



the signal

QUARTERLY NEWLETTER
JUNE—AUGUST 2020

LIFE DURING COVID

I am connected to you all as a fellow OSLC member, but I am also a primary care internal medicine physician in my work life. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of my patients are Medicare age and, therefore, at high risk for complications from COVID19. So in March we rapidly transitioned from having full clinics to trying to keep people at home and safe. About 90% of my patient contact has since been via telehealth – from my computer screen to their computers or phone screens, or even landlines in some cases. It is certainly the safest way to provide care, and it actually allows us to connect in ways that we could not have predicted. I have been able to “meet” family members and pets online, get a brief snapshot of what life is really like for my patients at home, and be a connection to the outside world for many who are very isolated and lonely. Some health problems, of course, require in-person evaluations so a handful of us are also in clinic each day to see and touch those people. My clinic day has been Monday. While I had settled into the routine of putting my phone in a Ziplock, dressing in easily washable clothes, wearing a mask, washing my hands frequently, and transitioning directly to laundry and a shower when I get home, I still have had anxiety each Monday. This week we are going in even more, to see more patients who really need health problems addressed but have been fearful to leave home. Although the trends around illness related to COVID in Northern Colorado are definitely headed in the right direction, I still worry about unknowingly transmitting a potential lethal virus to my patients and staff, I worry about bringing it home to my partner and daughters, and I worry about getting sick myself. I have prioritized discussions around end of life care and preferences with my patients, and I have more openly contemplated my own mortality. These complicated conversations are such a deep, sometimes difficult, and meaningful way to connect at this time.

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I also started a new job in April with the new University of Colorado School of Medicine branch campus at CSU. I get to help build the infrastructure to train new physicians in our community. As we juggle delays and changes for our first class of 12 third year medical students to join us soon, I am invigorated by their enthusiasm and that of their preceptors. We all seem to recognize that they are the ones who will lead our next health crisis, and they are awesome. It's the bright spot. My connection to them and their new life makes me feel hopeful for the future.

Proverbs 22:17
"A merry heart does good like medicine"

As the pandemic began to come into focus for us in the middle of March, I participated in some conversations about how our church should move forward. I am proud that we set an early example about how to gather safely and rapidly transitioned to online services. Since then there have been so many opportunities to gather in small groups virtually, or to just watch quietly from the safety of our homes. I have appreciated check-in phone calls and text messages from friends from church. It has been a really busy time in my life with more work and kids at home, and this has certainly been stressful in many ways. I also know that, based on those windows I get into my patients' lives at home, for many of us this pandemic has put the brakes on life as we knew it, and it is a slow silent difficult lonely time. So thank you to my church family for reaching out. To me and others. It is appreciated. I see that we are giving monetary gifts where they can be best used to bridge some of these gaps. Thank you for connecting in so many virtual formats with those of us whose who really need that. Thank you to our many members who are really working on the front lines in the hospitals and taking care of critically ill patients. Thank you to those who are sewing masks and gowns to help healthcare workers. And thank you to our church for setting the example that we can do all of this safely! I feel so lucky to be connected as member of OSLC.

-Christie Reimer

Interview with Sara Halac (RN)

What has it been like working directly with COVID 19 patients?

It has been heartbreaking; patients are so sick. It is a devastating illness. It is affecting every body system and every aged person. It is hard to see the families saying goodbye, for patients to be alone and separate from those they love. My heart goes out to them. I have never seen anything like this, even recovery is not like anything else. When patients recover from the illness it is grueling, patients are weak, weak, weak. The neurological damage is also tough and the deficits are challenging to overcome. For many it will be a long time to get back to where they were physically.

What is helping you get through this challenging time?

The team effort is incredible. There is a sense we are all in it for the long haul, the dedication of the team to patients and each other is so supportive. It also helps to have police, firefighters and public do drive-bys of the hospital, put up signs and have balloons outside to show their care and support of what we are all experiencing. Recently, I was pumping gas while still in scrubs (from a non COVID 19 shift) and a stranger came up and thanked me. That was so wonderful. It feels like we are so supported. I also have friends that text (one friend everyday!) and call and want to know how I am doing. I am also getting out and being in nature a lot! *Walking many miles. It helps to clear my head and get space and separation from the events at the hospital.*

Thank you for all you are doing to help. We appreciate you and your teams.

Thanks.

While these are not all direct quotes from her, they express many of her words and sentiments from the interview.

A Note from the Pastors

Blessings and peace to you on this day.

Psalms 46 is a psalm we have come to daily in the past couple of weeks:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

"Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

In the midst of fear, change, struggle, joys, sorrow, stress, chaos, God is our refuge and strength. Our refuge when we need shelter and peace and our strength to act, speak and be present with courage. As our nation experiences the protest against injustice and racism, we are more aware than ever that we need each other and that the world needs our voices, presence, deep listening and action.

The promise is steadfast and sure, God will not abandon us nor will God abandon our sisters and brothers of color. Let your presence, your voice and your hands be a disruption to the hate, anger, and chaos that is caused by systems of injustice. Open your ears to your neighbors and especially reach out to persons of color and stand by them as an ally. It is not always easy to navigate the best path forward, but God promises to walk with us. Now more than ever it is clear we don't just need a church in our buildings, we need a church in our communities, in our homes and in our hearts. And the good news is that we have this gift and this promise to be the light for others and to be surrounded in the mercy of love forgiveness.

Our Faith and Justice team is working on ways to resource you and help you seek knowledge and action steps for engaging in supporting our brothers and sisters of color. Our worship team is seeking to create space for you to reflect and be sent forth. Our small groups, children youth and family team, stephen ministers, and mothers are seeking and engaging in ways for you to be connected and supported. Outside our Walls and Faith Family Hospitality continue to help us serve those in need of shelter and food security. Our council and staff continue to strive **with you for continuing in our mission to welcome all to the love of Christ through worshipping, serving, and learning.**

While we could not include every story, know that every story matters. Your words, actions, listening, praying, calling to check in on another person, they all matter. Thank you for being a part of this ministry and a part of hope for the world.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Leta and Pastor Michael

Blessings & Celebrations during a Pandemic

I have been thinking a lot about blessings lately. I am typically a glass half full person, and looking at the positives and possibilities is my nature. In this time of a global pandemic, social isolation, and awareness of the death toll and viciousness of COVID 19, I have looked to my relationship with God as well as fellow church members for help in coping with the heaviness of it all.

I have counted blessings in thoughtful sermons, plentiful Zoom meetings, and moving OSLC devotions. These have all been touchstones to God for me. The stories of faith in action around the world, community, and here at OSLC are also helping me get through this trying time. Knowing about the myriad of ways people of our church are coming forward to be God's hands in our community is so inspiring.

There are still so many things to celebrate, and here are three recent activities to celebrate. First, OSLC members organized and delivered yard signs for each of our Class of 2020 high school graduates. They drove all over town to help bring sunshine to our youth. The loss of high school senior capstone moments: prom, Senior Ditch Day, and graduation are all so sad for these kids. The disappearance of in-person celebrations has been heartbreaking for them and their families. Having a yard sign brought a mini celebration that was appreciated. Both volunteers and students were brought to tears by the kindness and thoughtfulness of this effort. Second, fourteen, (yes-Fourteen!) OSLC youth assembled and delivered Care Packages, which included candy, chalk, bubbles and Sky Ranch Coloring books to every child in our congregation, again driving throughout Ft. Collins and some in Windsor to share in a joyful project. Lastly, many OSLC members made and wrote over 70 cards, sewed more than 100 masks, many gowns (with donated sheets!) and more than 100 caps for the staff at Eben Ezer Care Facility in Brush. All of this PPE and the cards were delivered by one OSLC family. Patients and staff at Eben Ezer have struggled with the COVID 19 illness and several patients there have died due to this virus. The sewing of PPE continues for one of our own members, Jennifer Hargleroad. As a pediatric dentist, she was also in need of these items and the sewers and donors have come forward yet again. Several of these sewers have been sewing most of their lives and are very happy to share skills in a project that is so helpful. These kind acts brought sunshine, joy, and some practical items to those needing to feel Christ's love. We had 9 people sewing and we did 25 gowns and 102 surgeon's caps. The depth and breadth of giving has been heartwarming.

The volunteers involved in these acts of love have ranged in age from 3 to 83+ years old and have been brand new members to long time members. No matter the age or length of membership, people have stepped forward to help in these projects and more. I am moved by the generosity I see. We at OSLC are united in our mission to bring love to all and that is a blessing. I will continue to count blessings, aim for kindness, and remember to see there is so much good happening despite the challenges we face.



Faith and Justice

OSLC Faith & Justice invites you to join us on a journey, as we seek to grow in knowledge and trust the Spirit's guidance for our response in these troubled times.

As a team we will be reading and studying the book and video series called "**Dialogues on Race**" which is a resource put out by Augsburg publishing. This is an opportunity for collaborative learning and discussion. We are not experts seeking to educate, we opening ourselves up to learn more together and trust the Spirit's guidance for our response in these troubled times

If you would like to join in these discussions, they begin **Monday June 15 at 7pm on Zoom**. This is an 8 week series and each meeting will begin by viewing a video segment and using the book as a guide for discussion.

Please RSVP to bethadehaven@gmail.com so that we know to expect you and will be sure that you have the Zoom link. We have a few copies available at OSLC or you can order from Sparkhouse or Amazon.

KISS MINISTRY: The Day Rita Skipped School

Rita grew up in the 40's and 50's in New York City. Living in New York City had many advantages. There was always something to do. There were restaurants to enjoy, a melting pot of people to meet, Broadway shows to see, museums to frequent, and concerts by famous singers to attend. One day, while in high school, Rita and her girlfriends decided to skip school and sneak into a concert practice of an up and coming young man with an amazing voice. He was giving a performance that evening and the girls didn't have tickets; however, if they could just listen to him practice they would be on Cloud Nine.

Quietly, they entered the performance hall and sat down together, but not too close to the front, they didn't want to be noticed, but close enough to be swept up in the excitement and hard work it took to prepare for a concert. They were mesmerized by the singer's attention to detail, rehearsing songs more than once, wanting to be as close to perfection as possible for his audience that evening.

Rita and her friends sat quietly taking it all in. All of a sudden, the singer noticed the five girls sitting a few rows from the stage.

"Girls, what are you doing here in the middle of a school day?" he asked. The girls dare not lie.

Rita responded, "We love your music and we don't have tickets to your show this evening, so we skipped school in order to hear you sing."

"That's quite a risk you are taking if you are caught out of school; however, I am taking that risk as a compliment and I appreciate your devotion to my work. Have you eaten? Let me buy you lunch," the young performer said.

The girls were ecstatic. The man sent out for sandwiches and the girls had lunch while continuing to watch the practice.

Rita said they never got in trouble for skipping school that day but if they had been caught it would have been worth it. It isn't every day that Perry Como buys you lunch.

Congratulations

OSLC High School Graduates

KAILEY ALMQUIST

- ATTENDING COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
- MAJORING IN ENGLISH WITH A CONCENTRATION IN CREATIVE WRITING



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



Kaitlyn Almquist

Attending Colorado State University, majoring in Zoology and Veterinary Medicine



COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



Makena Asmus

Makena plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall and major in elementary education.



Chloe Brewer

Chloe Brewer this Fall plans to attend either CU Boulder or McGill University in Montreal.



Rylee Habel

Rylee graduates from Highland High School and is planning to go to Arizona for college.



Becky Hutchinson

Becky plans to go to Portland State to study Social Work.



Will LaPlante

Will LaPlante is graduating from Fossil Ridge High School and will go to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in the fall to study Agricultural Business and Business Analytics.



Robert Perschau

Robert Perschau will be majoring in Physics at the University of Colorado, Boulder



Chris Ray

Chris Ray is graduating from the International Baccalaureate program at Poudre High School, and plans to attend the University of Colorado, Boulder in the fall. He will be majoring in Engineering Physics and minoring in Mathematics. He also hopes to continue to be involved in choral and theatre programs while he is at CU.



Anna Rehm

Anna is planning to attend Michigan State University in the fall!



Lily Sherman

Lily is happy to be graduating from Fossil Ridge this Spring. She plans to attend Montana State in the Fall



Emma Wulff

Emma is graduating from Fossil Ridge High School and will be attending Montana State University in Bozeman. She plans to study nursing.



If you are grieving over the news and events surrounding the Covid-19 outbreak, you're not alone.

Whether you are upset about being quarantined, or that your plans have come to a halt, or that you're unable to celebrate at weekly church services, people all over the world are grieving over the very same thing.

It can be frightening when everything we are familiar with changes. This statement in itself is the definition of grief: **it is the conflicting feelings caused by the end or change in a familiar pattern**, such as meeting with friends, going to church, enjoying lunch or dinner at your favorite restaurant. It can dredge up old feelings of grief that we still carry. We may feel like we have had the proverbial pulled out from under us. And it's scary.

It is at these times that we need to "give voice" to the feelings that you are experiencing. Old grief begets new grief. In other words, any past feelings of grief may resurface at times like this and fuel the new pain. You may be experiencing reduced concentration, disrupted sleep patterns, a change in eating habits, a roller coaster of emotional energy, or all of the above.

These feelings usually don't go away on their own. In order to deal with them, it is important to name these feelings and then find someone safe with whom you can freely talk about them without fear of judgement. It may be someone in your family, close relatives, or to trusted professional.

Once you are able to name your feelings, it then is time to discover the choices that go along with the feelings. The simple act of naming them will help take away some of the power of the negative emotion. What you are feeling is very real and it deserves acknowledgement. For now, write them down on a piece of paper leaving space in-between the lines. Then go back to the top and write down some possible choices. Pray for God's guidance as you do this exercise and ask Him to give you the courage to move forward with the feelings you are experiencing.

While we cannot change the big picture of what our world is experiencing right now, with God's help, we have the power to make choices about how to deal with our feelings of grief. Think of this as your emotional emergency room with Jesus as your Healing Physician. All you have to do is say yes and walk in.

-Marilyn Thelen

Ways to Walk with Grief:

- * ask a friend or family member to regularly reach out to you
- * spiritual practices can be very grounding and helpful. Read our daily devotions or check our website for spiritual practice ideas.
- * write down in a journal or random paper your thoughts and griefs to God. You don't even need to keep them, just get them out in a place you can put them and send them to God.
- *Take a walk or sit outside.
- *find one thing that is life giving that you can look forward to once a week, share that thing with a friend and ask them to help you remember to do that one thing.
- * be sure to reach out to a friend, counselor, pastor, neighbor, family member, or doctor if you are feeling lost in depression or anxiety.

COVID Update

Dear OSLC Congregation and Community,

Yes, we miss seeing you in person! Yes, church, spirituality, connections and our work for the sake of the world is ESSENTIAL! What we are navigating in this pandemic is new, ever changing, sometimes frightening, and always God is still here and God is still with us. At this time, it is not safe to gather in a building with talking, singing, hugging, and interacting. We love you too much to compromise your health or the health of your loved ones. Church is still open, but our building is not.

OSLC Council, Pastors, and Staff are on the same page with remaining up to date on CDC recommendations and guidelines, Recommendations and Guidelines from our Rocky Mountain Synod Bishop who is in conversation with Colorado Governor, and the guidelines of our health community. Our Bishop has put together recommendations that are well thought out and researched. We were able to participate in conversations with him and with colleagues as well. We encourage you to look at the resources that are provided in his letter. We will be following the recommendations outlined by the Bishop.

We will continue to be the church, to go deeper into our spirituality and connections and we will find safe ways to gather, connect, and be present for one another and for our communities. At this time, per the Bishop recommendation, we will keep our building closed through August and continue digital worship and gatherings. We are looking into safe ways to have small groups be able to interact, summer engagements for all ages, and we will continue to walk with you and with one another through this time.

Thank you. Thank you for your faithfulness, your gifts, your service, your continued communication and your willingness to continue to be church together. May you know that the Holy Spirit is surrounding you and giving you grace at this time.

With so much love,

Pastor Michael and Pastor Leta

Major Points from the Bishop Recommendations

Continue with Online Worship Services through August 31st (and possibly through the end of the year) with a reevaluation in mid-August.

- *In-person worship has very high-risk factors for spreading COVID-19.*
- *Use this time to invest in community and alternative means of connection*

Consideration of Low-Risk in-person gatherings

- *Using outdoor venue space for small groups using adequate protocols and policies to ensure safety.*
- *Consider ways to build community and help our neighbors while remaining safe.*
- *Continue to use electronic means as much as possible.*

Pay particular attention as people of faith to those in our community, in our nation, and in our world who are most vulnerable during the pandemic and let that inform our ministry efforts.

- *Caring for our elderly*
- *Caring for those with emotional and mental health challenges*
- *Caring for those affected by racism*
- *Caring for those in difficult economic situations*
- *Caring for those with food insecurities*
- *Caring for migrant and refugee populations*

Summer Happenings

PeaceWorks Activities:

Each week we will have an activity station at the worship entrance focused around peace. All supplies are in the box or you can make at home.



June VBS: Compassion Camp June 22-June 27th! Compassion Camp is a VBS focused around God's Love for all People, including you! We will be delivering materials for this camp and providing online resources/videos as well. If there is interest, we will have safe, masked, distanced activities.



UNRAVELED SUMMER WORSHIP SERIES

Since mid-March when the government declared stay-at-home orders, our lives have become unraveled. Many plans have been cancelled; dreams shattered; hopes lost. Even before all this, we didn't have to dig deep to think of moments when our lives hadn't gone as planned.

What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when

our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when the path we're on comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we fear it will be – what if God does something beautiful when the vision we had for our lives tears apart?

In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes unraveling becomes an opportunity to untangle ourselves from broken patterns, or to become unwound from a path or identity that no longer serves us. Sometimes we are unraveled, but God uses the unraveling to change us in unexpected, beautiful ways.

Throughout the summer our worship will focus on stories and characters throughout the Bible whose plans fall apart, stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and expectations. The promise we will hear over and over is that these are stories where God meets us, unraveling our plans – and us – into something new.



SUMMER PRAYER STATION & ART PROJECT

Our theme for worship this summer is Unraveled. Do you know what unraveled means? Have you ever pulled the edge of a blanket until the threads come loose? Or maybe you've rolled out a ball of yarn?

Sometimes in life we feel unraveled like a ball of yarn. Sometimes our plans or our lives don't go the ways we hope they will, which might cause us to feel sad, or angry, or upset.

In worship, we will be reading and learning about how God is with us even when our plans fall apart.

Throughout our summer series, we will be working together on a large congregational art project. Our project will use scraps of fabric to create new Communion Table Paraments for our worship space. In the end, our Communion Table will be dressed with lots of fabric and threads that will remind us of what it feels like to be unraveled. It might look kind of messy and unkempt, because that's how it feels when our lives unravel.

Our outdoor prayer station - located near our Narthex entrance doors, will have pieces of scrap fabric. Each week, the station will have a different prayer/thought prompt, and you will be able to write your prayer or answer on one of the fabric strips. You will then tie your strip to the prayer string that is hung between the two crosses.

Periodically, we will take the fabric prayers and strips from the prayer station, and different people in our church will weave it into beautiful woven tapestries for our Communion Table. These tapestries will remind us that even when things don't go as planned and we get upset, God is always there to hold us and love us. And sometimes, we get woven back together with the love we share with our friends, our families, and our church.

Better Together!

You've probably noticed the stain glass windows. They stand on each side of the front entrance into worship. There perfect because in many ways they are better than the logo on our sign. You see our logo is supposed to represent 4 pieces of brokenness (glass) coming together to make the cross. The glass is a perfect representation. This anonymous gift reminds each of us that we collectively need each other to better understand God. In this time that we are separate we still need each other. Today I give thank for these wonderful images that remind you we are better together. We all lament that we cannot be together as we intend, but in these windows I see a future promised by Christ that cannot be taken away. Thank you to all of you for continuing to find ways to support each other and the church.

Through you I know Christ Jesus even more.

Blessings, Pastor Michael



HOW TO STAY CONNECTED:

Follow us on Facebook!

[Facebook.com/OSLCFortCollins](https://www.facebook.com/OSLCFortCollins)

Check the Website!

www.our-saviours.org

Contact the Office

office@our-saviours.org

**JOIN US FOR
ONLINE WORSHIP**

**Sundays
10:30 am**

**Via Facebook or
the OSLC Website**