

HOPE CLINTON



JANUARY 2021

HINDSIGHT IS 2020

The Dream of God & Transformation

It's around this time of year that I fill words on our kitchen chalkboard. Perhaps you've seen the kitchen chalkboard during our Zoom calls, Bible studies or dialogue sermons? I call it the "Dream of God" chalkboard, actually there's more than one. I often gaze upon what God has done for us during the past year while dreaming what God will continue to do in the coming new year.

When I look back as the Hope Clinton pastor, I'm amazed how the Dream of God was alive in 2020 despite multiple pandemics. From a deadly health pandemic to a global movement for racial justice, the year 2020 certainly experienced its fair share of world-shifting events.

The Right Reverend Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, wrote about the Dream of God. He said, "God is changing things so that they finally reflect the Dream of God. It will be new but it is merely the fulfillment of what God intended all along."

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and growing the community of faith was one of Hope Clinton's aspirations, a Dream of God. The Dream of God indeed came to fruition by the grace of God this past year. For example, Hope Clinton grew from 20 worship participants to hundreds and sometimes thousands within one year.

When the Hope Clinton facility closed due to COVID-19, this community of faith lived its calling to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ within a global faith community despite the pandemic. Hope Clinton quickly shifted to an adaptive online ministry by hiring Drew Parrish (Worship Director) and Michael Yabar (Social Media Director). (see page 2 for more)

***When we have God-sized dreams,
it's not possible to remain the same.***



SHARING GOD'S GIFTS

A Year of Giving

Not only did Hope Clinton grow during a pandemic, but the community of faith continued to meet the needs of its neighbors.

Hope Clinton donated laptops to students and teachers, gave the gift of warmth by hosting a coat drive, assisted the trans community by providing women's professional clothing for job interviews, fed the hungry in partnership with Temple Hills Baptist and other Lutheran churches, picked up trash alongside the North Clinton Neighborhood Association (NCAA) and donated infant items for a family in need.

The list goes on and on how Hope Clinton came together for others during a pandemic.

HINDSIGHT IS 2020 (continued)

The Dream of God & Transformation

Since early March 2020, Hope Clinton hosted nearly 20 online Bible Studies, book studies and led devotions. This community of faith participated in nearly half a dozen Metro DC Synod Leadership Academy online events, too.

As Hope Clinton's pastor, I led the Metro DC Synod Self-Care and Mental Health team and became a member of the Synod Candidacy Committee.

During 2020, two people within Hope Clinton began ministry discernment. As part of that process, these possible future ministry candidates did or now are participating in the Metro DC Synod discernment group wherein we came together to read articles and books that address the calling to ministry.

This past year, Hope Clinton actively engaged within the local neighborhood and formally partnered with the NCAA to support their events, too. Monthly, we gathered together to listen to local community issues and needs. Thus, Hope Clinton grew its neighborhood friendships and today the community of faith more fully reflects the neighborhood in which the church facility exists.

There's not a doubt that the Dream of God transformed Hope Clinton in 2020. As this happened, two very distinct cultures and groups also evolved--the Legacy Ministry and the Present Hope Mission Ministry. After prayerful discussions and many hours of listening, Hope Clinton will continue to support these two distinct ministries in unique ways so Hope Clinton exists in the future.

The Legacy Ministry focus will continue to be upon nurturing those that have been the bedrock of Hope Clinton for decades. The Present Hope Mission Ministry will be the new mission-oriented community of faith. Each group will have their own safe space to grow spiritually so each can thrive within their respective comfort levels and feel safe with their respective cultures moving forward.

I remain grateful to God for another year of life through 2020, too. Although my call to Hope Clinton was paid as part-time, I worked 40-60 hours per week on average. I find this call life-giving, most days anyway. However, it became realistic that I could no longer lead ministry without another pastoral team member to keep up with the growth. The Dream of God included a Vicar to assist with this transformation at Hope Clinton. Hope Clinton's seminary intern begins his ministry at Hope Clinton this month and will assist with pastoral care duties and continue to help Hope Clinton to grow!

As Rev Perez, Holy Faith Episcopal Church eloquently wrote, "It's no time to bring a different set of questions to the community of faith. Not just how do we get more people, but how do we share power, how do we create a flexible culture that's fluid enough to be open, constantly evaluating and reorganizing based on the reality around us?" That's going to be the 2021 Dream of God for this new year.

-Pastor Karis

“Not long ago I was a guest on Real Time with Bill Maher, with one of America’s most prominent atheists. Wearing my clerical collar, I realized that I stood out among his guests. So I decided to announce to Bill that I, too, am an atheist. He seemed taken aback, so I explained that if we were talking about the God who hates poor people, immigrants, and gay folks, I don’t believe in that God either. Sometimes it helps to clarify our language.”

”

– William J. Barber II, The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement



Welcome to Vicar Eric Randolph

Hope Clinton is fortunate to have Vicar Eric Randolph join the ministry team as part of his one-year seminary internship in January.

As part of seminary training, this internship provides leadership experience under the supervision of Pastor Karis that serves as his contextual educator. The internship's dual aim is a developmental process of vocational formation and growth in competence using the various skills of ministry practice. During internship, Vicar Eric will serve as a public leader, engage in the full range of ministry and professional experiences, hone skills in proclaiming God's promise, and help equip Hope Clinton's growing faith community. As part of the internship experience, Vicar Eric will complete a major project that deepens learning of particular leadership skills. These projects may include areas such as administration, leadership, stewardship, conflict resolution, or revitalization which arise out of the context in which one is serving. Vicar Eric will divide his time between the Hope Clinton Legacy Ministry while also spending time assisting with the Present Hope Mission Ministry, as this growing ministry also requires pastoral and technical support.

Vicar Randolph is a third year Master of Divinity student at the United Lutheran Seminary, a historic seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with campuses in Gettysburg and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Vicar Eric is on his way to graduate in the Spring of 2022.

Eric was raised in Upstate New York and Northern Pennsylvania and has lived in the D.C. area for twenty years. He's married to Dennis, a senior civilian analyst with the Department of Defense.

His undergraduate studies were in religion and theology, and he graduated cum laude from Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, Florida. Prior to entering the seminary, Eric's professional career was in executive retail management, most recently as regional manager for a major North American department store company. Eric started to hear God's call to ministry when he was in his early teens and has always been active in the church, from participating in choirs to serving as a council president and a worship leader.

Legacy Ministry Post-Worship Zoom Chat

The Legacy Ministry meets via Zoom post Sunday worship (11:15am) by linking to the Hope Clinton Website Home Page.

Just click on the box "Legacy Zoom Call":

<https://hopeclinton.org/>

301.868.2678 office@hopeclinton.org f t

Home Live Just for Kids Classes Calendar Give Our Team eWorship @ Hope Sing with Us

Thanks for checking out Hope Lutheran Church where ministry is about being authentic and relevant while keeping our focus on serving God's creation.

We welcome everyone. That means—every- single-person! We're not looking to change anyone but rather offer a safe space to take off our masks and get real with one another and God. We are here to have soul conversations about things that really matter daily and where God exists in it all.

We're experiencing God right here and calling others to do the same.

Pastor Karis Graham

Legacy Zoom Call

When are we going to realize that God comes to us in ways we'd never recognize? The Israelites thought the Messiah would come as a great military king. Instead, God came as a poor child from a backwater town. We can't place limits on God. God's kingdom is mind-blowing.

The Metro DC Synod Leadership Academy Presents:

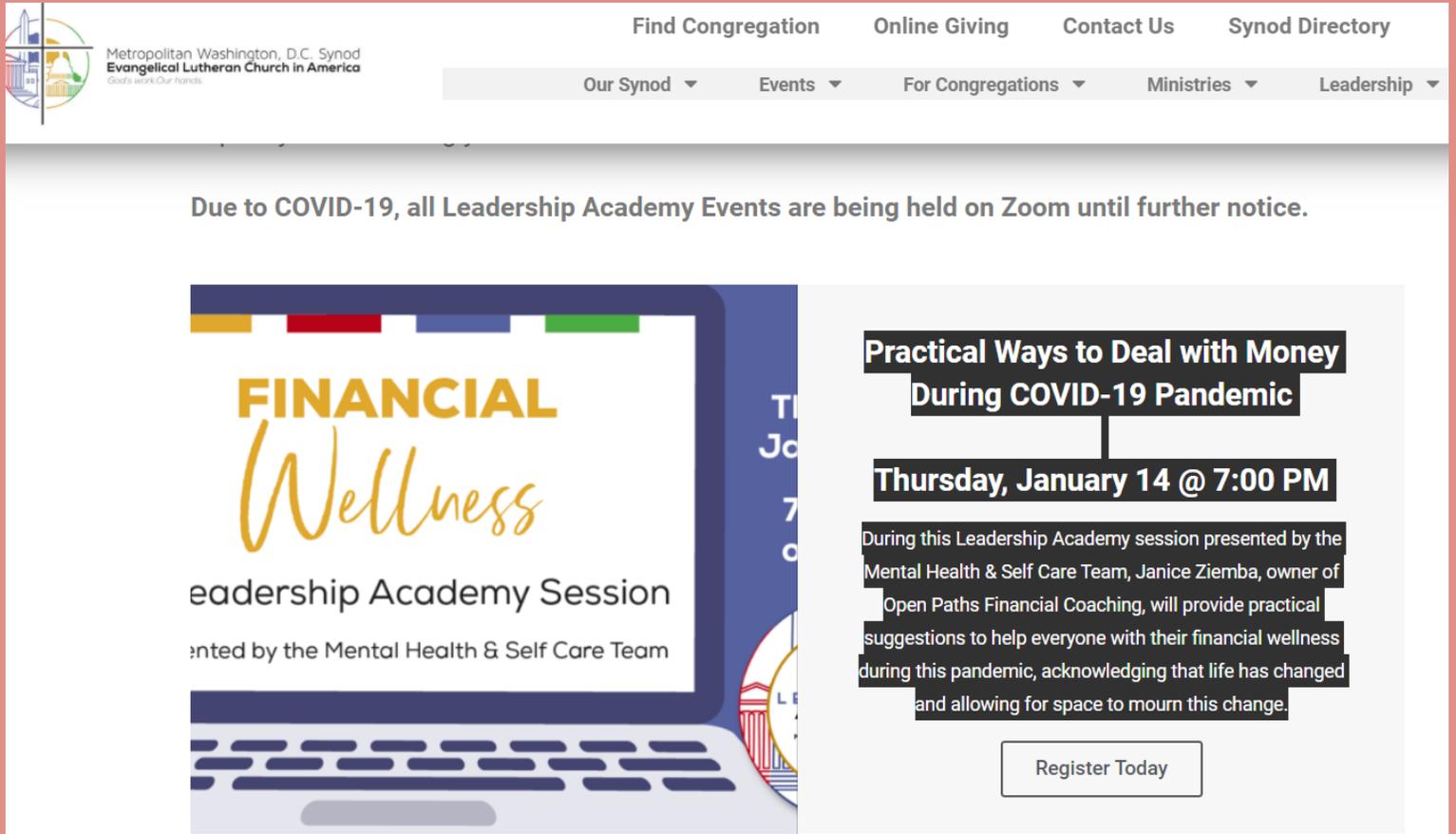
Practical Ways to Deal with Money During COVID-19 Pandemic

Thursday, January 14 @ 7:00 PM

During this Leadership Academy session presented by the Mental Health & Self Care Team, Janice Ziemba, owner of Open Paths Financial Coaching, will provide practical suggestions to help everyone with their financial wellness during this pandemic, acknowledging that life has changed and allowing for space to mourn this change.

Please Register for this Event At The Below Link:

<http://metrodcelca.org/leaderacademy/>



The screenshot shows the website for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The navigation bar includes links for 'Find Congregation', 'Online Giving', 'Contact Us', and 'Synod Directory'. Below the navigation bar are dropdown menus for 'Our Synod', 'Events', 'For Congregations', 'Ministries', and 'Leadership'. The main content area features a notice: 'Due to COVID-19, all Leadership Academy Events are being held on Zoom until further notice.' Below this is a promotional graphic for a Leadership Academy Session titled 'FINANCIAL Wellness'. The graphic includes the text 'Leadership Academy Session presented by the Mental Health & Self Care Team' and a 'Register Today' button. To the right of the graphic, the event details are repeated: 'Practical Ways to Deal with Money During COVID-19 Pandemic' on Thursday, January 14 @ 7:00 PM, with a description of the session and a 'Register Today' button.

It's time to bring a different set of questions. Not just how do we get more people, but how do we share power, how do we create a culture that is flexible and fluid enough to be open, constantly evaluating and reorganizing based on the reality around us?

-The Rev Altagracia Perez

**LOVE LIFE
LIVE LENT**

Lent, in the Christian church, a period of penitential preparation for Easter. In Western churches Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, six and a half weeks before Easter, and provides for 40-days of reflection (Sundays are excluded). Hope Clinton will host 10-minute Lenten devotions each Wednesday

February 17-March 31, 2021, at 7pm at the below links:

<https://www.facebook.com/pastorkaris.graham.5/>

or

<https://www.facebook.com/hopeclinton/>

*JESUS KNOWS YOU.
YOU ARE HIS SON OR DAUGHTER
FOREVER. PERIOD.*

Dear Church,

We have been living with this pandemic for nearly a year. So much has changed. Bubbles, personal protective equipment, social distancing and one-way grocery aisles are part of our lexicon and everyday experience. Who knew, a year ago, that face masks would be advertised as ideal stocking stuffers? Our homes have become offices, schools and gyms. Our commutes have been cut down from hours of traffic to walking over to the dining room table. I do not look forward to the weekly summary from my iPhone that tells me how many hours a day I am staring at a screen.

But the pandemic has also revealed the remarkable resilience and creativity of this church. Within weeks of shelter-in-place restrictions, thousands of our congregations converted to online worship, Bible studies and coffee hours. As the economy stuttered and people lost jobs, you stepped up the work of your food pantries. When kids needed internet access to go to virtual school, you became neighborhood hot spots.

We became more connected. And the gospel was heard by people who, in the “Before Times,” would never have come to church. There is a story about the devil bragging to a pastor, saying that the pandemic was the devil’s tool to close all the churches—to which the pastor replied, “We have opened a church in every home.”

You have been generous. In March and April we began to hear concern from our bishops about synod ministries. What would happen to camps and campus ministries? What would happen to congregations that were anchors in communities and were already stressed before the pandemic? We offered [Daily Bread grants](#)—\$500 from the churchwide organization/\$500 from the local congregation. We hoped that 50 congregations might be able to raise the matching funds. So far 374 grants have been awarded. Working with synod bishops we launched the [COVID-19 Appeal](#), which is designed to support key ministries in synods. You stepped up and in eight months have given over \$1.7 million. These grants have been distributed to ministries in 62 of our 65 synods.

The pandemic has revealed the remarkable resilience and creativity of this church.

Now it’s 2021. The pandemic is still with us. Yes, there are vaccines and distribution is being sorted out. There is an end in sight. But now is not the time to let down our guard. We’ll keep washing our hands, wearing masks and avoiding crowds. We will do this for ourselves and for each other. We will respect the disease and give thanks to God for the gift of science. And we will continue to worship, pray and serve.

The pandemic has also taught us something about ourselves. Though we are physically distant, we are connected. Paul put it this way in a letter to the Corinthians: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:26-27).

It is our joyful duty to care for one another, particularly the most vulnerable. It is an act of faithfulness when we limit ourselves so that the pandemic is brought to heel. It is an act of love when we restrict our travel or wear a mask. As Martin Luther pointed out in [The Freedom of a Christian](#), it is the freedom we have in Christ that makes us servants of all.

There is a model of such self-giving, self-limiting love. “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:4-8).

I pray that we all live in such freedom.

Peace. Be well.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Presiding Bishop

“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 loves us, it’s possible to go on, all the time, knowing God never leaves us.



PRESENT HOPE MISSION MINISTRY

Pastor Karis & Drew Parrish will be spending most of their time beginning this month alongside the Present Hope Mission Ministry members as we grow together in the faith. Present Hope has grown from a handful of amazing people to dozens of energetic worship participants.

We want to continue to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of Present Hope.

So, we are developing a survey to better listen to the desires, dreams and future direction of Present Hope.

Be sure to look in your FB messenger and email accounts soon to complete this survey.

We want to know how we can best serve this growing and dynamic mission ministry at Hope Clinton.

Stop watering things that were never meant to grow in your life. Water what works, what's good, what's right. Stop playing around with those dead bones and stuff you can't fix, its over...leave it alone! You're coming into a season of greatness. If you water what's alive and divine, you will see harvest like you've never seen before. Stop wasting water on dead issues, dead relationships, dead people, a dead past. No matter how much you water concrete, you can't grow a garden. –TD Jakes

YOUNG FAMILY IN NEED

AN INFANT WAS BORN IN LATE FALL
PREMATURELY TO A HOPE CLINTON FAMILY
MEMBER

BRITTANY, THE MOM, WAS ALSO
HOSPITALIZED. THANKFULLY SHE IS NOW
BACK HOME RECOVERING

IF YOU FEEL CALLED TO DONATE A GIFT CARD
FOR NEEDED BABY ITEMS TO PLEASE SEND TO:

ANTHONY MORRIS (AKA. DAD)

12309 Treetop Dr, Apt 12

Silver Spring, MD 20904



CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2021

12 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83095457872>