

Good News

May 2020



**Newsletter of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Every Sunday we begin worship with the words, "God is good. All the time." The Bible says it this way, "This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice, and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). Part of the reason for such words is to remind us of who is in control.

We now live in a world where we get daily briefings about the number of coronavirus cases and the number of deaths. We now live in a world where we have a new, everyday vocabulary that includes phrases like "flattening the curve," "COVID-19," "herd immunity," "social distancing," "self-quarantine," "asymptomatic," so on and so forth. We now live a world that has all but been taken over by a virus.

And so I remind us of who is still in control. God is good. All the time. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice, and be glad in it. As a person of faith, and not even that, but as a member of the whole human family living in what is maybe the worst crisis in this generation, I have to wonder why those daily briefings from the President and the Governor has not included a word of prayer. How would those briefings be received differently if the first words out of the President's mouth or the Governor's mouth were, "I want to begin with a moment of prayer." Should we not be reminding ourselves of who is in control? Should we not be praying as a state, as a nation, and as a global family?

Why have we had "feel-good" sing-a-longs on television? Why have we had musical concerts to raise monies to fight COVID-19? But where is space made for collective prayer? Why do we as a society give more time to prayer and to mourning at the loss of a celebrity like Kobe Bryant? Indeed I ask, why have we not had a national or global prayer venture to turn to God to seek God's help in the midst of this worldwide pandemic? Seriously. What is wrong with that? Now yes, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that at the beginning of the NFL draft, there was a moment of silence initiated by the Football Commissioner Roger Goodell. A moment of silence was kept, before the "important business" of the draft got started.

Now I get it that a time for collective prayer might smack in the face of separation of church and state. I get it that it might offend some people's religious or non-religious sensibilities. I get it. But it seems to me that if there was ever an argument to put those things aside, if there was ever a time to bring people together for prayer, this is it. And, I am sorry if I am coming across irate, but it really does bother me that the powers-that-be have not been more attuned to this need for prayer right now to buoy our global human family.

Do we remember the Opening Ceremonies of the Canadian Olympics in 2010, where K.D. Lang sang the song "Alleluia"? For me, it was one of the most inspirational, religious experiences I have ever witnessed on television. If you have the chance, watch it again on YouTube. There was a live audience of 60,000 people, and a television audience of three billion. And that song she sang is powerfully religious. For me, the song is about still needing to sing "Alleluia" to God, (that word "alleluia" means "praise God") when everything else around us is falling apart. The song is about the person who can't help but sing "alleluia," even when life is bleak. We still sing our praises to God when the world is unravelling, because ultimately God is still in control. Alleluia! Alleluia! ALLELUIA!

And so, I don't get why our government leaders are content to let the virus have its say day-in and day-out. "This is how many new infections the virus has caused today. This is how many people the virus has killed today." Why does sickness and death get its say every day, day after day after day? When doesn't God get a word in edgewise? At best we hear, "Good job, citizens. Because you are practicing social distancing, you are helping to flatten the curve. You should pat yourselves on the back." No, there has to be more to say about the promise of hope, and healing, and new life. There has to be the reminder that God is ultimately in control. God is good. All the time. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

(continued on the next page)

The Lessons for May 2020

May 5 — Easter 4

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

May 10 — Easter 5

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

May 17 — Easter 6

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

May 24 — Easter 7

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

May 31—Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

John 20:19-23

May 3, the first Sunday of this month, is Good Shepherd Sunday. And we are reminded that in the ancient world, kings were called to be shepherds for the people. Kings were called to shepherd their people. More than ever now, we need our shepherds (our kings, our governors, our presidents, our prime ministers) to shepherd us. More than ever now, we need our leaders to recognize that the “good” in the world is that which comes from God. More than ever now, we need to be reminded to turn to our Lord, to offer prayer, to give God praise, and to sing “alleluia.” For God is still in control.

In Christ, *Pastor Joel Petruschke*

Parish Staff

Joel D. Petruschke, pastor

Barbara Johnson, administrative assistant

Good News is a monthly publication of **The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour**, 420 North Progress Avenue, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109, 717-545-9992, ossec@comcast.net. **Deadline** for submission is the third Monday prior to publication month.

If you do not have email or internet access, your addressed copy of *Good News* will be available in your church mailbox the first weekend of each month.



About Worship

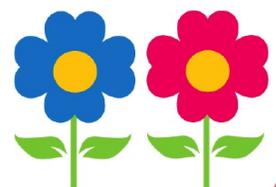
The other day my wife was telling me about a conversation she had had with a member of her church. She said to her church member, "If you had told me three months ago that I would become a tele-evangelist, I would have said, 'Not in a million years.' And now look at me." To which the church member responded, "If you told me three months ago that I would be attending weekly worship through a video screen, I would have said, 'Not in a million years. And now look at me.'" Yes, things have certainly changed in such a short time.

Now, I know we are all wondering, "When we will be able to get back to in-person worship at Our Saviour?" I wish I had a definite answer for you. Please know though that our church's leadership is beginning to think about what re-opening our church and beginning to worship again would look like. Maybe, weather permitting, we begin by worshipping outside, utilizing the pavilion. Maybe we bring our lawn chairs and sit outside around the pavilion, while observing social distancing protocols. For others who are not comfortable doing that, we might make space available in our parking lot, whereby folks can park facing the pavilion, and listen to the service from their vehicles. That is just one idea.

The Lutheran pastors in the area have been having discussion around this topic as well. One pastor talked about having several services (say six) over the course of a weekend, where only a certain number of people would be allowed at each service, so that social distancing could be maintained. But that sounded like a logistical nightmare, with respect to organizing who is coming to which service, as well as cleaning the sanctuary after each service.

As we do start to come back together for worship, we will need to be mindful of being very respectful of one another. Just because we might feel comfortable talking with someone while honoring the six-foot distance, does not mean that that other person feels the same way. And just because we might feel comfortable going without a mask (which for the present is not allowed in public spaces), does not mean that the other person feels that way. No, my guess is that we will have to create certain guidelines by which we will expect everyone at worship to abide. This is because we are talking about people's health and well-being. Wouldn't anyone of us feel terrible if some one of our members was to get the disease as a result of having come to worship? So we will need to be careful of how and when we re-start in-person worship. And we will need to be understanding and respectful of one another.

Aside from this, I don't know what else I can say about when we will be together again for worship. In the meantime, I continue to appreciate Herb who has been recording, editing, and producing our worship services. And thank you to Alice for uploading the services to our website. And thank you to Barb who has been mailing hardcopies of the sermon to folks. Many people are doing their best to keep us connected with one another through the power of God's Word. My wife reminds me often of this truth, "As God's people, we are called to worship not as we ought, but as we able." And right now, this is the way we are able to worship.



A Word on Stewardship

In light of the outbreak of the coronavirus, we have all found ourselves spending a lot more time at home. We have been told, "Stay well, stay safe, stay home." We have been told, "Limit travel, stay home." And so, that is what we have been doing. But what have we been doing at home? Some have been doing a lot of spring cleaning. Some have been going through storage containers of things we have collected over the years. But what do we do when we have cleaned everything in our home twice. What do we do when we have gone through all of the old storage containers. What do we do when we don't know what else to do? And so we are confronted with the notion of the stewardship of the home.

Unfortunately, some have not been as productive at home. We have probably heard the reports about how drinking has been on the rise during this pandemic. We have probably heard as well that domestic violence has been on the rise. Yes, it is difficult to stay at home. It is difficult to be around the same people days on end. And so we are confronted with the notion of the stewardship of the home.

The stewardship of the home - what does that mean? Well, it means how do we care for the home in which we live? How do we care for the upkeep of the house? How do we care for all the stuff we have accumulated in the house? But most of all, stewardship of the home means how do we care for the people with whom we share the space of our home. And, even though we might live by ourselves, that doesn't mean we can ignore the question of how we care for ourselves. Yes, just because we might not have to relate with other persons in our home, doesn't mean we can turn a blind eye to self-care. Indeed, it is easy to become depressed and anxious because we are by ourselves. And so, we need to learn to care for ourselves first and foremost.

One of the best ways I think we can tend to the stewardship of the home when we can't get outside our home is to get outside ourselves. We need to get outside ourselves. Now what that means is that we need to expand our horizons. Just because we can't do everything we want out there in the world, doesn't mean we can't create a larger world inside our home. And the way to make a larger home is to get outside ourselves. We need to expand our horizons. We need to take on new endeavors. Maybe we try a new recipe. Maybe we start an indoor garden. Maybe we begin learning a foreign language. Maybe we try teaching our pets new tricks. My wife actually taught our cat to ring a bell (like those bells you find at the front desk in a hotel), when it wants a treat.

For me, how I get outside myself is by spending hours looking at roadmaps and finding places I want to visit (museums, parks, lighthouses, etc.) when my family travels to certain places. Right now, I am investigating places in Ottawa, Canada, as that is where my family will be heading in the fall to see Mary off to school at Carleton University; that is, of course, if the Canadian/U.S. border is open by then. Even so, I am having a blast visiting Ottawa without even leaving my house.

And of course, another great way to get outside ourselves is prayer. When we pray, we lose ourselves in God. When we pray, we should experience a certain "mindmeld" (to use a term from Star Trek) with the Divine Being. What better way to spend some quality time getting outside one's self.

So, sisters and brothers in Christ, when you can't get outside literally, get outside yourself. Explore the possibilities around you in your home. And make new possibilities for yourself and for your loved ones. And be a good steward of your home.



Dear Padre,

How can the message of the church be of particular comfort to our world during this time of the pandemic?

Signed, Seeking Solace

Dear Seeking Solace,



First and foremost, I would remind us that our good and gracious God out of love for creating has made us to be his creatures. In God's mind, God delighted in the vision of his human creatures, and so God created us male and female. And God looked all that he had made, and behold it was very good.

Second, we are in the Easter season. And Easter is about the Good News that God's love in Jesus Christ wins. Regardless of how dire the world might look sometimes, we know that God's love wins. God's love for God's creation defeats any and every thing that would oppose God. That is the message of Easter.

Third, God's Spirit abides with God's people. Pentecost, which we celebrate at the end of this month on May 31st, is the day in which we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to be with God's people. God's Spirit comes like the rush of the wind, and God's Spirit is breathed into God's people. It is ironic (to me anyway) that in a time when we are so concerned about the transmission of a disease through the air, God had chosen to re-create us through the wind/the breath/the Spirit of God. We are the people of God, the people of faith, the people of a certain hope, because the Spirit has been inhaled by us.

Finally, what I am saying is that which the apostle Paul said long ago. It is as simple as "God is for us." God created us. God is for us. God gave his Son to die on a cross. God is for us. God sent his Spirit to be with us always. God is for us. Paul asked rhetorically, "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31-39 [31]).

God is in our corner. God fights on our behalf. We have ultimate power on our side. This is the message I would convey to any questioning person staring at the coronavirus. God is for us. If we don't believe this, well then we have already lost hope. If we don't believe that God is for us, what is the purpose of anything? Even our very own existence, we have to question, if God be not for us.

This is the message of the church, the message we need more than ever. God is for us. Thanks be to God. And thank you for your question.

Signed, *Padre*



Council Minutes

Please Note: Council Minutes cannot be included in the newsletter until after Council has approved them. Here are the minutes from the meetings in March.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting Thursday, March 12, 2020

Members Present: Pastor Joel Petruschke, President John Zimmerman, Treasurer Jim Lubrecht, Secretary Jessica Burigana, Marlee Zimmerman, Brad Neil, Arno Miller

Members Absent: Vice-President Herb Logan, Andrea Faber, Anneke Fleming, Kathy Sheetz

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm. The group began with a leadership and spiritual growth exercise. The group went around the table sharing where they have seen God in their lives in the last week. Pastor then led the group in prayer.

Minutes: No amendments were offered to the minutes. The minutes were approved as distributed.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reviewed the treasurer's report. He noted that the giving is up for the year. Egg sales are also up. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Jessica. The motion was seconded by Marlee. Without objection, the motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education - No report.

Fundraising - No report.

Property - Report attached and made a part of the record.

Welcome - No report.

Worship and Music - No report.

Child Protection Policy - Report attached and made a part of the record.

Social Ministry - Report attached and made a part of the record. The committee's Lenten Project is to gather items for the Bethesda Mission.

Stewardship - No report.

Pastor's Report - Report attached and made a part of the record. Pastor highlighted a few things from his report. After this Sunday (3/15), the council will have reviewed all sections of the bylaws. We are looking to hold an informational meeting/review of the bylaws for the congregation before meeting to vote to approve the updated bylaws. Dawne Veet offered to donate some equipment (smartboards and floor mats) from her place of work. Pastor is going to get more details from her, but the council feels these items would benefit the congregation. Also, our food inspection took place earlier this week. Pastor shared that the inspector was not pleased with the use of foil to wrap our chocolate Easter eggs. We need to find out if the foil is food grade. If not, we are going to need to look at other options to cover the eggs (i.e. wax paper bags).

Worship Protocols - With the news on the speaking COVID-19 virus, it is important that we take some precautions to keep all of our members safe and healthy. We are encouraging members to limit physical contact. For the sake of not spreading germs, we will not serve wine during communion. Pastor will take extra caution while distributing the wafers. All members are encouraged to partake in communion and the church service as they feel comfortable. Pastor made a motion to approve all committee reports. Arno seconded this motion. Without objection, the motion carried.

Old Business:

Capital Improvement Leadership - John plans to speak with Sue DeArmitt and Otis Martin about possibly taking on leadership roles in this area.

Synod Assembly Voting Members - Still looking for voting members.

New Business:

Lighting - Discussed

Committee Template - Still in the works.

Heating Units - Arno made motion was made to purchase and install two heating units in the Youth Room. Pastor seconded the motion. Without objection, the motion carried.

Facility Use Update - We are still looking to get a shed. This will be discussed further at our next meeting.

At 8:25pm, the meeting was adjourned. A motion was made by Arno and seconded by Jim. Without objection, the motion carried.

The next regular council meeting is to be held on April 15, 2020 at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Burigana (Secretary)

OUR SAVIOUR
FINANCIAL REPORT
March 31, 2020

ENVELOPES AND PLATE	\$	35,046.25
FUND RAISING	\$	9,595.00
FELLOWSHIP HALL RENTAL	\$	<u>600.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$	45,241.25
EXPENSE	\$	<u>46,558.40</u>
DEFICIT	\$	<u>(1,317.15)</u>

PNC ACCOUNTS:

CURRENT FUND	\$	19,126.86
MEMORIAL FUND	\$	28,648.70
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$	2,524.70
FUND RAISING	\$	743.42

THRIVENT ACCOUNTS

REGULAR MUTUALS	\$	60,059.42
SCHOLARSHIP MUTUALS	\$	92,349.42

During our time of not being able to worship together if you are dropping off your offering envelopes may we suggest you either:

- 1) drop them in the egg safe mail slot that is located on the wall beside the office door that is located directly across from the library or
- 2) drop them in the wooden box that is located at the back of the sanctuary, to your left as you enter the sanctuary doors.

If you feel more comfortable not entering our building then of course you may drop them off through our mail slot located below our doorbell/entrance key pad.

Another alternative is of course mailing your envelopes to the church.

Note: As of now, the activities of the church are “up-in-the-air.” We will send a revised calendar when we know more about the re-opening of the church.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 - Easter 4	4	5	6 Barb is out of the office	7 Myles Reilly's birthday	8 Barb is out of the office Lisa Neil's birthday	9
10 - Easter 5  Don DeArmitt's birthday	11	12	13 Margie Munz's birthday	14	15	16
17 - Easter 6 newsletter deadline George Schreffler's birthday	18 Christine Schreffler's birthday	19	20	21	22	23 Sara Smith's birthday
24 - Easter 7	25 - Memorial Day  office closed	26	27	28	29	30 Millie Horvath's birthday
31 - Day of Pentecost Jean Lisse's birthday						

The Evangelical Lutheran
CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
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Mission Statement

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, a caring congregation dedicated to the word of Christ, welcomes all people to worship and to grow with us as we share His love and salvation with our neighbors, our children and ourselves.

Worship

Our worship services have been cancelled until further notice. Please join us each week for our online service. There is a viewing link for all our service on our website listed below.

Church Office

9:00 am -12:00 pm Monday through Friday

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.