

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Almost every Tuesday morning, the pastors of the East Conference churches of the La Crosse Area Synod meet to discuss the scripture passages for the upcoming Sunday. During the Coronavirus Pandemic, we have been meeting online via ZOOM. A month or so ago, during a Text Study, we decided to join together to celebrate Pentecost: the day when the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles.

The East Conference includes the ELCA churches in Adams, Monroe and Juneau Counties. It includes the communities and areas surrounding Adams, Big Flats, Camp Douglas, Elroy, Hustler, Mauston, Nekoosa, New Lisbon, Shennington, Sparta, Tomah, and Wilton. The churches (by name) include Bethany (2 churches), East Lemonweir, Fountain, Grace, Peace, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, St. Stephen's, Trinity (3 churches), Woodland, and Zion.

Today is Pentecost Sunday, and a special day for parishioners in the East Conference of the La Crosse Area Synod! Today, we will be experiencing an online Pentecost Sunday worship service created by pastors and other church members from the East Conference churches.

While some of the churches have been creating weekly online services throughout this time of the Coronavirus Pandemic, several of our churches do not have the technological resources to create online services. This includes both human and material resources. However, by using the resources of those churches that do have the capabilities, this video was made possible. Here were the steps taken: the area pastors were given specific clips to record. Pastors invited parishioners from the churches they serve to participate. Videos were made by recording clips on cellphones. The clips were then sent via email or text message to Pastor Mark Kvale at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sparta. Pastor Kvale, Dean of the East Conference, assembled the clips to create the joint-service that we will see today.

During this time of the Coronavirus Pandemic, it is important for us to remember that we are part of something much larger than ourselves. We are part of something much larger than St. Paul's Lutheran Church. We are part of the La Crosse Area Synod, part of the larger ELCA, and part of the church universal. Today, we celebrate Pentecost with our brothers and sisters in Christ, both here in western Wisconsin and beyond.

I am grateful for the work of all who participated in creating this special Pentecost Sunday worship service. I hope that it reminds us that we are not alone. With other people of faith, we join together to worship and praise God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit on this Pentecost Sunday and every day.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy

P.S. Next Sunday, you will not receive the links to the worship service until Sunday morning.

This is per the request of Presiding Bishop Eaton. In this way, all of the ELCA churches throughout the U.S., will receive the worship service on Trinity Sunday morning.