



# FOXPOINT

## LUTHERAN CHURCH

July 22, 2020

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

My dad would come searching for my brother and me. He might find us outside in the middle of a kickball game or inside watching Gilligan's Island. He would walk right into the middle of what we were doing, until both of us were looking him in the eye, and say, "Family Meeting!" We would stop what we were doing and follow him to the "Family Room," which is where all of the family meetings at the Knapp house were held.

We had no idea if the meeting was about good or bad news. It might be to announce a family vacation to Disney World, to tell us that someone in the family had died, or to give us a hundred different variations of good and bad news. All we knew was when he called a family meeting, it was important. Really important!

In this note, I am calling a family meeting. It is important. It has to do with our future and our way through Covid-19 and what is happening with the construction of our new church home.

### **Navigating the Pandemic:**

Covid-19 is one of the greatest threats we have ever faced as people of faith. It is as simple as that. It is an awful disease that has already ravaged our country and attacked members of our own church family. It is insidious, often silent, and too often deadly. It has been manipulated and used for political advantage. It has brought businesses and nations to their knees, and it has closed houses of worship. It shows no mercy. It has often made our lives difficult and sad, lonely and filled with fear. And if we allow it, it will separate us from our faith and from our God. *If we allow it!*

If we are truly going to be God's people in this world, if we are going to be people who show the world that there is faith, hope, joy—and especially love—when life is at its darkest, we all need to stand up and fight for each other, for our faith, and for our God. We need to show the world and our community that we, the friends and followers of Jesus, are about more than gathering together on Sunday mornings to pray and sing. We are about more than gathering in Fellowship Hall, eating donuts, and drinking Mt. Meru coffee.

If we're truly going to be God's light and love to this world, it will take sacrifice. Pastor Bruce and I have been preaching about sacrifice for years. We sing about it. We pray about it. We talk about it. We often praise those who have sacrificed for us. Now is our time to sacrifice! Now is the time that we show the world that the "church" is not just a building! The church is our people! The church is God's people mobilized in the world to grow faith, serve others, connect, and grow with each other. So I am going to ask you to sacrifice.

I am going to ask you to support Fox Point Lutheran even if you cannot be physically present. Be the church by giving, caring, growing, and connecting in new ways. In the weeks and months ahead we, your church, will help you to discover an even deeper faith. We will continue to connect, communicate, and lead you in your faith life.

The church council and pastors of Fox Point Lutheran Church have made a plan for our way forward. It was not easy. It will not always make us happy. It will take sacrifice. But it will make us stronger. It will deepen our faith. It will make us grow as Christians.

**Determining Our Way Forward:**

We will continue to take our lead from health experts and officials—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), WI Department of Health Services (WDHS), Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), and the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC)—about how to best safeguard the well being of people during this pandemic. Epidemiologists inform us that the most effective way to transmit the virus is for people to be gathering in an enclosed space with limited air exchange. As a result, all large public gathering forums have been closed, postponed, or cancelled this year, including movie theaters, Summerfest, State Fair, and professional sports. Locally, there are new outbreaks and public community mask mandates. Public worship falls into the same category of a large public gathering.

We look forward to a time when we are able to gather for in-person worship again. However, determining a firm date is simply impossible. At this point, we need to wait.

Therefore, we will continue to grow our online worship community. Our worship has been innovative and dynamic. We have been blessed with a staff that has come together to produce excellent content that helps all of us worship, learn, and grow faith in our lives. We feel so blessed that our attendance at our online worship community has been equal or greater than our normal summer attendance.

You will be receiving a survey in the next several weeks asking questions on what content you would like and need to help you grow in your spiritual life. We also will be asking for your comments on how we can connect together in meaningful and safe ways. Please take the time to respond.

You will also receive our plans for online content and connection in the weeks and months ahead. We are working hard to give you the very best.

**Giving:**

We have an incredibly generous congregation. Thank you all for your continued giving. This fall, we will run our stewardship program remotely. We hope that our congregation will be able to pledge for next year what they pledged this year. If that happens, we will start 2021 in a wonderful place to be the church God needs us to be as we face new challenges in our lives.

**Communication:**

This is one of our most important tools but sometimes our weakest link. If you are not getting our emails, please contact Diane Knapp at [diane@foxpointchurch.org](mailto:diane@foxpointchurch.org).

### **The last but the best...OUR NEW BUILDING!**

We are nearing the end of our design process. We should be getting the word soon on how much our project will cost. The pastors and church council will review the information, present the design, and make suggestions to the congregation. Our plans going forward will depend on the bids. In August, you will receive a great deal of communication about the building. Please take time to read and respond.

The pastors and church council—no matter what path we take forward—have decided to close our building for at least 12 months. This will allow us to build our new building more quickly and more economically. If we can return to in-person worship before that date, we have been given permission to use other churches in our area for worship, fellowship, and all of our other ministries.

We are excited that around September 2021, we will open a new church building with amazing people to a world that will be looking for a place to find faith and friends.

### **What's Next?**

What's next is for our church to be the light shining on the hill, the spice that makes food great, the hug that cuts through sadness and grief, the joke that makes you belly laugh, the hand that (virtually) reaches out to help someone up. In other words, we will be the church we have always been to our community and the world.

Thank you for all you have done and all you will do in this next year. It will make a difference in the lives of so many people.

With Great Love and Respect,



Pastor Bill Knapp  
Lead Pastor