

# OUR SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3 MAY A.D. 2020

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Jesus Said, "Truly truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy... and no one will take your joy from you." John 16:20,22

THE DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING ONE  
9:30 A.M.

### ORDER OF SERVICE

DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING ONE, PAGES 151 - 166

*Stand*

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.  
**P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.  
**C** But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Kneel/Stand*

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.  
**C** Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.  
**P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

*Stand*

# Entrance Hymn "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds" (LSB 465)



1 Now all the vault of heav'n re - sounds In  
 2 E - ter - nal is the gift He brings, There -  
 3 O fill us, Lord, with daunt - less love; Set  
 △ 4 A - dor - ing prais - es now we bring And



praise of love that still a - bounds: "Christ has tri - umphed!  
 fore our heart with rap - ture sings: "Christ has tri - umphed!  
 heart and will on things a - bove That we con - quer  
 with the heav'n - ly bless - ed sing: "Christ has tri - umphed!



He is liv - ing!" Sing, choirs of an - gels, loud and  
 He is liv - ing!" Now still He comes to give us  
 through Your tri - umph; Grant grace suf - fi - cient for life's  
 Al - le - lu - ia!" Be to the Fa - ther and our



clear! Re - peat their song of glo - ry  
 life! And by His pres - ence stills all  
 day That by our lives we tru - ly  
 Lord, To Spir - it blest, most ho - ly



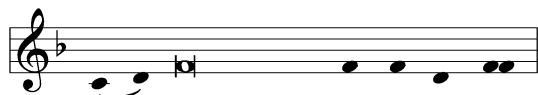
here: "Christ has tri - umphed! Christ has tri - umphed!"  
 strife. Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!  
 say: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 God, All the glo - ry, nev - er end - ing!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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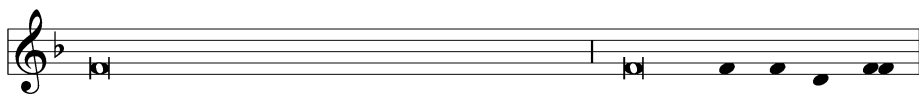
## Kyrie



**A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



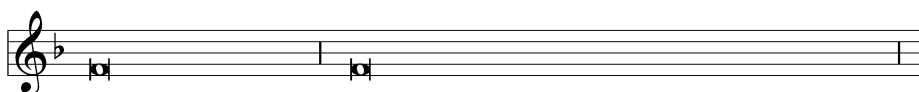
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



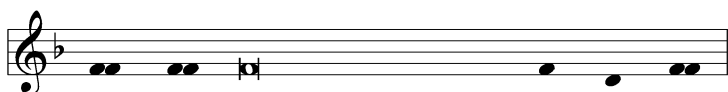
**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



**C** A - men.

### This Is the Feast



**C** This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

1 — Wor- thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose  
 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and  
 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and  
 4 Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and might be to  
 5 For the Lamb who was slain has be -  
 blood set us free to be peo - ple of God. *Refrain*  
 hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are His. *Refrain*  
 join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: *Stanza 4*  
 God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men. *Refrain*  
 gun His reign. Al - le - lu - ia. *Final Refrain*  
*Final Refrain*  
 This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.  
**G** And al - so with you.

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty God, You show those in error the light of Your truth so that they may return to the way of righteousness. Grant faithfulness to all who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Church that they may avoid whatever is contrary to their confession and follow all such things as are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**G** Amen.

*Sit*

## Old Testament Reading

Lamentations 3:22-33

*After the reading:*

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm 147:1-11



*Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our | God;\**  
*for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is | fitting.*  
*The LORD builds up Je- | rusalem;\**  
*he gathers the outcasts of | Israel.*

**He heals the broken- | hearted\***  
**and binds up their | wounds.**

**He determines the number of the | stars;\***  
**he gives to all of them their | names.**

*Great is our Lord, and abundant in | power;\**  
*his understanding is beyond | measure.*  
*The LORD lifts up the | humble;\**  
*he casts the wicked to the | ground.*

**Sing to the LORD with thanks- | giving;\***  
**make melody to our God on the | lyre!**

**He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the | earth;\***  
**he makes grass grow on the | hills.**

*He gives to the beasts their | food,\**  
*and to the young ravens that | cry.*  
*His delight is not in the strength of the | horse,\**  
*nor his pleasure in the legs of a | man,*  
*but the LORD takes pleasure in those who | fear him,\**  
*in those who hope in his steadfast | love.*

**Glory be to the Father and to the | Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. A- | men.**

## Epistle

1 Peter 2:11-20

*After the reading:*

- A** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

## Alleluia and Verse

**Congregation: Alleluia refrain**



*He sent redemption to his people. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*

**Congregation: Alleluia refrain**

## Holy Gospel

Saint John 16:16-22

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the sixteenth chapter.



**C** Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

*(Please remain standing for the Hymn of the Day.)*

## Hymn of the Day "With High Delight Let Us Unite" LSB 483

1 With high de-light Let us u - nite In songs of great  
2 True God, He first From death has burst Forth in - to life,  
3 Let prais-es ring; Give thanks, and bring To Christ our Lord

ju - bi - la - tion. Ye pure in heart, All bear your part,  
all sub-du - ing. His en - e - my Doth van - quished lie;  
ad - o - ra - tion. His hon - or speed By word and deed

Sing Je - sus Christ, our sal - va - tion. To set us  
His death has been death's un - do - ing. "And yours shall  
To ev - 'ry land, ev - 'ry na - tion. So shall His

free For - ev - er, He Is ris'n and sends To all earth's  
be Like vic - to - ry O'er death and grave," Saith He, who  
love Give us a - bove, From mis - er - y And death set

ends Good news to save ev - 'ry na - tion.  
gave His life for us, life re - new - ing.  
free, All joy and full con - so - la - tion.

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*Sit*

## Sermon

*Stand*

## Apostles' Creed

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life  $\text{✠}$  everlasting. Amen.

## Prayer of the Church

### Lord's Prayer

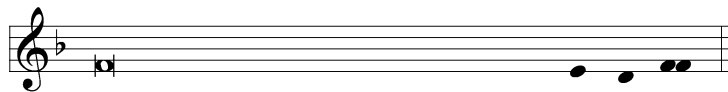
**C** Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

## Concluding Collect

**P** O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## Benediction



**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and  $\text{✠}$  give you peace.



**C** A - men.

## Hymn at the Retiring Procession "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (LSB 809)



1 Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;  
 2 Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest,  
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,

There is no shad - ow of turn - ing with Thee.  
 Sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove  
 Thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide;

Thou chang - est not: Thy com - pas - sions, they fail not;  
 Join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness  
 Strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row,

As Thou hast been, Thou for - ev - er wilt be.  
 To Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.  
 Bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

*Refrain*  
 Great is Thy faith - ful - ness! Great is Thy faith - ful - ness!

Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see;

All I have need - ed Thy hand hath pro - vid - ed;

Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me!

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✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

**IN PREPARATION** for the Divine Service next Sunday, 10 May A.D. 2020, The Fifth Sunday of Easter, take time this week to read the lessons appointed for that day, Psalm 66:1-8, Isaiah 12:1-6, James 1:16-21, John 16:5-15, and the Hymn of the Day, "Dear Christians One and All,

### Strengthened by God's grace... *Pray, Commit, and then Act!*

We are fortified by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel given in Word and Sacrament to be God's people and to produce fruits of faithfulness to Him. These fruits include the giving of tithes and offerings. If you are unable to give in the usual way, feel free to use your mobile device to scan the QR code provided here. It will take you directly to the church's online giving page. *Don't have a QR scanning application? Visit the Android or Apple App Store to download a free application.*





# OUR SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

ANNOUNCEMENTS — 3 MAY A.D. 2020

## ✝ PRAYERS ✝

**THE SICK, THE SHUT-INS, THOSE IN ADVERSITY:** Lucille Aldred & family, Adrian Atkinson, Leonard Badder, Susan Brandt, Mary Ann Brueggeman, Dan Bruzek, the Cowden family, George DesJardins, Ingrid Dickensen, David Erdman, Luther Habitz, John Hangstefer, Amanda Hatton, Donna Hay, Jim Liimatta—friend of Kathy Were, Ronald Masch, Charles McCloskey, Cathy Pawlowski, Gerry Radke, , Calvin Reinke, Randi Talsma, Susan Vogt, Michael Whalen, Frances Wyckoff, and Matt Zavada

**MILITARY:** Fletcher Armstrong, Jennifer Baca, Ramone Baca, Drew Barber, Brandy Bates, Robert Bell, Corry Brennan, Tom Buller, Brian Chapman, Mark Ciero, Kathleen Cottrell, Jonathan Cross, Kenneth Eyer, Kody Fletcher, Sgt. Paul Harrison, Drew Helmreich, Chad Libby, Neil Lipon, Richard McManamon, Meighan Mills, Matthew Niendorf, Chris Robosky, Steve Roeske, Samantha Russell, Jake Simkins, Cora Spangler, Sara Spangler, Logan Terao, Albie Therrien, Austin & Maria Wright, and Alex Young

**MISSIONARIES:** Rev. Charles Ferry and family, Rev. Steven Mahlborg and family, and Rev. Todd Roeske and family.

### Tithes and Offerings

#### Weekly Financial Report 26 April A.D. 2020

General Fund Income Week of 04/26	\$ 28,211.16
General Operating Savings Balance 04/26	\$ 4,297.60
General Operating Checking Balance 04/26	\$ 25,453.22
PPP Loan Funds Remaining	\$ 141,568.20
1+1+1 Eng. District Donations YTD 04/26	\$ 590.25
Debt Retirement Contributions 3/1/19-04/26	\$ 23,483.77

### UPCOMING NEEDS

Week of 05/03	\$ 29,744.00
Week of 05/10	\$ 2,444.21
Week of 05/17	\$ 31,113.10
Week of 05/24	\$ 25,517.53
Week of 05/31	\$ 36,514.99
Week of 06/07	\$ 919.21
Week of 06/14	\$ 31,181.60
Week of 06/21	\$ 26,913.03
Week of 06/28	\$ 29,266.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$213,614.60</b>

### Message from Nicole Spangler

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

These are unusual times. You may be wondering, if I am not physically attending church, how can I still financially support my congregation?

There are many options. So that you can make a fully informed decision, here are all the ways to contribute without leaving your home, along with the benefits of each method.

- Mail a check to the church. Mail is still being collected regularly. Any contribution checks received in the mail are included with the Sunday offerings.
- Use your bank's online bill pay feature. Checks arrive in the mail and are handled as above.
- Sign up for Joyful Response automatic ACH transfer (form attached). Authorization must be in writing (via form email to [nspangler@oursaviorhartland.org](mailto:nspangler@oursaviorhartland.org)). This goes directly into the LCEF General Fund Savings Account. No physical contact. All bank fees are waived by LCEF. This is a recurring transaction and requires you to contact [nspangler@oursaviorhartland.org](mailto:nspangler@oursaviorhartland.org) to change or cancel this method of payment.
- Give online at <https://www.shelbygiving.com/app/giving/oursaviorhartland> - either a one time gift or set up a recurring gift. No physical contact. You 'push' payments. You can use credit, debit, or a bank account. Our Savior does not receive your account information. This method links contributions directly to our church management software.
- Text Giving - Text 'Give' to 248-845-1095 - you will be sent a link to online giving. Same benefits as online giving. God be with each of us during our time apart. Blessings, Nicole

### Week of 4 May to 10 May

#### Birthdays

Darcy	Giddings	05/04	Alec	Kellaway	05/06
Jonathan	Hoppe	05/04	Liam	Thibodeau	05/06
Rev. Rodney	Zwonitzer	05/04	Jennifer	Atkinson	05/08
Maggie	Bliese	05/05	Stephen	Combs	05/08
Brody	Gallegos	05/05	Caden	Pierson	05/10

#### Anniversaries

George and Gloria	DesJardins	05/04	58 yrs.
Scott and Kimberly	Whitehouse	05/04	29 yrs.
David and Melody	Sharpe	05/05	30 yrs.
John and Felicia	Shirk	05/06	42 yrs.
Thomas and Bonnie	Nelson	05/09	56 yrs.
Jeff and Jean	Williams	05/09	33 yrs.

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**Acknowledgments**

Divine Service, Settings Three from Lutheran Service Book  
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### **Our Savior eNews from April 27, 2020**

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Lord be with you.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. Don't tell Jen I told you.

She got a little angry with me this weekend, and it wasn't because I went out and around Linden and Fenton dressed as Star Lord from "Guardians of the Galaxy"—which I did, by the way. Don't believe me? Well, then click [here](#).

The reason she gave for her grievance was that it feels like I'm far busier than I was before the quarantine and I'm giving even less time to the family, not more. Of course in response, I did what you'd expect a husband to do.

I made excuses.

I offered that when it comes to pastoring God's people, things are much more complicated these days. Just trying to commune even only a handful of folks takes all day, and who would've ever believed I'd one day be ministering to a shut-in through an exterior window of her home?

Sheesh, this COVID-19 stuff is crazy.

I'm also doing what I can to be at the church every day, not only for making sure I'm on top of anything urgent—messages, pastoral care situations, and the like—but to assure I don't fall behind on writing obligations while making sure God's house is available to His people if necessary. I don't want to close the doors to anyone desiring to pray before the altar of God, which I also do every single day.

Even more, while I'm not necessarily going anywhere when I'm at the church, time certainly moves along swiftly. I'm on the phone a lot, and I'm answering emails pretty much 24/7. I can easily spend three or four hours every day just trying to get back with people. Add to this that recording worship services has steered me into a whole new task that I'm still trying to master.

I did try to point out that, technically, I'm home in the evenings. I'm not out visiting anyone or attending meetings. But Jen was swift to present evidence that I continue the same pace when I'm home.

Once again I tried to swerve around her words, this time saying that perhaps the quarantine was getting to her and she needed to get out of the house. It was nearing dinnertime, and like a good husband trying to change the subject, I asked if she wanted to go for a quick drive. She agreed and asked where we might go. I said I needed to get over to the UPS store to ship some things, and then I mentioned one more phone call I needed to make about a graveside funeral service, but that I could make the call really quickly along the way.

She just looked at me.

The look was all I needed.

She was right about me. Even in that sensitive moment, I'd already partitioned a percentage of our time together to others.

I'm going to let you in on three more secrets. The first is that God was right when He aimed His people to confession and absolution. Using Saint Paul's pen, He commanded, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." (Colossians 3:13-15).

The second secret is that it's one thing when someone else knows you're being an idiot, but it's something altogether different when you actually arrive at this honest realization of yourself. It's scary, but also liberating.

The third secret is that I apologized to Jen, and she forgave me.

Amazingly, just as God knew it could, confession and forgiveness born from Christian love changed the scenario altogether. An honest admittance of my stupidity combined with her gracious heart helped bring us together, putting us back onto the same page. In fact, and perhaps humorously, we still ended up finding our way to the UPS store. She wanted to help me do what I needed to do. We were living in the light of Christ's peace. This meant that running an errand together really wasn't all that weird. In fact, it's never been unusual for a "Jen and Chris" date to include getting groceries at Walmart, and so now we were accomplishing something together, rather than apart. And by the way, Jen proved her gracious heart one more time by allowing the phone call. When it comes to the work of the Church, she's well-skilled at wife-of-a-pastor stuff. She can distinguish between essential and non-essential things (far better than our Governor, that's for sure).

Okay, one more secret and then I'm done.

My truest ailment in all of this: I can get to feeling pretty guilty sometimes. I'm not completely sure, but I think it has something to do with my self-diagnosed "completion complex." Whatever goal I set, I need to see it through to the end. Mix into this the disappointment that comes when something doesn't work out as I've planned. Add to this that I'm doing lots of different things with and for lots of different people, many of whom are more than gracious. However, there are plenty others who live by Eric Hoffer's thought that to "have a grievance is to have a purpose in life."

Mix all of this together, and after a while, it can become easy for just about anyone to believe their onlookers are keeping track of their deeds in two different kinds of ledgers—that they're permanently etching the things we've done wrong into stone, but scribbling the things we've done well into the surface of water.

I do have fairly thick skin, and I know I shouldn't feel this way, but sometimes I do, and it gets the better of me. It stirs me to juggle everything I can all the time, doing my best to not let anyone down.

It may be admirable to some, but in the end, it's a foolish way to live. It's far too taxing on the body and mind. And the thing is, I know it. I tell plenty of other people this. But like every good hypocrite, I rarely do it myself.

Again, confession is the key, here, and forgiveness is the cure. God used Jennifer in that moment to prompt it. With her voice, He reminded me that I don't need to do everything—and I certainly don't need to be afraid to fess up to

my sins—which means admitting I’ve not really been home with my family even while I’ve been home with my family. And you know me. I’ve written or said a thousand times before that the most courageous among us are those who can admit when they’ve done wrong. Those are the people I truly respect. I’m not one to latch onto “self-esteem” lingo, but in this regard, I’d like to be respectable.

I should add that God also made sure to let me know that He’s ever-vigilant to show mercy, and one of the great ways He does this is through other Christians. When it comes to the family of believers, His desire to forgive the penitent heart doesn’t have an expiration date. That’s partly what He meant when He said, “Bear with each other and forgive one another...” And when two people can live in this Christian love—not necessarily human love, but Christian love—then this Gospel truth will prove itself so wonderfully true.

In the end, this was a moment when God looked at me through my wife’s eyes and said, “You can’t do everything, dummy. But you don’t have to, anyway. It’s my job to be God, the Creator. It’s your job to be Chris, the created—a husband, a father, and then finally, a pastor. Are you doing your best to be faithful in these roles? Yes? Then, slow your roll, apologize to your lovely wife, receive My forgiveness through her—because I can’t wait to give it!—and then take her for a drive. Kind of like your relationship with Me, I’ll bet if she is part of your life rather than just tagging along, you’ll accomplish every bit of the daily nonsense that needs accomplishing. You may even get those packages shipped and that phone call made.”

And so I did. I mean, we did.

Now it’s on to the news...

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**+ The following two notes are very important. Please read them both.**

+ Our longtime member and faithful brother in Christ, George Desjardins, has been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. Please know it has also moved to one of his ribs as well as his liver. Lord have mercy. Please, PLEASE, pray for George and his wife, Gloria, our dear sister in Christ.

+ **Please read this very important note from Jeff Hoppe, our congregation president, regarding our PPP loan.** Also, a huge thanks to Nicole Spangler and Landon Martens for all of their work on this! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am hopeful this communication finds you well and safe!

I want to follow up with you regarding my previous note on the application we submitted for inclusion in the Payment Protection Program offered by the federal government earlier in April.

Earlier in April, I requested you to provide your “vote” of whether we, as a congregation, should continue or stop the application activities. Thank you to all of you that responded and provided feedback. Between Pastor Thoma and I, we received responses from over 60 members of the congregation. All responses were in support of the action taken. There were no responses against it. Again, thank you for your support.

**Current Status:**

We are pleased to report that Our Savior has received a Paycheck Protection Program Loan in the amount of \$152,400. Our loan amount was determined based on looking at the last 12 months of our actual personnel expenses. Companies are eligible for loan amounts up to 2.5 times their average monthly payroll expenses (past 12 months total divided by 12 and multiplied by 2.5). For purposes of the PPP Loan, payroll expenses INCLUDES health insurance and retirement paid by the employer. This definition makes our loan amount higher than you would anticipate by looking at payroll totals in our financial reports.

**How will we manage the financials?:**

IN ORDER FOR LOAN FORGIVENESS, we have 8 weeks to utilize the loan. Forgivable use of the loan is for payroll expenses (as defined above), utility expenses, and mortgage interest payments. At least 75% (\$114,300) must be used for payroll purposes, including health insurance and retirement, in order to be eligible for full forgiveness. There is a loan forgiveness application and reporting process that must be followed at the conclusion of the eight weeks. While we anticipate full loan forgiveness, forgiveness is not automatic.

For clear financial reporting over the coming months, you will see three 'bank' accounts reported in the financial reports. The PPP loan is not physically in a separate bank account. However, we will report it that way so that it is clear where we stand. Over the time period we have to utilize these funds, you will see the PPP loan amount steadily decrease. There may be some weeks you see no change in the PPP loan balance because no qualifying expenses are paid out.

### **Going Forward:**

I would ask everyone to offer a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving to our Merciful and Generous Lord and Savior. God has once again provided generous gifts for our needs. Let's make sure we stop, acknowledge, and offer thanksgiving in return. Additionally, I want to recognize Nikki Spangler and Landon Martens for their dedication and many hours of hard work to prepare, submit, and support the successful completion of the process.

This funding has been a tremendous blessing for our mission here at Our Savior. We must remember that we are still currently challenged as we have boldly decided to continue to support our staff throughout this stay at home period. Most of our savings has been depleted as a significant part of our income was completely stopped and will be stopped at least until June. It now appears the significant challenge we face has been provided for in the short term. Thanks be to God!

*Let's not be tempted to now sit back and think we can take a break in our giving.* Our offerings are a joyous response to the many blessings God has provided to each of us in our lives. He continues to bless us every day. Our response does not stop and needs to continue uninterrupted.

With this PPP loan funding, we have a unique opportunity in front of us. If we remain faithful, we hope to see a steady growth in general operating checking and savings accounts during that time as the PPP loan is applied to the qualifying general operating expenditures. This will position us for cash flow stability going forward. As council, our promise to the congregation is that we will continue to be good stewards of the blessings given. We are reminded:

- The congregation, school families, day care families, and friends of the congregation have supported Our Savior tremendously during this time.
- The PPP loan is not a magic pot of money that negates our need for godly financial stewardship.
- This is an opportunity for us to get our ship floating higher in the water so that water doesn't flow in over the side at any unexpected turn.
- While we did have to prioritize bills for a time and put some on hold, we were able to get caught up and have met all of our obligations.
- The spending freeze that was issued in October will remain in effect. All spending is scrutinized for need and timing. This will continue.
- Let us now collectively seize hold of this opportunity before us to gain solid financial footing for whatever challenges might remain ahead.

May God continue to bless our congregation!

In Jesus,

Jeff

+ A note from the Youth Board. Take a look!

The Youth Board spent our January and February meeting time compiling a list of events. The plan for the next meeting was to lock in some dates so that we could share a calendar with everyone. Considering our current situation, it makes little sense to do that until we know for sure when things will open up. Be assured that once we get the all clear, we will be able to get the fun rolling right away.

Also, if anyone in the congregation is tired of returnable bottles hanging around, let us know and we will be happy to pick them up and hold on to them to return them when we can, and donate the money to the Youth Fund. Just reach out to me at [bill\\_mrozek@yahoo.com](mailto:bill_mrozek@yahoo.com).

+ I received a few images from folks sharing what it is they're doing while in quarantine. The Thoma family is sharing a few here, too. All are posted at the end of this email. As I get more, I'll share. Don't be shy! Send 'em in!

+ The Elders will be meeting on Skype this weekend to, among other things, estimate our future reopening. We're not jumping the gun, we're just chatting about it. I have some ideas, and we need to talk them through. Needless to say, I'm excited to get back to business as usual, and I'm hoping for a joyful reunion with all of you. Stay tuned. When we have specifics, they'll be shared.

+ Are you finding yourself downhearted during this time of quarantine, even to the point of just not knowing what to say to God even as you pray? Well, consider taking twenty minutes or so to pray through the Prayer Vigil with me online. Just go to <https://www.oursaviorhartland.org/prayer-vigil/> and give it a try. The opportunity to kneel before God and to offer before Him all of our concerns is a wonderful thing. The Prayer Vigil is in place to help lead you in this.

+ Speaking of prayerful resources, don't forget we have plenty on our website. Visit <https://www.oursaviorhartland.org> and click on the resources tab. In fact, the very first link at the top of the list, <https://www.oursaviorhartland.org/resources/devotional-materials-for-use-at-home-or-away/>, will take you to a collection of resources usable during this time of quarantine. Take a look!

+ *Madeline wanted me to say thanks to all who reached out to wish her a happy birthday last week.* She was so happy to get the well-wishes, and she's thankful for her church family!

+ Take a look at the following note from Kantor Swett regarding the loft flooring needs:

You may recall the plea several months ago for volunteers to help with the loft floor replacement. At this time, we have determined that having the floor replaced professionally is the best course of action and believe that we have a very fair price from a local company to complete the work - hopefully in June. I will call on the members who volunteered originally to help with the removal of the old material which will save \$2,500. Taking into account the small amount of funds that has already been received and the Trustee's allowance from the Capital fund, \$6,500 is still needed by June 1. If you are in a position to make a gift toward this project in addition to your normal giving, it will help to bring this much needed and long overdue project to completion! The requested donation amount also includes material cost for minor wall repair and repainting using our own volunteers for labor. Please give in any of the methods that have been mentioned for weekly giving and be sure to designate your gift as "Loft Floor." Thank you sincerely.

+ I received a call in the middle of last week from Rev. Roy Askins, the managing editor of the "Lutheran Witness" magazine, asking for an article by Friday. Yikes. Good thing I can pretty much puke words when I have to, eh? Anyway, he said that they're shifting gears on the schedule and trying to make the June/July edition pertinent to the COVID-19 crisis. He said they just had a meeting, and while talking about what topics to include, someone said, "Call Thoma. He's at ground zero in one of the craziest states in the union." While funny, it's also sort of sad that Michigan is so well-known in this way.

My assigned topic was "When does the Church say to the Government 'Enough is Enough'?" They said they needed 1,200 to 1,500 words. I gave them 1,540 words. But hey, that's why editors exist, right?

Anyway, I thought I'd share with you what I sent for publication. I'm guessing some of you have asked this question, and perhaps it will help to know it's something of which the LCMS is somewhat mindful. By the way, remember the article hasn't been edited, is written to be read in June, and is for the most part assuming the stay-at-home orders have been lifted. Let's hope that last one ends up being an accurate assumption.

In March of this year, the United States found itself at war with an enemy known as COVID-19. In order to stop the spread of the disease, state and federal authorities began issuing executive orders that effectively muted business as usual and mandated that citizens shelter in place until further notice. These orders also identified essential and non-essential activities and services. Unfortunately, in most states, the Church was tagged as non-essential, and as a result, Word and Sacrament ministry suddenly became very complicated, and in many aspects, largely forbidden.

In an effort to continue serving God's people, pastors shifted worship and Bible study to the internet. Still, many Christians remained apart, unable to participate due to various logistical reasons.

Now, sprinkle into this the political ideologies held by elected officials at the helm of the government.

I live and serve in Michigan. Our Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, notably one of the most progressively liberal Governors this state has ever seen, as well as an open opponent of biblically conservative Christianity, she took to the national stage, becoming the face of unbridled government overreach.

It all started when she began issuing executive orders filled with what seemed to be over-the-top restrictions—such as criminalizing lawn care, as well as the sale of carpeting, flooring, furniture, and paint. She closed garden nurseries, and she outlawed the use of outboard motors on private lakes. She even prohibited travel between a person's own in-state residences.

Yeah, weird.

In contrast, she preserved as essential the sale of marijuana, liquor, and lottery tickets, and she remained unyielding in her decree that abortion clinics remain open, having referred to their work as a "life-saving necessity for women."

As this meets the Church, having my own hat in the ring of state government, at one point I learned she nearly barred Michigan's 110,000 congregations from broadcasting online worship services. Her reasoning: As a non-essential service, online worship would consume valuable internet bandwidth necessary for the essential services to function.

So, why share these things with you?

Because in the midst of this national crisis, Christians have learned the dangers of emergency executive power in the hands of those in opposition to the Church. Beneath the noble banner of public safety, the State has the authority to determine what is essential and to criminalize what isn't. Again, here in Michigan, the Church and her work to preach and teach the Word of the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments was strictly non-essential, and with that, her voice was reduced to little more than a murmur for many.

From this, a familiar question begins to emerge.

Like Peter and the Apostles before the Council in Acts 5:29, when must the Church say to the governing authorities, enough is enough? When must we say, "We must obey God rather than men"?

It was the Apostle Paul who wrote the familiar words, "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1), teaching that the Kingdom of the Left, or the civil government, is an institution ordained by God. In a general sense, the simplest understanding of this is that God gives and intends government for our good—for the wellbeing of the citizenry. However, since governments are comprised of sinful human beings, there are plenty of other places in God's Word that assume their potential for swerving from this ordination. Saint Paul hints to this in 1 Timothy 2:1-5. It's there he instructs the Christian Church to

engage both vertically and horizontally on behalf of society—vertically in her prayers to God, and horizontally in her readiness to intercede with those in authority (v. 1). Paul goes on to say that the Church is to labor in this way for the sake of preserving a societal framework that provides for Christians to live peaceful and quiet lives, Godly and dignified in every way (v.2). He adds that it serves to preserve the freedom to preach and teach the Gospel—to be the Church—without fear (vv. 3-5).

Consider the pretext of the confession the Apostles rendered in Acts 5:29. Right after the Lord’s ascension, Saint Luke’s account reveals the Apostles returned to Jerusalem with great joy, publicly praising God in the temple for the victory of salvation won by the risen Savior (24:52-53). The Gospel writer Mark tells us precisely what this praising looked like. He presents the image of eleven men who could barely contain themselves, having gone directly into the work of preaching and teaching, and confirming the divine authority for doing this by way of miraculous signs (16:20).

It’s in these moments the New Testament Church begins to take shape as the Gospel is given through unfettered Word and Sacrament ministry. The beginning chapters of the Book of Acts are the first brush strokes to this image, and for the most part, the labor continues unimpeded.

But then we arrive at chapter four and things begin to change.

The hues of the Church’s inception begin to reflect the Lord’s sobering words in John 15 and 16. It’s there the Lord made doubly sure His disciples knew the road ahead wouldn’t be easy. He left little doubt that the Church would face persecution, and this included abuse from the ruling authorities.

The world hates Christ, and therefore it hates His people. There’s just no way around it.

Still, the Lord didn’t say anything that night about refusing to submit to the authorities. He didn’t say to rebel against seemingly unfair executive orders. He simply urged His listeners to be discerning and faithful. He pressed for trust in the midst of a world coming undone. He reminded us to expect rigid rejection and abuse. He called for His people to discover the strength to endure by remaining well-fixed to Him, the vine. He urged a holding fast to His Word and assured of the joys to come. He ended chapter 16 by promising peace, having capped the discussion with the gentle imperative to take heart in the divine knowledge that He had already overcome all these terrors.

Here on the other side of the resurrection and ascension, now standing before the Council in Acts 5, the Apostles had all of this well in heart and mind. They weren’t ignorant to the deepest intentions of their enemies. They also knew that as citizens bound to submit to the governing authorities, they weren’t to be discourteous or belligerent, but rather respectful, and most importantly, ready to intercede for the faith—to engage—while at the same time being prepared to suffer whatever results might ensue. It was Peter, the one out in front in this moment, who would eventually write, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Standing before the Council, Peter knew to entrust himself to God, the definitive Judge. He knew no matter what happened, eventually God would set all things to rights.

Take notice during the proceedings, however, that the Apostles’ flexibility for obeying the authorities came to a screeching halt the moment they were given strict orders to stop preaching and teaching the Gospel. Again, as Christians, we know that a government born of God’s truest intent—one that can rightly be called good—is one that would not call for the complete silencing of the Gospel, but would instead, even at a minimum, let it be. Here in Acts 5, it’s only after the demand for silence that the infamous confession of fidelity to God over men is rendered.

That’s the fundamental answer to the question.



Yes, God has given us our reason and our senses. They are to be employed by those in the government to the benefit of the citizenry, most especially during a time of national crisis. And certainly the Church must be willing to adjust in this regard, showing by her actions that she cares for the wellbeing of her neighbor.

But the absolute silencing of the Gospel, even in the midst of crisis, is a sacrifice the Church is never called to make.

Have we reached the moment for speaking as the Apostles? Well, if the events surrounding COVID-19 have taught the Church anything, it's that there are elected officials proving it isn't as hard as one might think, even in America, to use executive power to snatch away religious liberty. Even more so, I'm guessing that more pastors and people have learned just how important it is to engage in the public square for the sake of preserving their First Amendment freedoms. And lastly, I'm wagering that many churches are talking about these things now, and pondering their own contexts, they are considering just how far they can bend to the ruling authorities before discovering they can no longer obey.

I dare say Christianity in Michigan was a splinter away—a mere sentence in an executive order—from such a moment.

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That's it for this week! God be with you and your family!

In Jesus,

Pastor Thoma+

P.S.



Nikki Spangler out with the dog.



One of Bob Newman's dogs playing with a herd of deer.

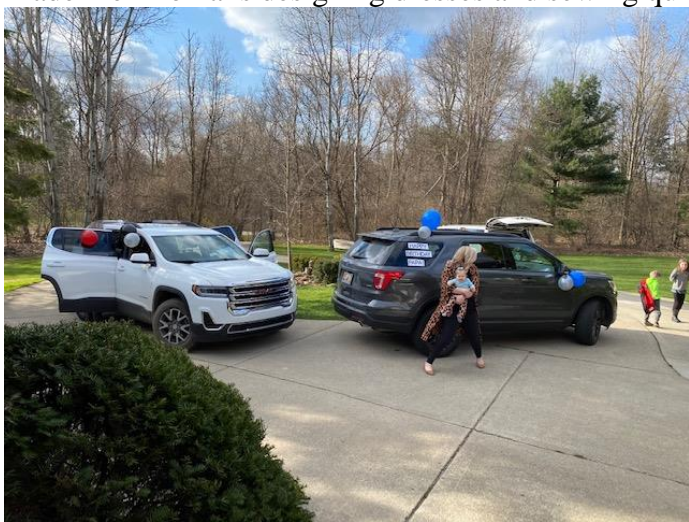


Lexy and Lacy Bronsberg miss their school.





Madeline Thoma is designing dresses and sewing quilts.



John Rose's kids and grandkids did a drive-by birthday visit!







This was me getting gas, buying toilet paper, and shopping at O'Reilly's Auto Parts.





Sandy Brandt is refinishing some furniture.



Evelyn misses her school... and her friends at school!