

Unity Newsletter May 2021

UPDATES ON IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Beginning May 9th we will welcome people back in the sanctuary.

GRATITUDE for the many, many ways you stepped up for each other living as the Body of Christ.



THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. MARIA ROJAS ON APRIL 17TH

We give thanks to God for the Ordination of the Rev. Maria Rojas on April 17th. The day was filled with the Holy Spirit as we gathered on-line and in-person to witness this long-awaited moment. Photo by Gaby Valladolid.

Pastor's Message



SINGING SILENT NIGHT TOGETHER ON CHRISTMAS EVE

DISCOVERING AGAIN WHAT IT IS TO BE CHURCH

Early in March of 2020, I was on the phone with a friend in Seattle, who described the city as a ghost town. "Everything is closed," she said. "No church, no school. And soon, it will be this way everywhere." I thought that surely this was an over-reaction or an exaggeration. But just a few weeks later, on March 22nd, I stood in front of you all as we held our last in-person worship service for more than a year.

That last service was so fraught with emotion. As I stood in front of you, I

felt in my bones how desperately we needed each other, how we needed to experience the promises of God together in person. And yet, I had to send you all home, not knowing when we could be together again. On Sunday, May 9th, we will re-open our doors, eager to receive people. Gratefully, we will also continue to offer worship on-line. Not only has it been a good resource for us as we try to keep safe, it has also allowed people to join us from other countries, while on vacation, and even as some

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grounded in grace, we shared the gifts of God



our hearts overflow with gratitude

Below is an incomplete list of ways you all stepped up to be the church in these strange and challenging times. There are so many other ways God has shown up that I've surely missed. But you proved again and again, that though we were distanced we were certainly the Body of Christ no matter what.

have moved.

In this past year, you have proven that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Over and over again you've stepped up for each other, praying, providing food, working out the technology, delivering communion, and far more. You have truly been a blessing. Now, as we come back together, we have an opportunity to build on those blessings and re-commit to being a church that lives out our call to love God and our neighbor.

I can promise you, there will be moments that feel strange and even clumsy, as we find our rhythm. Many of our old patterns will have to be re-thought. We will find new ways of doing things. And it will all be a messy mix of grief and joy.

But through it all, my heart has been filled with such gratitude for the thousands of ways God has shown up. In Easter Vigil skits, palm branch deliveries, watered plants, financial gifts and so much more.

God has been so good.

Pastor Julie Boleyn

- **THE GIFTS THAT ALLOWED SEVERAL FAMILIES TO PAY THEIR BILLS.**
- **A FELLOWSHIP HALL FILLED WITH FOOD**
- **THOSE WHO CAME IN THE BUILDING REGULARLY TO KEEP OUR PLANTS ALIVE**
- **THOSE WHO DELIVERED PALM BRANCHES AND COMMUNION**
- **TECHNOLOGY WIZARDS WHO KEPT US CONNECTED**
- **OUR COUNCIL WHO FAITHFULLY KEPT CARING FOR THIS CONGREGATION**
- **PASTOR MARIA ROJAS' FAITHFUL PARTNERSHIP**
- **THE METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD'S GIFTS TO HELP WITH FINANCES**
- **THE REOPENING COMMITTEE AND THEIR CARE FOR THIS COMMUNITY**
- **GROCERY STORE GIFT CARDS**
- **ALL THOSE WHO RECORDED THEMSELVES SINGING**
- **THE ADVENT STORIES, EASTER VIGIL SKITS, ZOOM PRAYERS, AND MORE**
- **UNITY/UNIDAD SPANISH AND ENGLISH CLASSES**
- **THURSDAY'S PRAYER TEAM MEETINGS**
- **ELIDER DIPAULA FOR KEEPING OUR MUSIC GOING**
- **DESIRAE DIEHL FOR HER GENEROUS SINGING IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES.**

Notes...

SYNOD ASSEMBLY IS JUNE 5TH FROM 8:30AM TO NOON. Kristina Adamczewski and Mike Garon will serve as our representatives. Everyone is invited to join on-line. The link is available at the synod's webpage: www.mcselca.org.

ON-LINE WORSHIP CONTINUES The login information each week will be the same. English worship is at 9am and Spanish is at 11am. To login go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83271298924> or dial 312-626-6799 and enter code 832 7129 8924.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF A SPIRITUAL CARE TEAM? Bishop Anderson House has a training opportunity for those interested in providing Spiritual Care to those in need. We'd like to put together a team of people to partake in this training. If you are interested please contact Pastor Julie at pastorboleyn@gmail.com. The people of Unidad are also starting a similar training, and it would be lovely to share this wisdom together.

HELP MAKING WORSHIP HAPPEN As we return to in-person worship we will have many opportunities for people to help make worship happen. Please contact the worship committee chair, Kristina Adamczewski, or Pastor Julie if you are interested in helping in any of the following ways:

- Altar Care
- Reader
- Prayers of Intercession
- Technologist (managing Zoom & Powerpoint)
- Usher
- Cantor (singing for the congregation)
- Post-worship clean-up

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP IN PERSON


BEGINNING MAY 9TH


Please join us in-person or online each Sunday. English services are at 9:00am and Spanish services are at 11:00am

If you are coming in person here are a few things to know:

MASKS ARE REQUIRED 
Everyone will need to wear a mask covering both their nose and their mouth.


6-FOOT APART
Every other pew will be open to help with social distancing. Families and vaccinated people may sit closer together.

COMMUNION 
Communion will be provided in single-serving disposable cups.


ALAS, NO GROUP SINGING
We will have a cantor sing most of the music as we try to limit our potential exposure.

"COFFEE" HOUR OUTSIDE 
We won't have coffee hour as we used to, but on Sundays when the weather permits, we will gather outside following services to connect and catch up.

For more information:
<https://mcselca.org/congregational-support/covid-19-resources>
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/>

Worship leaders

Day	Date	Reader *	Prayer *	Altar Guild	Tech Person	Ushers	Cantor
Easter 6	5/9	David Olson	Patricia Gill	R. Ziegler	J. Adamczewski	Mike Garon	Sandy Cervenka
Easter 7	5/16	Kristina Adamczewski	Mike Garon	R. Ziegler	J. Adamczewski		
Pentecost	5/23	Patricia Gill	Kayla Layng	R. Ziegler	J. Adamczewski		
Holy Trinity	5/30	Holly Little	David Olson	R. Ziegler	J. Adamczewski		
Pentecost 2	6/6	Kayla Layng	Patricia Gill				
Pentecost 3	6/13	David Olson	Kristina Adamczewski				
Pentecost 4	6/20	Mike Garon	Holly Little				
Pentecost 5	6/27	Zieglers	Zieglers				
Pentecost 6	7/4	Kristina Adamczewski	Holly Little				
Pentecost 7	7/11	Patricia Gill	Kristina Adamczewski				
Pentecost 8	7/18	Kayla Layng	Mike Garon				
Pentecost 9	7/25	Holly Little	Kayla Layng				
Pentecost 10	8/1	David Olson	Patricia Gill				
Pentecost 11	8/8	Mike Garon	Holly Little				
Pentecost 12	8/15	Zieglers	Zieglers				
Pentecost 13	8/22	Kristina Adamczewski	Patricia Gill				
Pentecost 14	8/29	Patricia Gill	Kayla Layng				

IF YOU ARE UNAVAILABLE FOR YOUR ASSIGNED DATE Please let Pastor Julie know or visit the google doc.

ROLES WITH AN * CAN BE DONE IN PERSON OR FROM HOME. Readers and those doing the prayers are welcome to lead from home or in-person.

USHERS YOUR DUTIES WILL INCLUDE:

- Ask questions re: health status
- Mask enforcement
- Help with communion distribution

Unidad Update

Unidad has become a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community with Pastor Maria Rojas as its mission developer.

Family and friends of Unidad, I give you greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, hoping that you are well in every way and that the Spirit of God remains in you.

So much has happened and even though it seems like a long time has passed at the same time it feels like everything has happened very quickly.

Now, finally, my ordination happened after 10 years of hard work in different areas with books and experiences, the big day arrived! And with it a greater responsibility -thanks to God I am accompanied by



PASTOR MARIA ROJAS-BANDA AT HER ORDINATION ALONG WITH OTHER PASTORS

the Spirit, who never abandons me- And obviously there are changes in Unidad.

We continue walking the journey shoulder to shoulder with Unity. Only now the Synod has officially called me to be an ELCA Mission Developer “Desarrolladora de Misión” and

this entails some changes in some areas, this will allow the Unidad community to obtain the necessary experience to develop as a congregation in a few years and to have the necessary tools to survive.

Unidad had its first baptisms, Luna Grace, and Nova Rain Ma-



rie. Now Unidad is working to have a choir with guitars and other Latinx instruments. And at the same time walking with the Unity Choir.

As we develop new ministries, we will share what is happening. We look forward to resuming “Testimonio y Luz” (Witness and Light) Wednesdays from 6-8pm at the sanctuary on May 19.

We hope to form a group for first communion and confirmation in June, and for now 2 people will have their first communion on Sunday May 23 - Pentecost Day-

This Sunday (May 9, 2021) we heard how Jesus calls us friends and invites us to imitate him in that loyal love of a friend that never fails. In the same way he reminds us in John: 15:16 “16 You did not choose me, but I have chosen you and I have commissioned you to go and bear much fruit, and that this fruit remains. “

Unity and Unidad with the help of God, we walk in the call of Christ with our ministries.

In Christ,
Rev. María Rojas-Banda Unidad





Project 88 Updates

When Project 88's board of directors met to consider how we might respond to the pandemic's challenges, we initially struggled. We knew that people were struggling just to eat, and we wondered what role we might have to play as we attended to these challenges.

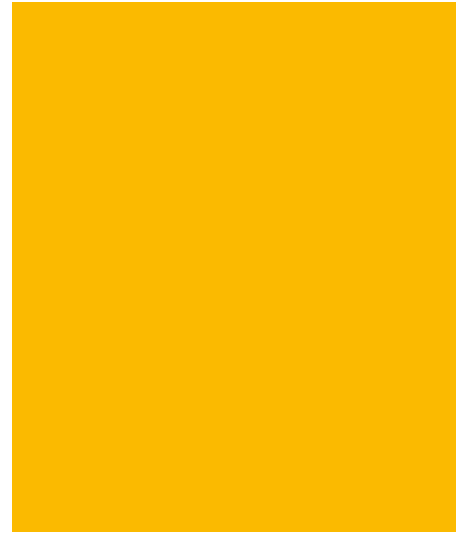
But, we soon realized that music and creativity are vital to making it through troubling times. Music allows us an outlet, a way to express our feelings, and a much-needed reminder of the beauty in this world. After a delay we were able to welcome 8 students into our Music Preparatory program. These students invested themselves in learning their instruments along with music theo-

ry. Each of them excelled in tremendous ways.

We also presented an abbreviated schedule of 9 concerts on-line. These artists helped us celebrate Slavic Composers, the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, an exploration of modern music, and more.

Plans are in the works for an expanded schedule in 2021, and a continuation of our Music Academy programs.

We are especially grateful to Elider DiPaula, for his graceful and determined leadership in this past year.



Your generosity made it possible for us to
take on our first cohort of students and
offer 9 concerts



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Update from Awake

Awake has continued its mission to serve as a catalyst for leadership, justice and relationship all the way through this pandemic.

In early April, Awake's Board of Directors made the decision to launch a fund to help community members who would not be eligible for government assistance due to their immigration status. We put in \$5,000 from our reserves, and hoped we could raise another \$5,000 from donors. We completely underestimated your generosity.

By August, more than 400 of you had come together to raise over \$40,000, and this support helped us secure \$25,000 in grants from two local foundations. And you didn't stop there – community volunteers



THE BERWYN RUNNING CLUB LED THE WAY IN RAISING MORE FUNDS FOR AWAKE'S EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANTS

helped us organize a virtual 5k, deliver checks to families, stock local food pantries, distribute winter clothing, and then make follow up phone calls to the 143 households who received assistance. We will never forget the love and support that poured out of you to help those most in need.

When we called families to let them know they would be receiving a check, we heard stories of heartbreak and joy. One call that will always stick with me came towards the end of our efforts. We had just received a grant that would help us fund the remaining families on our list, families that had been waiting months for a call.

Awake's Summer Programs were conducted on-line with home-delivered kits designed to keep kids engaged.



A board member made the call to one of these families, and apologized for the long wait. The mother of the family said, "No, this came at the right time. We just had to pool all our remaining money to bury a family member, and we didn't know how we would make rent. This check is a blessing, and we are so grateful." Because of you, and this community we were there for this family – and many more like them – in their time of greatest need.

Your love and support also gave educational and leadership opportunities to children and youth in our community, along with a deeper sense of community connection. With your support, Awake's volunteer education committee was able to pivot our Summer Reading Program and Math & Science Club to an on-line platform. Because of you, 40 children received high-quality instruction and 13 program aides gained leadership experience. When these children and youth needed engagement and connection this summer, you were there for them.

Awake's focus for the coming year is to support a coalition of local residents and organizations who are working to get reliable news to the people of Berwyn and Cicero through a bilingual, on-line news site. We believe that the efforts of this coalition will give Berwyn and Cicero residents the resources they crave to become more informed, engaged and connected.



I loved this program and the teachers were so positive and fun.
- Parent

It was amazing to see them enjoy the activities and books I had picked out.
- Program Aide

"The effort and engagement shown by the teachers was really outstanding. I'm very appreciative of the work and time put into this program."
- Parent

I felt like I was doing something good by teaching the kids in my community and helping them to learn during the difficult times we're currently in.
- Program Aide

13 TEEN PROGRAM AIDES

6 EDUCATORS

40 STUDENTS



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Lutheran Church
OF BERWYN

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