

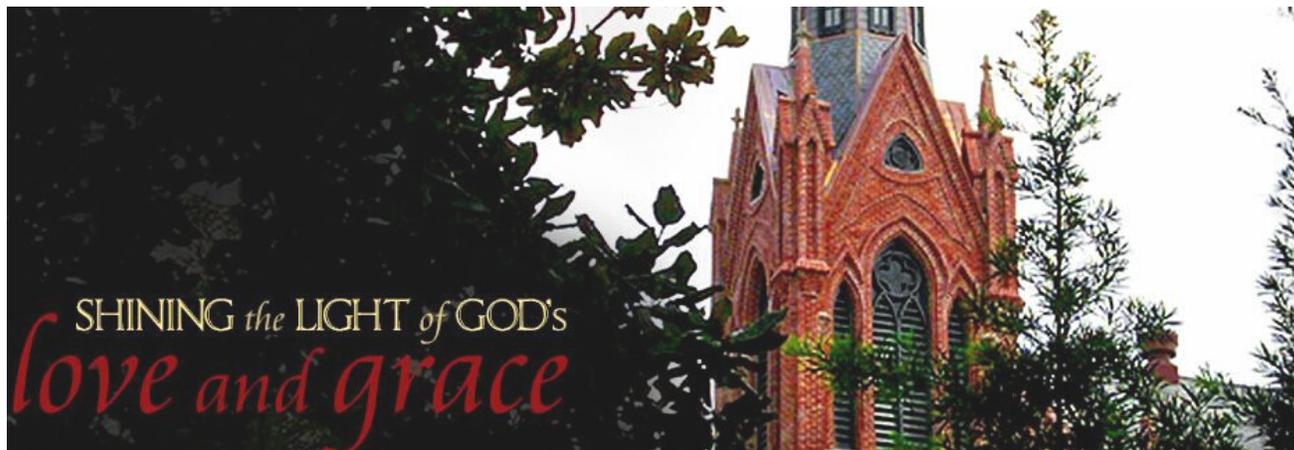
THE FORECAST

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter

AUGUST 6, 2020

Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church

3900 Saint Charles Ave New Orleans LA 70115 // 504.899.3431 // www.raynenola.org



PLEASE NOTE

The Rayne Community is available online!

WORSHIP IS LIVE ON FACEBOOK AT 10A ON SUNDAYS.

www.facebook.com/raynenola.org/live

All on-site activities and worship are postponed until further notice.

Please note: our office staff is working remotely.

LONG ON CONSPIRACY, SHORT ON THEORY (PRACTICING PRAYER)

Theories of the "deep state" are swirling, aren't they? I feel like the COVID-19 pandemic has offered us the perfect backdrop. Real, live "conspiracy entrepreneurs" prey upon our imaginations. Like Bill Gates created this virus...the "deep state" is manipulating data. Just two examples of the conspiracy theory craze. Suspicions, like so many fleas to a dog, jump on thousands of reputable scientists and medical professionals. Thanks to the ease of access via social media and extremist "news sources," we're treading in some rancid waters. "America's frontline doctors" come to mind. Distrust lubricates some remarkably bad medicine. Amid those who prey on our trust, do we have a prayer?

Peter Marty, the editor of *Christian Century*, happens also to serve as a Lutheran pastor.

Reflecting on the prickly nature of conspiracy theories, Rev. Marty comes to this understanding: *"What I've concluded is that my parishioners are actually playing out a version of their own Christian faith and practice. It's one where chaos feels threatening, lack of control feels like powerlessness, a predictable world is soothing, and orderly patterns are reassuring. If a story comes along or can be woven together to help make sense of unforeseen turns of events—and even connect the dots between coincidences—that's comforting."* And it's a potentially nefarious comfort, a comfort that betrays the cost of discipleship.

Conjuring up comfort by seeking pseudo-certainty beckons us to trust less. In order to quench our thirst for "knowing" what's really happening, we are invited to reduce faith - trusting our neighbor, trusting others who know more than I do, and trusting ultimately the nature of God's mysterious ways in the world. So do we have a prayer? Yes. Yes, we do.

Prayer is an antidote, the true **conspiracy**. **Conspire** means "to breathe together." How promising! And how faithful and hopeful! Within the root of a word that sows suspicion, we find our most faithful work. By praying, especially praying together, we breathe in the Spirit's fruitful work against the chaos of our culture. Prayer is one way God encourages us to a beautiful collaboration among people who are filled with the spirit of God. The truth shows up: we Christians don't necessarily know more, we trust more. Pentecost shows us this much - a true **conspiracy**: our Lord was and is and always will be gathering us, even our fears if we allow it, toward a common good.

The second lesson about prayer in my life is this: In the face of what we truly do not know, we who are bound in Christ don't need theories to numb our discomfort. We use prayer to face the discomfort. We pray to conspire for deeper trust. We pray to conspire for faithful works of light and love.

Less theorizing, more practicing,

Jay

ALL SHALL BE WELL

A Prayer for Making It Through Together by
Britney Winn Lee

Everything can change in a moment. Disaster can take our certainty, our plans for the coming months, the health we thought would be ours, and the people that made our lives full.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Tragedy can shake the firmest foundation and consume our homes by flood. Grief can rob our chests of deep breaths and our minds of every clear thought. **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.**

The darkness can threaten the marginalized, who were vulnerable before its coming. It can bring out the worst in our humanity and expose the fears that we nurse. **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.**

War, disease, disaster, and violence can rewrite a story we loved. Injustice can leave us beyond exhausted. "How long, O God!" we cry out. **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.**

But here's what it cannot do: It cannot stop the sun from rising or grace from being free. It cannot contain the abundant creativity that explodes amid limitations. **Emmanuel, God is with us.**

Loss cannot restrain the helpers from meeting the needs of neighbors. Pain will not keep the people from singing or the grass from growing again. **Emmanuel, God is with us.**

Every ounce of chaos couldn't kill the bravery we learned was inside of us. And no new normal can steal the memories that taught us how to love. **Emmanuel, God is with us.**

This moment, no matter how dark or how long, can't make us belong to one another less. And not one single thing in all of creation can separate us from God's love. **Emmanuel, God is with us.**

All shall be well, love has not failed,
We'll make it through together.

All shall be well, love will not fail,
We'll make it through together.

All shall be well, love cannot fail,
We'll make it through together. Amen.

**Excerpt from Rally: Communal Prayers for Lovers of Jesus and Justice*

LECTIONARY

A weekly set of Scripture readings.

August 9

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 • Psalm 105
Romans 10:5-15 • Matthew 14:22-33

August 16

Genesis 45:1-15 • Psalm 133
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32 • Matthew 15:10-28

BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY

The beginning of this school year is looking very different than in years past.

On **August 16th**, we will mark the time in worship with prayer for our students, teachers, and families.

Participate with us in Worship on Facebook Live **Sundays at 10a-**
www.facebook.com/raynenola.org/live.

NOLA WESLEY WORK DAY

**Saturday August 8th,
9a-1p
7102 Freret Street**

It's almost time for students to be back at Tulane and Loyola - which means it is time to get the NOLA Wesley Foundation ready!

There are jobs for every skill set! Yard work and cleaning and organizing the cafe are the major tasks!

Unable to assist but still want support? Offer some financial support for gloves, disinfectant, and non-contact thermometers.

For more information please contact Rev Zoë Garry, Director of NOLA Wesley.

Email: nolawesleyumcc@gmail.com
Phone: 504-866-8681

PRAYER LIST

We pray for healing of —

**Brenda Frey, Chuck Pate, Debbie Strickland,
Melba Maleta and her sons Henry and Edward,
Dan & Jane Sikes, Rick Hammontree,
Robert Wilson, Jim Jeter, Andrew McLetchie,
Cida Lancaster, Ronald Sepanik, Marjorie Lentini,
Emily Chancellor, Robin O'Bannon,
Barbara Everett & Judy Mastainich.**

We share in the grief of —

Susie VanderKuy in the loss of her uncle, Tom.



PRAYER REQUESTS

James 4:8 reminds us, *“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”*

In this time of social distancing, comfort is found sensing the nearness of the Creator.

If you would like to share prayer requests,
email them to Pastor Marissa marissa@raynenola.org.
Or mail a note to the church addressed with "Attention: Marissa."

Please indicate if the request is public (shared in the newsletter)
or private (supplied to the Intercessory Prayer Group).