTK STAFF

Pastor Tia Pelz (510) 859-5672

pelztia@gmail.com

Barney Tiller, *Music Director*

Christina Bauer, *Webmaster/Designer*

CTK OFFICE HOURS:

Monday thru Thursday 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

(not open for in person business or visiting)