

Pastor's Report for the May 2022 Church Council Meeting

As we continue in the Great Fifty Days of Easter, it feels like spring-time at Mount Cross. There are signs of joy and new life on our campus and in our congregation. We baptized the baby sister of one of our preschool students last Sunday and welcomed the family to Mount Cross, our prayer garden is erupting with color, "Spring Training" for worship assistants brought renewed energy and even some new volunteers, and the Church Council is meeting in-person for the first time in over two years!

Trusting the good news of the Gospel, that goodness is stronger than evil and life is stronger than death, helps us meet our struggles and sad days with hope. We commended Linda Frantz to the arms of God when we gathered for her service on May 7, we continue to be a caring community offering practical and spiritual support to many individuals and families enduring times of illness and grief, and we are taking steps to educate ourselves on how to be a church that bears the light of Christ in a world where heart-breaking news does not seem to stop. As we meet this month, we are still reeling from the racially motivated mass shooting in Buffalo and the hate-driven attack on a Taiwanese congregation in Orange County. We need the strength and courage that knowing Christ brings us, and we need each other.

In addition to regular worship, teaching, meetings, and pastoral care responsibilities, some things I've been involved in this past month include:

- Joe and I are serving on the Synod Assembly Planning Team. The Synod Assembly is meeting June 11 at the Lutheran Center in Glendale.
- I attended the Lutheran Bishop's Colloquy in El Camino Pines May 1-2. It was my first time at the camp (loved it), and I appreciated the workshop "Finding Hope in Exhaustion."
- I attended the Episcopal Clergy conference May 2-4 in Riverside. The theme was "Exile, Return, and Renewal." The presentations focused on leadership in uncertain times.
- The Ventura County Interfaith Community invited me to present on the topic, "Sacred Space" on a Zoom webinar April 26. I talked about hallmarks of Christian sacred space, using Mount Cross as an example. The event included two other presenters. It was recorded. Here is a link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZORuE1cowU>
- I am participating in a Zoom study on the ELCA's *Declaration to People of African Descent*. It meets two hours a week for 5 weeks on Zoom. Four others from Mount Cross are also attending this course. Over 90 people, clergy and lay, from across the country registered for the study. My hope is to bring something similar to our congregation. For the declaration, go to https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Slavery_Apology_Explanation.pdf

Looking forward, we are blessed that three young people will be confirmed next Sunday, May 22, and we will celebrate graduations for students of all levels, and the conclusion of a successful preschool year, on Sunday, June 5. Don't forget to wear red that Sunday too, for Pentecost!

Thank you, Church Council, for your diligent work on behalf of the congregation.

With you in Christ's service,
Pastor Julie