

# OUR SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

10 MAY A.D. 2020

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



JESUS SAID, "AND WHEN THE HELPER COMES, HE WILL CONVICT THE WORLD  
CONCERNING SIN, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGEMENT..." JOHN 16:8

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 "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing" (LSB 475)



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice and sing! Now is the tri - umph  
 2 The Lord of life is ris'n this day; Bring flow'rs of song to  
 3 Praise we in songs of vic - to - ry That love, that life which  
 4 Your name we bless, O ris - en Lord, And sing to - day with



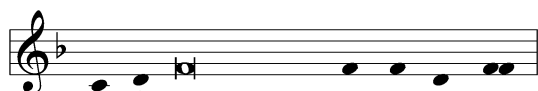
of our King! To all the world glad news we bring:  
 strew His way; Let all the world re - joice and say:  
 can - not die, And sing with hearts up - lift - ed high:  
 one ac - cord The life laid down, the life re - stored:



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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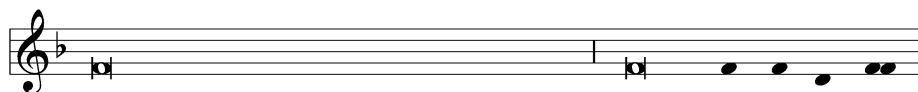
## Kyrie



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



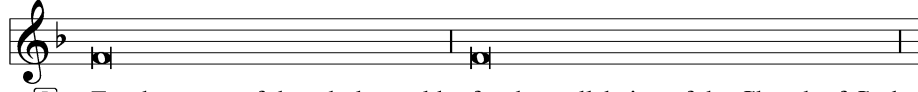
**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



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



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



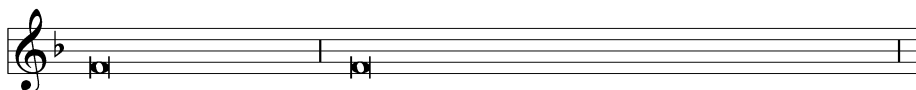
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



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



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



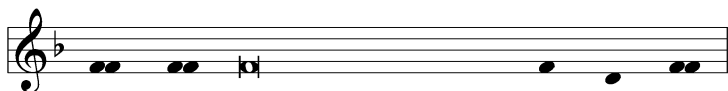
**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise



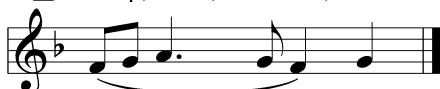
let us pray to the Lord.



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



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



**C** A - men.

### This Is the Feast



*Refrain*

**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-ty 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.



**C** And al - so with you.

**P** Let us pray.

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

*Sit*

## Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 12:1-6

*After the reading:*

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm

Psalm 66:1-8



*Shout for joy to God, all the | earth;  
sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious | praise!  
Say to God, "How awesome are your | deeds!\*"  
So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to | you.  
All the earth worships you and sings praises to | you;  
they sing praises to your | name."*

**Come and see what God has | done:**

**he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of | man.\***

**He turned the sea into dry | land;**

**they passed through the river on | foot.**

*There did we rejoice in him, who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the | nations—  
let not the rebellious exalt them- | selves.\**

*Bless our God, O | peoples;*

*let the sound of his praise be | heard.*

**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. | Amen.**

## Epistle

James 1:16-21

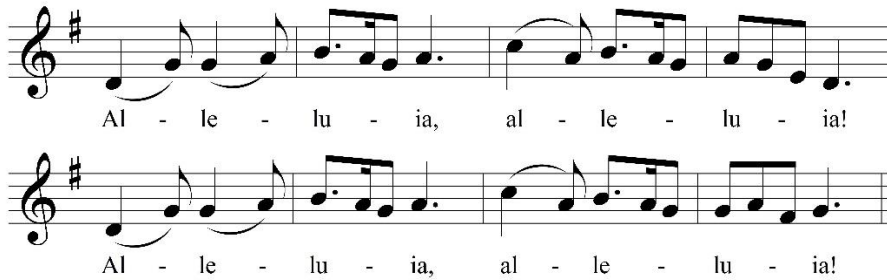
*After the reading:*

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

*Stand*

## Alleluia and Verse

**Congregation: Alleluia refrain**



*The right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly! We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.* **Congregation: Alleluia refrain**

## Holy Gospel

Saint John 16:5-15

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



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

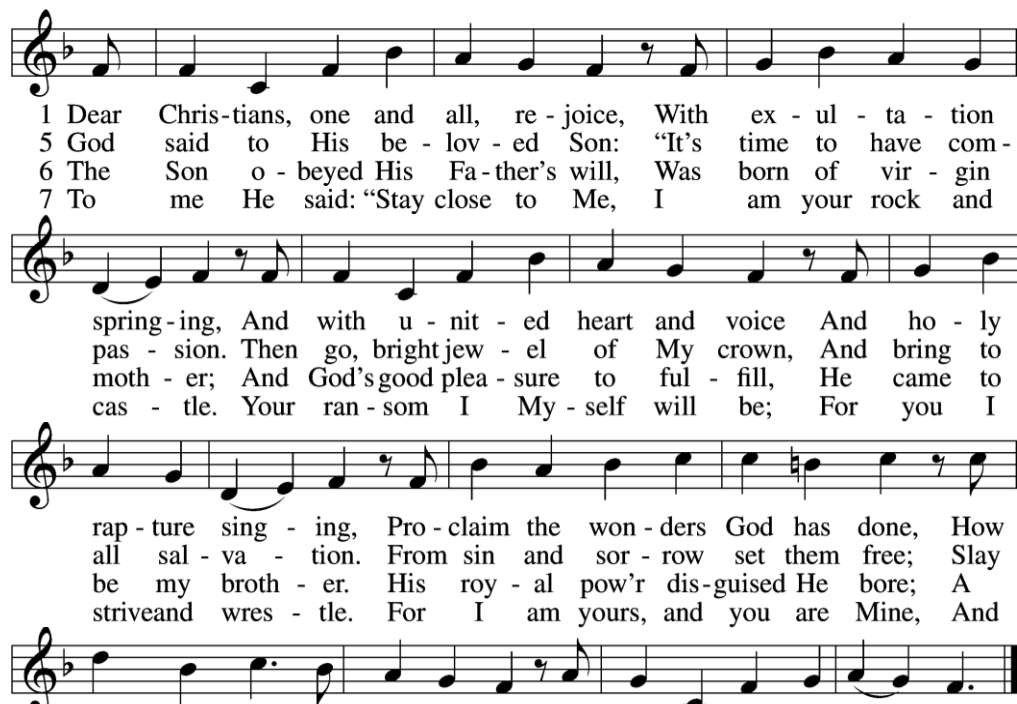
- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



- C** Praise to You, O Christ.

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

## Hymn of the Day “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice” (LSB 556, stanzas 1 & 5-10)



1 Dear Chris-tians, one and all, re-joice, With ex-ul-ta-tion  
 5 God said to His be-lov-ed Son: “It’s time to have com-  
 6 The Son o-beyed His Fa-ther’s will, Was born of vir-gin  
 7 To me He said: “Stay close to Me, I am your rock and  
 spring-ing, And with u-nit-ed heart and voice And ho-ly  
 pas-sion. Then go, bright jew-el of My crown, And bring to  
 moth-er; And God’s good plea-sure to ful-fill, He came to  
 cas-tle. Your ran-som I My-self will be; For you I  
 rap-ture sing-ing, Pro-claim the won-ders God has done, How  
 all-sal-va-tion. From sin and sor-row set them free; Slay  
 be my broth-er. His roy-al pow’r dis-guised He bore; A  
 striveand wres-tle. For I am yours, and you are Mine, And  
 His right arm the vic-t’ry won. What price our ran-som cost Him!  
 bit-ter death for them that they May live with You for-ev-er.”  
 ser-vant’s form, like mine, He wore To lead the dev-il cap-tive.  
 where I am you may re-main; The foe shall not di-vide us.

8 “Though he will shed My precious blood,  
 Me of My life bereaving,  
 All this I suffer for your good;  
 Be steadfast and believing.  
 Life will from death the vict’ry win;  
 My innocence shall bear your sin,  
 And you are blest forever.

9 “Now to My Father I depart,  
 From earth to heav’n ascending,  
 And, heav’nly wisdom to impart,  
 The Holy Spirit sending;  
 In trouble He will comfort you  
 And teach you always to be true  
 And into truth shall guide you.

10 “What I on earth have done and taught  
 Guide all your life and teaching;  
 So shall the kingdom’s work be wrought  
 And honored in your preaching.  
 But watch lest foes with base alloy  
 The heav’nly treasure should destroy;  
 This final word I leave you.”

*Text and tune: Public domain*


*Sit*

## Sermon

*Stand*

*This fourth verse of Isaiah chapter 12 is sung once by the Choir, then two times by the Congregation.*

*Refrain*



The LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and  
 He has be-come my sal-va-tion.

## 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

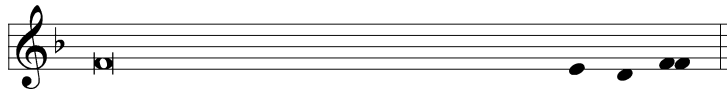
**C** Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from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

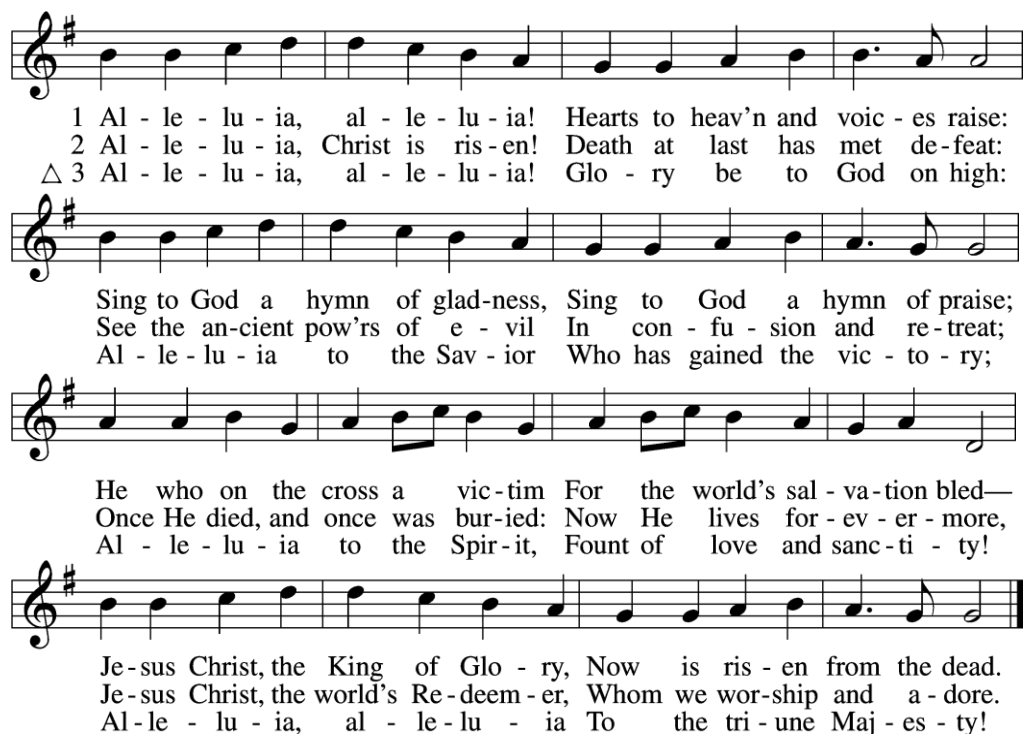


**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and  $\text{✝}$  give you peace.



**C** A - - men.

## Hymn at the Retiring Procession “Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven” (LSB 477)



1 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Hearts to heav'n and voic - es raise:  
2 Al - le - lu - ia, Christ is ris - en! Death at last has met de - feat:  
Δ 3 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Glo - ry be to God on high:  
Sing to God a hymn of glad-ness, Sing to God a hymn of praise;  
See the an-cient pow'rs of e - vil In con - fu - sion and re - treat;  
Al - le - lu - ia to the Sav - ior Who has gained the vic - to - ry;  
He who on the cross a vic-tim For the world's sal - va - tion bled—  
Once He died, and once was bur-ied: Now He lives for - ev - er - more,  
Al - le - lu - ia to the Spir - it, Fount of love and sanc - ti - ty!  
Je - sus Christ, the King of Glo - ry, Now is ris - en from the dead.  
Je - sus Christ, the world's Re - deem - er, Whom we wor-ship and a - dore.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia To the tri - une Maj - es - ty!

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✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

**IN PREPARATION** for the Divine Service next Sunday, 17 May A.D. 2020, Sixth Sunday of Easter, take time this week to read the lessons appointed for that day, Psalm 107:1-9, Numbers 21:4-9, I Timothy 2:1-6, John 16:23-33, and the Hymn of the Day, “Our Father, Who from Heaven Above,” *LSB 766*.

### 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 — 10 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 3 May A.D. 2020

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| General Fund Income Week of 05/03          | \$ 17,826.75  |
| General Operating Savings Balance 05/03    | \$ 5,639.58   |
| General Operating Checking Balance 05/03   | \$ 39,794.81  |
| PPP Loan Funds Remaining                   | \$ 113,772.55 |
| 1+1+1 Eng, District Donations YTD 05/03    | \$ 590.25     |
| Debt Retirement Contributions 3/1/19-05/03 | \$ 24,183.77  |

#### UPCOMING NEEDS

|               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Week of 05/10 | \$ 3,561.10         |
| Week of 05/17 | \$ 31,755.33        |
| 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 | \$ 28,404.93        |
| Week of 07/05 | \$ 1,525.56         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$186,293.28</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 11 May to 17 May**

#### **Birthdays**

|         |           |       |         |         |       |
|---------|-----------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| Jillian | Butsavich | 05/12 | Braydon | Tougas  | 05/14 |
| Robert  | Zells     | 05/13 | David   | Krieger | 05/15 |
| Amelia  | Ayers     | 05/14 | Steven  | Roeske  | 05/16 |
| Kathy   | Kittridge | 05/14 | Casey   | Neuroth | 05/17 |
| Andrew  | Schneider | 05/14 |         |         |       |

#### **Anniversaries**

|                   |         |       |         |
|-------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Rick and Maureen  | Saless  | 05/11 | 19 yrs. |
| Adam and Michelle | Pushman | 05/13 | 20 yrs. |
| David and Susan   | Krieger | 05/16 | 39 yrs. |

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**Acknowledgments**

Divine Service, Settings Three from Lutheran Service Book  
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### **Our Savior eNews from May 4, 2020**

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Lord be with you.

Maybe you sensed by my last few eNews messages that one of the bigger concerns I have during this time of quarantine is the seemingly irreparable damage that is occurring between people—friends becoming enemies.

There's so much dividing so many right now. Honestly, I'm concerned that much of what's at the root of these struggles is manufactured.

Of course, whether it is or whether it isn't, I suppose the human divides are being amplified by the non-stop virtual access to everything and everyone. That's part of the irony in this "quarantine." We've been apart, and yet by way of social media, hardly. Our keyboards—the devices designed for giving our thoughts to others—have become both offensive and defensive weapons, rifles aimed into an expanse of folks who are there, but not really. The communal "false sense of security" we already had before this mess began has only gotten worse. In many of the conversations, far too many folks begin their arguments with phrases like "The real problem with the issue is," or something like that, as if they actually had all of the relevant information—as if they have an 8' by 16' chalk board in their garage adorned with a dusty matrix of all the accurate data (not the false), and in its bottom corner is the only accurate conclusion in the world. Far too many are jockeying for the leading spot as "expert," and few are actually listening. Even further, many appear to be astounded by their own brilliance, so much so that I dare say even their thoughtless replies/memes laced with

profanity that took a whole ten seconds to create are beginning to tempt them with the deceptive feeling of having been divinely inspired.

The result in all of this has been a spewing of a whole lot of nothing; a vomitous mess revealing not much more than the deeper chambers of folks' secretive innards; a cavernous sharing of opinions many of us wish we'd never written, heard, or seen.

Indeed, we're seeing the darker sides of both ourselves and others.

After the mess we're in eventually gets mopped up—and God willing, it will—if the communities in which we live, work, and serve are to ever regain a semblance of wholeness, we have to be prepared to put everything about these days behind us. We'll need tools for doing so.

To start, if you're wondering about these tools, I'll let you in on a little secret. The Christian Church—the community of believers in Christ—is the only segment of the population that genuinely possesses them. Others might have facsimiles—replicas of sorts—but only the people who gather beneath the Niagara-like waterfall of forgiveness pouring forth from God Himself will have the capability for truly putting these days in the rearview mirror where they belong. Only the Church can exist in a time and place where our sins are put as far from us as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). Only the Church has the real peace that can outlast the time-stamped promises of the shallow what's-done-is-done kind of handshakes extended from this finicky and crumbling world (John 14:27; John 20:21-23).

Beyond this, and even better, Christians don't have to wait until this “shelter in place” order has passed to begin in this peace. This peace is ours right now, and we can live mindfully of it. As someone whose Facebook bio includes the descriptor “cultural critic,” I'm one who takes deliberate time to contemplate these things with the ultimate goal of passing along my discoveries—good or bad—to others. I think I've discovered one of the best ways to live in the peace of the Lord, especially right now.

Keep an eye out for humor.

We're in a sideways situation. If you really think about it, the purpose of humor is to turn things a little sideways, and in the process, scowls are made into smiles. This is true because with humor, people find different avenues for connecting, avenues that perhaps they didn't have access to before. Besides, when was the last time you heard of an angry person hoping to become angrier by watching their favorite comedy? Or a depressed person listening to their favorite comedian in order to foster more depression?

Humor can change things, and I have the perfect example.

I was reprimanded by a clerk in the UPS store in Fenton for not wearing a mask. In all honesty, I had it around my neck. It just wasn't on my face. I was trying to carry a stack of boxes, and while doing so, my glasses kept fogging up, so I took the mask off so I could see what I was doing and where I was going. The clerk was swift to tell me that if I came into the store again without my mask, he wouldn't serve me. Admittedly, the moment got a little contentious, especially when I reminded him that the wording of the Governor's executive order strongly encouraged the wearing of masks, but did not actually mandate them. I did not have to wear a mask. Nevertheless, he said very plainly that I would not be allowed back into the store if I wasn't wearing a mask.

Okay.

I came back the next day wearing a Stormtrooper helmet. ([Here's a link to the image.](#)) He laughed. I laughed. The situation was eased. In fact, even my own original feeling of having been bullied had subsided. Things were fine, it just took a little bit of humor, something out of the ordinary, to bring two opponents together.

God gives humor. No doubt He has a sense of humor, Himself. Just look at the platypus. Poor guy. It's like God had a whole bunch of leftover parts from the other animals, and in order to keep from wasting anything, he made a platypus.

Anyone familiar with the Bible knows God reveals His humor through more than just His unique creation. We get glimpses of it all over the place in the Holy Scriptures. That moment when Elijah is taunting the prophets of Baal, that's

hilarious, especially when, by the original language, you realize what Elijah is really saying. When his poking comment clicks, a giggle is hard to suppress. Take a look:

“And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, ‘Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened’” (1 Kings 18:27).

Relieving himself? Hah! That’s funny, right there.

The uptights among us might argue the following point, but I think Paul is a pretty funny guy sometimes. In fact, I’d say we get a little off-color humor from him in Galatians 5. If you know the context, then you know Paul is pretty angry with the Judaizers who are demanding that circumcision be considered part of salvation. In frustration, Paul essentially says, “Well, since they like circumcision so much, they should prove their own super-Christianity to us and just cut the whole darn thing off!”

Seriously. Read Galatians 5:7-12 and you’ll see.

Jesus used sarcasm for humor in order to make His points. There’s a perfect example in John 1:45-48. I imagine a half smile on His face during His conversation with Nathanael.

“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you’.”

I imagine the same of the Lord’s response to the disciples’ outburst in John 16:29-31. Read that one, too, when you get a chance.

If you’re listening carefully, even the Divine Service has a little bit of humor sprinkled in. Quite honestly, a smirk is not all that far from my face when we mention Pontius Pilate in the Creed. Why? Because of the irony involved. Having washed his hands of the Lord’s death, going out of his way to make sure his role in the unjust results would be forgotten, here we are saying his name over and over again throughout the centuries.

Admit it. That’s kind of funny.

There’s another side to humor that’s helpful to us. It was Will Rogers who said, “Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else.” There’s truth in that observation. Humor can work in a confession/absolution sort of way. Humor can be used to reveal the things about ourselves that we’d much rather hide. I’d argue that in many ways, humor is often the better stepping stone toward the honesties that might normally sting. Of course, if we’re not too pretentious and we actually have a sense of humor—that is, we’re willing to see our true selves a little sideways—humor can help guide us to an honest confession while equipping us with an even better tolerance for the mistakes of others. I don’t mean tolerance in the sense of being okay with Sin, but rather recognizing the need to pull the plank from our own eyes before we can remove the speck from someone else’s eye. We can acknowledge our failings, having realized our own foolishness, and we can seek the Lord’s forgiveness, fully enabled to forgive others, ultimately standing together and laughing at our collective past.

I suppose what I’m rambling on about here is that God does have a sense of humor, and in one sense, for us to see the humor in things is to affirm the peace we have in Him. Perhaps more succinctly, *having a Godly sense of humor in the midst of terror proves the superiority of Christian joy against anything and everything that might attack us*. It was Saint Peter who wrote in 1 Peter 2:11-20 that we are to “live as people who are free.” In context, what he meant was that even as the world challenges us, by the Gospel, we have what we need to live in the joy of Christ no matter what’s happening. He also points out that as Christians, if we freak out in the middle of struggle, we do our unbelieving onlookers a great disservice.

I guess I'll end with the clarification that, like all forms of communication, humor has its place. I'm just letting you know that I'm deliberately looking for it in our current situation, and most of the time, it seems to help. I'm reading posts and follow-up replies, I'm considering the broken logic in memes and quick-witted sayings, and I'm discovering more opportunities to laugh than get frustrated.

Naturally, I'm not implying the license to laugh at someone's unfortunate job loss, or to yuck it up at a funeral. No doubt the folks with no sense of humor were already preparing to lock and load in that regard. However, having re-read what I just wrote right there, go ahead. I'd say Christians would be the only ones capable of discovering a smile during such strife-filled situations. Read Psalm 27. What have we to fear in any circumstance? Death? Hardly. Even if an entire nation rises up in war against you alone, you have hope. This world is passing away, and with it, so goes all of its sorrows. Most certainly we can laugh at Death. Because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, if we actually had a picture of Death, I imagine seeing a toothless, skin-and-bones beastie on a leash, stripped of all his power and his tail between his legs.

If those of us with a sense of humor had a picture like that to view through the eyes of faith, I'll bet the only struggle we'd experience would be to contain ourselves.

And with that, it's on to the news...

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+ Just in case you missed the note from Saturday, please keep Donna Hay in your prayers. I received word that her health is failing. The folks in the home where she is currently living are suggesting her remaining time with us will be short. God willing they'll abide by the allowances given to clergy for being with the dying, even during this time of quarantine. If not, you might see me on TV in handcuffs. Either way, I'll keep you posted.

+ The Elders had a virtual meeting on Saturday to discuss a process for reopening the church. As it stands, all are in agreement that we've gone as far as we can go in isolation, and after the date of May 15<sup>th</sup> noted in the Governor's last order, we'll begin gathering together once again regardless of (albeit mindful) any future executive orders. Beginning on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, we'll begin the process of phasing back into our lives together as a worshipping community—offering subsequent services of 50, then 100, and then eventually, all of us! We're aiming for a full, celebratory reunion together on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Lord's Supper will be served at the altar as is our practice.

Sara and I spoke last week about a plan to graduate our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at the service on June 28<sup>th</sup>. I'm working on a plan to accomplish the Great Confession sometime before so that Confirmation can occur that day, too. What a day for the confirmands to remember! Of course in the midst of all of this, a combined hymnody from Holy Week, Easter, and the Trinity seasons will be rattling the rafters and shaking loose the roof. We'll get a good taste of things we missed while apart. Lastly, after the service is over, we'll gather together for a catered meal.

Mark your calendar, friends. It'll be a glorious day.

*By the way, if you're willing to help orchestrate the meal, please let me know. I'll need the help as we get closer to the date. The Thoma family is still planning to get on a plane and travel to Florida for ten days prior to June 28<sup>th</sup>, which means I'll need someone to help run point. Send me a note if you're willing to help.*

+ The Mahlborg's sent out a video update. Take a look by clicking [here](#)!

+ I'll be starting up with the Senior Catechumens again next week with the hope of having them ready for confirmation on June 28<sup>th</sup> (which I mentioned in the article above). Prior to this, I'm aiming for the Great Confession to occur on Saturday, May 30 at 9:00am. I'm assuming we'll accomplish this in person at the church. *Parents of Senior Catechumens, if you didn't receive the email from me about this, please call the church to chat about the details (248-887-4300). I'll need to connect with your student by Skype.*



+ Again, I'd like to invite you to reach out to Pastor Zwonitzer at [pzwonitzer@oursaviorhartland.org](mailto:pzwonitzer@oursaviorhartland.org) if you'd like to join one of the online Bible studies he is hosting. Send him a note to get the necessary info for joining!

+ Lastly, I have a few more photos from folks in quarantine. Enjoy!



Like good Lutherans, celebrating Solomon's 21st birthday on the porch.



Scott and Georgie Rhodes enjoying the great weather!



Bryan Stearns and his family playing "Pandemic" during a pandemic. Nice!

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That's it for this week.

The Lord bless and keep you by His grace!

In Jesus,

Pastor Thoma+