



# HOPE CLINTON NEWS

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**“Grace is too good to a believer. The world wants to exclude certain people, say they shouldn’t be allowed inside. The church says, ‘No one is excluded. We’re radically open. God keeps getting bigger, and we have to expand with God.’”-  
*Radical Welcome***

### Keep These Things For A Newsletter

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FALL CLASSES

**“Be not afraid” is one of the most common commandments. God is trying to say, “Chill out. I’m with you.” Of course we’re petrified, but because God love us, it’s possible to go on, all the time, on knowing God never leaves us.**

## **RADICAL WELCOME- A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KARIS**

In recent weeks, I have spent time with so many people within the Hope Clinton faith community. Throughout this newsletter, you will find some quotes in the margin spaces from some of our new faith community participants. It is beyond exciting to lead a radical welcoming church while we understand that each group or person brings gifts and perspectives that help Hope Clinton to fulfill God’s dream and purpose.

Today, Hope Clinton embraces everyone’s voice while the faith community shares power, with a special commitment to embracing groups who have been defined as “The Other”.

Who is “The Other”?

“The Other” is any group that is likely (or would reasonably expect) to experience patterns of historic, systemic oppression and marginalization within the Lutheran churches of the past, especially given our church’s dominant race, worship modality and culture, language, generation, socioeconomic class, education level, sexual orientation and physical ability.

At Hope Clinton, which of these groups or people have held power and influence? That is, which groups or people have had the ability to solely own authority or influence, and to have their story, worship culture and modality, and voices shape the voice for the entire faith community? Which groups or people have not had a voice leaving some feeling alienated or excluded?

These excluded groups or people are “The Other” for Hope Clinton. We will be answering these questions in the coming days within various groups and as a community of faith as we seek to include “The Other” intentionally within ministry and worship.

This intentional practice of open arms is radical, and it is truly welcoming. Radical welcome is not an invitation to assimilate. Rather, Hope Clinton is called to move beyond the inviting church paradigm, inviting people to come inside Hope Clinton and take on what has been already packaged for decades. Rather, today, Hope Clinton embraces “The Other” and welcomes various cultures and worship modality’s so Hope Clinton expands Christ’s message.

I realize Hope Clinton will not be a fit for everyone as we move forward. We cannot be all things to all people or allow one dominant group or people to hold all the power. Traditions and cultures changed, and Hope Clinton’s worship will reflect the reality of the world in which a vast array of Christ’s people exist.

**“I love you  
teach us  
while  
uplifting us  
all while  
trying to get  
us through  
these tough  
times.  
People are  
hurting and  
this is  
needed”**

**--R.O**

***A Present Hope  
Group Participant***

Let me reassure you this change is not easy. As a pastor I realize this. I love each and every one of you unconditionally. Yet, at the end of the day, I want everyone to have a spiritual home that feels right. Hope Clinton cannot go backwards stuck within a certain worship culture with certain assumed traditions with only certain voices with power shared only by a small group. The Hope Clinton faith community has not grown in three decades thus its leadership structures are called now to adapt to what Christ has given us, a faith community beautifully reflecting the vastness of God’s creation.

Hope Clinton knows where it is heading in the years to come. This is it: Hope Clinton offers a gracious, warm space to all people, especially those who have been defined as “The Other.”

Becoming a community of radical welcome requires this faith community to go through a process of transformation that results in mutually open arms especially with “The Other”. Transformation is not easy. It takes some work – reflection, facing the reality of who Hope Clinton is today, rethinking traditions, especially how Hope Clinton does worship, re-imagining the future, etc. Radical welcome and expanding Hope Clinton’s unknown, unmet voices may be too much for some to bear. I possess positive relationships with many of our area church pastors and I will help those that are not open to being part of a radical welcoming congregation, one that is intentional with open arms to “The Other”, their cultures, their modality of worship music, their traditions or lack of traditions. I want to help the spiritually struggling to find the right spiritual fit, if needed.

God has given us a new time and opportunity during COVID-19. Every day I verbally and virtually engage with “The Other” and those that are now part of the Hope Clinton community. I remain excited for the next chapter in front of us as we spread God’s love.

Peace,

*Pastor Karis*

**The  
number  
of people  
who had  
Hope  
Clinton  
enter  
onto  
their  
screen  
during  
*one  
single  
day:***

**5,181**

## **Hope Clinton Council Update**

Two weeks ago, Hope Clinton's Council met virtually with the Metro DC Synod Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, Katharyn Wheeler. The one-hour meeting discussed the Hope Clinton Constitution. The Council explored ways to ensure Hope Clinton is a radically welcoming faith community by clarifying wording found in the Hope Clinton Constitution.

Many questions by the Council to the Metro DC Synod Administrative Assistant to the Bishop came from the perspective of how Hope Clinton can be as inclusive as ever during COVID-19 while expanding the community of faith. For example, anyone that is worships online or in person is part of the Hope Clinton faith community. Period. There is nothing in the Constitution stating worship only occurs within a building. Physical location of a worship service is a tradition but not in the ELCA or Hope Clinton constitution. There is no need for a different kind of membership for "virtual" or "online" membership as that is a division only offers barriers.

There are ELCA and Hope Clinton Constitutional mandates and then there are traditions. Constitutional mandates shape and inform the ELCA and Hope Clinton.

The Constitution does not specifically refer to intake of communion elements-bread and wine- for a person to be a member of Hope Clinton. To "commune" means participation in the Hope Clinton faith community. A person that is baptized, confirmed, donates and participates in worship is a communing member. It does not matter if all those things happened recently or earlier in one's lifetime.

Also, once a person is a baptized, confirmed, member, the Jesus follower can run for any council position and not wait years to lead Hope Clinton. This may have been a tradition but is not part of the ELCA or Hope Clinton Constitution.

The Council was reminded not to have "we" (old culture) vs "them" (new culture) boundaries rather embrace all people with open arms. Not invite them to join "us" as that implies they need to assimilate to Hope Clinton's old cultures and ways. Rather open ourselves to everyone.

## Hope Clinton Contact



*Don't forget to email Pastor Karis with prayer requests or pastoral care needs at:*

***Pastorkaris@hopeclinton.org***

Many thanks to Pastor Nicki Parrish, Pastor Tony Carpenter and Pastor Lou Shuetze as they volunteer to lead Hope Clinton through teaching, visitation and pastoral support.

**"We ask too little of God and expect too little of the encounter with a living God. Does anything matter to you enough to give your life for it? Does God matter enough that we get swept into radical, sacrificial, life-altering love and solidarity? Every now and then there have been Christians who could stand up and say 'Yes,' and embody that. We're in a moment right now where we need those revolutionaries—not just Christians, but people of faith, period."**

**- The Reverend Canon Stephanie Spellers**

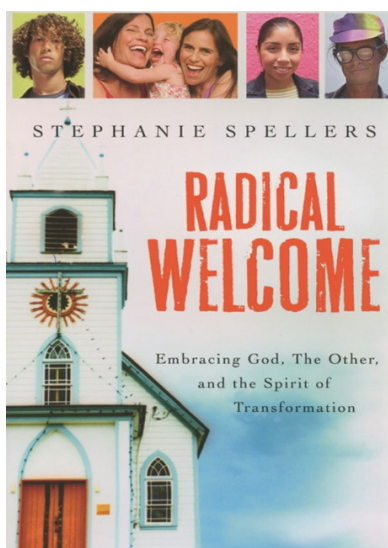
Many thanks to Drew and Michael as they updated the Hope Clinton website

Check it out

**<https://hopeclinton.org>**

**“(Two kids) watch on You Tube and Face Book. Love your children’s sermons and Quinn is a big hit!”**

**--T.L.**



**“I really like this. I appreciate that it is heartfelt. If I were not churched, it would speak to me.....you make the invitation.”**

**--M.T.**

## **HOPE CLINTON FALL CLASSES!**

### **Legacy Group Class (65+): Radical Welcome--Embracing God, The Other and The Spirit of Transformation**

Instructors: John Feldman, Pastor Nicki, Pastor Karis

STARTS SEPTEMBER 10 WITH LEGACY GROUP AT 5PM

#### **Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87845937415>**

Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other, and the Spirit of Transformation is at once a theological, inspirational, and practical guide for congregations that want to move beyond diversity and inclusion to present a vision for the church of the future: one where the transforming gifts, voices and power of marginalized cultures and groups bring new life to the mainline church.

The book is based on two years of work and over 200 interviews with people in congregations around the United States--in urban, suburban, and rural settings, in the Northeast, South, Midwest, West, and Pacific Northwest--asking the question, How do we face our fears and welcome transformation in order to become God's radically welcoming people? Each chapter introduces a particular congregation and the challenges it faced, and lays out the theological underpinnings of tackling fears head-on and embracing change as a welcome part of community life. This is a seven- week series.

### **PRESENT HOPE GROUP CLASS (PASTOR'S DISCIPLESHIP GROUP)**

#### **RADICAL WELCOME-Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation**

Instructors: Pastor Karis, Pastor Baily guest

STARTS SEPTEMBER 10 WITH LEGACY GROUP AT 7PM

The Reverend Canon Spellers’ mission is to help the Episcopal Church to fall more deeply in love with the God who shakes people to their foundations and transforms their lives. Her principles are easily translated for the Lutheran Church and Hope Clinton as this community of faith transforms during and after COVID-19.

While Spellers is an optimist and an evangelist, she is also aware of the generations-long decline in religious affiliation that has trimmed the ranks of mainline Protestant churches. She says that the issue is more fundamental than a crisis of relevance—it’s about the failure of Christian denominations to adapt to the cultural shifts of the last 50 years and, most of all, to be in an authentic, vital relationship with God. The solution, she says, is not better music or a church Facebook page or even social justice work. It’s love.



**Council Meeting**

**Sunday**

**September 20**

**1pm**

**Zoom Gathering**

### **WHAT DOES LUTHERANISM HAVE TO DO WITH JESUS AND JELLO?**

Target Audience: Those interested in learning about the Lutheran faith

Instructor: Pastor Karis

### **COMING IN NOVEMBER!**

Lutheranism is one of the largest branches of Protestantism that identifies with the teachings of Martin Luther, a 16th-century German reformer. Luther's efforts to reform the theology and practice of the church launched the Protestant Reformation. The reaction of the government and church authorities to the international spread of his writings, beginning with the 95 Theses, divided Western Christianity. Together, we'll read theologian, Martin Marty's book, "Lutheran Questions, Lutheran Answers". This is a four-week series.

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

--CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR KAREN VICKERS AS SHE TRAVELS TO SOUTH DAKOTA TO BURY HER MOTHER FOLLOWING HER MOTHER'S PASSING DUE TO COVID-19

--CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THOSE THAT ARE FEARFUL OF LOSING THEIR JOBS OR HAVE RECENTLY LOST EMPLOYEMENT

--GIVE THANKS CAROL IS IMPROVING FOLLOWING HER OPERATION

--CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR OUR SYNOD PASTORS AND BISHOP'S STAFF AS THEY LEAD FAITH FOLLOWERS DURING NEW SEASONS OF MINISTRY

--PRAY FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS, STRONG OF WILL AND HEART, GIVING FREELY OF THEIR YEARS OF TRAINING

--PRAY FOR THOSE WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE HOPE CLINTON FAITH COMMUNITY STRUGGLING WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION.

--PRAY FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT ARE SEPARATED DUE TO POLITICAL VIEWS.

--PRAY FOR THOSE HATING AND HARMING OTHERS WITH SHARPNESS OF TONGUE

--REMEMBER AND PRAY FOR THE GOOD THINGS GOD HAS GIVING

**DO YOU WANT  
TO STAY  
CONNECTED  
AND CHECK IN  
WITH THE HOPE  
CLINTON FAITH  
COMMUNITY?**

**EVERY TUESDAY  
AT NOON HOPE  
CLINTON PRAYS  
AND CHECK'S-IN  
WITH ONE  
ANOTHER**

***SIMPLY DIAL:***

***Call in (515) 604-  
9300***

***Access Code:  
475996#***

**Class: Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Church**

Instructors: Pastor Tony, Pastor Karis

**COMING IN NOVEMBER!**

Joy Unspeakable focuses on the aspects of the Black church that point beyond particular congregational gatherings toward a mystical and communal spirituality not within the exclusive domain of any denomination. This mystical aspect of the black church is deeply implicated in the well-being of African American people but is not the focus of their intentional reflection. Moreover, its traditions are deeply ensconced within the historical memory of the wider society and can be found in Coltrane's riffs, Malcolm's exhortations, the social activism of the Black Lives Matter Movement and the presidency of Barack Hussein Obama. The research in this book--through oral histories, church records, and written accounts--details not only ways in which contemplative experience is built into African American collective worship but also the legacy of African monasticism, a history of spiritual exemplars, and unique meditative worship practices.

**Class: Accidental Saints**

Instructor: Pastor Karis

**COMING IN LATE OCTOBER!**

What if that person you've been trying to avoid is your best shot at grace today? And what if that's the point? In *Accidental Saints*, New York Times best-selling author Nadia Bolz-Weber invites readers into a surprising encounter with what she calls "a religious but not-so-spiritual life." Tattooed, angry and profane, this former standup comic turned pastor stubbornly, sometimes hilariously, resists the God she feels called to serve. But God keeps showing up in the least likely of people—a church-loving agnostic, a drag queen, a felonious Bishop and a gun-toting member of the NRA.

In a time when many have rightly become dis-illusioned with Christianity, *Accidental Saints* demonstrates what happens when ordinary people share bread and wine, struggle with scripture together, and tell each other the truth about their real lives. This unforgettable account of their faltering steps toward wholeness will ring true for believer and skeptic alike.

Told in Nadia's trademark confessional style, *Accidental Saints* is the stunning next work from one of today's most important religious voices. This is three-week series.