Dear Friends in Christ,

The other day, I walked into the quiet, empty sanctuary on a midweek afternoon. It was warm, and the sun was shining through the stained glass window in the peak of the roof. Colored light landed on the baptismal font, dancing and moving as the light shifted and changed. It was as if the space was holding its breath, but also holding out its hand, beckoning me forward.

I’ve been in the sanctuary numerous times over the past 17 months, often with a sense of sadness and loss. Though the church itself never closed, the emptiness of that worship space has been a place of lament. I stand at the altar and look at the chairs and imagine where you sit (and I mean the actual chairs you’re normally in – I could probably make a seating chart!). I long for the day when the space is loud, not quiet; full, not empty; lived in, not pristine.

This time, standing in the sanctuary surrounded by the light and color, the room felt ready. Eager, like an airplane standing on the runway, engines revving, waiting to lift into the sky. It’s time.

Over the past 17 months, we have been the church every single day. You have been the church in caring for each other and the wider world; through online worship, bible studies, youth groups and Sunday School; in raising money for our COVID-19 relief fund that put food on the tables of our neighbors; we sang Advent hymns in our living rooms and served each other communion at our kitchen tables. We’ve said it a thousand times and I’ll say it again: the church never closed. It’s just been on the loose.

And yet we long for face-to-face interaction, for the holy experience of worshipping together. As you know, we have been carefully monitoring the pandemic and vaccination rates in our area. Our Reopening Team has met faithfully, every other Thursday, since March of 2020, and they continue to give their time, care, and wisdom. I am deeply grateful to David Papenhausen, Bill Carberry, Amy Wulfesteig, Pastor Mike Anderson, and others who have joined us along the way, including Paul de la Port and Jessica Thompson. Their steadfast presence has been a gift.

We know that vaccination rates in our area are strong, and that the science suggests it is now safer to gather in larger groups. We also know that the youngest members in our community don’t yet have access to the vaccine and that variants continue to spread. As we embrace the path forward, we will continue to place the safety and health of the most vulnerable among us at the center of our decisions.

Beginning Sunday, August 1, we will start worshipping in the sanctuary at our summer worship times of 9:00am and 10:30am. For the rest of the summer, the worship service will remain abbreviated, without singing, but will always include Holy Communion. Physical distancing will be encouraged and masks that cover your nose and mouth will be required for all worshippers over the age of 2. We will livestream video Path Toward Regathering

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Regathering Letter from Pastor Katy (continued)

from the sanctuary into the Fellowship Hall, so you may choose to sit in either location. An abbreviated form of online worship (including the sermon) will continue to be available. After each worship service, we will host a coffee hour outside – we’ll provide the coffee, and encourage you to bring your own reusable cup.

Will there be a few bumps along the way? Almost certainly. Some of us have been ready for this for a long time; others are not quite sure yet. We’ll need to reconnect with each other and be mindful of lots of different comfort levels with closeness. We’ll need to ask before sitting next to someone and be okay if they say they need some extra space.

As we move into the fall, we are preparing for additional changes, including kids’ programming, increased music in worship, and an eventual return to our previous worship schedule (8am, 9:30am, 11am). And yet this step along the way is also a huge reason to rejoice. The chairs are empty; it’s time to fill them. The room is quiet; it’s time to turn up the volume. The path is ahead of us; let’s embrace it with care, and hope, and the promise of God who is with us every step of the way.

In peace,
Pastor Katy

Pastor Phil Strain Retirement

The HSLC personnel committee, on behalf of our entire congregation, offers Pastor Phil our appreciation and thanks for more than 10 years of faithful service as visitation pastor. Over the years Pastor Phil has visited, offered communion, and prayed with many members of the congregation. We wish him and Carolyn many blessings in this new stage of retirement and invite congregation members to send Pastor Phil words of thanks to the church address.

Call Committee Update

The Pastoral Call Committee has been conducting a series of interviews with our pastoral candidates since receiving their names from the Synod in June. We received a diverse and gifted slate of pastors from around the country to consider. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, to date all of these interviews have been virtual.

In the coming weeks, with the gradual reopening of the church to the congregation, we hope to be able to invite our final candidate to visit with us in person. Details for this visit are in process and they will be shared with the congregation through the weekly e-News as these plans develop. We ask for your continued prayer support for the Committee to faithfully discern God’s direction for our future ministry.

Deborah May
Call Committee Chair
Custodian Patti Peterson Retirement

After nearly 30 years, I have made the decision to retire from my custodial position at Holy Spirit. In those years I've had the opportunity to partner with amazing staff and wonderful volunteers to help make Holy Spirit Lutheran Church a welcoming place. I am so thankful to have worked with such a vibrant congregation. Feeling thankful, grateful, and blessed for the opportunity to serve.

Patti Peterson

*The HSLC personnel committee, on behalf of our entire congregation, offers Patti our appreciation and thanks for her many years of faithful service as custodian. She has seen the church nearly double in square footage and numbers of ministries grow in similar proportions. Through all the changes, Patti has worked to present a building that is welcoming and ready for worship and events. We wish Patti many blessings as she embraces retirement and invite congregation members to send her words of thanks to the church address.*

Tiny House Project: Adult Volunteers Needed

Holy Spirit is building its fifth tiny house to support people experiencing homelessness. With the generous leadership of Robert Boreson, our Junior High and Confirmation Students will start building the house during their Stay-at-Home Mission Trip. During the first week they will build the floor, walls, maybe get up the rafters and start painting the exterior.

The second week will consist of work on the roof, windows, door, vinyl floor, inside insulation, inside walls, fascia and complete painting.

More adult volunteers are needed the second week of the build August 9-13 8:30 to noon or 12:30-4ish. Please contact Robert Boreson through the church office to sign up for a time. Morning or afternoon, one day or the whole week – you pick and you are welcome!

For all volunteers: please wear long pants, closed-toe shoes (at least as sturdy as tennis shoes). No open toed shoes or sandals. A hat is good too.

If you can't be there, spread the word! Robert is looking for adult volunteers. It’s one way to make a difference in our community, and have fun while doing it.

Position Opening: Custodian

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church is accepting applications for a part-time Custodian. The position’s hours vary depending on church building schedule. Responsibilities include custodial, janitorial, and light maintenance to maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment. The suitable candidate will have proven customer service experience, the ability to work independently, strong communication skills, and enjoy being challenged by a varied workday.

Please send resume and letter of interest to Marjorie Buchanan parishadmin@hslckirkland.org.
Junior High Youth Stay-at-Home Summer Mission

This year Holy Spirit Junior High youth are having a "Stay-at-Home" mission trip. August 2-6 they will start building a tiny house to support Low Income Housing Institute, gather and pack school supply bags for the YMCA Foster Care program, gather and donate blessing bags for those experiencing homelessness, and donate boxed cereal for the local food bank.

Along the way there will be lots of fun and time to make new friends. They hope to create a huge domino game around the church made out of cereal boxes before taking them to Hope-Link.

Here is how you can help:

- Sign up as an adult helper as we take on building a tiny house for someone experiencing homelessness
- Donate items to create blessing bags for those who are experiencing homelessness
- Donate items to create school bags for the YMCA Foster Care program

Items can be dropped off at the church during Sunday worship (look for the red bin marked “Stay-at-Home Mission Trip”) or brought to the upper parking on the week of August 2–6.

Thank you for your support!

Contact Tammie Zarfos for more information! Confirmation@hslckirkland.org

Regular sized boxes of cereal – all kinds
School year planners for middle and high school youth
Sturdy back packs for kids and youth
Flash drives
Granola bars/ energy bars
Tuna and cracker packs or other protein-type snacks (jerky, peanut butter, etc) – individually wrapped
Water/sports drinks
On-the-go coffee or vitamin mixes

Travel size toiletries
Applesauce or other fruit sauces in a squeeze pouch
Nuts/ trail mixes – individually wrapped
Chips and crackers or other snacks – individually wrapped
New socks – all genders and sizes
Gallon Ziploc bags
New refillable water bottles
Hand wipes

Vacation Bible School Fun!

In July, Vacation Bible School & Day Camp returned to the Holy Spirit Lutheran Church campus with two options - an online / virtual experience or a hybrid experience that included outdoor on campus time and online activities. Kids from more than 50 families and amazing Holy Spirit teen and adult volunteers played and learned outdoors for a fun-filled week.

The kids explored the theme “Go for the Gold.” All of the favorites were included – story, science, art, snacks, games, music, and special activities for preschool and pre-kindergarten friends.

Each morning kids enjoyed a livestream opening that included the beloved puppet show and music. Videos for the livestream can be found on the Holy Spirit VBS & Day Camp page (www.HolySpiritVBS.org). Prior to the event, each family picked up a bag that was assembled uniquely for their household with daily activity supplies and snacks for each child. They also received a family pack that included crayons, colored pencils, and much more.

Enjoy the highlights video from the week of fun on the website!
Join us for Online Worship!

Beginning August 1st we gather in the sanctuary for abbreviated, summer worship. Masks required for all over 2 years of age.

Please RSVP (website or enews link) or fill out the welcome card Sunday morning.

Summer Worship—Sundays, 9:00 and 10:30 AM

Go Paperless!

Thank you for reducing waste and receiving a digital copy of our monthly newsletter along with our weekly enews updates. Please let us know if you’d like to receive our digital copy.

If you’d like to update your communication preferences, please contact office@hslckirkland.org.