

Good News

May 2023



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

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

So I have just finished a very interesting book called *Behave—The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* by Robert M. Sapolsky. The book focuses on why humans do good and do bad. As Christians, we would respond by saying that we do bad because of sin, and we do good because of grace. But Sapolsky, who is a neuroendocrinology researcher, as well as a professor of biology, neurology, neurological sciences, and neurosurgery at Stanford, and who is a self-professed atheist, argues that all our actions (both good and bad) can ultimately be explained by neuroscience. In other words, it is our brain which causes us to behave the way we do, he says. The human brain has been shaped by environmental and cultural factors for many, many years. And we are the product of the function of our brain. It was a very interesting read, not that I agree with everything in the book.

But what I found most significant is his discussion about Us/Them-ing, a phrase he uses to describe our human proclivity to divide people into two sets, those who are like us, and those who aren't. And, of course, there are numerous categories in which we divide people: those who prefer the beach as opposed to those who don't; those who prefer classical music as opposed to those who don't; those who prefer watching sitcoms as opposed to those who don't. Of course, there are more significant categories, which have greater ramifications. There are those in France who think the retirement age should be 64, as opposed to those who don't. And thus, we have strikes in France. There are those who think that Ukraine is its own sovereign nation, as opposed to those who don't. And thus, we have a war in eastern Europe.

So the question we might want to keep in mind is “who are the people whom we consider ‘Us,’ and who are the people whom we consider ‘Them’?” And what can we do to “reappraise” the Us/Them scenario, so as to see the “Them” as “Us”? Because Us/Them-ing is ultimately toxic for human relationships. Now granted, that is not always the case. Differences among people can be a strength. Diversity can be a blessing. But when Us/Them-ing is accompanied by fear and subsequent animosity, then the human proclivity to see others as “Them” becomes a problem.

Where did Us/Them-ing originate from? Evolutionary biologists would no doubt say that it emerged as part of human evolution, that our ancestors needed to distinguish between those who were a part of one's particular social group from those who weren't for the sake of protecting one's particular social group. And that process of distinguishing one's social group, the “Us” from the “Them,” was reinforced for generations upon generations. And so, it became a rather perfected human instinct.

From another side, I have to wonder if the Bible isn't telling us something about the origin of Us/Them-ing in the story of Creation. When God created the heavens and the earth, God does what? God separates over and over again—the light from darkness, the waters above the dome from the waters below the dome, the day from night, so on and so forth. Also, God distinguished (i.e. “separated”) the chosen people Israel from all the nations of the earth. God does a lot of separating in the Bible. There is a lot of Us/Them-ing going on there in God's Word. And again, it is not always a bad thing, these differences, this diversity; but sin (fear and animosity) does seem to get the better of us, such as to make differences into a problem.

Ultimately, we should celebrate differences and diversity, and not force conformity. Seeing people as “Us” does not mean forcing people to do things our way. I am a big believer that the way we grow as human beings is by learning and experiencing others for who they are; and they, learning and experiencing from us. In short, Us/Them-ing is actually a gift from God, as long as we can get beyond our fears and animosities.

So again, I recommend Sapolsky's book to you. Perhaps, you might include it on your summer reading list. It can be a bit “science-sy.” Sometimes it is a challenge to understand the workings of the brain, even with his excellent descriptions. But the book certainly does make the reader think.

In Christ, *Pastor Joel Petruschke*

The Lessons for April 2023

May 7 — Easter 5

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

May 14 — Easter 6

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

May 21 — 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 28 — Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

John 20:19-23



Parish Staff

Rev. Dr. Joel D. Petruschke, pastor

Barbara Johnson, administrative assistant

Mitchell Sensenig, organist

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

Have we ever heard of “prayer offices”? They are also known as The Liturgy of the Hours (“hours”), Divine Office, or Opus Dei. These are prayers that are set at particular times during the day. The purpose is to mark the hours of each day and to sanctify the day with prayer. In short, the purpose is to discipline one’s life with prayer. Muslims do a similar thing when they pray towards Mecca five times a day.

Traditionally there have been seven “hours.” They are as follows: matins and lauds (in the middle of the night), prime (at sunrise); terce (at 9:00 a.m.), sext (at noon), none (at 3 p.m.), vespers (at sunset), and compline (at bedtime). These prayer “hours” have traditionally been associated with the Catholic Faith.

Martin Luther and other Catholic monks have followed this schedule of prayer “hours” in monasteries. I don’t know how these monks would faithfully get up each night to pray at midnight and then go back to sleep. That would have thrown off my sleep schedule something terrible. And after a few nights, I would have been a zombie. As you can tell, I would not have made a good Catholic monk.

Lutherans still use some of these “hours,” specifically matins (in the morning), vespers (in the evening), and compline (at bedtime). These prayer offices appear in the red hymnal, the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) hymnal, if you are interested in looking at them.

Now, we probably have our own personal prayer routine, around meals, at night before bed, maybe in the morning when we get up. So we probably already do a little bit of the prayer “hours” in a more informal way. But, I bring up this practice for you to consider as part of your worship life in addition to Sunday mornings. If you don’t have an ELW, consider purchasing one to have in your home to utilize for the prayer offices, as well as to have on hand to sing hymns, or to use as a means to read through the Bible in the liturgical year. There is a three-year lectionary contained in the hymnal to help us do just that. The hymnal is actually a great resource to have in our homes for a number of reasons, but I lift it up here in particular to think about using as part of our practice of praying the daily “hours,” and thus, as a way to bring worship into our homes.

Upcoming In Betweeners Event

Future Event in September!

What: The Story of Moses

Where: Sight & Sound Theater

When: Saturday, September 16th

Cost: \$89 or \$84.55 for a group of 15+

Reservations to the Flemings by May 23rd.

Mark your calendars & save the date. More details and a sign-up sheet are now in the Narthex.



A Word on Stewardship

One of a kind. Unique. None other like it. That is what we humans are. That is what any species on earth is. There is nothing else exactly like any particular species on earth, or even in the entire cosmos. Each species is one of a kind, because conditions on earth were such that allowed for each individual species to develop as it has. But if life exists in other corners of the universe, astrobiologists tell us that those species will probably be quite different from us. Why? Because conditions on other planets will likely be quite different requiring different biology for lifeforms to exist. So, we are unique. Nothing else is like us.

Think about animal and plant species that have become extinct, never to live again. They were unique, one of a kind. But they are no more. The Dodo Bird will never inhabit the earth again. The Yangtze River Dolphin will never swim again. The Northern White Rhino will never lumber over the land of Africa again. I wonder what these and other animals thought when they realized that they were the very last individual in their particular species? What did they think being the only one left? What did they think realizing that never again would their species exist?

In the year 2017, National Geographic published a book entitled *The Photo Ark: One Man's Quest to Document the World's Animals*. The purpose of the book was to capture photos of endangered species before they disappeared from Earth. The photos are stunning and moving because when looking through this book, one realizes the beauty and wonder of creation, and how truly fragile life is.

Does it change our hearts in any way when we think of Creation and its creatures in this way? Do we value the inhabitants of Earth any more knowing that these creatures with whom we share this place called Earth may one day disappear forever? Does it bother us to think that our species could one day vanish as well either by our own doing or by some astrological phenomenon like an asteroid impact? One day we are here, and the next day the cosmos has no more humans ever.

One of a kind. Unique. None other like it. That is what we are. That is in fact what every human being is. There is no other like our spouse, or our child, or that special teacher we remember from elementary school. And when that person is gone, there will never be another like them.

My point is that maybe if we can remember how truly remarkable each species is in the world, and we remember how remarkable each person is, we might value all of life around us a little more, that in fact we might be better stewards of our relationships with others and the world as a whole.

Jesus Said, "Let the Little Children Come to Me."

We have successfully revived Sunday School for the children of Our Saviour. The children have a lesson, complete a craft and enjoyed a snack. As a reminder, children's Sunday School class will be held on the first Sunday of the month during the service. **The next class will be Sunday, May 7th.**

Children will be excused for their lesson after the children's message. Please share our news with anyone you know who may be interested. We welcome every child to join us and learn! **WE ARE SO EXCITED TO HAVE GOTTEN STARTED! OUR CHILDREN ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR CONGREGATION.**



Dear Padre,

What does hell look like?

Signed, Hoping Not to Know Personally

Dear, Hoping



Popular descriptions of hell, of course, include things like a fiery abode with a Red Devil in charge. The New Testament describes hell as a place of anguish, where one is in torment in flames. We can think of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Other places in the bible describe hell as a fiery furnace where there will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:36-43).

The concept of "hell" evolves in theology. In Jewish thought, according to the Old Testament, souls departed from this world to live in a place called "sheol." It was a shadowy existence in some underworld. Here a person would be gathered with their forebears but it did not necessarily have an element of torment associated with it. A departed soul was just there, and that was it (Proverbs 9:18). Only later does hell take on the sense of an afterlife for sinful and evil people.

For me, hell is nowhere better described than in the story of Cain (Genesis 4). Cain has risen up and killed his brother. And in response to Cain's act of murder, God says to Cain, "You will be a fugitive and a wanderer of the earth." And Cain responds, almost as if it is a question, "I will be hidden from your face? I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer of the earth? Anyone who meets me will want to kill me." And this is hell. To be separated from God. To be a pariah in the eyes all human beings. What worse torment could there be?

Is hell real? Yes. Is it a fiery furnace where there is weeping and the gnashing of teeth? I don't know. But hell exists at least in the form that the bible describes in the story of Cain and Abel. And we can't help but feel for those who feel cut off from God, abandoned my humanity, and who are feel utterly alone. I imagine that is how many incarcerated persons feel. I imagine that is how many persons suffering the stigma of a divorce feel. I imagine that is how many persons who are impoverished feel. Hell is real. Unfortunately, many people live it in the here and now. May we continue to pray for those persons in "hell," that the grace of God would shatter their prison and give their spirit a new release on life.

Thanks for your question.

Signed, *Padre*



Council Minutes

Please Note: Council Minutes cannot be included in the newsletter until after Council has approved them.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Members Present: Pastor Joel Petruschke, Antonetta Fleming, President, Brad Neil, Vice President, Jim Lubrecht, Treasurer, Jeanette Logan, Secretary and Steve Barron. Penny Zimmerman and Dawne Veet, (via ZOOM).

At 6:34 pm the meeting was called to order and Pastor Joel offered a word of prayer.

A correction to the Special Congregational Meeting Minutes of February, 12, 2023 was made.

Dawne made a motion to accept the February 8, 2023 Regular Council Minutes and Pastor Joel seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Dawne made a motion to accept the minutes from the Special Council Meeting of February 28, 2023 and Pastor Joel seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reviewed the financial report with Council. He noted there is a \$15,727.00 deficit for January to February 2023. Jim discussed the Current Fund Mutuals and Scholarship Mutuals noting there was a small drop due to the market. These funds will be discussed at an upcoming Finance Committee Meeting

Previous Year Comparison-

Snow Removal - Costs are less but we didn't have a bad winter this year.

Egg Sales - There was a deposit for Egg Sales of \$7,757.75. Eggs Sales are up but our expenses for supplies have gone up.

Shown under Budget Performance for February 2023, there is a \$334.69 surplus.

Pastor Joel will inform Barb that Anneke or Jim may purchase items for the church and fundraising via Costco.

The Treasurer's Report is filed for Audit.

Committee Reports:

Christian Ed: No report

Child Protection Policy: No Report

Fund Raising: No Report

Mutual Ministry: No Report

Property: Brad has spoken with the snow removal company and we will not be charged for the last time they came out and spread ice melt without the church's approval. They understand they must call Brad first before coming out to the church to plow or treat the surfaces.

Scholarship BOT: No Report

Social Ministry: No Report

Stewardship: There is no formal committee

Welcome: No Report



Worship and Music: No Report

Finance Committee: Jim will contact Christopher Grant, our Thrivent representative to schedule a meeting date.

Pastor's Report: Reviewed by Council. Pastor Joel reminded Council that he will be in Spain March 9, 2023 through March 19, 2023 and our worship time change to 9:00 am will begin on Sunday, March 26, 2023. Our Holy Week Progressive will be Maundy Thursday service at St. Stephen's Church, Good Friday services at Our Saviour, Good Shepherd Vigil on Saturday and Easter Sunday services at Our Saviour and St. Stephen's. There will be a celebration for the 1st Communion participants at Easter Sunday's service.

He informed Council that he received a request from The Baptist Church on Progress Avenue for use of our church's parking lot for overflow parking. They are having a concert on the evening of Saturday, March 11, 2023 and are in the need of additional parking.

Pastor Joel mentioned there weren't hymns listed in Sunday's bulletin due to Mitchell not getting the hymn numbers to Barb. He asked Anneke to speak with Mitchell about this and Anneke agreed to do so. It was agreed that the deadlines for the hymns should be no later than Tuesday.

Two voting members for the Synod Assembly on June 2nd and 3rd, 2023 are still needed. The first day will be via ZOOM and the second day will take place in person at Trinity in Camp Hill. Also, May 20, 2023 is Edification Day which will take place online.

Old Business:

Research on Cost Effective Ways to help lower our costs: Dawne informed Council that she has looked at the expenses but more details are needed as to what exactly we are spending money on. Jim will supply Dawne with invoices to help her. She is wondering about charges that we are receiving from the bank such as a fee for the night deposit. She asked if it would be possible to use a Credit Union. Do they have a night deposit available?

Anneke requested a spreadsheet for each week that lists expenses.

Pastor Joel has asked Barb to supply a monthly comparison from 2019 to 2023 of attendance, deaths, new members and baptisms. What is happening with our membership? Numbers are needed for us to be able to compare changes that are happening.

Hall Available and Marquee sign update: Anneke has been staying in contact with David and he is waiting for warmer weather.

Visioning: Pastor Joel updated Council. He discussed the need to promote our church by using our outdoor Marquee and a website to advise people on who we are and what we do. We need to look internally. There is a need for fellowship events and we need to work to help our congregation feel more unified.

There was discussion about developing an Ad Hoc Committee. Dawne mentioned she could help out but not lead the committee. She said we should look at what is missing in our church? She sees and hears other churches discussing and teaching about discipleship. We should take a look at other churches to see what they are doing to disciple and bring people into their church. We can learn from others.

There was discussion about things that we used to do in our congregation such as Friendship Club and other events for younger members and their families.

There was discussion about Benevolence envelopes. The idea of placing envelopes in the pews where members could place donations for specific things such as benevolence, Christian Education, bulletins, building expenses, etc. was discussed.

Bylaws Update: Pastor informed Council that Barb will send the Bylaws to Synod and she will inform Anneke when

she has done this.

Primary Day Election on Tuesday, May 16, 2023: Jeanette will supply a signup sheet in the Narthex a few weeks before to ask members for baked good donations. Pastor Joel will help Jeanette set up tables and the bake sale items on the evening of Monday, May 15th. Brad will look for the hot dog machine. We should reach out to the Election Office for an anticipation of number of voters to prevent too many baked good donations. Jeanette will work with Nadine and Otis to make chocolate candy to be sold on Election Day.

Worship time change. Volunteer feedback: Jim talked with many of the volunteers who help with Sunday services and there were no issues with the worship service time change. Anneke spoke with parents of the Sunday School students and they didn't have any problems with the time change. She also mentioned that she spoke with people about the article that was published in the newsletter and they told her that they thought it was easily understood and well written.

New Business:

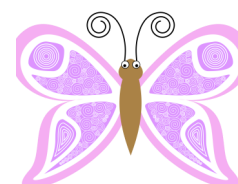
Visioning: There was discussion about having an Ad Hoc Committee. Dawne said she could help with this committee but is unable to lead it. She said she see and hears other churches are discussing and teaching their members about discipleship. We should take a look at other churches to see what they are doing to disciple and bring people into their church. We can learn from others.

At 8:26 pm Pastor Joel made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jim seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer.

The next Council Meeting will be on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanette Logan, Council Secretary



**OUR SAVIOUR
FINANCIAL REPORT
through March 31, 2023**

ENVELOPES AND PLATE	\$	29,395.85
FUND RAISING	\$	17,042.85
FELLOWSHIP HALL RENTAL	\$	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$	46,438.70

EXPENSE \$ 52,218.03

DEFICIT \$ (5,779.33)

PNC BANK STATEMENT BALANCES
as of March 31, 2023

CURRENT FUND CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$4,875.48
MEMORIAL FUND MONEY MARKET (INTEREST RATE 01%)	\$87,638.25*

THRIVENT ACCOUNTS

	<u>3/31/2023</u>	<u>2/28/2023</u>
CURRENT FUND MUTUALS	\$ 51,990.85	\$ 53,111.11
SCHOLARSHIP MUTUALS	\$ 158,306.00	\$ 161,426.16

* \$61,000 of Memorial Fund is from the Neidich estate.

\$1,310.57 of Memorial Fund is from the Ruth Knerr estate to be used for Christian Ed expenses.

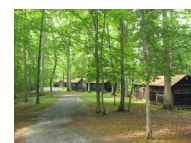


HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Carol Ranck	5/1	Jaylen Copeland	5/18
Jared Copeland	5/6	Christine Schreffler	5/18
Myles Reilly	5/7	Steffany Provencher	5/23
Lisa Neil	5/8	Sara Smith	5/23
Don DeArmitt	5/10	Katelyn Miller	5/30
Margie Munz	5/13	Jean Lisse	5/31
George Schreffler	5/17		

Let's think about camp!

We have received the new camping corp. brochures for the upcoming 2023 summer programs. They are on the table in the Narthex. Camping is not just for children. They offer family camp & elders camp. Pick one up & check out all that is being offered this year!



Jobs are available

In addition to offering summer camping for campers the Lutheran Camping Corp. also offers summer employment for high school & college students such as: counselors, lifeguards, kitchen staff, craft staff and maintenance. More information about these opportunities is available at LutheranCamping.org/employment.

Manna Food Pantry

Our "2nd Sunday" food collection is still ongoing. During this time of continuous rising food prices & heating costs, food pantries are seeing a greater demand of their services. If you would like to make a donation you may bring your items into the church & place them on the table in the Narthex at any time. There is a list of suggested items now on the table. If you would like to make a monetary donations, please mark your envelopes "Manna Food Pantry" and place it with your regular giving envelope.





Sun

Mon



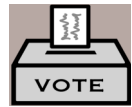


Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	6 pm - Welcome Committee		6:30 pm - Worship & Music via Zoom			
				Family Promise Host Week		
7 - Easter 5 9 am - Worship with Children's Sunday School	8 Pastor Joel @St. Stephen's 6 pm - Altar Guild Praise Him Singers Rehearsal deadline for committee council reports	9	10 2 pm - Bible Study @Manor @Oakridge 6:30 pm - Council	11	12 vacation day for Barb - office closed	13
14 - Easter 6 Mother's Day 9 am - Worship 	15 Pastor Joel @St. Stephen's vacation day for Barb - office closed	16 Polling Place with Bake Sale 	17 6:30 pm - Mutual Ministry	18 7 pm - Praise Him Singers Concert	19	20 Synod Assembly Edification Day
21 - Easter 7 9 am - Worship newsletter deadline	22 Pastor Joel @St. Stephen's 7 pm - Christian Ed	23	24 2 pm - Bible Study @Manor @Oakridge	25	26	27 3-9 pm - Private Event
28 - Pentecost 9 am - Worship 3:45 pm - Worship @Manor @Oakridge	29 - Memorial Day  office closed	30	31			

The Evangelical Lutheran
CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



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

9:00 am.

Please join us!

Holy Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday.

Church Office

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

Phone: 717-545-9992

Email: ossec@comcast.net

Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.