



Waterford Mennonite Church | June 7, 2020

buzz

Digging into Romans!

Remember when we used to meet in the church sanctuary?! You may remember that way back on November 10, 2019, Pastor Cindy Voth preached a sermon on *Practicing Faith: Studying Scripture/ Digging Deeply*. After the service, I told Cindy that studying scripture and its relevance for today is a practice I do regularly. I shared briefly that I had been digging into Romans – and that I would be willing to do a sermon series on the book. Within a couple weeks, she and others on the Worship Ministry Team had me on the schedule for June and July 2020!

I am inspired to learn about the personhood of God from two major sources – creation and biblical texts. Gaining insights from these two sources isn't always easy. I have learned so much about nature and ecology from colleagues. Each person has special interest area – insects, flowers, trees, aquatic creatures, mammals, etc. As I walk the trails with them, I gain new insights about the amazing complexity of creation. Through those experiences, I also learn more about the Creator. The same is true about finding meaning in scripture. I have benefited from reading and hearing the voices of many people who have studied deeply various aspects of the Bible. As a result, the Spirit leads me in growth and motivates me to act on what I have learned.

My commitment to you is to be a guide through the book of Romans in the four-part sermon series. I pray that it will be a challenging and encouraging time of walking/running through this book. I don't know how you have experienced or feel about this book written by Paul almost 2,000 years ago. You may love the theological stimulus. You may view it as a confusing book. You may see it as a great guide to personal salvation. You may despise it because it has been used as "a hammer" to keep you in line. You may find Romans to be life-giving. You may find any book by Paul to be filled with offensive statements. Well...let's see what we can do with all those views!

I encourage us all to read through the book of Romans in the coming weeks. I won't be able to speak to every verse. That would take a long time! I

feel it will be helpful for our conversations for you to gain an overview of what is in the book. Some of you have read it many times – and for others it may be a first. The book only has 7,111 words in it! That means that if you read at 100 words per minute, you can finish it in 71 minutes. Pick a favorite translation and give it a try!

The title that I have designed for the series is ***Romans Unloaded – and Regenerated: Pursuing community and justice***. I have selected major themes to explore during the four sermons. We will be looking at these themes as found throughout Romans rather than going through the book chapter by chapter. The sermon titles are as follows:

June 21 – *Colliding with the Empire*

June 28 – *Homemaking in the Face of Empire*

July 5 – *Caring for Household Essentials – Creation and Economics*

July 12 – *Practicing Peace and Deep Hospitality*

In addition to the sermons, I am preparing questions that can be discussed in Nurture Hour classes. You will have the opportunity to join a Zoom class session hosted by Seekers from 11:05-11:50 a.m. on the four Sundays. I will be online to respond to questions and share some additional insights. Classes may also choose to look at the questions on their own at a time that suits.

I know that there will be parts of the messages that will be enlightening moments – and other parts that will make us feel uncomfortable. I have experienced this as I have been studying for the series. I am grateful that we can take this journey together.

-Luke Gascho





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The *Waterford Buzz* is normally published weekly for members of Waterford Mennonite Church. Items for inclusion should be given to the editor by 5 p.m. Monday preceding publication.

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From Christian Peacemaker Teams:

We are deeply grateful for your generous gift at this time of uncertainty and physical distancing.

Our team has begun to document the latest round of Turkish cross-border bombing affecting Kurdish civilians; at least three human rights defenders in Colombia have been assassinated since the beginning of the quarantine; the Israeli Military have raided Palestinian homes violating the lockdown. The oppression of the vulnerable is often justified in a time of heightened crisis, and the virus is pulling back the curtain on that very systemic injustice.

We are grateful that we can rely on your support. Your social solidarity makes the work of creative nonviolent peacemaking possible. Thank you!

— Milena Rincón, Program Director



From Elkhart County Clubhouse:

Thank you for your recent donation of \$1000. Our Clubhouse is a primary support community for over a hundred adults with mental illnesses. In one week we established phone, email, text and social media networks to continue our support when we couldn't be together on a daily basis. We are now checking in on most of our members every day, making sure that they have food, medications and emotional support. For many of our members, isolation is itself a mental health risk, so we are working to overcome the dangers of physical distancing with social connections.

The funding that we were receiving from the state is not available when members are not at the Clubhouse, so we are especially grateful for your support now.

— Rich Meyer, Director

