

What's **NEXT** for Hope Clinton as the Pandemic wanes?

God's got this! Hope Clinton will continue to adapt and change to thrive in the years to come. God's got you and Hope Clinton!

THE REV. DR. KARIS GRAHAM

At Hope Clinton, we have so many things to be grateful for, even during a time of a pandemic and equity imbalances. Each of you has come together not only to sustain this community of faith but to grow with a once-tiny parish sitting in Clinton, Maryland. As hard as it's been for some within the Legacy Ministry to change, you've done it. Others that the Church has hurt have dipped their toes back into the baptismal waters!

So, what's next for Hope Clinton as the pandemic wanes?

The Legacy Ministry will continue to worship together at 8:30 a.m. once it's safe to return in person within the building for those that yearn for that comfort zone. Vicar Eric will continue to minister to the Legacy Group full-time. Many within the Legacy Ministry have had their vaccinations, but masks and social distancing while caring for the "least of these" will be paramount. There's no definitive date of reconvening for this ministry, but that day is coming!

The Present Hope Ministry will continue primarily online while Pastor and Drew lead parts of the 10:30 a.m. worship service within a physical structure. Most Present Hope members are younger, and the vaccines aren't yet available for this age group.

Next week, the Hope Clinton staff, Council President, and facility representative will meet at church to explore how to refresh the sanctuary for a new and growing community of faith while adding technological features that continue with our growth.

At the same time, Hope Clinton lay leaders urge members to support the church financially through digital giving. Hope Clinton is preparing ways to minister to the immediate community during the pandemic and beyond. I remain grateful for the responses and caring hearts of so many within Hope Clinton's life. Amid our significant financial challenge, it's heartwarming and reassuring to see many people who care about being God's loving presence in a hurting world.

I am fascinated to see what our churches

will look like on "the other side" as I've been reading some research. Here are seven likely developments:

- **NON-DIGITAL GIVING WILL BECOME AN OUTLIER.** Fewer people will want to handle the offering plates or buckets. Fewer people will touch cash. Make sure you are moving your church to digital giving. Most communities of faith should be receiving 60% of gifts digitally right now. That number must grow. Thanks to the Finance Team shifting gears and quickly adapting as they have during this challenging period.
- **SMALLER WORSHIP SERVICES WILL BECOME NORMAL.** We were already seeing a trend of churches moving to smaller worship gatherings, even if a community of faith is growing. Smaller gatherings will be the new normal.
- **THE NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON CHURCHES COULD HAVE LONG-LASTING EFFECTS.** Hope Clinton leadership should begin discussions of "what if?" What if our giving was cut by 30% for the next few years? What adjustments will we make? (Cont'd p.2)



What's Next for Hope Clinton as the Pandemic wanes?

Continued.

What creative ways are we going to capture funding? (Synod Renewing Congregation, Grants, etc.)

- **SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL CHANGE THIS COMMUNITY OF FAITH PERMANENTLY.** Stand and greet is gone and will not return in most communities of faith. Church huggers will no longer be tolerated. Even handshakes will be minimized.

- **THE DEATH RATE OF CHURCHES WILL WORSEN.** Some communities of faith within our Synod are barely hanging on. Some will not survive the consequences of the coronavirus or decades long inequities. The death rate of congregations will thus increase significantly. These deaths can be mitigated, however, with an intentional focus on changing course as Hope Clinton has done during the past year.

- **CHURCHES WILL PERMANENTLY AND RAPIDLY ADOPT MORE VIRTUAL PRACTICES.** Some communities of faith have resisted the migration into the virtual world, but the coronavirus has taken many congregations into a quick immersion into the digital age. Hope Clinton has been at the forefront of this change and has expanded among a vast group of "the other." The coronavirus is the tipping point of much more to come in the digital world. Indeed, this change may be

the most profound of all the changes churches will face after the coronavirus is no longer considered a pandemic.

- **NO ONE WANTS TO BE PART OF A CONGREGATION THAT IS REMEMBERED FOR LETTING THE BUILDING FALL INTO SERIOUS DISREPAIR.** Hope Clinton will keep everyone up-to-date on a renovation project that can succeed while offering a different strategy during a technical age. Repairs and refreshing will be needed before Present Hope reconvenes in the sanctuary so that Hope Clinton can continue to minister and serve a growing faith community

I know you know it, but remember God's got this! Hope Clinton will continue to adapt and change to thrive in the years to come. God's got you and Hope Clinton! The wonderful things happened with each of you. God's got your church! I am beyond grateful for the caring hearts of so many within this faith community. In the midst of a major new reformation, it's heartwarming and reassuring to see many people who really are creating radical bonds to be God's unconditional loving presence in a hurting world.

In Christ,
Pastor Karis

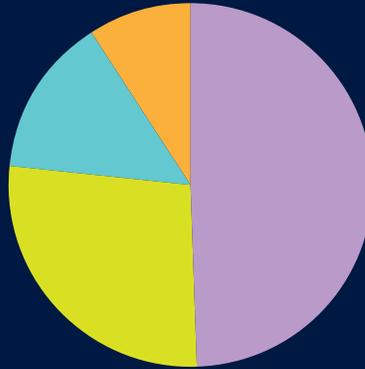
2021 SURVEY

RESULTS FROM OUR SURVEY OF THE PRESENT HOPE MINISTRY

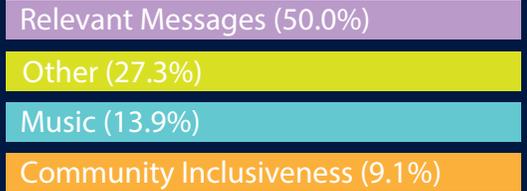
Over the last month and a half, Hope Clinton surveyed the Present Hope Ministry to gauge vitality and engagement as Hope Clinton continues to adapt to the changes all faith communities have experienced during the pandemic, and as we look ahead to life in a post-pandemic world. Pastor Karis' seven bullets in the previous article outline the overwhelming conclusions from recent studies about how congregations will function in the months, years and decades ahead.

Theologian Karl Barth popularized the phrase *Ecclesia semper reformada est*, or "the Church must always be reformed." In other words, the church must always examine itself not only from the doctrinal perspective, but also how the church practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has invited faith communities around the world into a season of re-examination, revival, and, in many cases, resurrection. How well a community of faith positions itself for the post-pandemic future relies on how well it listens and adapts.

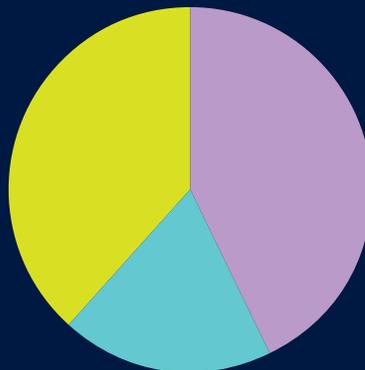
The survey results were confirmation that Hope Clinton is moving in the right direction with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hope Clinton, like the wider Church, will continue to pay attention to the spiritual needs of the many. And open itself to new and exciting ways of engaging with all of God's children in this troubled world by sharing the Gospel in revolutionary ways with the technology at hand.



What keeps you engaged with Hope Clinton's online worship experience?



The 27.3% who responded 'Other' indicated their engagement was a mix of relevant messaging, music, and community inclusivity.



As Hope Clinton keeps its worship online, would you like to see the worship team film worship in your neighborhood?



The 38.1% who responded 'Other' provided alternative location suggestions and positive feedback on Hope's worship model during the pandemic.



The days of maintaining our congregations are over. This is now the time of transformation.

The Rev. Leila Ortiz, Bishop
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod



Virtual Community of Faith

Where are we growing and who are we engaging with?

Average Weekly Reach by City (February 2021)

Abingdon, VA (3)	Fairfax, VA (4)	Newburg, MD (3)
Accokeek, MD (3)	Fort Washington, MD (8)	Norfolk, VA (5)
Albuquerque, NM (6)	Fort Worth, TX (6)	Odenton, MD (3)
Alexandria, VA (4)	Fresno, CA (7)	Omaha, NE (5)
Anchorage, AK (7)	Gettysburg, PA (4)	Oneida, TN (9)
Annandale, VA (4)	Glen Burnie, MD (6)	Oxon Hill, MD (5)
Annapolis, MD (6)	Golden Beach, MD (3)	Pasadena, MD (5)
Arlington, VA (7)	Greenbelt, MD (3)	Philadelphia, PA (9)
Arnold, MD (3)	Greenville, SC (6)	Phoenix, AZ (6)
Athens, PA (4)	Harwood, MD (3)	Port Tobacco, MD (4)
Bakersfield, CA (5)	Hernando, MS (3)	Portland, OR (5)
Baltimore, MD (10)	Hollywood, MD (4)	Potomac Heights, MD (4)
Baton Rouge, LA (5)	Honolulu, HI (7)	Raleigh, NC (4)
Bel Air, MD (2)	Hot Springs, VA (2)	Richmond, VA (4)
Belcamp, MD (2)	Houston, TX (7)	Russelville, AL (3)
Bethesda, MD (3)	Hughesville, MD (3)	Saint Charles, MD (6)
Boston, MA (5)	Huntingtown, MD (3)	San Antonio, TX (7)
Bowie, MD (3)	Huntsville, TN (5)	Savannah, GA (5)
Brandywine, MD (4)	Indian Head, MD (85)	Sayre, PA (4)
Bryans Road, MD (11)	Indianapolis, IN (7)	Severn, MD (2)
Burke, VA (4)	Jacksonville, FL (4)	Shady Side, MD (2)
California, MD (13)	Kansas City, KS (3)	Silver Spring, MD (4)
Camp Springs, MD (3)	La Plata, MD (12)	Springfield, MO (5)
Centerville, VA (3)	Las Vegas, NV (5)	Springfield, VA (2)
Chandler, AZ (2)	Leonardtown, MD (8)	Stevensville, MD (4)
Chaptico, MD (3)	Lexington Park, MD (7)	Stockton, CA (4)
Charlotte, NC (10)	Los Angeles, CA (6)	Standford, CT (2)
Charlotte Hall, MD (7)	Lowville, NY (3)	Suffolk, VA (3)
Chicago, IL (8)	Lusby, MD (5)	Temple Hills, MD (3)
Cincinnati, OH (3)	Manassas, VA (3)	Tulsa, OK (7)
Clinton, MD (16)	Marbury, MD (10)	Upper Marlboro, MD (3)
Columbia, SC (2)	Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (2)	Uppsala, Sweden (2)
Crofton, MD (4)	Mechanicsville, MD (19)	Virginia Beach, VA (3)
Dallas, TX (5)	Memphis, TN (10)	Waldorf, MD (13)
Davidsonville, MD (4)	Milwaukee, WI (6)	Washington, D.C. (21)
DeKalb, IL (2)	Montgomery, AL (4)	White Plains, MD (5)
Des Moines, IA (6)	Nanjemoy, MD (7)	Wichita, KS (4)
Detroit, MI (4)	Nashville, TN (7)	Winston-Salem, NC (6)
Edgewater, MD (4)	New Orleans, LA (4)	York, PA (3)
Ellicott City, MD (4)	New York, NY (20)	

Average February Reach

714

Listed are all the cities where Hope Clinton's online worship was viewed during the month of February. The number in parentheses represents the average number of weekly views for each city.

Our reach has expanded through advertising, but it is impacted the most when you share worship on your individual Facebook pages.

Hope Clinton is now set up to receive online donations through Facebook. Click the "Donation" button at the top of our page to help support Hope Clinton's ministry.

Our top 5 cities are:

- Indian Head, MD
- Washington, D.C.
- New York, NY
- Mechanicsville, MD
- Clinton, MD

"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND TEACHING THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU" (MATTHEW 28:19-20)

People Talking about Hope Clinton on Facebook (February 2021)

These numbers represent the age and gender demographics of individuals who like, share, comment, and post about Hope Clinton.

	Female	Male	Unidentified
Age		Age	Age
25-34 (2)		25-34 (12)	35-44 (1)
35-44 (34)		35-44 (22)	
45-54 (29)		45-54 (30)	
55-64 (48)		55-64 (7)	
65+ (45)		65+ (13)	



Your financial gifts help support our ministry and outreach, and the salaries of our staff. Help support Hope Clinton by making your offering online by texting (855) 934-3553 or visit facebook.com/hopeclinton and click the "Donate" button on our page header. Thank you for your generosity and your support of Hope Clinton.

March/Lent Update

BY: Drew Parrish

“Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; God’s greatness no one can fathom” (Psalm 145:3)

In the past few months God has continued to bless the people of Hope with worship that exalts our Creator virtually. We have continued to do church on location, with Pastor Karis, Vicar Eric and Drew Parrish travelling around the community to new and unique historical and natural settings. Our Savior has been honored again and again in the Word and music, and the Holy Spirit continues to connect God’s people in the spreading of the gospel. What a great season to be the church. We have been called to change, we rose to that change, and we are a more diverse and more vibrant community of faith for it!

We are currently preparing for Easter, the music is going to be diverse, uplifting and celebratory. We will continue to feature new music from our team of musicians and we will step it up a notch for the Easter celebration. Keep us in prayer, that the music we prepare will be used for God’s continued blessing of encouragement and growth upon the people of Hope Clinton.

MEDIA

As we move through Lent, our website has been updated weekly with children’s activities and songs and stories. Please check out <https://hopeclinton.org/just-for-kids/> and share this page with the children you encounter in your day-to-day life (some of the fun is fun for adults as well!) We update this every Sunday and would love for this resource to benefit as much of our community as possible.

SEMINARY

As you may or may not have heard, Drew Parrish has been accepted to the MDivX program at Luther Seminary! (Yay!) This 2-year program is a full 4-year seminary experience squeezed into a 2-year program. Pastor Karis says that Drew will be doing the equivalent of “drinking from a firehose.” This whole journey begins June 2021, and the great news is that this online program and internship has been approved for Drew to be at Hope Clinton during this whole program, with Pastor Karis as his supervisor. As Drew switches to a more pastoral role for this study, we will see some changes coming in the worship service, and in the roles Drew is called upon to play in the Hope Clinton community. There will be more details on this in the months to

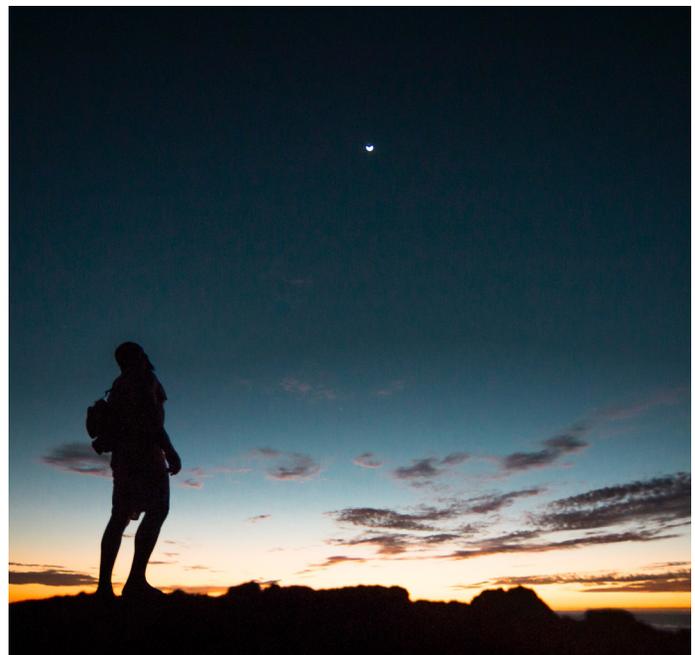
come, but we maintain that the online worship will not only continue, it will continue with excellence.

TECH EQUIPMENT

We will be looking at a hybrid model of online/in-person church for the Present Hope community as we return to the sanctuary – (STILL A WAYS OFF – and only when everyone can be safe.) While we still have the time, we have begun planning for what this might look like. As we move forward, we plan to involve our Present Hope community in the planning of how this will look as it rolls out. Feel free to email – drewparrish@me.com or message me on Facebook if you would like to get involved creatively.

So glad to be on this journey together at Hope Clinton!

Drew and the Hope Clinton Worship Team.





BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Dorothy Scott's granddaughter, Summer, is home and is doing well. Dorothy, Anthony (dad) and Brittany (mom) thank everyone for their prayers and the assistance the church gave them.



CALENDAR

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING

March 21st at 12:00 p.m. on Zoom

LIFE CAFE with Gail Wathen

March 25th | 2:00 p.m. Hope Legacy & 7:00 p.m. Present Hope

BIBLE STUDY - THE BOOK OF REVELATION with Vicar Eric

(Hope Legacy) Every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

*No Bible Study on April 1st (Maundy Thursday)

LENTEN DEVOTIONS - "WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO END HUNGER?"

Wednesdays during Lent at 7:00 p.m. | facebook.com/hopecinton

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. on facebook.com/hopecinton

PALMS FOR PALM SUNDAY

Palms for Palm Sunday will be available for pick up on Friday, March 26th from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Stop by at the church and get your palms and say hello to Vicar Eric. If you are not able to pick up palms during that time not to worry. Palms will be left at the church building for anyone to pick up through Saturday evening.

HOLY WEEK AT HOPE CLINTON

PALM SUNDAY

March 21st at 10:30 a.m. on

facebook.com/hopecinton

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Pastor Karis

April 1st at 7:00 p.m. on

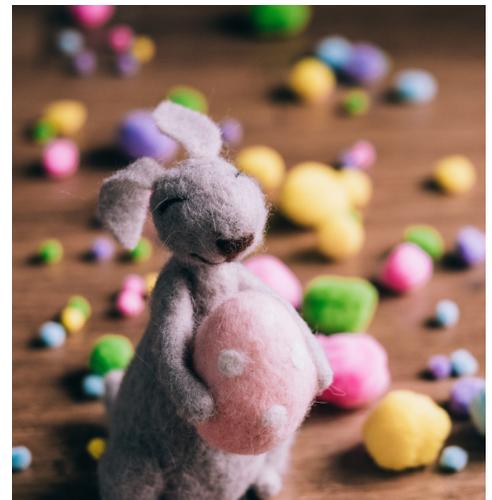
facebook.com/hopecinton

GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Vicar Eric

April 2nd at 12:00 p.m. on

facebook.com/hopecinton





Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This month marks 1 year since COVID-19 entered our lives. As I share this with you, there have been 505,642 deaths in the United States alone and 2,497,406 deaths worldwide. All of these were beloved children of God and some were our family members, friends, colleagues... they had stories to tell, dreams, and ambitions. They still have names, our collective body grieves their loss, and they will now remain a part of our life's story.

This story also holds the ways COVID-19 forced us to re-imagine how we function in a world with this invisible and deadly threat, and how we remain and grow as disciples of Jesus who worship together. Neither life nor ministry have taken a pause in the midst of this pandemic. Instead, both have grown in their demands and some would argue that these demands drained their bodies of energy, their minds of sanity, and their spirits of inspired creativity. And yet, here we are. Here we are in the middle of the Lenten season testifying and adding to our personal and collective story of death that leads to resurrection; adding to and actively participating in our personal and collective story of transformation.

On this Lenten journey we've invited you to explore Romans 12:1-21. Today, March 1st, we're invited to meditate on verse 5, "so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."

We are tied to all God's beloved creation through our relationship in Christ. We are one body and we are members of one another. How might claiming this truth lead to further transformation in each of us this coming year? How might we be transformed by the renewing of our minds and by waking to the avoidable loss of millions to the triple pandemic we suffer today: a deadly virus, systemic injustice, and a climate crisis? How might we be transformed in our thinking, living, and leading for the sake of co-participating in the transformation of a world in desperate need of unconditional love and healing?

My prayer this day is that we hold this moment in history and these questions near to our hearts; that we wrestle with the invitations and answers that may arise and become inspired by the possibilities; that we sit with the weight and implications of God's word to us and truly recognize each other as members one of another. Ultimately, I pray we come to believe in our bones that we can lean into the Spirit's transformative work in us with confidence and courage... with God's help and in Jesus' name. Amen.

Bishop Leila M. Ortiz
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

March 1, 2021



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Synod Assembly

The 2021 Synod Assembly will be held virtually from June 4-5, 2021. A Closing Worship Service will be held on Sunday, June 6 at 10 a.m. that will be available to the entire synod.

New Address

The synod has a new address:
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod ELCA
4005 Wisconsin Ave., NW
PO Box 39105
Washington, D.C. 20016-9997

Leadership Academy

The Mental Health & Self Care Team will present the session "Mental Health & Addiction for Church Leaders" on Thursday, March 18 at 7:00 p.m. More details at metrodelca.org/events