

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Syd Hills, Pastoral Assistant
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TO THE PEOPLE OF TRINITY CHURCH

Dear friends,

Grace be yours and peace.

In June, I wrote you about what was going on in the life of our family. With this letter, I want to bring you up to date and to offer some words of gratitude.

When I wrote you in June, we had only recently been told that Kim had a serious cancer. Our world was much in turmoil. A lot has happened since then: innumerable tests; countless appointments; the intervention of a great number of medical and other people; a great deal of love and support. The long and short of it is that the diagnosis was confirmed and Kim is now in active treatment at Grand River Hospital.

For Kim, that means *chemotherapy*. (Radiation is not an option.) As I write, she has completed her first three-day course and will have two more such courses three weeks apart. That will take us into September at which time they will assess her progress. Right now, that's as much as we know. And while we still feel like we're caught in the eye of a storm, the support of our church and community has been overwhelming and we are very, very grateful.

On the fridge at home, I've been jotting down a growing thank-you list to which we will turn our attention somewhere down the road: food and flowers; offers of transportation and conversation; cards, notes and letters; small creature-comforts to make life more enjoyable; lots of prayers and more. The list goes on and on and each line bears the name of a person or family in our community.

When I last wrote, I ventured "We discover God's Spirit alive in God's people, sometimes comforting; sometimes offering a little wisdom; sometimes helping to carry the ball." You've done all of these, and much, much more, wonderfully well. Thank you.

For my part, I have benefitted from a terrific circle of parishioners, family, friends and colleagues who have helped me to focus my ministry where it is most needed and to be there for Kim, Ruth and John, which is most important.

To that end, I have begun a leave of absence from my national worship work. Karen Johnson-Lefsrud has taken over as chairperson of the ELCIC Program Committee for Worship. Debbie Lou Ludolph has been seconded to the Committee with a focus on the RENEWING WORSHIP project. Both are formidably gifted women. Other colleagues will help to cover-off various aspects of my wider-church work. Thus, as of a few days ago, I have withdrawn from most all of my non-parish ministry.

Within the parish, I have enjoyed the terrific support of Pastors Nadine and Syd together with the generous and careful attention of our Mutual Ministry people, Congregational Council and staff. In the current issue of TRINITY DOVE, you will read that Syd Hills has taken up a ministry as “pastoral assistant” at Trinity while, come September, the congregation will be asked to invite Pr. Nadine to continue her ministry here as “pastor.” This is all great news! Already, Pr. Syd has presided at worship, begun some visitation in the parish and taken a funeral. Having him aboard is a godsend. Having Nadine’s ministry affirmed is wonderful!

In late June, on the Sunday following Church Music Sunday, I placed the following note in the Sunday GUIDE TO WORSHIP. I’d like to reprint it here for our wider TRINITY DOVE community. I wrote, in part...

I am writing to say “thank you.” Sunday’s worship was terrific. Sunday’s music was wonderful. Sunday’s birthday program and fellowship were awesome.

I was a little teary, sometimes, at some of the wonderful anthems and incidental music. I’m sure many of you have been there. I especially loved Bob Dufford’s Be Not Afraid (Trinity Choir), Le Doux & Wilson’s lovely Listen to God (the piece with the magnificent flute obligato; Affirmation! Singers) and Handel’s Ode to Music (Gywin’s prelude).

At the same time, I haven’t laughed so hard, in a long while, as I did at the jokes and songs and skits after worship. (I’m still trying to get the lipstick off!) Moreover, I haven’t had so much fun, just hanging out and visiting with old friends and parishioners, as I did with everyone at the reception in Trinity Hall. It was a great day!

Whether you planned or plotted, prepared or performed; whether you greeted, ushered, presided, assisted or worshiped; whether you decorated, planted, spoke, sang, played or acted the fool; whether you helped set up, helped serve or washed dishes; whatever your role... for your part in making the day happen, I am very grateful.

Perhaps I will have the opportunity to thank you personally. That would be great. If not, please accept this note with all good wishes for your part in bringing life to celebration and celebration to life at Trinity Church.

One of my deepest gratitudes in all this, is to Kim for her part in making my birthday celebration the wonderful community event that it was, at a time when it might have been easier to just let it go. For her love and for yours, in every aspect of our life together, I am very, very grateful.

Grace be yours and peace.

(Signed) André Lavergne,
pastor in the Trinity community.