



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

April 2020

Volume 60, Number 4



Living Hope

(1 Peter 1:3)

“Living Hope”

Will this coronavirus crisis be over in the near future? I sure hope so. Will my son who works at the hospital, or my son-in-law who works retail, resist contracting the virus? I sure hope so. Will my friend who is out of work these days because of the isolation and social distancing have enough money to make ends meet until she can go back to work? I sure hope so. In all these instances, I've used the word “hope” to refer to a happy situation that I would like to see happen, but really have no certainty or confidence that it will happen. It's just a well wish. It's like applying for a job and saying, “I hope I get it.” Or washing our hands after we come back from the grocery store and saying, “I hope I *don't* get it!”

The Bible uses the word “hope” in this way sometimes. For example, in his letter to the Philippians St. Paul said that he hoped to send Timothy to them soon (see Philippians 2:19-24). But quite a bit of the time the Bible uses the word “hope” in a very different way. For example, it says things like. . .

*“May **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).*

*“faith and love... spring from **the hope stored up for you in heaven**” (Colossians 1:5).*

*“**the hope of eternal life**, which God, who does not lie, promised” (Titus 1:2).*

*“you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so **your faith and hope are in God**” (1 Peter 1:21).*

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a **living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**” (1 Peter 1:3).*

Clearly in passages like these and many others, “hope” is not a reference to some pie-in-the-sky pipe dream (like “I hope I win the lottery”). No, God gives to us His sure promises, and Jesus' resurrection from the dead guarantees that what God has promised will indeed come to complete fulfillment. That's why even in the face of death our funeral liturgy can speak of the “sure and certain hope” of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting for all those who fall asleep with faith in Jesus.

We actually do sometimes use the word “hope” in this same way. Imagine, for example, that you were stranded for days in a small boat all by yourself miles out into the ocean. You had run out of fuel for the motor, and to make matters more desperate, you had no working radio, no food, no fresh water, and no hope of ever being rescued. You could rightly call your situation hopeless. But what if out of nowhere a coast guard boat suddenly came cruising to your rescue. You would suddenly go from despair to hope, even before the rescue boat actually got up to you and pulled you aboard. From the moment you spotted them far off in the distance, until the time when they finally arrived and tied your boat up to theirs, you would have been filled with inexpressible joy over your new found hope when you thought that all was lost.

This is the way it is with our hope in Christ. It appeared for a time that all was lost as Jesus, who had claimed to be the Messiah and Savior, suffered and died on the cross at the hands of His enemies. His disciples deserted Him, and went off in hiding for fear that they would be next. What a sad ending to something that appeared to have such promise. But wait, early in the morning on the first day of the week, the stone over Jesus' tomb was found rolled away and the grave was empty. Then Jesus appeared to hundreds of people over forty days – alive and well! He had arisen victorious over death and the grave. Everything He has promised is true. Sin does not win. Death is not the end.

In his famous resurrection chapter, St. Paul writes of the necessity of Jesus' resurrection from the dead in order for our sins to be forgiven and for us to have eternal salvation. He points out that what God has promised us is not just a better life here on earth. In fact, he goes so far as to say, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Corinthians 15:19). But then he powerfully declares, based on testimony of hundreds of eye witnesses (including himself) "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead" and therefore, we too shall rise from the dead on the last day.

Certainly God has come to our rescue countless times by healing our injuries and infirmities, and by solving any number of our problems that we have faced in this life. All this increases our hope of what God can and will do for us in the future, as we continue to face problems and challenges that test our faith. But nothing bolsters our confidence in Christ, nothing reinforces more the "sure and certain hope" of our own resurrection even from death, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So we rejoice to say with St. Paul, "we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people" (1 Timothy 4:10), "Christ Jesus, our hope" (1 Timothy 1:1). And so may you and I have great hope in the midst of these fearful days of uncertainty. "May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word" (1 Thessalonians 2:16).

In Christ, our living hope,

Pastor Naumann

This is a stressful and scary time for many. If your family, or someone you know is in need of support, you can reach out to the Lay Minister that is assigned to your family, based on the list and contact info. below.

Shepherd Group Assignments					
Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names Start with & include	Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names Start with & include
Geoff Bohren 231-679-4927	A	Boelman	Ernie VanOrman 269-679-5378	Lausman	McNees
Brian Hall 269-625-5827	Bohren	Chadderdon	Eric VanOrman 269-679-5491	Messing	Nelson
Dan Bryer 269-323-7416	Chilcott	D	Jeff Burnett 269-806-2683	Newland	P
Mel Schroeder 734-646-9651	E	Freeman	Andy Allan 269-501-3763	Q	Shook
Mark Hough 269-567-0705	Frommann	G	Greg Wedel 269-599-1470	Sible	Stolsky
John Engelmann 269-544-1542	H	June	Matt Heintz 269-372-7053	Sullivan	T
Cory Luma 269-365-8282	Jung	Lapekas	Arlan Wendzel 269-279-9196	U	Z

F E B R U A R Y - 2 0 2 0



SERVING THE LORD IN

Latin America

News from Rev Dr Jonathan & Deaconess Cheryl Naumann



Jesus for Odalis!

A few weeks ago we had the fun of giving Odalis a print of Kelly Schumacher's painting titled "Children of the Heavenly Father." Many of you will remember that Odalis works in a hardware store close to our LCMS mission in Palmar Arriba. He was the model for Jesus in this painting, posing with children from Concordia Lutheran School and our group home for disabled youngsters.

Odalis is still "searching for the truth" by investigating every type of good and bad teaching associated with Christianity. At the moment he is particularly intrigued by information about the "Last Days," conspiracy theories, and whether or not extra terrestrial beings are somehow linked to Christian beliefs.

Our hope is that the print of Jesus and children of the Heavenly Father will always remind Odalis of what he has heard when visiting our mission congregation: Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life! Please continue to pray with us that the Holy Spirit will bring Odalis to a saving faith in Jesus!

"Él les dijo: Venid vosotros aparte a un lugar desierto, y descansad un poco..."

(And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest for a while..." Mark 6:31a)

The last weekend of February and first couple of days of March were spent in San Juan, Puerto Rico, providing spiritual care to our LCMS missionaries, during their much-needed break from continuous work in the aftermath of dozens of earthquakes. Yes, even full-time missionaries need Spiritual care! And it is when we rely on God to provide all of our needs that we are refreshed in both body and soul to continue our work in His name!

In the Dominican Republic (where the LCMS missionary community includes 24 adults and 23 children), I still teach weekly youth confirmation classes; am providing pre-marriage counseling for engaged missionaries; and lead weekly Lenten services in English, along with taking my turn preaching in Spanish at various missions.

My time at the seminary is currently focused on preparing the seminary library for use by students and professors, as well as members of our missions or partner churches throughout the LAC region. THAT is a big job, but God is blessing our effort through some wonderful volunteers!

Thank you for your prayers and support! *Pastor Jonathan*



Anyone desiring a print of "Children of the Heavenly Father" can purchase one from Angus Dei Liturgical Arts on their website: <https://squareup.com/store/agnus-dei-liturgical-arts/>. The current **Buy 1 Give 1 Mission Project** means that for every one of these prints purchased, artist Kelly Schumacher will be giving the same size print to a school or congregations in Latin America!

Dear friends in Christ,

In our February 2018 newsletter we reported on the installation of Pastor Sergio Fritzler and the dedication of a new church building for Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Licey. God has truly blessed His Word going out from this congregation - already using the young mission as a "mother church" for two more mission starts in the same area of Santiago. The first Service of the Word was held in Villa Dura just before Christmas. Pastor Navarro, Pastor Fritzler and seminary field workers are working tirelessly to connect their youth outreach efforts to families in the more rural area of Villa Dura. Their weekly Bible study regularly brings together about 30 children from the community, with increasingly more adults coming to join.



More than 80 children and 20 adults were present for the first Service of the Word in Villa Dura!



Pastor Paul and Dana unpacking the medical kits



Since the Mercy Center serves not only the Dominican Republic, but our missions and partner churches throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, there are several projects in the hopper in other countries. Four congregations in Venezuela are scheduled to have workshops on "Go and Be Reconciled" and a large conference using our Spanish translation of "Every One His Witness" is being planned for church leaders in Mexico. Here in the DR in the next couple of months there will be workshops on health education, associated with some type of evangelism initiative, for each of the communities around our LCMS mission congregations.

We send our thanks to the people of Saint Michael Lutheran Church in Portage, Michigan, who donated medical supplies and assembled them into 88 first aid kits for assisting people during natural disasters. Rev. Dr. Paul Naumann and his wife, Dana, delivered the kits during their February visit to DR mission sites. We are grateful that the LCMS is dedicated to teaching LAC peoples how to prepare beforehand - and help people through - disasters such as fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and flooding. It is wonderful to see how God works through His Word in difficult times to bring the comfort of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in need, even as they receive physical support.

You may recall that our LCMS mission in Jamaica opened its first Lutheran School five months ago in an area called Parade Gardens in the capitol city of Kingston. Two weeks ago, Mia Daley, a toddler enrolled at the Lutheran school, was hit by a stray bullet while she was dressing to go to our Lutheran church. She is in intensive care in a Jamaica hospital, with a spinal cord injury and damage to her liver and kidney, and the doctors are concerned that she may not be able to walk again. We are praying that God would have mercy on this little one, her family, and those who care for her.

Topics related to Life Issues - especially those that are already publicly debated in North America - are just starting to be addressed in many areas of Latin America. This May our seminary's annual symposia will focus on Life Issues, and the Mercy Center conference on the last day of that symposia will address Abortion and Euthanasia. Rev. Michael Salemink, President of Lutherans for Life, is working with me and our regional nurse to develop materials appropriate for the Latino peoples in LAC.

Thank you for your prayers, your messages, and you financial support!

love in Christ,
Deaconess Cheryl

Please include in your prayers

+ That God would heal little Mia Daley, according to His will, and give strength and encouragement to her family; + That God will bless His missionaries with good health and keep them safe from every evil; + That God will raise up more indigenous men from the LAC region to serve as pastors in our Lutheran missions and partner church bodies; + That our mission support fund will continue to receive ample gifts to keep us working here in the DR; + That the DR elections scheduled for next Sunday will be peaceful and that the chosen leaders will serve according to God's will for the good of the country and its people.

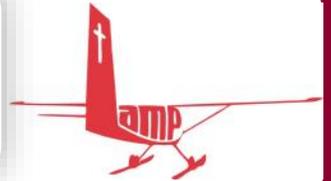
Tax-deductible gifts to support the work of Jonathan & Cheryl Naumann can be given:

- + Online at www.lcms.org/jonathan.naumann**
- + By phoning the LCMS donor care line: 888-930-4438**
- + By mailing checks to The LCMS, PO Box 66861, Saint Louis, MO 63166-6861 with "Jonathan Naumann - Latin America" on the check memo line**



Evangelism Notes

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



Normally by April 1, the St. Michael LAMP Summer Team has been selected and I am looking into scheduling flights for our team members and scheduling our meetings to put together our curriculum and getting our team ready for the trip in August.

But this year is not normal, by any means!

No one predicted that we would be in the midst of social distancing and isolating to stop the spread of life threatening disease. As we are focusing on protecting the vulnerable in our community, our dear friends in the north are themselves highly vulnerable. Other teams reaching out to other northern communities, which have an off season trip planned (March or April) have been asked to cancel their trip because of the risk of spreading the virus to these highly vulnerable communities. **First Nations people are more vulnerable to these types of illnesses with many living in overcrowded conditions and lacking access to healthcare services. They too are cancelling large events and gatherings.** LAMP at this time, has asked us to wait to purchase our plane tickets because they are waiting until May 1 to tell the teams if they may go through with the summer trips.

Standing on the Rock,

Dana Naumann

SMLC LAMP Team Leader

Prayer is essential!

- 1) For the people of Lac Brochet—protection from the virus (at this time there is no one with the virus in Lac Brochet—however there is a person under observation in another northern community).
- 2) For trust in God's hand of protection and deliverance to overcome fear.
- 3) For LAMP and the communities who host a summer team to assess the situation, and decide if it is safe for the summer ministry teams to serve this summer.
- 4) For us to find ways to minister to our friends—adults and children in Lac Brochet from afar.



Thrivent Action Teams Make A Difference

Many people don't know that [Thrivent Action Teams](#) can receive seed money grants. Thrivent members and associate members that are 13 & older can utilize them to work on a project. Tyler Stolsky (16 yrs old member and former St. Michael student) utilized his Thrivent dollars to give back to his younger brother's classroom. Tyler filled out the Thrivent online form for (Aidan Stolsky- 5th grade class) \$250 for pickle-ball equipment for gym class and for reading materials for this class.

Part of the seed money went to purchase age-appropriate books to read. The 5th grade class was planning to go to a lower-income, private school in Kalamazoo and have a reading/sharing day with students. With the recent events it is TBD when this will happen. Tyler was excited to use his Thrivent seed money to help kids in the school, because the book buddy program (older students read to younger students an age-appropriate book) at St. Michael school is one of his favorite memories. Julie Prentice (5th grade teacher), currently has these 5th graders reading to other preschool students during the week, as a time honored book buddy tradition at St. Michael Lutheran School.

Tyler's other passion was doing something athletic for the school and there was enough money to fund the purchase of pickle-ball equipment. Mrs. Taylor Cronk (gym teacher) has incorporated pickleball for all ages at the school. Tyler has a passion for giving these kids another opportunity

to play sports. For the past 6 years, Tyler has taken a MSU 4-H camp that taught pickleball. Tyler is now a sophomore at Portage Central High School and plays football, hockey & baseball.

In addition, Tyler utilized his Thrivent seed money for the St. Michael Christ For Kids Childcare to purchase educational materials. Tyler & his brother, Aidan, both went through St Michael's childcare program. Due to privacy reasons photos of kids in the childcare cannot be published. Instead, Emily Ritchie was able to take a photo with the hardworking and very caring staff with their Thrivent shirts on. Tyler will tell you that he has fond memories of St. Michael and the very loving staff.



St. Michael 5th grade class (L-R) - Alexis Jamie, Serenity Mack, Sadie Kamphis, Jonah Sarrantos Pierce, Andrew Olsen, Aidan Stolsky, Tyler Stolsky, Ruth Heacox, Elizabeth Orley, Aryn Ortiz, Evan Pangburn. (not pictured Julie Prentice 5th grade teacher & Taylor Cronk-gym teacher)



Mike & Stephanie Farrance
269-655-1818
[Lake Effect Financial Consultants](#)



Christ For Kids Childcare Staff

We want your family's favorite RECIPES!!

As many of you know, Andi Lynch will be getting married this summer. We are collecting recipes to create a gift book from the St. Michael family, featuring favorite recipes from our members. This is sure to be a treasured keepsake for Andi, but we also want to make a similar collection available to you closer to the 60th anniversary celebration.

Your recipe can be included! Print out [a form](#) and return it to Mary Wright's mailbox #445 by April 26, or email it to: mary.wright65@gmail.com

. We anticipate a great demand for our cookbook, and want to be certain to order plenty. You can reserve one, or more, for yourself at this time to be assured of receiving them.



MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

So unsettling in our world today is the Corona virus. We have all heard about it and some may be experiencing the affects. From all appearances, we can't escape the disease, or its consequences.

To be clear, most of us will not die from COVID-19; it is not a new bubonic plague. Of 100 infected victims, 98 will probably survive and experience only mild, flu-like symptoms. But the effects of the disease on our lives will likely reverberate into the future.

In the 14th century, the Black Death (the bubonic plague) killed between 75 million and 200 million people in Eurasia; it undoubtedly affected the course of European history.

When the plague struck a town, the wealthy would often flee to the countryside. The question put to Luther was simple: Should a Christian flee this horrific plague? We cannot escape COVID-19 by fleeing to the countryside. How should a Christian live, when he can't flee an oncoming disease?

Here is Luther's solution:

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
one little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.*

I am a worrier, as I'm sure most of us are in today's world. We want our families close so we know that they are doing well or so we can be there to help them if they are not. This time of "self isolationism" is very difficult. But Martin Luther has reminded us of the very thing we must hold onto in all times good and bad. Because faith in God is what will bring us through anything we face – good and bad.

Keeping in touch with your friends and family is so very important now. Keeping up with your Bible Studies and The Red Letter Challenge is also very important. Share with your friends and family the truths you discover as you study God's word.

As we look forward to Easter and the celebration of the resurrection of Christ let us abide in God's Word and find peace in Prayer.

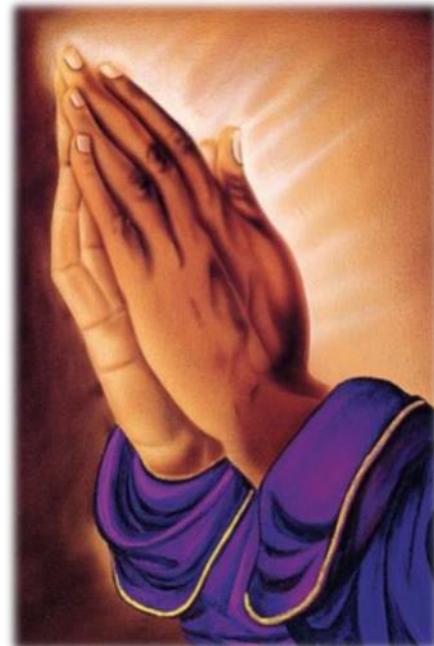
Virginia Hetrick – Prayer Co-Coordinator

Did you know we have a prayer chain? To be included in our "Prayer Team" or to request prayers, send an email prayer-request@mightymessengers.org

When we resume a regular onsite worship schedule, those desiring prayer are invited to come forward after the service and find a "Prayer Team" member to pray with.

Prayer meetings are regularly scheduled for Tuesdays (9:00 am) and Wednesdays (6:00 pm) in Room 231.

Let us pray!





Growing Community from a Distance

All of the recent events surrounding the COVID-19 virus and the sweeping impact it has had on our world seem almost like something from a science-fiction movie. A week ago, I would not have imagined such circumstances, but how rapidly events have moved to place us in a surreal existence. About a week ago, it became evident to me from conversations with other school administrators and consultations with the Kalamazoo County Health Department that something was coming that was bigger than anything I could have imagined. Upon my return from a meeting with the Health Department, I directed the teaching staff to begin thinking about delivering instruction and supporting materials to our school families as a means of distance learning. Little did I know that the very next day schools would be mandated to close the following week.

With that news, the teaching staff shifted into high gear and began a very busy process of preparation. Not only would our school families be experiencing an entirely new dynamic for learning, but our teachers would also be learning many new things about how to continue to bring instruction to their students in a practical and meaningful way. While there have been a few minor bumps along the way, I am happy to report that instruction continues even though there are no students in our school!

The teaching staff has used a number of various platforms and programs to deliver instruction as well as to convey expectations, directions to parents, and answer questions presented by students and parents. Each teacher has chosen to use an existing platform that families are familiar with, or selected one that they felt would be the best for their purposes. Thus far, efforts have received a great deal of support and praise from our school parents. As we continue to work with our distance learning, changes will be made to make this process better with each passing day. Many free additional supports are being shared with families that supplement the materials and topics being learning. It has truly been a partnership between home and school and speaks to the fact that we have a strong church and school community.

The Red Letter Challenge that was adapted to be used in our school also continues via the distance learning avenues. Reading lists as well as discussion of the Five Principles are being shared with students and parents alike. Many have expressed an appreciation of the timeliness of The Red Letter Challenge and the current challenge of COVID-19. We continue to pray for a positive resolution to this current world challenge and ask that you will join us in that effort as we continue to minister to our school families.

In Christ,

Greg Johnson

Principal





THANK YOU!!



KICKOFF





**YOUTH SERVED A PANCAKE DINNER,
SMLS STUDENTS SANG and SHARED DRAMA
ROD SNOW, Ventriloquist/Chalk Artist**





Thank you



YOUTH & CHILD MINISTRY



A message from Andi Lynch:

Hi everyone, we are amazed at all of the changes that are here due to the virus. I know that I am going through a lot of emotions and trying to process a new normal with "social distancing." We know that you may feel alone, overwhelmed, or just plain bored. To help us keep our community and our hearts and eyes on Jesus, we are creating a mass text to Sr. and Jr. high students. If you want to be in the group text messages, please send your name and number to Andi Lynch at 989-891-7638.

Here is a little word of encouragement for you. During this time I have been feeling a lot like Jonah. I have been given many blessings in my life, I have food, health, a place to shelter, however I am disappointed that my plans have changed. Jonah had many plans changed. He ran away from God and God had a giant sea animal eat him, to get Jonah on the right path. After Jonah proclaimed to the Ninevites to change their ways and follow God and the people listened, Jonah was disappointed that the people he didn't like did not get what he thought they deserved. Throughout this whole time that Jonah, and I, have had a hard time, pay attention to how God reacts? God who has the right to be upset continues to love Jonah, God gives Jonah a tree to protect him against the sun. God loved the Ninevites even though they were wicked, and God loves and is with us, no matter what.

Jonah 4 TLB

This change of plans made Jonah very angry. ² He complained to the Lord about it: "This is exactly what I thought you'd do, Lord, when I was there in my own country and you first told me to come here. That's why I ran away to Tarshish. For I knew you were a gracious God, merciful, slow to get angry, and full of kindness; I knew how easily you could cancel your plans for destroying these people. ³ "Please kill me, Lord; I'd rather be dead than alive when nothing that I told them happens." ⁴ Then the Lord said, "Is it right to be angry about this?" ⁵ So Jonah went out and sat sulking on the east side of the city, and he made a leafy shelter to shade him as he waited there to see if anything would happen to the city. ⁶ And when the leaves of the shelter withered in the heat, the Lord arranged for a vine to grow up quickly and spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head to shade him. This made him comfortable and very grateful. ⁷ But God also prepared a worm! The next morning the worm ate through the stem of the plant, so that it withered away and died. ⁸ Then when the sun was hot, God ordered a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah, and the sun beat down upon his head until he grew faint and wished to die. For he said, "Death is better than this!" ⁹ And God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?" "Yes," Jonah said, "it is; it is right for me to be angry enough to die!" ¹⁰ Then the Lord said, "You feel sorry for yourself when your shelter is destroyed, though you did no work to put it there, and it is, at best, short-lived. ¹¹ And why shouldn't I feel sorry for a great city like Nineveh with its 120,000 people in utter spiritual darkness and all its cattle?"

Sunday School Attendance Recognition

Winter Quarter 2019-20
Preschool-8th Grade

Perfect Attendance!

Ethan Kwigizile	Mark Rudowske
Will Rudowske	Callan Toman
Silas Toman	



Faithful Attendance

(no more than 2 absences)

Emily Havenhill	Nathan Havenhill
Sara Havenhill	Andrew Heimlich
Owen Heimlich	Ivan Kwigizile
Cole Lahrke	Asher Toman
Lyra Toman	Kovy Weller



**Kids, 3 yrs-6th grade
are invited to join us**

June 22-26

9AM-Noon

for a high-energy, fun adventure at

Vacation Bible School!

REGISTER TODAY at:

mightymessengers.org

Volunteers Can Register Here Too!



The Sanctity of Life in the Shadow of Coronavirus

**Lutherans
For Life** By Michael W.
Salemink

DATE: March 20, 2020

What has the sanctity of life to do with pandemics and cancellations? Believe it or not, it's more relevant than ever. The Gospel of Jesus Christ belongs to just such a time as this. It prepares us for precisely these kinds of moments. Here's how we can keep speaking truth, showing love, and sharing life in the face of the coronavirus and cultural distress.

Let's not abort the unborn. Some will use this virus as the latest excuse to experiment with embryos for developing another vaccine or a stem-cell therapy. Do we have to let the emergency turn our little ones into nothing more than spare parts? One abortionist already advocated removing restrictions on RU486 because increased time at home equals more surprise pregnancies. Widespread dread provides the least rational and most hazardous justification for medically cannibalizing our young.

Let's not abandon the elderly. We can allocate healthcare resources, even in crisis, according to urgency of needs and not duration of years. Quality of life is in the eye of the beholder, which makes a poor basis for assessing survival. This outbreak already especially endangers the aged. Sacrificing them to it will embolden, not appease it.

Reconsider the role of our bodies. Disease transmission reminds us of some wonderful realities. A person's value means more than how attractive or productive we find her. Comfort, luxury, and indulgence do not trump everything else. There's no such thing as a personal choice or a private decision. We affect others wherever we go and whatever we do—for worse and for better. These bodies are gifts, not rights or burdens.

Behold how defenseless and dependent we are. But for the grace of God, we cannot sustain ourselves against the tiniest menaces. Humankind's selfishness long ago upset the harmony our Almighty Maker wove into the universe, and we have competed with creation ever since. Microscopic organisms have turned against us too ("cursed is the ground because of you"). Sin has rendered us little and feeble like an embryo, impaired and compromised as much as any hospital patient. Yet our heart beats and eyes blink—how relentlessly does the Heavenly Father preserve us!

Take comfort that no one suffers alone. Our Lord Jesus Christ has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows. He knows weeping and bleeding. The Son of God humbled Himself under hurt and obedient to death to walk its valley alongside us. His crucified forgiveness has emptied suffering of any punishment and filled it with purposes. In His hand even our pain accomplishes outcomes that far surpass its costs.



Let's celebrate community. What an unprecedented opportunity we have in school closings, travel restrictions, and working from home (or furloughs). Families, locales, and countries could unite in ways our fast-paced culture doesn't usually facilitate. Lean in to the household. Play board games. Read stories aloud. Reach out to aging relatives. Catch up with old friends. Check in on isolated neighbors. Use phone, email, letters, and cards when visits become inadvisable. Engage in real conversation with your husband or wife. How can we serve those whom the quarantining affects most adversely?

Let's do more patting on the back than finger-pointing. Contagions can make us suspicious of each other. Distances and differences can further impede goodwill. Practice patience rather than complaining, even with government officials, and commending instead of condemning, even with overseas populations. We're going to need one another in order to overcome both this peril and its opportunistic secondary infection: disrupted relationships.

Resist the temptation to fill the extra time with screens. No media delivers just the facts (or distractions). They sell products and philosophies, and scares and stories sell even more than sex. Seek truth rather than news ("infotainment" which often consists mostly of rumors and exaggerations). Rather than resorting to technology and toys, dive headlong into what your mind and heart really crave—connecting with fellow human beings.

Remember the hope of a new creation. Whatever this world robs from us, the resurrection of the body will restore. Pray not just to be spared from sickness but to be liberated from sin. Pray not only for ourselves but for our every neighbor. Pray, watch, and await with eager anticipation the day when God shall wipe away every tear from your eyes and there will be no more disease.

Let's demonstrate the best of humanity and make the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 the most life-affirming, Gospel-motivated event of our age!

Journaling from Ellery Toman:

From January 21-23,2020 I went on a trip to Washington D.C. for the March for Life. My sister had asked about going, and I also really wanted to go. I thought it would be a great way to stand up for what I believe and have an experience that I would remember for a long time. It was a last minute arrangement, and I'm very thankful to everyone who helped organize it!

Andi Lynch drove us to Fort Wayne, IN and then we rode in buses the rest of the way to D.C. After a night on the buses, we went to tour the Capitol Building. The next night we slept on a church floor, and the following day we attended the rally and the march. Then, we had our second 9 hour bus ride to get back to Fort Wayne.

I really enjoyed the entire trip (except for the uncomfortable and long bus rides), including the friendly group we joined! They were very accommodating, organized, and kind (we also got a karaoke concert for a couple hours from them).

My favorite part of the trip was the rally. We went through security early, so we got good spots. There was pre-rally music for a bit, then there were various speeches and testimonies for a few hours. It was amazing to hear many different people talk about a baby's right to live, each sharing their own personal stories of how they became convicted with this truth. I also got to hear President Trump speak, which I liked. The rally made me more strong in my beliefs about a baby's right to live, and it encouraged me to see so many other people with the same belief.

Another highlight of the trip was our tour of the Capitol building. Our tour guide was smart and funny, and I learned an incredible amount in just a couple hours.

I'm very glad I got to go on this trip! It's an experience that will continually inspire me to speak up for the sanctity of human life.



Maya Toman
Andi Lynch
Ellery Toman
RIGHT TO LIFE
MARCH 2020,
Washington, D.C.



Sitting on the back steps of the Capitol for a group photo with Life Defenders .



Thanks so much to Mr. and Mrs. Burns and Andi Lynch for supporting, transporting, and encouraging us throughout the trip!

Journaling from Maya Toman:

On January 24 of this year, I spent a day standing. First I stood in line and gave my belongings to secret service agents to look through (they confiscated my orange -- because I could throw it -- and my favorite CPH water bottle -- because it was also, somehow, dangerous). Then I stood in an almost full field, surrounded by excited people I'd never met, gazing up at the sky (because it was the only not-full-of-people place in my field of vision) and seeing planes flying low and snipers on a tower. I listened to bands and speeches, frantically texted friends that I was trying to find and threaded my way to a better spot for seeing the stage. Then I walked down a ridiculously crowded road, holding a sign amidst hundreds of people also holding signs. Still standing. I didn't sit down that day until 5 in the afternoon.

But despite all this standing, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and want to go back. (And in case you can't tell: I was at the March for Life!)

I've wanted to go to the March for years. The opportunity to go this year came last-minute, but it miraculously worked out, so my sister, our youth leader Andi, and I went.

We toured the Capitol building and saw statues of Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, and Alexander Hamilton (our tour guide informed us that this one was popular with teens). We waited in line for four hours (more standing!) to watch the Senate... take a 30-minute break (but I did see Mitt Romney). And we spent the night at a nearby church.

Friday was the day of copious standing and walking. We heard the band "We are Messengers" (I loved the lead singer's Irish accent!) and speeches by many people. The three I remember best were a pro-life Democrat, a survivor of abortion (they do exist), and President Trump. Regardless of your opinion of Trump's person or politics, I think you'll enjoy this quote from his speech:

"We cannot know what our citizens yet unborn will achieve. The dreams they will imagine. The masterpieces they will create. The discoveries they will make. But we know this: every life brings love into this world. Every child brings joy to a family. Every person is worth protecting. And above all, we know that every human soul is divine and every human life, born and unborn, is made in the holy image of Almighty God. [applause] Together, we will defend this truth all across our magnificent land. We will set free the dreams of our people. And with determined hope, we look forward to all of the blessings that will come from the beauty, talent, purpose, nobility, and grace of every American child."

He got a lot of applause.

The trip was long and tiring, but completely worth it. I hope I have a chance to go back someday (and actually see the Senate, maybe). If you're able to, I think every pro-life person should attend the March some time. The enormous number of people there and the message of life and support for women coming from huge loudspeakers (and this year, the president) is truly incredible.



WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READINGS & SERMON SUMMARIES

April 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion

PSALM 118:19-29; JOHN 12:12-19; MATTHEW 27:11-66

“PALMS TO PASSION” - SERMON TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 2:8B - REV. SHAYNE JONKER

Holy Week begins on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. Jesus procures a donkey and His disciples hail Him with palm branches. They make a royal highway for Him with their coats and shout, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” The mood, however, shifts quickly from palms to passion, from triumph to crucifixion. This is no ordinary King. He dies for His people and kingdom. Never has the world seen such a King as this one.

April 12, 2020 – The Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter Day

PSALM 16; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11; JOHN 20:1-18

“TEARS OF JOY” - SERMON TEXT: JOHN 20:1-18 - REV. PAUL SHOEMAKER

When a military mother is unexpectedly greeted by her child returning from deployment, the shock is overwhelming, and she may burst into tears of joy. Mary’s tears of sorrow changed into tears of joy when she saw the risen Savior.

April 19, 2020 – Second Sunday of Easter

PSALM 148; 1 PETER 1:3-9; JOHN 20:19-31

“A GENUINELY TESTED FAITH” - SERMON TEXT: 1 PETER 1:3-9 - REV. WILLIAM MUELLER

The Apostle Peter reminds us that our faith in Jesus Christ is a genuinely tested faith. This means that through the struggles, various trials, and other griefs that we endure, God is drawing us closer to Jesus. Our faith in Jesus may be tested, but it is genuine!

April 26, 2020 – Third Sunday of Easter

PSALM 116:1-14; 1 PETER 1:17-25; LUKE 24:13-35

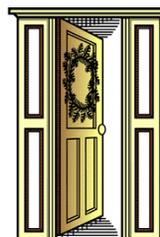
“HAVE IT GOD’S WAY!” - SERMON TEXT: LUKE 24:13-35 - REV. DR. THOMAS AHLERSMEYER

Does God’s gift of faith come from a set menu, or is it served up à la carte? In what ways are we “slow of heart” to believe all that God’s Word tells us? In His conversation with two Emmaus-bound disciples, the risen Lord Jesus Christ reveals the challenges and possibilities of a faith humbly determined to Have It GOD’S Way!

TV MINISTRY YOU CAN TRUST!

Charter Cable Channel 189
AT&T U-Verse Channel 99
Access for Kalamazoo and Portage
WJPG-LD 26 (TCT) Sunday 11:30 a.m.

- 30-Minute Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod worship service
- Produced by Lutherans for the homebound, hospitalized...
- Includes the Gospel, Epistle, and Sermon by LCMS pastors
- Music by choirs, soloists, and small groups



Remembering
Our Shut-ins

Bill & Carol Bahlmann
Caroline Barkow
Lotte Christoph
Shirley Cosgrove
Ethel Dahms*
Ginny Evans
Jack & Vi Evans
Nola Geissel
Audrey Glover
Virgil & Pat Harrison
Harry & Nancy Heath

Norma Holst*
Bob Johnson
Larry & Flo Kangas*
Carol Lauterbach
Carol McCarty*
Betty McCoy
Ardean Monck
Ruth Newland
Ruth Provanzano*
Marilyn Sible
*non-members

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Because of the Coronavirus we are not planning a Spring Activity.

We will not be doing the traditional Easter Blessing Baskets, but will distribute the food and money collected to our church family as needed. You can mail a donation to the Church Office, or to Rika Noggle (10339 Shaver Road, Portage, Michigan 49024).

Since the last Flu epidemic was in 1918, we have never seen a time like this before and we don't know what we are yet to face. But we can look at many times of hardship in our Bible, and see how God took care of his people. We do know that God is in charge and that he will not give us more than we can handle. The hope is that we can help each other, so that as a St. Michael Lutheran Church family, we can all get through these trying times together.

Did you know that there are ways to stay connected with Women's Ministry Events and Resources beyond what is going on at St. Michael? Check out these links!

[SW Michigan Lutheran Women In Mission](#) Facebook for Battle Creek Zone

[Michigan District Lutheran Women's Missionary League \(LWML\)](#) website

[Michigan District Lutheran Women's Missionary League \(LWML\)](#) Facebook

Tons of Resources for women can be found at: lwml.org

[See what a few coins in a box can do for so many here and around the world!](#)

If anyone would like to join the Women's Fellowship Ministry Board and help come up with and plan activities, service events, and fellowship events please let us know. Or if you have any ideas for an event, activity or service project please let a board member know.

Board Members

June Kucks 649-4529

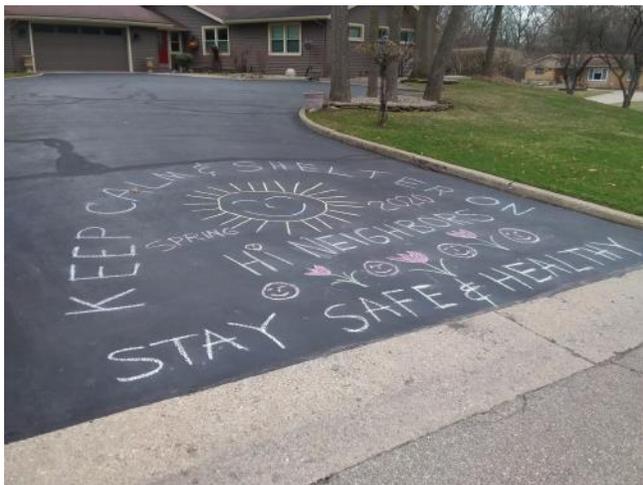
Diane Goetz 323-7667

Connie Chadderdon 327-7220

Arla Mayhew 327-4643

Rika Noggle 327-4702

Sandy Maya 330-9100



SOMETHING FUN
TO DO THAT
BLESSES YOUR
NEIGHBORS!

FEBUARY FINANCIALS

4 months

11/1/19-3/1/20	
Church Revenue	\$ 278,552
School Revenue	\$ <u>291,185</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 596,737
Total Expenses	\$ 567,229
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 2,507
Expense Budget	\$ 585,356
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ 18,127
Working Cash Balance	\$ 13,473
Mortgage Balance	\$ 842,403
December 2019 Average Attendance . . .	318
January Average Attendance	301
February Average Attendance	342
Avg. 2020 Attendance	321

Designated Fund Balances

Trust Fund	\$ 396,564
Building Contingency	\$ 14,534
Technology Refresh	\$ 9,996
AV Fund	\$ 11,340
Sunday School	\$ 731
Youth Donations	\$ 8,084
Youth Accounts	\$ 9,918
Good Samaritan	\$ 6,304
Memorials	\$ 433
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 9,039
Quilting	\$ 441
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 685
School Improvements	\$ 12,335
PTL Playground Fund	\$ 17,913
Tuition Assistance	\$ 43,979
School Music	\$ 943
Flower Fund	\$ 557

Class of 2020

Calling all High School Seniors!

We are celebrating your graduation on May 31. Right now we are creating a list of graduating seniors for our celebration. If you are graduating from High School, please contact Andi Lynch

alynch@mightymessengers.org

Saying that you are a high school senior this year.





ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

60TH ANNIVERSARY

MAKING MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST
SEPTEMBER, 1960—SEPTEMBER, 2020



St Michael Lutheran Church

7211 Oakland Drive
Portage, MI 49024-4151



Church Phone: 269-327-7832
School Phone: 269-327-0512
Fax: 269-327-3148
website: www.mightymessengers.org
E-mail: stmike@mightymessengers.org

Our Mission at St. Michael Lutheran Church is to make disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ by building up one another in the faith and reaching out to others with the Gospel.

We call this ***“Making Mighty Messengers for Christ.”***



We really miss our church family and pray that everyone is staying safe and enjoy your extra family time together.

Worship Services will continue to be ONLINE ONLY until further notice.
You can find us on Facebook or at mightymessengers.org/streaming

This includes Holy Week and the following Saturdays, and Sundays.

Maundy Thursday, April 9 - 7:00 PM

Good Friday, April 10 - 7:00 PM

Holy Saturday Candlelight Vigil, April 11 - 5:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 12 Sunrise - 7:30 AM Worship - 11:00 AM