

# The Spirit

May 2020



A favorite book of mine in recent times has been *"In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the Word"* by Padraig O Tuama. Throughout the book O Tuama uses the word 'Hello' as a way to welcome us into a deep encounter with a simple truth, usually a truth grounded in the physical world. O Tuama is especially fond of welcoming us into an encounter with our own bodies as a way for us to understand our connections with each other.



*duine a theannadh le do chroi* – to squeeze somebody with your heart. It's lovely but I never knew it. That first time I was asked for a hug and I got one – even though I didn't know I had one to either give or take – I found myself thinking 'So this is what arms are for'."

O Tuama then offers Michael Ondaatje's poem 'Bearhug.' "Ondaatje tells of his small son, Griffin, calling for his dad to come in and kiss him goodnight. Ondaatje finishes one piece of work, then another, and then

another, and when finally he gets to the room, he finds that Griffin has been standing there with arms stretched out, grinning:

***This is the hug which collects  
all his small bones and his warm neck  
against me.***

***The thin tough body under the pyjamas  
locks to me like a magnet of blood.  
How long was he standing there  
like that, before I came?***

As we spend time apart, I find that you are all more on my mind and in my heart than ever. Your presence is real to me even as I eagerly anticipate the day we are all reunited in worship. So, I offer two poems and a verse as a way for us to acknowledge the strange poignancy of this moment in history while entrusting our future to the One who loves us best!

O Tuama says, "When I was a school chaplain a young person once wrote a prayer for our end-of-day service. He wrote it, he read it out, and then threw it in the bin. I fished it out and framed it and hung it on my way. I do not know what other prayer to pray":

***Dear God,  
Thank you for putting me on this earth  
but people can get lonely  
and I don't like people being lonely  
cause sometimes I am  
and it's not a good feeling.  
So I'd like you to pair them up  
with someone who is lonely  
if you can.  
Amen.  
Sad could be happy.***

And again, O Tuama, who grew up in Ireland says, "The Ireland I grew up in was not an Ireland that knew much about hugging. Maybe it was particularly true for Irish boys; I don't know whether it was different for girls. One Irish way of saying 'hug' is

O Tuama goes on to say, "To live in the body is to be a body. I can only speak as a person with the body of a man, and as a man. I know that there is a deeper language of the manbody than the language of prowess or domination. It is the language of confidence, of gesture, of holding and generosity.

***Hello to being a body with other bodies."***

We are beings with bodies that God named very good and formed for community within which we could all live and thrive, grow and love. In the face of a virus that means our bodies are potentially dangerous to one another, the most loving thing we can do is care for one another by keeping our distance, by withholding the hug.

Even as we experience loneliness and anxiety about what the future may hold we remember God's words given to us by the prophet, Jeremiah, "I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not dis-

aster, to give you a future filled with hope.”

This future is not without challenge and perhaps even hardship and loss. But it is a future filled with God’s love in the midst of whatever comes and it is a future we are invited to share as we imagine and courageously try new ways of being community formed in love, by love and for love for our sake and for the sake of the world.

Maybe for the first time in our lives we really are being called upon to trust in God for a future. We will trust together. I’ll trust for you when you cannot. And you can trust for me when I cannot. God holds us all.

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.

Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us

and your love supporting us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*(Holden Village prayer)*

Pastor Val



(A note left on the front door of the church. After our first Sunday of online worship. It’s still there)



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**UNITED IN BAPTISM**

There is an Irish saying: “It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.”

I am writing this at the end of March. I don’t know what the world will look like when you read this at the beginning of May. COVID-19 has the world sheltering-in-place. We’ve learned new concepts such as “social distancing” and “flatten the curve.” We have stopped physical contact—no handshakes, hugs or high fives. We even wear gloves. It is a strange new world we live in.

There is fear in this new world. Over a million people have been infected and thousands have died. We can’t see the virus. We don’t know where or when it will strike next. Our lives have been disrupted—restricted travel and closed churches, schools, businesses, parks and stores. Health care workers, those dedicated to healing, find themselves as soldiers on the front line. Pray and give thanks for them.

In this highly anxious time, some—individuals, communities and countries—are seeking safety and

certainly by stockpiling as many provisions as they can and walling off others. Barricaded behind rolls of toilet paper and Clorox wipes, fortified with generators and Spam, some will try to wait this out by themselves. There has been a spike in sales of firearms and alcohol. Not a good combination. Taking precautions is wise. Believing that it is possible to isolate and cut off from neighbors and nations so that one will never be touched either by the virus or the fallout of this pandemic is unreasonable.

For me, one of the cruelest effects of this pandemic is that we cannot gather. Our natural inclination in a time of crisis is to draw together, hold on to each other, support each other. Life passages, births, birthdays, weddings, baptisms, funerals, holy days, holidays, will be remembered as times of isolation and absence.

And yet, in the deepest, truest sense, we are connect to one another. In baptism we are united with Christ and are members one of another.

Baptism makes a difference and makes us different. We are no longer lone travelers making our way through this life. We don't have to go it alone. In fact, we cannot, because, in Christ, we are knit into one body. And just as surely as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one—this wildly mysterious community of the Trinity—so are we one.

Jesus clearly stated this and daily fulfills this promise: "My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one" (John 10:27-30).

Baptism makes us different. The immutable gracious truth that we are God's makes it possible for us to feel the connection with each other, even, and especially, when we are separated. This is a great paradox—the more we are separated from each other, the deeper our connection to each other becomes.

I find myself thinking about family and friends more often now that we can't be physically together.

And here is another paradox—when we are alone, when "the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Page 325), then, in the stillness and solitude, we feel the presence of God.

When life gets back to "normal," I pray that I do not slip back into casual encounters with people and God. We can't think of ourselves as islands. Because we belong to God, we belong to each other.

The author Hebrews puts it this way: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). +

Bishop Eaton



## WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

*Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

~ *Lamentations 3: 21b – 23*

This year in this Easter season we experience, at least to some degree, what those on the margins – those with severe disabilities or illness, the migrant, the refugee, the homeless, the poor, the jobless, the voiceless, the powerless, victims of violence, those with mental illness – all experience as their "normality": uncertainty, fear; lack of food, money; without access to basic necessities and for too many, healthcare, clean water and sanitation.

***Jesus, Light of the World: Pierce the darkness of our world and our understanding.***

For many there is the added trauma of grieving the loss of loved ones while separated by 'social distancing', quarantine, or lockdown. Words are useless at times like this, but we meet the Christ within – in the still center in each one of us whether we lay claim to faith or have none.

***Jesus, Light of the World: Come in your loving compassion; pierce the darkness of our world and our understanding.***

We celebrate and give thanks for the kindness of so many rediscovering the joy of sharing and the joy of loving those who are our neighbors.

***Jesus, Light of the World: Heal our selfishness and help us reset our values so that every one of us truly looks out for each other as one family under God.***

You went through the evil of the hatred, injustice, cruelty and a degrading tortured death, to overcome evil once and for all in our stead. As we go through our own Good Friday experience during this pandemic, may we come out to the reality of new life for us all if we choose to follow you. Forgive us, Lord, for seeking to shield ourselves behind illusory masks which hide our true selves. You know us are we really are and you love us with an everlasting love.

***Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.***

Help us to travel the road to freedom to live in your Light, and be open to the promptings of your Holy Spirit, made possible by your descending into Hell and rising again on the Third Day through love for each one of us. May we enfold and uphold each other to God's Healing Light and Love – today and always.  
***Jesus, Light of the World: May we joyfully cry out, "Christ is risen. Come let us worship."***

**We continue to pray for those in need of healing and comfort:** Arvid Iverson, David Wilhelms, Candy Cowden, Caldarella & Harley, Isaac & his mother, Jarod, Annie, Jeff & Bob, Alan, Fr. Xavier, Pam Paulin, Nancy, Al, Courtney, Adrienne, Jared, Alex Reid, Bud, Ella Swanson, June Bender, Andrea Barkstrom, Holly Henderson, Cody Walls, Carter, Kenny McCoy, Susie Kallendar, Kevin, Tom Plumlee, Lana Wilke, Ginny Clark, Philip, Matthew Green and his family, David Shaw, Don Rabung, Whitney Morean, David Hanson and for the family and friends mourning the death of Vi Nixon. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

We periodically edit the prayer list. Please contact the office 532-8250 to update prayer requests.

Contact Brenda Grant with prayer requests at: [brenda\\_k\\_grant@hotmail.com](mailto:brenda_k_grant@hotmail.com)

## May Birthdays and Anniversaries

### BIRTHDAYS:

Al Kelling, May 1  
Molly Gundersen, May 2  
Kari Ann Penttila, May 2  
Janice Frafjord, May 6  
Hiedi Seelke, May 6  
Sophie Kupka, May 8  
Hank Bilderback, May 9  
Eilidh Channel, May 9  
John Pellesier, May 14

Kristine Finazzo, May 17

Mark Smalley, May 20

Cindy Penttila, May 23

Tessa Buckman, May 24

Joelle Buckman, May 27

Madison Winter, May 28

### ANNIVERSARIES:

Jeff & Stephanie Gunderson, May 26

Al & Marge Kelling, May 27



To Kristine Finazzo and Judi Hubbard for taking care of the depositing.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to

Amazing Grace financially and with your prayers during this time.

Thanks to everyone learning new technology in order to worship together online and for your patience as we learn how best to do that.

To everyone who has donated to the Food Bank.

Michelle Weiberg and family for continuing our tradition of delighting children on Easter morning with

Easter baskets. They gathered, assembled and distributed them to our families with small children.

To those of you who are keeping an eye out for our neighbor George and each other!

A big thank you to you all for your patience during this time.

Thanks to our Care Team—calling friends and members of A.G. and keeping us connected!

Thanks to A.G. for making our parking lot available for homeless folks to have a bathroom to use when all other facilities have been closed to them almost entirely.

To Mike Hubbard and Roger Shaw for their hard work in the Sunday school room.



## THANKS WE'VE RECEIVED

- **ELCA Good Gifts** thanks Amazing Grace for a donation of \$460.08 (This donation was our Advent Noisy offering collected by young people.
- **Family Promise** thanks Amazing Grace for donations of \$25.00 & \$250.00.

**No in-person gatherings including Sunday morning worship until further notice.** Please look for more information in the Friday Grace Notes each week, special emails as they come out and on the Amazing Grace website; [amazinggraceaberdeem.org](http://amazinggraceaberdeem.org)

## OFFICE HOURS

Church office is open Tuesday & Thursday 8-1. **No one** should be in the office while Vicky is there. You can drop mail in the mail slot or drop Food Bank donations in the fellowship hall. If you need help, talk to Vicky through the door or call her: 360.532.8250.

Please let Pastor Val or a council member know of any concerns or needs that arise for you AND ways you'd like to help others. We are figuring this out together. None of us has ever been the church in a pandemic! **What we know is that we are called to love God and Jesus told us that loving our neighbors (all of them, especially the marginalized) is how God wants us to show that love! So, what does that look like here, today in Aberdeen, WA?**



## ONLINE GIVING OPTION

Our website now has an online giving option using your credit/debit card or bank accounts. Please visit our website: <https://www.amazinggraceaberdeem.org/giving>  
While you're there check out the daily devotions, the newsletter, photos and lots more information about Amazing Grace.



## SERVING AT AMAZING GRACE

### LIVING STONES PRISON MINISTRY

**Your involvement is encouraged!** You are invited to write a short (*no more than 350 words, please*) letter. A short paragraph with just a few sentences is fine. Maybe share a Bible verse that gives you hope in these days or tell where you have seen God in this time or write a prayer or reflect about a song you have heard the praise band sing. All contributions are welcome and will be gratefully received by our men. You can sign your note with your first name or just put "brother/sister in Christ." Feel free to write more than once - since we're doing this on a weekly basis, lots of letters are needed! Please email Sandi your letter(s) as you are able. Your participation will be deeply appreciated. Sandi's email: [LivingStonesAssistant@outlook.com](mailto:LivingStonesAssistant@outlook.com)

## ENDOWMENT FUND

Scholarship applications and endowment fund requests are available in church office or from Darrell Lokken. Applications are due June 1st. There will be more information on this later. All completed forms can be returned to the office or to a committee member.



### UNION GOSPEL MISSION May 5

Kristine Finazzo, Leader Liz Ellis,  
Molly Leithold, Michelle Weiberg,  
Lynnette Lile, Marti Dabandt  
Substitutes: Hiedi Seelke, Carmon Shaw 360-532-2940

They are doing 2 seating's currently to keep the residents separate from the people coming in off the street. Residents eat at 6pm, others at 7pm. The kitchen manager, Doug, would like to have food

there at 3pm. Probably would be a good idea if the team leader calls a day ahead to confirm that your meal is coming, When you deliver, drive in to the back alley, then call the Union Gospel office at 360-533-1064 and they will come out to the back alley to carry the food in for you. (You all don't have to show up at the exact same time, just call in when you get there). There will be no volunteers serving inside at this time. Contact Doug Jones (kitchen manger) by 8:30pm the night BEFORE if there are any changes.



**MAY 17 - CHAPLAINS' DINNER - feeding our neighbors in need** - On Sunday May 17 Amazing Grace is providing food for the Chaplains' Dinner at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Aberdeen, serving 140-160 people. If you would like to be on the team

preparing food for this meal, or if you would like to donate money to help with the shopping, please contact the church office (or contact Amy Ostwald: [aao-stwald@gmail.com](mailto:aao-stwald@gmail.com), 360-482-2306)



### UNION GOSPEL TEAMS

We are making a few minor adjustments to Union Gospel teams. Team members assist in making dinner (to feed 60) for Union Gospel Mission 2 times per year. Each team member delivers some aspect of the meal, agreed on with the team leader. If you are not on a team but would like to be, contact the

church office. If you are on a team but need to step-down from this ministry, let us know. The goal is to balance the team numbers. We will not move you from your team without asking (and very few people will be moved anyway). Some teams serve meals, some just deliver food. At this time (pandemic) we are only delivering food, no serving. Thank you!



President	Joelle Buckman	(360) 589-6111	Joelle_buckman@email.com
Treasurer	Theresa Kaufman	(360) 537-1190	Theresamarie4739.3@gmail.com
Financial Secretary	Phil Stegemoeller	(360) 580-9310	phil@willisent.com
Youth & Family	Curtis Steinhauer	(360) 580-2301	turtis21@gmail.com
Outreach	Amy Ostwald	(360)-482-2306	Ostwald@olynet.com
Worship	Dee Erickson	(360) 533-7948	deekayel@comcast.net
Fellowship	Judi Hubbard	(360) 532-8577	jhubbard1952@comcast.net
Property	Mike Barkstrom	(360)532-3319	mkbarks1@gmail.com
Endowment	Darrell Lokken	(360) 532-1615	delokken@comcast.net
Pastor	Val Metropoulos	(360) 580-8977	vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu
Church Secretary	Vicky Kolb	(360) 532-8250	amazing111@comcast.net

## BUILDING REPAIRS/MAINTANCE

Please notify Mike Barkstrom or send a message to the church office if there are any repairs needed at the church. Sometimes members or visitors notice things that need to be fixed that the committee is not aware of. Your input is helpful in these matters.

Mike Barkstrom: mkbarks1@gmail.com - (360) 589-1393

## Ministers: The People of Amazing Grace

111 E. 4th Street, (360) 532-8250

[amazinggraceaberdeen.org](http://amazinggraceaberdeen.org)

[amazing111@comcast.net](mailto:amazing111@comcast.net)

Pastor Val Metropoulos-(360) 580-8977

[vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu](mailto:vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu)

**Office Administrator:** Vicky Kolb

**Liturgists:** Hank Bilderback, Keith Lile, Laura Carle, Greg Johnstone,  
Charles Scamman, Curtis Steinhauer

**Musicians:** Kristine Burns, Heidi Seelke



**Please join us for worship  
Sundays at 10am on Facebook live at:  
[amazinggraceaberdeem.org](http://amazinggraceaberdeem.org)**

***AMAZING GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
of Grays Harbor***



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**VISION**

A welcoming place where grace happens!

**MISSION**

To experience and share God's love through worship,  
education and community

**VALUES**

Radical Hospitality  
Passionate worship  
Intentional faith development  
Risk-taking mission and service  
Extravagant generosity

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church of  
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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE