

Pastor's Report for August 18, 2020 Church Council Meeting

It has been a busy and adaptive month as we continue to offer worship and programs in creative ways and adjust to staffing transitions. A positive, patient, energized and collaborative spirit encompasses our virtual gatherings and planning meetings, as well as our recent in-person gatherings.

Worship: Our combined Sunday worship services with St. Columba's concluded at the end of July. For the first part of August, we continued to livestream Sunday worship at 9:30 a.m. from the Mount Cross Prayer Garden. On August 16, we shifted the filming location to the parking lot island, planning ahead for when we can have a congregation worshipping on site. As the pandemic persists, we are trying to involve more people – either live or through recordings – as worship assistants. “Come to the Table” Drive Through Communion continues to be offered Sundays from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. thanks to the help of several volunteers each week. Usually 60-80 people attend. Peak Live Viewers on Facebook for Sunday services averages about 70 with estimated average of Facebook engagements close to 400. There are an additional 15-45 YouTube views of the recorded service each week. Music at Sunday worship is provided by a rotation of guest musicians – a stipended lead singer, a volunteer singer and a stipended accompanist. Plans are coming together to produce a few virtual choir pieces, hopefully by late September or early October. We are well-served by volunteer engineer Bill Dawson and his team for our Sunday technology needs and the Technology Committee is working to ensure the church has the necessary equipment and resources to continue offering worship online and, eventually, online and on site.

Re-Opening: I met with the Re-Opening Committee on July 29 where it was decided to allow Mount Cross groups to meet on campus outside, providing that all participants wear masks and keep at least 6 feet of physical distance. We are not yet open to outside groups meeting on our campus. Mary Circle women's Bible study was the first to meet on site on August 4. It was wonderful to meet in-person under the pavilion. The Tuesday morning women's study group also began meeting on site for some of their meetings. As of now, the Wednesday evening Bible study and Men's Bible Study have decided to continue meeting on Zoom. The information gathered from the Congregational Survey in late July is informing the Re-Opening Committee's deliberations. See below for a summary of the survey results produced by Brian Fisher.

Seminarian: Vicar Amanda Berg began her ministry internship with Mount Cross on Sunday, Aug. 2. We are happy to have her with us and she has been busy attending every program as well as helping with Sunday worship and Drive Through Communion so she can meet as many people as possible. Amanda will preach for the first time at Mount Cross on Sunday, August 23. We are working together to set her learning goals and the best use of her 25 hours/week at Mount Cross.

Office Transition: Becky Riley, Joe Zimmerly and I completed the search and hiring process for the new on site office manager. Carol Browning comes with extensive church office management experience and we are thrilled to have her on staff. Her hours are 1-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. We wish Carina well in her new adventure as a graduate student and are glad she will continue to work (mostly remotely) for us 5-15 hours/week.

Peace and Justice: It is an honor for me to work with Bill Stoll and the dedicated Peace and Justice team to plan how to help Mount Cross live into our pledge to become an anti-racist congregation. With Jacquanna Davis, I am hosting a monthly “Anti-Racism Check-in” on Zoom. This is a follow-up to the summer book group on Ibram Kendi's *How to be and Anti-Racist*.

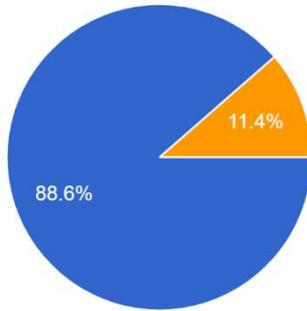
Pastor's Schedule: I was on vacation the last week in July. My day off continues to be Monday and I write from home on Fridays, however this week (8/17) I switched my day off to Friday and am working Monday.

See Joe Zimmerly's separate report on all the wonderful things happening in Children, Youth and Family Ministry.

Thank you, Church Council, for your prayerful and committed service to Mount Cross. God bless you.

Would you like a check-in call from a Care Team member or the Pastor?

114 responses

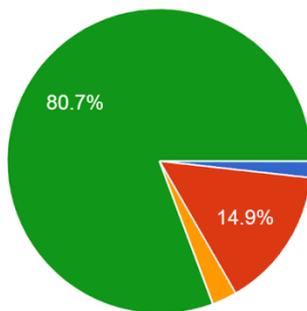


- No, thanks. I will call the church if I need anything.
- Yes, please call as soon as possible.
- Yes, a phone call in the next few weeks is fine.

Summary: 88.6% will call the church if they need anything

Would you welcome assistance with getting the equipment necessary to access online church services and/or help with learning how to access services?

114 responses

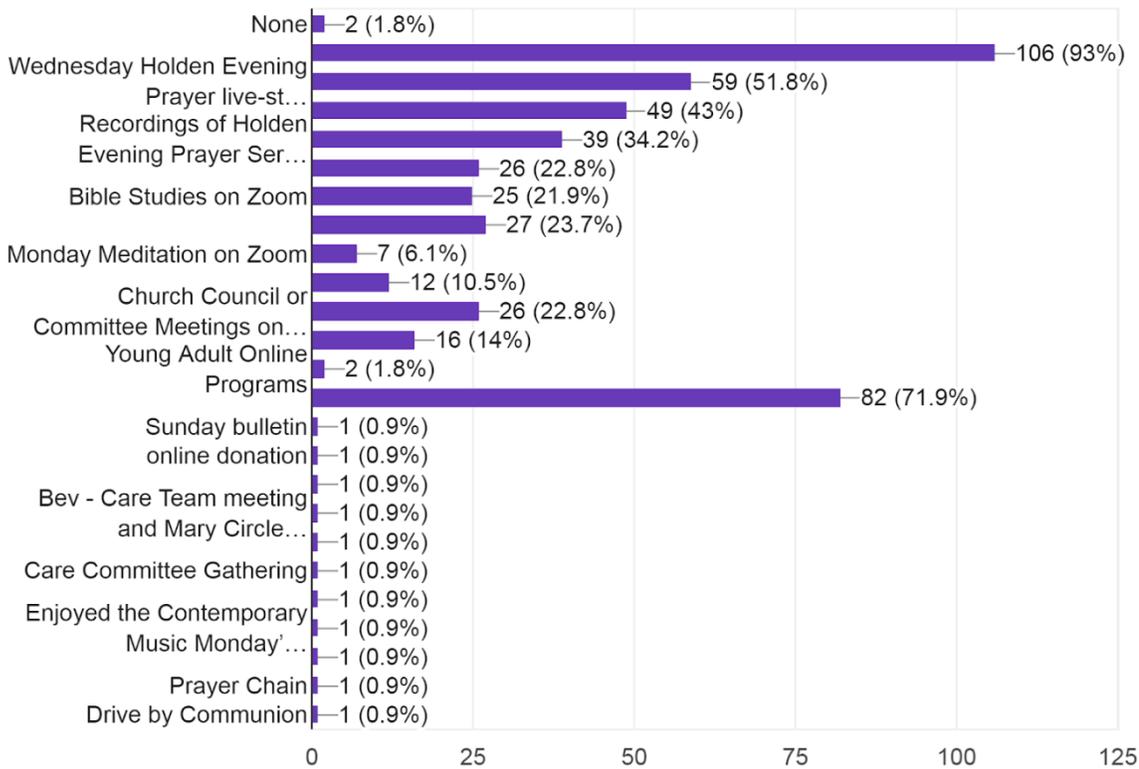


- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- I already have the equipment and knowledge necessary to access online services

Summary: 81% are OK now, 15% don't want assistance even if it was offered

What Mount Cross online content have you accessed during the COVID-19 pandemic? (Please check all that apply).

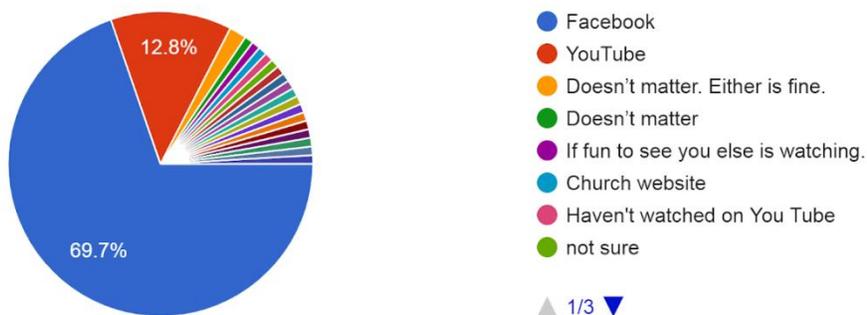
114 responses



Summary: 93% have come to a Sunday service online. 72% have received a church email or bulletin. 23% have participated in a Zoom meeting for a committee. Comments generally reflect early struggles then positive experiences after

Do you prefer watching live-stream services on Facebook or YouTube?

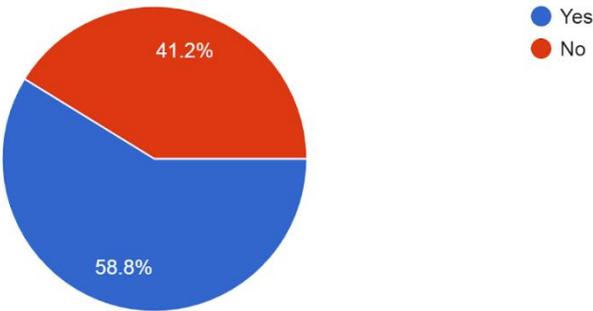
109 responses



Summary: 70% watch church on Facebook

Have you attended Sunday Drive-Through Communion?

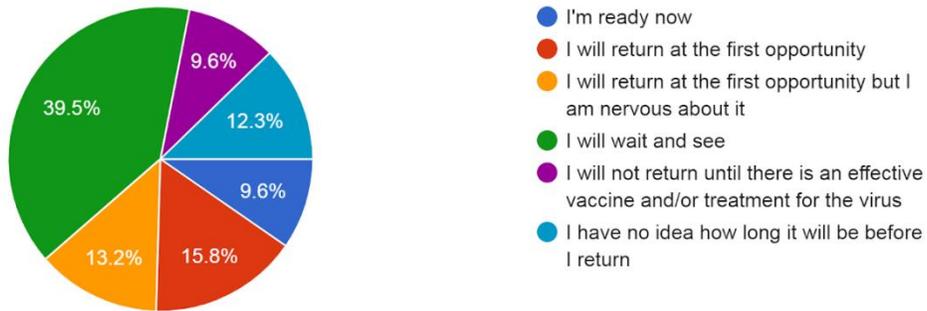
114 responses



Summary: 59% have attended and are generally positive about the experience. Of the 41% that haven't, most cite concerns over safety or that the communion during the service is enough for them

As our local government allows indoor worship services again with the above precautions, how do you think you will feel about returning to in-person worship at Mount Cross? (Select one)

114 responses



Summary: 39% are ready to return to church when offered, 40% are taking a wait and see approach, 12% don't know when they will return and 9% will return when there is a vaccine.

Regardless of what else we do, we intend to continue online live-streaming services for all who are not able to attend in-person worship. Knowing th...y, which ONE of the following do you most prefer.

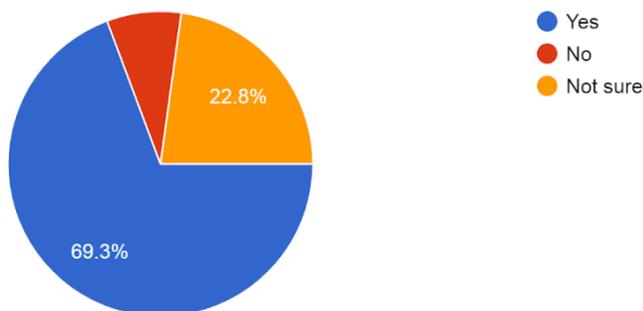
114 responses



Summary: 52% say continue as is, 8% say to drop the drive through communion, 11% want to resume normally, 14% want to resume outdoors, 15% are unsure

Would you be willing to attend a worship service at a different time than you typically attended to allow people to be more spread out in the sanctuary?

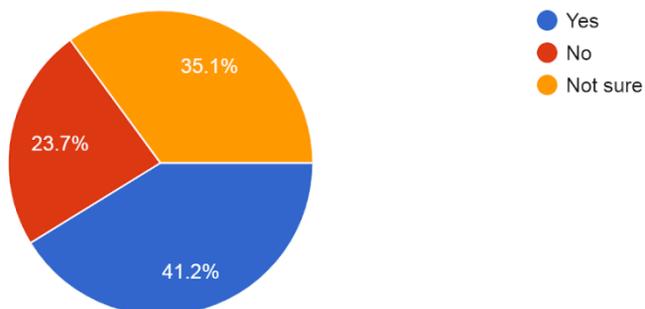
114 responses



Summary: 69% would be flexible on the timing of church to maintain distancing

Would you be willing to attend a worship service in an overflow room to ensure people (in the sanctuary and overflow rooms) are spread out?

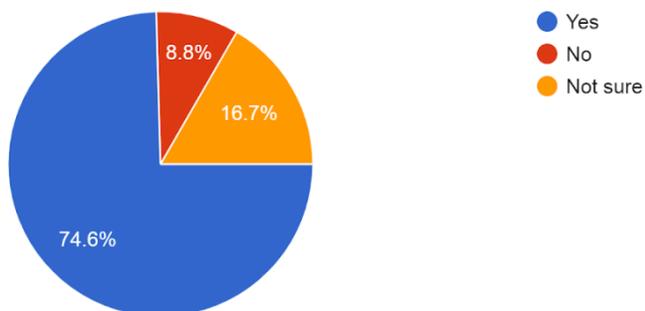
114 responses



Summary: 41% would be OK in an overflow room/area. 24% are a hard no

Weather permitting, would you be comfortable attending outdoor worship services, if safe social distancing was observed?

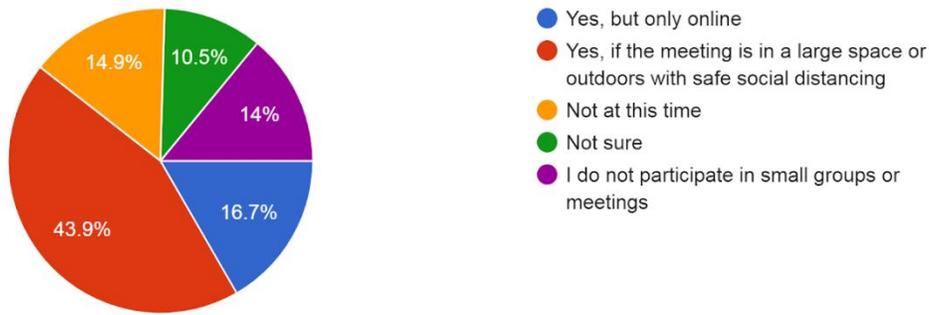
114 responses



Summary: 75% would be OK with a socially distanced outdoor service

Would you be willing to attend small group Bible studies or church meetings?

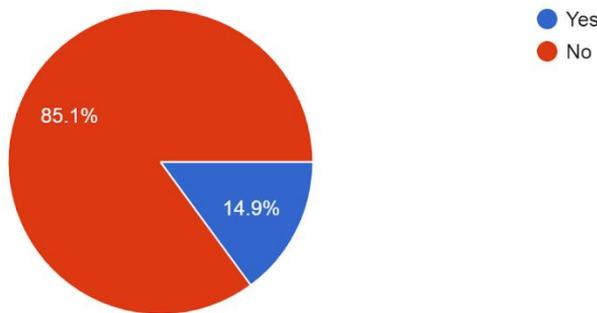
114 responses



Summary: 44% are ready for in-person socially distanced gatherings, 17% say online only, 15% say not at this time

Do you have children age 18 or younger who typically attend church with you?

114 responses



Summary: Only 15% of the respondents have children under the age of 18

If you bring children with you when you attend worship services, would you allow them to attend Children's Church or the Nursery where they typically allow youth to attend on-site youth group meetings?

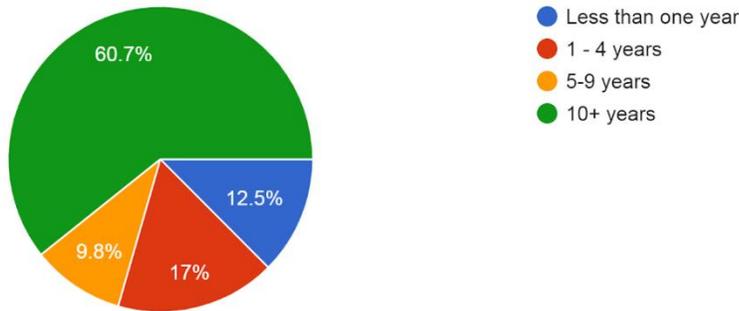
25 responses



Summary: Of the 17 responses from those with children, 40% say yes w/ restrictions, 24% say not right now and 20% don't have children that typically attend programs

How long have you been attending Mount Cross

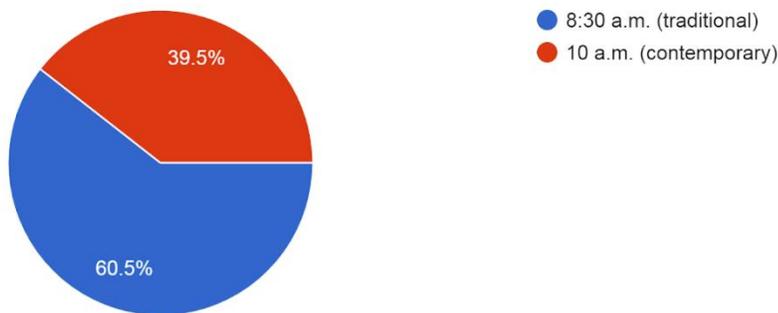
112 responses



Summary: 13% have joined in the last year, 17% in the last 1-4 years.

Which service did you attend most often before the pandemic?

114 responses



Summary: 61% early service, 39% late service

Conclusions/Questions

114 total survey responses, a 60/40 split between early and late services which seems like it may over represent the late service relative to typical attendance.

Only 17 families (15% of respondents) have children under 18. Are we spending 15% of the budget on families with children? Do we have enough adult programs for our aging population?

13% of responses came from members that have joined in the last year. Considering all of the change and challenges, this seems promising

70% access online church through Facebook. This could be a good way to publicize events at the church (in addition to email) and be relevant for online advertising to attract new members

75% would be interested in a socially distanced outdoor service

26% of responses want some form of worship service to resume ASAP. 60% say continue with online service, 10% aren't sure. This indicates to me that we should stay the course for now

In summarizing the comment questions, I think our congregation is appreciative and approves of the current service offerings. They also seem to be well informed on what is acceptable behavior (or not) for group gatherings at this stage of the pandemic. I think there is general frustration with the situation which is beyond our collective control. The reopening committee may want to consider a monthly Grapevine update on what services are available to keep the congregation informed and limit potential frustration with the pastor or council.

Pastor's Report for the July 14, 2020 Church Council Meeting

We continue to be the church in the midst of a pandemic: worshipping God, caring for each other, trying to grow in our faith and seeking ways to serve our community. Thank you to the Mount Cross Executive Committee and Church Council for being prayerful, conscientious and adaptive in leading the congregation through these uncertain and anxious times. Thank you to the Care Team for being so responsive to the needs of church members. Thank you to the Livestream Worship Team for offering a beautiful worship service each Sunday morning in our Prayer Garden.

We know things change daily but, as of now, we will continue combined livestream worship with St. Columba's Episcopal through July and return to our separate livestream service in August. A congregational survey will be sent out around July 17 to assess people's participation in online services and programs and to gather opinions about returning to in-person worship. Our Re-Opening Task Force will meet July 29 to talk about next steps. As of July 13, 2020 in-door worship services in Ventura County are again prohibited. We are exploring outdoor and parking lot options. Drive-Through Communion has been well-received since it began on June 14. Between 50-90 people participate each week. Please volunteer to help if you are able to do so.

Staff are taking vacations: Carina will be away July 15-19. Joe will be away July 16-20.

I was away at the beginning of the month and will be away July 20-28. Father Greg Larkin from St. Columba's will preach and preside at the livestream service on Sunday, July 26 while I am away and he and Pastor Lynn Enloe will be on-call for pastoral care.

Carina's last day as the on-site Office Manager will be August 16. Please join me in wishing her well as she begins graduate school. We hope to hire a new on-site Office Manager to begin by August 10.

Thank you to all who made the "Appreciation Parade" special for our musicians. We will be using volunteers and guest musicians, including Jayne Pompey, Guy Erwin and Carina McVeigh, for worship music until the pandemic resolves.

90 people signed up for the Peace and Justice Team's anti-racism book group, meeting weekly on Thursdays at 7 p.m. over Zoom. The last meeting will be July 16 and then the group will consider next steps to continue local anti-racism education and action, in keeping with ELCA positions.

We will joyfully welcome our seminarian, Amanda Berg, on Sunday August 2 with a "Service of Beginning" included in our Sunday worship. The members of Amanda's Lay Internship Committee are Allison Johnson, Luanne Crockett, Kris Dawson, Bill Greason and Brian Rubin. The purposes of the Lay Internship Committee are to support, accompany and evaluate the seminarian.

Bible Studies have continued, though with some modifications to accommodate my vacation schedule.

Pastor's Report for the June 2020 Church Council Meeting

Worship

Sunday Worship: We have continued to join with St. Columba's Episcopal Church for one live-streamed service at 9:30 am on Sundays from the Mount Cross Prayer Garden. Fr. Greg Larkin and I share preaching and presiding. On June 7, the sermon was from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. I propose continuing these shared services through July. (On June 28, St. Columba's will not be with us because they are participating in an online worship service that their Bishop is conducting).

Originating from the Re-Opening Committee and approved by Church Council, we began offering "Drive Through Communion" from 11 am – 1 pm on June 14. 90 people total in 52 cars participated. Many expressed their joy and gratitude for the opportunity to be back on campus, see some church members and receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. I propose continuing this through July.

Wednesday Worship: Our Holden Evening Prayer services on Wednesday at 7pm will conclude at the end of June. Originally planned just for Lent, we continued to offer them to the congregation in the height of the stay at home order for continuity, connection and spiritual support.

Upper Room Zoom, 15 minutes of Prayer at Noon Mondays -Saturdays: Initially an offering only for the 9 days between Ascension and Pentecost, several people wanted to continue this so, with shared leadership, it continues. We will re-evaluate it at the end of the month. An average of 8 people attend daily, some from Mt. Cross, some from St. Columba's and some from other churches.

Adult Christian Formation

Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study, Wednesday evening Bible Study and bi-weekly Men's Bible Study all continue on Zoom.

The Peace and Justice Team started a new book group for the congregation and community, reading *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram Kendi. Over 60 people joined us on Zoom for the launch of this book group. We will meet from 7pm-8pm on Thursdays, June 11, 18, 25, and July-9 and 16.

Pastoral Care

I continue to visit personally with anyone who is on hospice and to reach out and respond by phone, Zoom and email to other pastoral concerns.

Community Involvement

I supported the peaceful, silent protest "Hear My Cry" at Constitution Park on Tuesday, June 2 organized by Jacquanna Davis who attends worship at Mount Cross. Several Mount Cross members attended. Here is an article about it in the Camarillo Acorn. <https://www.thecamarilloacorn.com/articles/peaceful-protests-held-in-camarillo-across-county/> I also was invited to speak at a peaceful candlelight vigil for George Floyd on Monday, June 8 at Constitution Park.

Administration

I will be away June 29- July 7 and July 20 – 29 and have arranged for pastoral coverage. Office Manager, Carina McVeigh, did a great job following all county guidelines to re-open the church office. See her message below about this and other office matters.

Church Council,

As you know, the office is officially reopened and registered with Ventura County as such. While we are excited to take this step toward full reopening, there is still a long way to go. Details surrounding COVID-19 information and a Mount Cross specific training are available on our website at <https://www.mountcross.com/coronavirus-information.html>, and I have asked that anyone who plans to be in the office review the policies before coming in and notify one of the regular office staff (Pastor Julie, Joe, or myself).

Starting in July, when we are no longer broadcasting Holden Evening Prayer, I will be fully switched back to regular office hours. I will be in the office from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and for approximately three hours after worship on Sunday (this is dependent upon when service ends and what service timeline we are following). Joe is in the office from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Fridays. I am currently finalizing the new church directory, and expect it to be completed by late June or early July if not sooner. We will likely start distributing them via drive through Communion.

I will also be working on reorganizing the front office and maximizing the use of our filing cabinet in the hallway, as well as the long term project of updating our member tracking database. While Bill, Becky, and Susan are working on updating the official roster and bringing that information to council to officially remove members, the database updates are solely for tracking purposes. My work there does not officially remove anyone from Mount Cross membership. When that database is updated, we will be able to use it for creating the directory, sending the newsletter, etc.

As I'm sure Pastor Julie has shared with you, I have been in the process of applying to graduate school over the course of the last year. I am excited to announce that I have been accepted to my first choice program! I will be attending California State University Long Beach beginning in August to complete a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Theatre Management and a Master of Business Administration (MBA). I have been informed by the department that the first semester of school will be entirely online, so Pastor Julie and I will be discussing how to best transition my position as I will, fortunately, still be local until the holidays. I want you all to know that Mount Cross is more than a job to me. This congregation has become my family, and I am eternally grateful for the wonderful support and care I've received here, so I will do everything I can to make my transition as easy as possible, and am open to the many possibilities that that may come with. I'm grateful that the opportunity to do things smoothly and over time is available.

Carina McVeigh, Office Manager

Pastor's Report for May 19, 2019 Church Council Meeting

I am pleased with the overall functioning and spiritual health of Mount Cross during this pandemic. Even though people have been anxious, frustrated and eager to return to meeting together at church, I am witnessing a lot of adaptability, patience and care for one another and the community. The Church Council has been attentive, calm, constructive and supportive. I thank God for the goodwill and wisdom permeating our congregation and pray for guidance as we all try to make the best decisions moving forward.

Worship

Sunday Worship: During the month of May we have combined with St. Columba's Episcopal Church for one live-streamed service at 9:30 am on Sundays from the Mount Cross Prayer Garden. Fr. Greg and I alternate preaching and presiding. Assisting ministers and musicians from both congregations participate. The services seem to be well-received by both congregations. Facebook statistics, which should be held lightly, indicate that the number of "Peak Live Viewers" on 5/3, 5/10 and 5/17, respectively, were 109, 87 and 102. Total views are much higher but should also be taken lightly. St. Columba's Vestry (equivalent to Church Council)

met last Sunday and would like the combined services to continue through June. I have asked the Worship and Music Committee for their input and those from the Committee who have responded have agreed that it is a good idea to continue through June, although we should revisit that format if in-person worship is allowed before the end of June. I request a Council decision on the question of continuing combined services with St. Columba's.

Wednesday Worship: Holden Evening Prayer continues on Wednesdays at 7PM. Carol Browning accompanies Carina McVeigh and/or Jayne Pompey and Brian and Tiana Stouch. I arrange for a video message from someone from the congregation or community. The number of "Peak Live Viewers" for 4/29, 5/6 and 5/13 were 36, 32 and 34, respectively. We plan to continue offering Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesdays through June.

*Both Sunday and Wednesday worship are completely dependent on Production Engineering, courtesy of Bill Dawson and Joe Zimmerly, assisted by Emily Valencia and Colin Edwards. Carina coordinates our social media presence and uploads all videos to YouTube.

Ascension – Pentecost: Special Ascension Thursday Worship at 5:30 PM Thursday, May 21 followed by the Nine Day Prayer Challenge for the Holy Spirit's guidance, the "Upper Room Zoom" from 12-12:15 May 22-May 30, culminating in worship on Pentecost Sunday.

Looking towards re-opening of Sunday Worship: I am staying informed about County and State orders and Synod and ELCA guidelines. Bishop Erwin asks that we move slowly and carefully. In addition to consultation with the Advisory Committee appointed at the last Council Meeting (Craig, Brian, Becky and Randy), this ELCA document is guiding my thinking about how and when to resume in-person worship
<https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/returning-to%20In-person-worship.pdf>

Adult Christian Formation

All on Zoom: Wednesday evening weekly Bible Study continues, average of 7 participants. Tuesday morning weekly Women's Bible Study continues, average of 12 participants. Bi-weekly Men's Bible Study continues, average of 12 participants.

Pastoral Care

The Care Team is doing excellent work reaching out to the whole congregation. I'm leaning on them for information about who may need more focused pastoral care. I continue to offer pastoral care via phone, Zoom and email and am visiting people, with appropriate precautions, in hospice situations. To date, no one in the Mount Cross community has contracted COVID-19, according to my knowledge.

Administration

Joe, Carina and I meet weekly as a staff. Carina is preparing the necessary documents to register in the County as a re-opened office. The next newsletter deadline is Thursday, May 21.

Pastor's Report for the April 2020 Church Council Meeting March 18-April 21, 2020

This is a report from the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the "Stay Well at Home" order that was issued in Ventura County on March 17 and updated on April 20. Thankfully, our congregation has not suffered illness or death due to the virus. However, every person has been impacted by the changes to daily life, some have lost

jobs and we have had to close the Child Development Center through this school year. Church continues at this time but in different ways. We are learning what is most important: worship, caring and opportunities for connection and service. We are working towards the best ways to offer what is most important given current restrictions and we are recognizing how collectively gifted we are with skills, resources, leadership, cooperation, perseverance, creativity, humor and generosity. I need to say, in bold letters, that **Carina McVeigh and Joe Zimmerly have provided essential skills, energy and commitment to excellence during this crisis. I am grateful to be working with them and the Executive Committee and Church Council.**

Worship: March 15 was the last day people gathered in the church for worship. Beginning with Wednesday night Holden Evening Prayer on March 18, we have livestreamed Wednesday Evening Prayer at 7 pm and Sunday worship at 9:30 am with a small worship team. We were also able to offer all the services of Holy Week (Maundy Thursday, 2 services on Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday) some in collaboration with St. Columba's Episcopal Church. Deep gratitude to those who make our worship services possible (Joe Zimmerly, Carina McVeigh, Bill Dawson), those who are assisting (Allison Johnson, the Stouch family, Brett Hanley, Carol Browning, Kate Fisher, Emily Valencia) and the congregation for supporting these efforts with their encouragement and patience. We are now allowed to have up to 10 people working on the livestream services.

Looking forward: I expect we will only be able to offer worship by livestream or recordings at least through May and possibly longer. Technology is working to improve our livestream. We also need to address the accessibility of our services. Some people continue to have difficulty finding them.

Caring: Under Susan Prosser's leadership, the Care Team and additional volunteers have reached out to the entire congregation and maintain on-going connection and support for those who need or want it. This is a stellar example of "God's Work our Hands" and I commend and thank the Care Team. I continue to offer pastoral care by phone and Zoom, as needed and in person in the case of urgency.

Opportunities for Connection and Spiritual Growth: Joe Zimmerly has stepped into the huge need for children and youth to have structure, support and fun during this time. See his report for a full list. I celebrate his commitment and dedication to his work and the joy and creativity with which he does it. I continue to offer Wednesday evening Bible Study and Women's Bible Study weekly, and Men's Bible study bi-weekly, as well as a virtual "hospitality time" after Sunday worship.

Pastor's Report to Church Council for March 2020 Council Meeting February 19 – March 17, 2020

Worship at Mount Cross: There were 4 Sundays in this report period, with 8 Sunday worship services. I presided at all of them and preached at 6 of them. The Rev. Susan Klein preached on March 15. We transitioned into Lent on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26. Mount Cross hosted St. Columba's. The Rev. Greg Larkin preached and I presided at the 7 pm service which included the distribution of ashes. We also offered "Ashes to Go" for preschool families and others who could not attend the evening Ash Wednesday service. At least 20 people came to the patio or church office during the day for a prayer and ashes. Joe Zimmerly and Carina McVeigh assisted with "Ashes to Go" and it was well-received by all who experienced it.

Accompanied by Guy Ervin, we offered Holden Evening Prayer following the Lenten Soup suppers on March 4 and 11. On March 4, Jayne Pompey and Allison Johnson led the singing for the prayer service, Confirmation students were worship assistants and I gave the message. On March 11, Carina McVeigh and Sarah Dagnan led the singing, Confirmation students were the worship assistants and Carina McVeigh gave the message. We have people assigned to lead and give the message for the remaining Wednesdays in Lent, however the coronavirus response will change the nature of these services.

I met with the Worship and Music Committee and Contemporary Worship Focus Team separately on March 5. We discussed the Holy Week schedule, which will likely be modified in response to the coronavirus response. The planned schedule was Maundy Thursday at 7 pm, Good Friday at noon at Mount Cross and at 7:30 pm at St. Columba's, Easter Vigil/Sunrise services Easter morning at 6am at Mount Cross (with St. Columba's) and 8:30 am and 10 am "blended" worship at Mount Cross.

Pastoral Care: I met with 3 people for "Get-to-Know-You" conversations this month, bringing the total to 70. I had 6 pastoral care sessions, including 2 home communions. We offered the second "Communion with Community" on March 11. 8 people attended. I am working with the Care Team to make sure our entire congregation receives caring calls in response to the coronavirus.

Adult Education: The well-received video series "The Lives of Great Christians" concluded on February 23. On March 1, we began a new Sunday Adult Education series on "Ways to Pray." In the first class we discussed "What is Prayer?" In the second class on March 8 we discussed and experienced praying with scripture. The class on March 15 was cancelled due to increased social distancing related to the coronavirus. The class is now postponed for the time being.

Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study met 4 times. We began a Gather study on Forgiveness and Reconciliation for Lent. Our March 17 meeting was held on Zoom video conferencing and we will continue to meet that way during this time of social distancing. I attended Mary's Circle women's bible study on March 3 at the home of Judy Winters.

Men's Bible Study met Feb. 20 at Denny's. Bill Greason led the study in my absence. The location was changed to Marie Callender's, beginning March 5, to better accommodate the size of the group. I attended 3/5 and Brian Rubin facilitated the study. Beginning this week and throughout the duration of social distancing, Men's Bible Study will be held on Zoom.

Two "Companions on a Journey with Jesus" spiritual direction groups met, facilitated by Dr. Luisa Johnson. These are monthly groups, one held on Monday afternoons and one on Tuesday mornings.

Peace and Justice: The Peace and Justice Team met on March 10. We are planning to be trained in the Alternatives to Violence Program in June. Our goal of contributing 40 phone banking hours to Everytown for Gun Safety by Easter may be a bit ambitious, but we are proud of team member Karin Grennan for leading the way in this.

Wider Church Involvement: Mount Cross has been asked to have a ministry intern from Wartburg Theological Seminary. The seminarian lives locally and would serve at Mount Cross about 25 hours per week for one year. Normally the stipend is \$21,600 for a full-time intern. We are not required to pay a stipend because of the seminarian's geographical restrictions, but we may offer a stipend. We are required to pay an administrative fee of \$1,000; contribute to a travel pool for seminarians of \$500, reimburse mileage incurred in performance of duties; and pay up to \$1,000 towards registration at synod assembly and other conferences.

I met with my clergy women's support group at Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino on March 2 and walked in the local Crop Walk on March 8.

I wrote a devotion of the California Lutheran University Online Lenten Devotional and it was published March 13, 2020. You can view it here <https://blogs.callutheran.edu/lenten-devotions/2020/03/13/>

Full-Communion Partners and Ecumenical Involvement: I have a meeting planned with Fr. Greg Larkin of St. Columba's Episcopal and Pastor Gary Keene of Camarillo United Methodist Church on Thursday, March 19 to discuss ways to collaborate.

Community Involvement: The Camarillo Acorn interviewed me about my favorite movie or TV show and published the column March 6. It can be viewed here <https://www.thecamarilloacorn.com/articles/pastor-inspired-by-leaders-in-star-trek/?fbclid=IwAR2LQVcLNob4D5Nrk15sf4f3YG-hN9nC-qmoG0UbcNmz07rqVmxXv9bowJs>.

Coronavirus Response Plans: Presented verbally in the meeting for discussion and Council decisions.

God bless you all and our whole community as we do our best to love and serve God and neighbor in these unsettled times. Thank you, Church Council, for your wisdom and prayerful leadership!

Pastor's Report to Church Council for February 2020 Council Meeting January 9 – February 18, 2020

This is a longer report period than usual due to the earlier scheduled January meeting to accommodate Annual Meeting timelines.

Worship at Mount Cross: There were 6 Sundays in this report period, with 12 Sunday worship services. I presided at 10 of them and preached at 8 of them. Pastor Lynn Enloe preached at both services on 2/2, allowing me to spend more time the previous week preparing for the Leadership Retreat. Pastor Bill Knutson preached and presided at both services on 2/16 while I was away for continuing education. I hope to welcome guest preachers about once a month to Mount Cross to allow the congregation to hear different voices and to allow me to give occasional focus to other congregational needs.

This month there was one baptism on 2/2 and three funerals on 1/18, 1/25 and 2/8. The funeral on 1/18 also included a graveside service. All three families expressed their deep gratitude to Mount Cross for beautiful services honoring their loved ones and for the Helping Hands ministry's compassionate assistance with the receptions.

I met with the Contemporary Worship Focus Team on 2/6. We continue to work together to offer a contemporary service that meets the needs of those in attendance. We are increasing opportunities for spontaneous prayers of intercession and offering healing prayer stations once each month. We are discussing the need to offer hospitality after the service to allow people to visit with each other. I am grateful to the Praise Band for their generous dedication to and care for the 10 am service.

I met with the Worship and Music Committee on 2/10. We discussed adding a 3rd service on Easter Sunday and decided it would be a sunrise service. We also discussed increased collaboration with our Full-Communion partners for Holy Week. At this time, St. Columba's *may* be joining us for the Easter sunrise service and we will make it a combined Easter Vigil – beginning in the darkness with the readings and celebrating Christ's resurrection as the sun rises. We *may* be joining with St. Columba's and another church for Good Friday. I invite Council comments about this.

Pastoral Care: I met with 6 people for "Get-to-Know-You" conversations this month, bringing the total to 67. Included in these conversations are potential new members of Mount Cross. I reach out to all local visitors who give their contact information and invite them to meet with me. Sign-ups from current members are slowing down. Please sign-up and encourage others to do so, either by calling the office or going online to <https://signup.com/go/> There are plenty of openings and I can always make more time slots available.

I made 3 Communion visits this month and, on 2/12, started what will be a monthly, short "Communion with Community" offering for people who are unable to make it to church for a full hour on Sunday mornings. 10

people attended . I continue to coordinate Home Communion visits from our wonderful Communion Ministers and always welcome referrals to this ministry. I had 11 pastoral meetings with Mount Cross people this month, including funeral and baptism preparation. I also offer pastoral care via phone and email, the number of which I do not track. I met with the Care Team on 1/9 and 2/6 and was happy to be at the well-attended luncheon for caring ministries on 1/12. We have an excellent and devoted Care Team. The addition of a Volunteer Coordinator will really help the Care Team expand its reach, as well as serving other needs in the church. The search is under way for the right person for that position. Please pray and spread the word.

Many thanks to local clergy, Pastor Lynn Enloe, Rev. Susan Klein and Pastor Bill Knutson for providing on-call pastoral care while I am away for continuing education 2/15-2/22.

Adult Education: Sunday Adult Education resumed on 1/5. The video series “The Lives of Great Christians” has been well-received. I estimate an average attendance of 15 people. Thank you to LaJean Wenzel for facilitating the class while I was away 2/16. Adult Bible Study resumed 1/15 and continues to reflect on the upcoming Sunday’s Gospel. Estimated average attendance is 10 people. Thank you to Allison Johnson for facilitating on 2/19 while I am away. Tuesday morning Women’s Bible Study resumed 1/14. We are using a study called “Slow Faith” published by Gather. Estimated average attendance is 9. Thank you to Allison Johnson for facilitating 2/18. Men’s Bible Study met at Denny’s on 1/9, 1/23 and 2/6. Estimated average attendance is 12. Thank you to Bill Stoll for facilitating on 2/6 and to Bill Greason who will facilitate on 2/20. In an effort to increase small group faith formation opportunities at Mount Cross, I invited a local spiritual director, Luisa Johnson, to offer introductory sessions of a group process called “Companions on a Journey with Jesus.” She offered these on 2/10 and 2/11. A total of 16 people attended. There may be enough interest to start two groups which would meet monthly.

Peace and Justice: The Peace and Justice Team met on 1/3 and 2/10. I am encouraged by the attendance (estimated 10-12 people). We are planning to be trained in a program called the Alternatives to Violence Project and, inspired by Karin Grennan, we set a goal to contribute 40 phone banking hours to Everytown for Gun Safety by Easter.

Children and Youth: Collaborating with Joe Zimmerly on Confirmation classes Wednesday nights continues to be a highlight of my week. We have wonderful middle school students and loving and dedicated Confirmation Guides, Brian Fischer and Patti Stouch.

Child Development Center: Joe Zimmerly has been leading Chapel for the CDC since he came on full-time in January. He has good ideas for building the connections between the church and the CDC, including offering “Ashes to Go” to preschool families at drop-off and pick-up times on Ash Wednesday. I’m looking forward to doing that with him.

Wider Church Involvement: I was approached by Pastor Brenda Bos (Pastor Reg’s successor at the Synod offices) asking if we would consider having a full-time ministry intern at Mount Cross for the coming academic year. This would be a person in seminary at Wartburg. No stipend is required but there is a hope that we would be able to contribute something. More conversations to follow about that.

I was pleased to write a letter of support for a grant application submitted to the Synod by Trinity, Ventura. They are partnering with a volunteer caregiving agency to establish comprehensive support services for older adults in ELCA churches. Mount Cross will be among the first churches they work with if the grant is funded.

I met with my clergy women’s support group at Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino on 2/3. I attended the ordinations for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles on 1/11 at the Cathedral of St. John in Los Angeles as a member of the Bishop’s Commission on Ministry and also as a presenter of one of the candidates for the priesthood. Bishop Taylor has asked that I continue working with the Commission on Ministry to design the Diocesan Discernment Year for people considering ministry in the church. After a leave of absence from

August-December 2019 while I was on-boarding at Mount Cross, it is important for me to re-engage with this service to the Diocese.

Full-Communion Partners and Ecumenical Involvement: I met with Father Greg Larkin from St. Columba's to plan Ash Wednesday and to discuss the possibility of collaborating on some Holy Week observances, this year possibly including the Easter Vigil and Good Friday (see Worship above). I will be meeting with him and Pastor Gary Keene of Camarillo United Methodist Church in March to discuss other ways we can work together in the community.

Community Involvement: Representing Mount Cross, I attended the memorial service at Nancy Bush park for Kaydian Shipley. Also, from time to time I am asked to respond to pastoral needs of people not associated with Mount Cross and who are unlikely to become formally associated. Sometimes people reach out to me directly or are referred by local health care providers. I respond as I am able, recognizing that my priority is to Mount Cross members.

Administration: Fingerprinting is still pending, but Safeguarding training is complete.

My first Mount Cross Annual Meeting was January 26. Thank you to President Craig Blois and Treasurer Keith Selbrede for clear presentations and a good meeting process and to the whole Council and congregation for a wonderful pot-luck dinner. Next year we can include narrative and/or visual highlights of the church year. Welcome new Council members! Thank you for serving!

The Leadership Retreat for Church Council and other leaders was Feb. 1. I was pleased with the turn out and the deep, thoughtful discussions. Notes from the day were sent to all in attendance. Based on the conversations that day and follow-up conversations. I will present some possible congregational goals to Executive Committee in March, to be further refined and brought to Council at the March meeting.

I met with the Personnel Committee on 1/31 to review the Employee Handbook. Thank you to Jim Prosser and his committee for bringing this big project to completion.

With the help of Becky Riley, I will be completing job reviews with the music staff in March, the Office Manager in April and the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries in May. Executive Committee will plan for my review in June or July.

My office remodel is progressing and looks great!

Looking Ahead:

- Mount Cross is hosting St. Columba's for Ash Wednesday at 7 pm on 2/26/20.
- Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers (6pm) and Holden Evening Prayer (7pm) with a brief message every Wednesday in March.
- The Rev. Susan Klein will be preaching Sunday, March 15.
- I will attend the Bishop's Colloquy in Glendale the evening of March 15 - March 16.

Church Council: Thank you for your work, prayer and care! God bless you and our congregation.

**Pastor's Report to Church Council for January 2020 Council Meeting
December 17, 2019 – January 8, 2020**

Worship at Mount Cross: Since the last Council Meeting, I preached and presided at 9 worship services, including 2 Baptisms and 2 Christmas Eve services. Thank you to the Altar Guild, Choir, Praise Band and all who served as Lectors, Assisting Ministers, Communion Assistants, Ushers and Greeters helping to make Christmas Eve beautiful, joyful and inviting. We had one worship service only on 12/29/19 and during the sermon I screened a short film on AMMPARO, the ELCA's strategy of Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. On 1/2/20 I met with the Contemporary Worship Focus Group. We decided to incorporate an opportunity for healing prayers after communion on 1/26/20.

Pastoral Care: I met with 3 people for "Get-to-Know-You" conversations this month, bringing the total to 61. I made 5 Home Communion visits, and 6 pastoral visits, including 2 hospital visits. Services for John Colby III are being planned for 1/25/20. The Care Team is gathering all care related ministries for a lunch meeting on Sunday, January 12.

Adult Education: Since the last Council meeting, I facilitated one Wednesday night Bible Study on 12/18/19 and one Men's Bible Study on 12/19/19. Mark Storer's Sunday morning class on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* concluded on 12/22 with a screening of a film adaptation of the book. Women's Bible Study concluded Advent Yoga Chapel with Pastor Jennifer Witten in December and will resume on 1/14/20 with another *Gather* curriculum. I launched the Adult Education series for this season after Epiphany on 1/5/20. It is called "The Lives of Great Christians" and will use video lectures from one of The Teaching Company's Great Courses.

Children and Youth: I joined the Confirmation class in Christmas caroling to some home-bound or elderly parishioners on 12/18/19. It was heart-warming to see how meaningful it was to both the carolers and those visited.

Child Development Center: I led 2 chapel services after the last council meeting in December. Chapel resumed 1/7 and 1/8 and I am working to transition Joe Zimmerly into the role of chapel leader for the CDC.

Wider Church Involvement: I met with my clergy women's support group at Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino on 1/6/20.

Administration: Joe, Carina and I completed the required Harassment Prevention and Safeguarding God's Children video training on 12/30 and 12/31.

We have been working to refine office hours, office coverage and days off. The office will continue to be open 10-5 Monday-Thursday and 10-1 on Friday. Carina will work most Sundays from 12-3 rather than Fridays from 10-1, thus allowing her to have two days off each week. She will arrange for volunteer office coverage on Fridays from 10-1. Joe will generally have Mondays and Saturdays off, although his camp schedule during January and February will require shifting days off. I am switching my day off to Monday (and Saturday when possible). I will use Fridays as a writing day off site.

I met with Executive Committee on 1/2/20 to consider the 2020 budget and Annual Meeting Agenda. Carina is completing assembly of the Annual Report so it will be available two weeks in advance of the January 26, 2020 Annual Meeting.

The new phone system is up and running, thanks to Gil Valencia and the Technology Committee!

Looking Ahead:

Men's Bible Study resumes 1/9/20

Women's Bible Study resumes 1/14/20

Wednesday night programs, including Adult Bible Study and Confirmation resume 1/15/20

The Annual Meeting and Pot-luck is Sunday, January 26 at 4 p.m.

The Church Council Retreat is Saturday, February 1 – time and place TBA

I will be away 2/15-2/22 for continuing education focused on worship and preaching for Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Mount Cross is hosting St. Columba's for Ash Wednesday at 7 pm on 2/26/20.

Pastor's Report to Church Council for December Council Meeting November 19, 2019 – December 16, 2019

Worship at Mount Cross: In addition to the regular Sunday worship schedule this month (2 services each Sunday at 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 am.) Mount Cross offered a Thanksgiving Eve Holden Evening Prayer Service. I presided and preached at 6 of the 8 Sunday services. I am grateful to Pastor Ron Cox, the guest preacher and presider on 11/23, and Allison Johnson and Jayne Pompey, presiders at Holden Evening Prayer on 11/27, while I was away. We began a new church year with the first Sunday of Advent on December 1. "Farewell and Godspeed" to the Riley family was incorporated into the 8:30am service on 12/15. I met with the Contemporary Service Focus Group on 12/5. While acknowledging the wide-range of hopes for the service, we chose to focus this month on inviting more heart-felt, spontaneous prayers during the Prayers of Intercession. I met with the Worship and Music Committee on 12/9. The Altar Guild, Sanctuary Choir, Bell Choir, Praise Band and Church Council are all represented on the Worship and Music Committee.

Pastoral Care: I met with 5 people for "Get-to-Know-You" conversations this month, bringing the total to 58. I made 9 pastoral visits, including 1 to the hospital. I met with the Care Team on 11/21. I appreciate their work to make sure that members of the congregation are supported in their physical and spiritual needs. The Care Team is gathering all care related ministries for a lunch meeting on Sunday, January 12.

Adult Education: Since the last Council meeting, I facilitated 1 Men's Bible Study and 1 Women's Bible Study. For Advent, the Women's Bible Study welcomed Pastor Jennifer Witten to lead Yoga Chapel, an integration of yoga and Christian meditation. The prayerful yoga experience was well-received by the group. All 4 Sunday Adult Education classes this month had guest teachers. Many thanks to Allison Johnson for leading a session on "Reaching Out to the Unchurched" on 11/23 while I was away and to Mark Storer for teaching a three-week class (12/1, 12/8 and 12/15) on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Based on the high attendance at the Sunday Adult Education programs this month, I think people appreciate learning from a variety of teachers/facilitators, especially those who are passionate about the subject they are teaching. I welcome suggestions for adult education topics and leaders in the new year. The Wednesday evening Bible Study (focusing on the upcoming Sunday Gospel reading) met 3 times since the last Council meeting. Thank you to Melissa Henry for leading the study on 12/4. The Wednesday evening family dinners prepared by John Colby IV continue to earn rave reviews. I joined in the Peace and Justice Team meeting on 12/9 and am pleased with the group process to research community responses to gun-violence and discern how we can best participate in these efforts.

Children and Youth: Joe Zimmerly and I teach Confirmation on Wednesday nights, well-supported by Confirmation mentors Brian Fisher and Patti Stouch. We are working our way through the Hebrew Bible and, thanks to Joe's connections, welcomed a CLU student to teach a class on Noah and the Flood as a project for an education class at CLU. Joe comes on as a full-time staff member in January.

Child Development Center: I led 4 chapel services this month and spoke about the Advent Wreath at the CDC Christmas program on 12/12. I will help transition Joe Zimmerly into the role of CDC Chapel Leader when he comes on staff full-time in January.

Wider Church Involvement: I hosted the Collegium (the Lutheran Clergy of the Channel Islands Conference) at Mount Cross on December 5. The Rev. Melissa Maxwell-Doherty, Vice-President for Mission and Identity at CLU, came to Camarillo to meet with me and offer her thanks for Mount Cross' consistent support of PLTS (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary) and CLU. We discussed ways to deepen these relationships.

Ecumenical and Community Involvement: About 10 Mount Cross families went to St. Columba's Advent Preparation Evening on December 1 to join in a pot-luck dinner and make Advent wreaths together, followed by an evening prayer service and blessing of the Advent wreaths. Participants found this to be a fun and meaningful event and we hope to make it an annual tradition. I met with Pastor Gary Keene of Camarillo United Methodist Church. We discussed ways for Mount Cross and Camarillo UMC to collaborate and connect. I hope to start a regular "Round Table" meeting with lay and ordained leadership from St. Columba's and Camarillo UMC in the new year to promote our full-communion partnerships. I marched in the Camarillo Christmas Parade with the Ventura County Interfaith Community on 12/14.

Administration: I have one-on-one meetings weekly with Carina McVeigh and Joe Zimmerly and we meet together as a staff Wednesdays at 2pm. We have set aside two days in late December and early January to do all of our required background checks and misconduct prevention. **The date for reports to be submitted for the Annual Meeting is December 31, 2019. Please notify your committees about this important deadline.** The Pastor's office remodel is progressing. New furniture and an area rug arrived. Carpet will be installed in the new year. The Technology Committee will install the new office phone system, likely within the week. Planning for and implementing annual staff reviews is still needed. Carina offers this update to Council:

The last few weeks in the office have been dedicated to preparation for the busy Advent and Christmas seasons as well as the new year. One of the biggest challenges we've faced has been the change of the Office Manager position from a full time (36-40 hours per week) to part time (30-32 hours per week) position, while currently requiring the same responsibilities. Pastor Julie and I are working together to see how to best meet the needs of the Office Manager position in the hours allotted to it, including discussion of outsourcing some of these tasks to volunteers or other means of assistance.

It has been discussed beginning the week of January 6, 2020 that I shift my Friday hours to Sundays after church to better accommodate the needs of the congregation, and to have volunteer office coverage on Fridays to assist with smaller tasks. In addition to this, Joe will move his current day off from Thursday to Monday. Therefore, the busiest days of the week (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays) would have all three front office staff on site.

It has been recommended by our Insurance Company (Church & Casualty) that all members of the Mount Cross Church Council have background checks completed for their own and Mount Cross' protection. At the very least, it is highly recommended that all members of the Executive Committee have background checks performed. I have these forms available if that is something Council wishes to proceed with.

I am continuing to learn more about the position and about Mount Cross every day, and am compiling a binder of Office Manager Guidelines as I learn. My biggest projects consist of updating our membership tracking software (ICON CMO), switching most of our systems into being primarily digital (or at least having digital backup records), and reorganization of the front office and its processes. Thank you!

Pastor's Report to Church Council for November Council Meeting October 16- November 18, 2019

Worship at Mount Cross: Total Sunday worship services with Holy Communion: 11, including All Saints Sunday on 11/3 with 2 baptisms and the welcoming of 17 new members to Mount Cross in the morning and my installation service in the afternoon. **I am thankful to the Call Committee, the Church Council, the Altar Guild, the Choir, Praise Band and the whole congregation for making the installation and reception such a joyful and meaningful celebration.** I met with the Worship and Music Committee on November 4, the Communion Ministers and Worship Assistants on October 19 and the Ushers and Greeters on November 9. There was one funeral with interment this month for Clairbell Peterson on Saturday, November 16. The Praise

Band Director and I convened a meeting on 11/14 for all who are interested in building up the 10:00 am contemporary worship service. There is strong commitment to the service and hope that it can develop and grow, even as there are a diversity of needs people are hoping to meet with the service and wide-ranging, even contradictory, definitions of “contemporary.”

Pastoral Care: I met with 20 people for “Get-to-Know-You” conversations this month, bringing the total to 53. I made three hospital visits and one visit to a skilled nursing facility. I worked to prepare new members for Baptism and Affirmation of Baptism on Nov. 3. I joined the Care Team at their meeting on October 31 and am hopeful that we can develop a stipended Volunteer Coordinator position (MBC funds request submitted) to help meet the needs of Mount Cross members and ministries. I have consulted with mediators about a process for healing and reconciliation related to the Pavilion construction and will continue to discuss a path forward with Executive Committee. In addition to visits, I make phone calls and check-in personally with people when I am aware of specific needs. I would like to have more time to visit people. In December, I will focus on visiting those who are ill or homebound.

Adult Education: Since the last Council meeting, I facilitated 4 Women’s Bible studies, continuing the *Gather* curriculum “In Good Company”; 3 Men’s Bible studies at Denny’s focusing on the upcoming Sunday Gospel text; 3 Wednesday evening Bible studies focusing on the upcoming Sunday Gospel (we had to cancel one Wednesday due to high winds and likely power outages) and Susan Prosser facilitated an inspiring discussion on stewardship on 11/13. I taught 3 Sunday Adult Education classes: “Living our Baptism – part 3” on 10/19 and “There is a Season” on 11/10 and 11/17 focusing on the liturgical calendar, especially Advent and Christmas. Mark Storer taught a well-received class on the stewardship of creation on 10/26. We are thrilled that he will be teaching Sunday Adult Education for three weeks (12/1, 12/8 and 12/15) on Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. I continue to attend Monday Meditation as much as possible. The Tuesday Women’s Bible study will have a guest leader, Pastor Jennifer Witten, from 9:30am-10:30am on 12/3, 12/10 and 12/17 for “Advent Yoga Chapel” which integrates yoga and Christian meditation. The Service and Missions Committee launched a new Peace and Justice Team focused on responding to gun violence with a screening of the film *Beating Guns* on 10/22 and followed-up with a meeting on 11/5 for all who are interested. We will meet monthly. I am committed to this project.

Children and Youth: I am working with Joe Zimmerly on the Wednesday evening Confirmation Class. I am looking forward to the new year when he will be with us full-time.

Joe Zimmerly offers this summary of his work this month to Council:

This month we have implemented a nursery staff and fun with faith volunteers. As we slowly build our volunteer groups, we are continuing to work through the Old Testament with our Confirmands growing in our faith and in community with one another. On our Wednesday nights, we will be learning a new grace every month in hopes to learn 12 new table graces every year. For High School youth group we will be moving our meeting times from 11am-1pm on Sundays to a new time (to be decided) in the coming weeks. We also, have completed a Parents Night Out on Friday the 15th. We are preparing for the Christmas play which will be taking place on December 15th at 7pm. We look forward to the new year as we will begin having monthly "All Church" Events where we are hoping to gather people of all ages in the church once a month for a fun outing. We also will be starting a region-wide young adults bible study group that will meet regularly.

Child Development Center: I led 10 chapel services since the last Council meeting and spoke on family spirituality at the CDC Fall Open House on October 28. It had to be rescheduled from October 25 because of a power outage due to high winds.

Administration: I have one-on-one meetings weekly with Carina McVeigh and Joe Zimmerly and we meet together as a staff Wednesdays at 2pm. We have set aside two days in late December and early January to do all of our required background checks and misconduct prevention. In January, the Office Manager’s Friday

office hours will shift to Sunday. She will work to schedule office volunteers to cover the current 10am-1pm Friday window. The Pastor's office remodel is progressing: the walls and ceiling have been painted thanks to Melissa and Gordon Henry and Jan Mann. Furniture will soon be installed. Melissa Henry is assisting me in packing up the office so that the current furniture can be donated and space made for the new furniture. Carpet will be installed in the new year. The new phone system has been ordered thanks to the Technology Committee. Installation is pending. Planning for and implementing annual staff reviews is still needed. I welcome support from the Personnel Committee in this area.

Wider Church Involvement: I met with the Collegium (the Lutheran Clergy of the Channel Islands Conference) on November 7. I will host the Collegium at Mount Cross on December 5 from 10am-12pm. I have taken a five-month leave of absence from my work with the Commission on Ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles as I transition into my ministry at Mount Cross. The Diocese is understanding and I hope to resume that work in the new year.

Ecumenical and Community Involvement: I spoke with Father Greg Larkin at St. Columba's to discuss points of collaboration between our congregations. He invited us to their Advent wreath-making and pot-luck dinner on Sunday, December 1 at 5:30 p.m. I hope Mount Cross participation will be strong. We are also publicizing their contemplative prayer service offerings in our newsletter and email communications. I met with Father Patrick Mullen at Padre Serra Catholic Church. We discussed ways to join together in introducing people to Christianity. He invited us to have a table at their Alpha program, a program of basic Christian faith formation. This program is widely used across denominations to introduce seekers to the Christian faith. Ascension Lutheran is also using it. I am in communication with Pastor Gary Keene at Camarillo United Methodist to set a time to talk about how we might work together in ministry.

I am abundantly grateful for the grace of God dancing all around Mount Cross, noticeable especially in the generous service members offer inside and outside the church. The Church Council is doing a remarkable job of leading the congregation with skill as well as faith. Thank you Church Council!

Pastor's Report to Church Council for October Council Meeting September 17- October 15, 2019

Worship at Mount Cross: Total Sunday worship services with Holy Communion: 6, including the "Tent Service" following Make, Bake Celebrate. 1 Funeral. We returned to two services on October 6 (8:30 am and 10 am). I met individually with the Music Director and the Praise Band Director at the end of September in anticipation of moving back to two services. I met with the Worship and Music Committee on October 7 and the Altar Guild for a training/re-orientation session on Saturday, October 12.

Pastoral Care: I met with the Care Team this month and appreciate the many ways they reach out to support and care for members of the church, especially those who are no longer able to attend Sunday worship. I worked with Mary Goodenough, the Coordinator of the Home Communion Ministry, to train and re-orient Home Communion Ministers on Sunday, September 29. I met with 21 people for "Get-to-Know-You" conversations this month, bringing the total to 33. These conversations are the highlight of my work week. I made one Home Communion visit and continue to touch base in person or by phone with people experiencing health or other concerns. I have discussed with Executive Committee my sense that there is a need for healing and reconciliation around issues related to the Pavilion construction. In collaboration with the Executive Committee, I am discerning pathways towards reconciliation, including the possibility of bringing in skilled reconcilers to work with us at Mount Cross. I ask for your prayers about this matter.

Adult Education: I had one Adult Education planning meeting. The Adult Education Committee no longer has any active members. I am considering ways to move forward with a team approach to Adult Education. This

month I held 4 Women's Bible studies using a Gather Curriculum called "In Good Company" about women in the Bible; 2 Men's Bible studies focusing on the upcoming Sunday Gospel text; 4 Wednesday evening Bible studies focusing on the upcoming Sunday Gospel and 3 Sunday morning adult education classes (9/21 "The Heart of Mount Cross" taught by Denise Sobolik; 10/6 "Living Our Baptism -Part 1; and 10/13 – Living Our Baptism part 2). I attend Monday Meditation when possible (love it!).

Children and Youth: I am working with Joe Zimmerly on the Wednesday evening Confirmation Class. The focus this year is the Hebrew Bible. The students are memorizing the books of the Old Testament and growing to appreciate the gift of scripture and the work of reformers whose courage and sacrifice made it possible for us to have access to the Bible in our language.

Joe Zimmerly offers this summary of his work this month to Council:

It has been over a month and I am overjoyed to be here at Mount Cross! Other than building relationships with our children, youth, and families I have started creating safe policies and practices when working with children in effect like Safe Guarding God's Children, building a youth ministry team made of dedicated volunteers, and re-implementing the nursery and staffing it. During the first week of preschool I was able to meet every child and their parent as they walked in with a flyer that explained events to look forward to from September and October. Every week I average at about 20-25 hours a week (sometimes more) while balancing 17 units at school! Usually you can find me in the office Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings when needed along with Sunday mornings.

Looking forward, some things that will be happening is our Pumpkin Patch day at Limoneira Ranch with Camp Sunday with Lutheran Retreats Camps and Conferences visiting us and building our relationship with the camps. We also have a Parents Night Out coming up on October 25th. A youth room makeover is in the works and we are looking forward to a great year in all of our programs!

Child Development Center: I led 8 chapel services this month (two each week) for the preschool, usually focusing on the Sunday Gospel or an object (e.g. the stained glass windows or the Baptismal Font) they can see in the church.

Other Events:

Make, Bake Celebrate: WOW! The organizing and execution of the event was impressive, as were the results. It was a wonderful evening of generosity and community. Kudos to the planning team and thank you to all who contributed to the event!

Stewardship: I celebrate the excellent work of this year's Stewardship Team. I attended the Stewardship Dinner and "Money Matters" workshop for Adults and Children on October 13.

Administration: I have one-on-one meetings weekly with Carina McVeigh and Joe Zimmerly and we meet together as a staff Wednesdays at 2pm. The Pastor's office remodel is progressing – painting is planned for October 17 and 18. My phone still does not work, nor does Joe's. The Technology Committee is working on it. Another administrative need is planning for and implementing annual staff reviews.

Carina McVeigh offers this summary of her work to Council:

Things in the office are going well as I continue to get accustomed to the Office Manager position. Aside from maintaining weekly responsibilities such as the Sunday bulletins, announcements, worship PowerPoint presentations, etc., my main priorities are revamping the organizational system in the office computer, updating member logs, and simplifying some of our weekly processes. I've also been working with Joe and Pastor Julie to revitalize our social media presence and eventually, with the help of the communications team, the website. Pastor Julie, Joe, and I have also been discussing the possibility of modifying my work hours in the new year when Joe is full time. These modified hours would have me in the office from at least 10a to 5p Monday through Thursday, and staying after worship for between an hour and a half and three hours on Sundays. Balancing two roles at Mount Cross (Office Manager and Praise Band Director) has proven to be a challenge, but I'm hopeful and excited for all the wonderful things happening for the church in this time.

Wider Church Involvement: Along with 3 members of Mount Cross, I attended the Conference Assembly with met Bishop Guy Erwin at CLU on September 20. I met with the Collegium (the Lutheran Clergy of the Channel Islands Conference) on October 3. I attended the first half of the CLU Convocation as a Convocator on October 10.

Community Involvement: I spoke at the Interfaith March for Peace and Justice in Oxnard on September 21 for the International Day of Peace.

Installation: I'm looking forward to my installation as Pastor of Mount Cross at 2pm on Sunday, Nov. 3 and am grateful to the Music Director, Praise Band Director, Call Committee and Church Council for helping organize the liturgy and reception. Bishop Erwin will preach and preside and representatives from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles will attend, as well as ecumenical and interfaith representatives.

Pastor's Report August 21- September 16, 2019

Respectfully Submitted by Pastor Julie Morris to the Mount Cross Church Council

Worship at Mount Cross: Sunday worship is the center of our congregational life and my first priority as Pastor. It is my joy to preach and preside at Sunday Worship and to offer a warm, friendly welcome to all on behalf of Christ and the congregation. This month: 4 Sunday services with Holy Communion, 1 funeral with Holy Communion, 5 sermons.

Pastoral Care: Through relationship-building with members, response to critical needs, welcome of newcomers and visitors and support for lay pastoral ministry, I hope to embody Christ's care for each person in our congregational community. I set a goal of having "get-to-know-you" meetings with every member of the church by Pentecost 2020. To date, I have formally met with 12 people. I also continue to reach out to all visitors and newcomers and respond to pastoral needs as they arise.

Committees and Teams: I give thanks for the many Committees and Teams at Mount Cross and the generosity of those who lead them and serve on them. My focus is getting to know the leadership and functioning of these groups. This month I attended the following committee and team meetings: Care Team, Welcome Team, Stewardship, Worship and Music (2), Helping Hands, MBC (Make, Bake, Celebrate), Praise Band, Learning Committee and Executive Committee. I also met with the Lead of the Altar Guild and maintain regular contact with the Lead of the Property Committee.

Adult Education: I am committed to ensuring Mount Cross offers quality adult Christian formation opportunities. Men's Bible study continues every other Thursday morning at Denny's; Sunday Adult Education resumed Sept. 8; a new Women's Bible study begins September 17; and Adult Bible Study resumes September 18. I facilitated two Men's Bible studies, attended Mary's Circle Women's Bible Study, attended Service and Mission's screening of *Wasted*, taught "The Heart of Christianity" on September 8 and attended "The Heart of Lutheranism" taught by LaJean Wenzel and Allison Johnson on September 15.

Children and Youth: Through supervision and support of our Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry, I am committed to ensuring that Mount Cross offers quality Christian formation for our children and youth. Joe Zimmerly began his work as Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries on August 26. I have been working closely with him to help orient him (as far as I can) to Mount Cross and the Children's Programs. He has been well-supported by the Learning Committee. Joe has coordinated and facilitated Children's Church and nursery each Sunday, as well as Youth Group. He took several youth to the Labor Day Interfaith Harvest preparation day on Sunday, Sept. 1 and the event itself on Monday, Sept. 2. He is coordinating Confirmation which begins on September 18. He and I will co-teach Confirmation.

Child Development Center: I met with the CDC staff at their opening staff meeting and lead their time of devotion on August 28, spoke at all of their parent orientations Sept. 3-6 welcoming families to Mount Cross and inviting moms to the new Women's Bible Study (REAL) and attended the CDC Board Meeting on Sept. 10. CDC Chapel resumes twice each week on Sept. 17.

Administration: The new Office Manager, Carina McVeigh, and I continue to work together to learn the administrative systems at Mount Cross. Carina, Joe and I are meeting weekly as a staff to help ensure good communication and collaboration and to follow up with necessary safety training (Safeguarding God's Children, fingerprinting, etc.)

Wider Church Involvement: I met with Bishop Guy Erwin and Pastor Reg Schultz-Akerson at the Lutheran Center in Glendale on August 21 and preached at their mid-week worship service. I met with the Collegium (the Lutheran Clergy of the Channel Islands Conference) on September 5. I continue to serve on the Commission on Ministry for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, serve as a formal mentor to a newly ordained clergy person and meet monthly with a clergy women's support group.

Community Involvement: I served as the M.C. at the Abundant Table's Feast in the Fields on August 26 and coordinated the 4th Annual Interfaith Labor Day Harvest at the Abundant Table Farm on Sept. 1. I presided at the funeral of a family member for a colleague from the Episcopal Church and at the renewal of wedding vows for a former campus ministry student.

Installation: The date for my installation as Pastor at Mount Cross has been rescheduled for Sunday, Nov. 3 in the afternoon, time to TBA.

FYI: An excerpt from Father Greg Larkin's Column in St. Columba's Episcopal Church September Newsletter

"Don't think that nothing ever happens in the summer. This past summer has been full of action and activity here at St. Columba's. We once again had a successful booth at the Camarillo Fiesta and continued our Stories Around the Campfire Bible Study and other programs as well. The Vestry Chili Cook-Off was a delightful evening of community and conversation, and we raised a little money in the process. And we refurbished the parish hall restrooms!

But all this pales in comparison with the summer our Lutheran Brothers and Sisters at Mount Cross have had. They made history by calling perhaps the first Episcopal Priest to be their full-time Pastor,

Julie Morris. In a letter, Julie shares some of her hopes and dreams:

Dear St. Columba's,

I am writing to share with you that, after a surprising sequence of events that felt Spirit-led, I was called to serve as the Pastor of Mount Cross Lutheran Church in Camarillo beginning August 1. The Episcopal Church has been in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since 2000. This full communion partnership, known as Called to Common Mission, allows for the sharing of ordained priests and pastors as a visible sign of the unity between our churches. Because I am an ecumenist by theology and life experience, I am especially excited for this opportunity to be living into what I hope is the future of the church: deeper relationships between denominations so that together we can be of greater service, in Jesus' name, to the community. I am grateful to Fr. Greg for his support and to our Bishop John Taylor and the Lutheran Bishop, Guy Erwin, for their blessings on this new call. I and the people of Mount Cross are looking forward to continuing and developing the already existing relationship between Mount Cross and St. Columba's according to the creative guidance of the Holy Spirit. I look forward with hope to all that is to come. As I said on Pentecost Sunday, when I had the joy of being with you for that great feast and St. Columba's Day, "We are all in this together." Thank you always for your love and prayers!

Peace,

Julie Morris +

We don't know what all this means or where it will go. As we move forward, we will strive to be open to the whisper of the Holy Spirit as we work to be faithful to God's call to us.

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Greg"



Pastor's Report August 20, 2019

Gratitude: Office Volunteers! Church Council! Committee Leadership and Members! The warm welcome from the whole congregation!

Worship

3 Sunday worship services with sermons, 1 with a Baptism

Pastoral Care

- 1 Baptism preparation
- 2 deaths, funerals pending
- 1 funeral planning meeting
- 2 Telecare calls
- 1 Home visit with farewell blessing
- 1 Home visitation with Holy Communion
- 1 Home bereavement visit

Newcomer/Visitor Follow-up

- Emails sent to all inviting to meet with me in the office
- 4 newcomer meetings

Programs: VBS; Many Meals; Men's Bible Study; Monday Meditation (2)

Meetings: Executive Committee, Learning Committee; Adult Education; Service and Missions (partial); Lutheran clergy breakfast; Lynn Bullock regarding Synod Mental Health Programming grant; Bishop Erwin (8/21); Worship and Music Chair; oriented to Altar Guild

Administration: Working collaboratively on new hire arrangements for self, Office Manager, Youth Children and Family Director, Assistant and Cook; helping to on-board new Office Manager; thinking through Fall worship schedule; office remodel discussions

Pre-school: Will attend all orientations, first staff meeting and first board meeting

Adult Education Plan:

“The Heart of the Matter” Sundays Sept. 8, 15, 22 11am-12pm

The Heart of Christianity (9/8; Pastor Julie)

The Heart of Lutheranism (9/15; LaJean and Allison)

The Heart of Mount Cross (9/22; Denise S.)

Bible Study resumes Wednesday’s at 5pm beginning 9/18

New Women’s Bible Study Tuesdays, beginning 9/17 at 8:30am-10am with invitations to all, especially pre-school moms

Men’s Bible Studies continue every other Thursday at 7:30 am at Denny’s

On the horizon:

Fall Worship Schedule and Contemporary Service Planning; Joe Zimmerly begins 8/26

Nursery Care- may need to re-instate

All Saints Sunday welcome and Baptisms

Needs: Computer; prayers