Director's Corner

Article from our Executive Director,
Rev. Dan Krutz

A New Beginning

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good, (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, in an interview this week said, “The opposite of love is not hate. It is selfishness. Bishop Curry goes on to say that to live the way of love is not a sentiment, it is decision. At the end of the interview he says that the symbol for this love today is not the heart but a mask. When wearing a mask, we do so to protect the other and in that simply act express our love. It sounds simple in some ways, but it is this simple action lived in the lives of people of faith that the world can be transformed. In the icon of the mask we reveal our love for the other whether stranger or friend. The love of which the bishop speaks is meant to all inclusive.

As I thought about the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minnesota policeman, I grieve that in so many instances in life loving the other doesn’t taken place. Instead, the tendency to treat another as not worthy, somehow less, takes on a power than is not of God, not of the Spirit. How will we overcome this tragedy of yet another death of an African American male and the hands of those who are supposed to protect and serve? I do think it’s not just the officer who is culpable, but to a greater degree this horrific event happened as the result of the living a lie that somehow Whites are better and smarter than Blacks. I believe it was James Baldwin who made that observation
decades ago as he wrote about the struggle of Blacks in America. Obviously, there is so much more that could be said, but as baptized persons and people of faith we are called to live our lives with the conviction that every life is precious in the sight of God and that are to “respect the dignity of every human being.”

Henri Nouwen in *The Only Necessary Thing*, (85) writes, “we must learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new.” We each have been gifted by the Holy Spirit with the grace to live into the truth of Nouwen’s vision for all the people of the planet. My own tradition states that the mission of the Church is to “restore all people to unity with God and each in Christ.” When we have fully embraced the love of God and the love of neighbor, we will have achieved the mission set before us. May our prayer be, “Lord, renew your people, beginning with me. Amen.”

Rev. Dan Krutz

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**In Sympathy**

Our sympathies to the Bouldin family after the passing of Rose Marie “Winkie” Bouldin on May 9, 2020, at the age of 89. Winkie attended LIC Board Meetings with her husband, William “Bill” Bouldin until her health failed and then they ‘both’ resigned in 2016. Bill was actually a member on the LIC Board of Directors, but this couple truly did everything they could together, throughout their 68 years of marriage. So when Bill was there, so was Winkie, lending encouragement and enthusiasm all the way.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a celebration of her life will be planned at a later date. To extend condolences, please visit: https://www.muhleisen.com/obituaries/Rose-Bouldin/#!/Obituary

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**Church safety during COVID-19 protocols**

The Louisiana United Methodists have created this clever video giving general guidelines for safe practices in houses of worship during this COVID-19 pandemic. Click here for the short video on Summary of Re-Entry Guidelines for In-Person Worship.

The Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge website has recently been updated with resources from lots of different denominations. See https://www.ifedgbr.com/ and go to the COVID-19 page.

The above links are also available on the LIC website home page.

**NCC Urges Churches to Exercise Extreme Caution Before Re-Opening**
WASHINGTON 5/22/20: The National Council of Churches USA is urging churches to exercise extreme caution when deciding whether or not to open its doors for services Memorial Day weekend and in the near future. Churches have been reported to be a source of outbreaks of the coronavirus and opening prematurely could have deadly consequences. Close contact of congregants and even congregational singing are ways the virus has been known to spread in churches. Asymptomatic carriers of the virus could also unknowingly spread it, particularly to the elderly and other vulnerable populations. Without enough testing or proven treatment for those who contract the disease, it does not seem wise or sensible for churches to re-open as if it is business as usual.

“We have found new and creative ways to worship online and to meet virtually, said Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, NCC Chair and President and General Minister of the United Church of Christ. “It makes sense for churches to continue in this vein until we are confident it is safe for us to gather again in-person.”

“As we set aside time on Sunday (May 24th) to remember the many lives lost to this virus, it is almost cruel to imagine churches would rush to re-open and put so many more at risk of dying,” said Jim Winkler, NCC President and General Secretary. “From the reports we’ve received, our churches have been among the most responsible in the nation in handling this global pandemic and we do expect that to continue.”

Rather than hastily go back to having church in-person, NCC urges congregations to make sure they have a solid strategy for opening safely. Taking every precaution is essential, including wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands frequently, avoiding congregational singing and leaving doors open during worship services. Still, these measures are no guarantee that no one will become sick or contract the virus. This means the most loving, noble and sacrificial thing to do is to worship from home until gathering in-person is safe. Too much is still unknown about how the coronavirus spreads and how it can be treated. While some locations are just beginning to experience a downturn in cases and deaths, it is too early to rush back to church. As Christians, we have a responsibility to care for one another and look out for those most at risk of getting sick or losing their lives from this virus. In most cases, that will mean churches should continue online services for the time being.

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**Update on Louisiana Legislature sessions**

The Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature was set to end Monday night, June 1, 2020. The Louisiana Legislature is going into SPECIAL SESSION as there are still budget issues to address. Income to the state is down, but with federal assistance there may not have to be significant cuts to the budget for 2021. The LIC will be monitoring this special session closely in efforts to maintain funding for the poor and most vulnerable in our society.

In the Regular Session, we are happy to report that generally all the bills on criminal justice reform passed, and advancements were made in both juvenile and adult criminal justice. Efforts to roll back measures passed in the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2018 largely failed. There was a gun bill, HB 334, which would have expanded the possibility of concealed weapons brought into churches and houses of worship. This effort failed because of an amendment from Senator Cleo Fields to clarify the usage of guns in churches and returned the bill to current law.

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**Response to the Killing of George Floyd**

A call for Prayer and Justice for our Nation

- And for Healing
The LIC joins with others in decrying the killing of George Floyd. We hope and pray that the people of our nation can respond in a loving way to this crisis - that we all may be one.

We invite you to review some statements made by various church leaders in response to this tragic event at these links:
United States Catholic Bishops
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
National Council of Churches

These links are also available on the homepage of the LIC website at www.lainterchurch.org.

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Offering thanks to our recent contributors – we couldn't make it without you all!

The majority of the LIC operating income is contributed through the leadership of our member Judicatories, whom we deeply appreciate and depend upon.

Contributions received from April 29, 2020 through May 31, 2020:

Friends of the LIC donations: Mrs. Carol Broussard; Mrs. Ann Ball; Mr. Robert Gorman; and Rev. Samuel Tolbert.

Thank you all!

Please pray for this ecumenical ministry. If you would like to help financially, please mail contributions to: Louisiana Interchurch Conference, 527 N. Blvd., 4th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, or contribute online via PayPal at http://www.lainterchurch.org/contribute/index.htm.

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Board Meeting Dates to Calendar

Fall Board meeting dates:

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Annual Assembly meeting dates:

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“To live the faith we hold in common”

President: The Most Rev. Douglas Deshotel; President Elect: The Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton; Executive Director: Fr. Dan Krutz