

May 2024

VIEW FROM THE LAKE

Abiding Peace Lutheran Church

The Point of Awareness by Pastor Serena

About a month ago I mentioned in therapy that I had used the concept of "Opposite Action" from a prior session as the focal idea for my sermon that week. From her expression, I think I really surprised my therapist with that revelation. The concept had been a perfect way of breaking open the scripture texts for the week, so the application made perfect sense, but I can understand why someone wouldn't expect a pastor to talk openly about what she is learning in therapy from the pulpit.

In our culture, we tend to assume that people in positions of authority should bolster that authority by presenting their strongest qualities... and unfortunately our culture does not tend to associate transparency about mental health needs with "strength." I, however, differ with our dominant culture on that point. I think it can be a sign of strength to be honest about the challenges of mental illness and to seek appropriate supports. That is why I talk openly about going to therapy, and taking prescribed medication, and about my diagnoses of Major Depressive Disorder and Anxiety. I don't think I will be a better spiritual leader by pretending to be someone I am not. In fact, I think an important part of what I bring to the role of pastor is my inside knowledge about what it's like for your brain to mess with you, and my awareness that there are no easy pray-it-away fixes for mental illness.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It could be argued that what we really need is Mental Health Advocacy Month, given the social and financial barriers to mental health care that prevent so many people from getting the help they need. However, "awareness" is an important step in that direction. The more that we talk about mental health, and normalize going to therapy, and increase understanding about the symptoms and treatments for various mental illnesses, the more stigma will be challenged and access to care will be expanded.

And the church is an important place for that awareness to be (both literally and figuratively) preached. If we follow a God of love, whose desire is the wholeness and restoration of all of creation, then part of the work of God's church is to support the work of mental health. In far too many contexts faith has been pitted against science and spiritual healing has been pushed as an alternative to treatment. But we pray for physical healing and also go to the doctor when we are sick. In the same way, we can have Jesus and a therapist too. And we can all commit to learning more about how to support our own and others' mental health as a spiritual act of stewardship.

**Worship: 10:00 AM
Online/ In-person**

June 2024 newsletter deadline: 5/27
Any news/ photos can be sent to Erin
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

Our Mission and Purpose:

Abiding peace lutheran church makes christ known by welcoming all people to a supporting and accepting place to grow in faith and community and to serve the lord as people created by god, saved by christ and nurtured by the holy spirit. we are a reconciling in christ congregation, committed to the full inclusion and celebration of people of all sexualities, genders, and gender expressions, and to the work of racial equity.

Phone: 973-691-9393 Website: www.abidingpeacechurch.org

Evangelism Reflections

by Aaron Hyndman

I wanted to write an evangelism column for the May newsletter, understanding that May is also Mental Health Awareness month. But how exactly can the two be tied together? Reflecting on this led me to the following passage from the book of Isaiah:

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory."

Isaiah 61:1-3 NRSV

We often think of evangelism as simply spreading the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. But what are ways that we can bring Christ's gospel to those who need it the most, particularly in this case, those who struggle with mental health issues? I look at phrases in that passage from Isaiah, words such as "binding up the brokenhearted," and "oil of gladness instead of mourning," and what comes to mind is the liberating aspect of sharing Christ's love. I myself have my own ordeal to come to grips with every single day, living life with a serious mental health condition. It's caused turmoil, crisis, and upheaval throughout my adult life.

It's not easy to live my life questioning everything that makes me who I am. And yet, there's something quite remarkable about always asking questions: they often lead to answers. So in doing the hard work to maintain my mental health, I can absolutely confirm the vast amount of insight I've been able to tap into: knowledge about my self, awareness of those around me, understanding of the nature of how the world works and all the intricate, intertwined, and commingled patterns of what we call "life."

In spite of it all, I like to think I've done the best that I could. I've achieved some measures of success to balance my epic failures. And I've learned to value and appreciate some essential things: the importance of family, of community, of living life with a purpose, always striving to give back, and hoping to leave a lasting legacy. Stigma certainly is a thing that exists, but by experiencing life to the fullest, I do all that I can to break through. Through the trails I've traveled, I try to live, learn, and lead by example.

What can we do as a church community help break through the stigma that surrounds mental health issues. Certainly, it falls under the greatest directive Jesus gave us, which is to love the Lord with all our heart and to love one another. So for starters, that means showing love and compassion to all who might struggle, knowing that each is a person created in the image and likeness of God, with value, with gifts, with worth. I'm blessed to have had so many people come alongside me in support of my own mental health journey. I hope we can all take a moment to think of what could be done to be a resource to someone in need.

There are certainly some practical things that can be done. Educate yourself on mental health issues and stigma and sign the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) pledge to be stigma-free. You can also take a Mental Health First-Aid class, or a QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) course to understand the fundamental aspects of community-based mental health support. Whether or not you have a mental health diagnosis, or personally know someone who is struggling, or simply want to be a good ally, I hope these reflections help shape your thinking in the same way they've influenced my own life's path.

To close, I want to leave you with some words that describe my own mental health journey, in the form of a poem I wrote. I hope it provides insight and meaning as you consider what it means to be a partner in mental health this month and into the future...

continued...



Life.

unashamedly, enthusiastically, overwhelmingly Poured out in episodes of energy,

Release of joy

recovered in strength,

sobriety and steadfast persistence,

The knowledge and understanding of mysteries unraveled...

...Fulfillment found in emotional harvest,

The bounty a benefit

unleashed by labors

of the heart and mind and soul and body,

A balance achieved

as light suppresses shadows

lingering within and among and around.

The joy cannot be stolen.

Self-care my self-defense

against twists and turns,

Ups and downs,

Tumultuous toils

traversing the roads less traveled,

I walk the path,

My journey, my joy

COUNCIL & MINISTRY

Food Pantry Needs for May

- Parmalat Milk
 - Crushed Tomatoes
 - Rice
 - Vegetable Oil
 - PB & Jelly
 - Canned Fruit
 - Juice
 - Hot-Dogs and buns
 - Vegan/vegetarian soups
 - Vegan/vegetarian protein options
 - Toiletries
 - Re-usable bags!
- (proteins & breads must go directly into freezer)

Thank you all for your continued support of our community!
-Erin

Officers

President	Cindy Pawlo
Vice President	Heather Nilsen
Secretary	Jackie King-Palermo
Treasurer	George Pawlo

Council Members

Cindy Pawlo	Jackie king-palermo
Ken Schwier	Maria Jerez-Kearney
Shelli Skeels	Charlie Palermo
Sibylle Schroeder	Aaron Hyndman
heather nilsen	

Ministry Leaders

Arts & Crafts	Sibylle Schroeder
Christian Ed. & Youth	Heather Nilsen
Evangelism	Aaron Hyndman
Fellowship	Demetria Laird
Finance	George Pawlo
Financial Secretary	Nita Persson
Messengers Dancers	Mary Kasakove
Mutal Ministry	Heather Nilsen
Property	Vacant
Social Ministry	Sibylle Schroeder
Seniors	Sibylle Schroeder
Stewardship	Nick Senior
Worship & Music	Mary Kasakove

Our Staff

Pastor:
Serena Rice
pastorserena@optimum.net
c: 908-458-3940

Music Director:
Ben Schroeder
benmschroeder@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:
Erin Porter
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

Office Hours

Pastor Serena will hold office hours on either Wednesday or Thursday each week in May. In addition to posted hours in the office, Pastor Serena is also available to the congregation by cell phone or e-mail during the week: (908) 458-3940; pastorserena@optimum.net. Her day off is Saturday, so please refrain from sending non-emergency messages or calls on Saturday.

Erin will be in the office **Thursdays from 9:00-12:00**, and can always be reached via email: aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

Pastor's May hours

April 29 - May 5

- Thursday, 5/2, 10:30am-9:00pm
- Sunday, 5/5 - 9:00am-1:00pm

May 6 - May 12

- Wednesday, 5/8, 10:30am-8:30pm
- Saturday, 5/11, 9:00am-3:00am - Synod Assembly (off-site)
- Sunday, 5/12 - 9:00am-1:00pm

May 13 - May 19

- Thursday, 5/16, 10:30am-9:00pm
- Sunday, 5/19 - 9:00am-2:00pm

May 20 - May 26

- Wednesday, 5/22, 10:30am-8:30pm
- Sunday, 5/26 - 9:00am-1:00pm

May 27 - June 2

- Thursday, 5/30, 10:30am-9:00pm
- Sunday, 6/2 - 9:00am-1:00pm

May Readings

5/5: Acts 10:44-48; Ps. 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17.
 5/12: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Ps. 1; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19
 5/19: Acts 2:1-21; Ps. 104:24-34,35b; Rom. 8:22-27;
 John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15
 5/26: Isaiah 6:1-8; Ps. 29; Rom 8: 12-17; John 3:1-17

Partnering Update

There has been a LOT of work, mostly behind the scenes, since our congregational vote in January to become a partnering congregation. It may seem to be slow progress, but doing the groundwork now sets us up to be more effective when we invite in new partners. With that being said, we want the process to be as transparent as possible, so here's a brief update on where we stand.

There are **three teams working on distinct areas of responsibility:**

- *The Outreach Team is focused on strategies to increase our visibility to the surrounding community and to populations that may be interested in our work and ministry.*
- *The Financial Strategy Team is doing the research and planning to help the Council make informed decisions about necessary investments in our property, as well as the fund-raising side of the plan, as discussed at the January vote.*
- *The Partnering Team is working through the steps for preparing to become a Partnering congregation, including things like the building walk-through, outreach to stakeholders, and the welcoming lunch.*

In the coming months, you will have chances to support the work of all of these teams, and support our efforts to ensure that Abiding Peace is making the best use of our resources to serve the needs of our larger community. **These opportunities will include:**

- *Participating in our Social Media Outreach month in May, to increase the digital visibility of our congregation.*
- *Responding to the April 23 survey on investment priorities and considering whether you wish to support the Investing to Thrive Campaign, (to be launched in May) to raise funds for the investments needed to get our building ready to welcome partners.*
- *Assisting with the preparations and invitations for our Stakeholders Luncheon in June to build community support and gather input on how to use our building to support the larger community.*

Any questions about Partnering can be directly addressed to Pastor Serena!

Adult Learners Survey

One of the benefits of being part of the ELCA is the chance to collaborate with other congregations that share our theology and traditions. The congregations in our area of the state are exploring a collaboration on adult education offerings. The collaboration would allow us to gather virtually with learning partners from other congregations, benefit from the teaching talents of multiple pastors, and explore multiple learning topics. To gather feedback on what folks want to learn, and how this proposal might work best, we have put together a survey. Please click the link below into your browser to provide your feedback:

[survey link](#)



A quick note from Mary:

For quite a number of years I've had the pleasure of maintaining the planters in our entrance courtyard. I have loved helping to beautify our property and have always been grateful for the the help that others have provided, but the time has come to pass the trowel to someone else who would like to take responsibility for maintaining the planters. I'll be happy to advise and help. Please let me know if you're interested- planting season is coming

Flower Updates!

The Worship & Music Committee unanimously agreed to having the Altar Flower Sign-up Chart provide for two arrangements on Sunday. This will allow more people to remember special occasions and special people and provide even more beauty to our sanctuary.

Important Reminders about the flowers:

Altar flowers are \$17.50 a piece. You must sign up on the Alter Flower Sign-Up Chart posted outside of the office. Flower sign-ups must be completed at least one week before the service as Erin orders them at least one week in advanced during her office hours on Thursdays. Any questions about ordering flowers can be directed to Erin at aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

Shout out to our volunteers!

April is National Volunteer Month, a time to recognize the contributions of all our volunteers. Practically everyone in our congregation volunteers for something! A salute to all who volunteer their time and talents for Abiding Peace. Everything you do, whether big or small contributes to our community. Happy Volunteer's Month to our amazing volunteers! Thank you for your dedication to APLC!

April 21-27 is National Volunteers Week. Our volunteers were out working around our property. Thank you to Sue Stirrat for her initiative for doing clean up around the church property and picking up sticks before Easter and before Clean-up Day. Also thank you to Anna Santino, Nick Senior, Ann Ascot and Tyler George for helping on Clean-up Day.

With heartfelt thanks and gratitude,

Cindy Pawlo

GERANIUMS FOR PENTECOST MAY 19, 2024

Please plan to bring a red (6.5"-7") geranium to church for use on the altar on Pentecost. Plants should be in full bloom and can be brought to church and left outside on May 16-17-18 or on Sunday, May 19th before 9:15am.

Thank You!!

To Sandy and Tony Carlson for transporting the palms.

To Marco Ponce for hanging the black and white drapes on the cross on the wall.

To Rachel Marlowe for leading the Seder, a longtime Abiding Peace tradition that Rachel is helping us continue.

Directory Updates!

We are planning to update the church directory this Spring, which means that we need your updates. Please e-mail the updated information to aplcbuddlake@gmail.com if you have:

New address

New phone number

New e-mail address

New photo (optional)

Thank you for your help! The directory is the easiest way to make sure the congregation can get in touch with each other.



May 2024



LITTLE LEARNERS SUNDAY SCHOOL!

May 5, 19
June 2, 16, 30



APLC HAPPENINGS!

So many great things were happening at APLC these past few weeks. We celebrated Palm Sunday and Easter. Check out Robert and the cross adorned with palms! Our Faith Kitchen team also served up some smiles and another delicious meal to the community on the 2nd of April.



MAY BIRTHDAYS!

- 5/5 - Shelli Skeels
- 5/11 - Jackie Schwier
- 5/26 - Karina Laird
- 5/27 - Catherine Blackburne and Maria Jerez-Kearney



Did we miss a birthday? Please email Erin (aplcbuddlake@gmail.com) to keep us up to date!

SENIOR EVENTS

- May 15 "If" movie
 - June 19 Frelinghuysen Arboretum
 - July 17 Games
 - Aug 21 Pool party at Pawlo's
 - Sept. 18 "UFO of God: The Extraordinary True Story of Chris Bledsoe"
 - Oct. 18 Halloween Party
 - Nov.29 Christmas/Holiday Party
- This schedule is open to change.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			5/1 AA 6:30 PM	5/2	5/3	5/4
5/5 Worship 10:00 Sunday School	5/6	5/7 Faith Kitchen 9:00am-12:30pm	5/8 Worship & Music Committee meeting @1:00 PM AA 6:30 PM	5/9 Pre-Assembly workshops (zoom) 6:30& 7:45 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:45pm	5/10	5/11 Synod Assembly @Grounds for Sculpture
5/12 Worship 10:00 Mother's Day Brunch 11:00 am	5/13	5/14	5/15 AA 6:30 PM Balcony Conservation (zoom) 7:30 PM	5/16 7:45pm - Choir Rehearsal	5/17	5/18
5/19 Pentecost Worship Service 10:00 Sunday School Council Meeting 11:30 AM	5/20	5/21	5/22 Mt Olive Clergy Assoc. Meeting 1:00 PM Prayer Service Mt. Olive Manor 4:30 PM AA 6:30 PM	5/23 7:45pm - Choir Rehearsal	5/24	5/25
5/26 Worship 10:00 Placeholder for Partnering/ outreach team meetings	5/27	5/28	5/29 AA 6:30 PM Placeholder for outreach team meeting	5/30 7:45pm - Choir Rehearsal	5/31	





May 2024

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND A REPLACEMENT IF YOU CANNOT SERVE.

March	5/5	5/12	5/19	5/26
Altar Guild	Cindy Pawlo	Cindy Pawlo	Cindy Pawlo	Cindy Pawlo
Counter	Howard Corneilson	George Pawlo	Nita Persson	Anna Santino
Assistant Minister	Sue Stirrat	Mary Kasakove	Sheeba David	Maria Jerez
Lector	Demetria Laird	Anna Santino	Roy Persson	Doug Laird
Communion Assistant	Maria Jerez	Sibylle Schroeder	Mary Kasakove	George Pawlo
Usher/Greeter/Acolyte	Sibylle Schroeder	Doug Laird	Howard Corneilson	Sandy Carlson
Soloist	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Livestream Assistant	Ray Mueller	Nick Senior	Tyler Rice	Sheeba David

BREAD BAKING:

Sibylle Schroeder

