

# **HEARTBEATS – Staying Connected**

## **5/21/2021**

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year, the Pacifica Synod assembly, the gathering of voting members from the congregations of our synod, was held by Zoom. Nearly 400 people carried out the business of the synod without leaving their homes or offices. We accomplished all the necessary tasks of the synod as a whole and heard reports from the various expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, both synodically and nationally. We worshiped together from a distance. And we did this across two different time zones as congregations from California and Hawaii.

It was a good event, and it was act of good stewardship. Costs to congregations and to the synod to bring folks together, normally in a hotel, were much reduced as the pandemic kept us from physically gathering. Yet, electronically, we were still able to be the church. As a result of this wonderful effort of the synod, we are considering meeting by Zoom every other year in the future. We found that, though the in-person contact and socialization was missing, this was offset by the more economical outcome and efficiency of a meeting through the internet. A good outcome from our time of pandemic.

Congregations have also discovered some good things from this time of pandemic. Educational classes and other events have continued to be offered by Zoom. Meetings now take place without people scrambling to get to them in time thanks to the ease of connecting on-line. Worship has been live-streamed (not new for all but new for many) reaching people who previously were not able to attend worship.

Following the pandemic, some things will be different. There are items and activities that we will do differently than we did before. This will be more difficult for some than for others. Some will want to cling to the ways things were done in the past, simply because “that’s the way we’ve always done it.” Yet even that statement is not true. The church has always been evolving and reforming, finding new and different ways to carry out the mission God has given to it. As technology has changed, the church has

adapted to utilize that technology to improve the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ, though often at a much slower pace than the rest of society.

When change makes us feel uncomfortable, it is a good idea to weigh the rewards against what might be lost. It can be helpful to consider who is benefiting from the adjustments and adaptations. And it is important to honestly ask ourselves, “Am I thinking more about what I want, or about what may be a blessing to others?”

Things will be different. Not radically, but there will be change. Change doesn't have to be bad though, especially if we can expect it and evaluate it in the larger scope of things. How we respond will play an important role in how much we get out of those new variations and how much others do. Our goal always should be to work for the good of the Kingdom of God and for the blessing of others.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey