

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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TO THE PEOPLE OF TRINITY CHURCH

Dear friends,

Grace be yours and peace.

This is a very hard letter for me to write. This is a very hard time for me and my family.

This last weekend, we told our kids what the doctors are now telling us and what I am now telling you. In recent weeks, some medical testing has been unfolding for Kim. One test has led to another, and another, and another. What they are saying is that she likely has a serious cancer. That's the "working diagnosis."

Right now, I'm not sure what more to say. Questions are hard. We have so few answers. Offers of help abound. The truth is, I don't know what we need. We have little idea of what lies ahead. We do know this: we are in the right place, the right community, and the right congregation, to cross such bridges as lie ahead.

Over the last weeks, I preached on three consecutive Sundays: Easter 6, Easter 7 and Pentecost. While my sermons drew upon images from the Gospels, they were also being framed by the realities unfolding in our family. Perhaps that is apparent now.

On Easter 6, I talked of how Jesus was confident in the abilities of his community to face the difficult times which surely lay ahead. Jesus thought of his people as gifted and resourceful; as people who had what it takes to love one another, in very real terms, in very hard times. That's how I think of you.

On Easter 7, I talked of "holy worry." Jesus worried. So do we. So do you. You have made that abundantly clear. We worry about one-another and we ask ourselves "What needs to happen now?" "What need we do to give voice and flesh to our concerns?" Much of any pastor's ministry, and my own ministry in particular, involves a day-to-day attempt to figure that out.

On the Feast of Pentecost, I reminded you how God has been there for God's people, in a variety of ways, throughout the ages: "Comforter," once upon a time, when comfort was the pressing need; "Counselor," in another age, when a little wisdom was required; "Advocate," for a generation wherein we are seeking to extend God's love and justice to people who have heretofore felt unloved or put down.

We discover God's Spirit alive in God's people, sometimes comforting; sometimes offering a little wisdom; sometimes helping to carry the ball.

For my part, I am taking stock of my parish work and of my national and international worship work.

Outside the parish, I will be withdrawing from those things which are less affirming and offer less satisfaction in favour of those things which offer greater balance and moments of grace.

Within the parish, I am pacing myself at a time when things normally wind down, anyway, for the summer. I am also relying increasingly on Pr. Nadine to carry the ball for the parish and on her presence as pastor for our family. Pr. Syd is available to back us up. As well, I have several friends in ordained ministry who are there for us.

The Mutual Ministry Committee, Congregational Council and Trinity staff are aware of our realities and, together with Pr. Nadine, will insure that the ministry of the congregation proceeds with all of the grace and love we can muster.

The timing of this letter has to do with a whirlwind of realities over which we have had no control. I was, however, anxious that our choirs and musicians learn of things ahead of their preparations for Church Music Sunday. It's not much notice but it's a little. We're looking forward to Church Music Sunday and to that small bit of grace amidst the bleakness which might otherwise prevail.

Thank you for your forbearance and for your love and support, especially.

Grace be yours and peace.

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