



From Pastor Bob

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Please remember in these times when all the news is bad that to focus on the negative in this world is to miss out on God's good Creation and all that God is doing to bring Creation to its fulfillment. In the same way that death is not the end of life but the fulfillment of life, the horrors of nature and humankind (pandemics, floods, tornadoes/hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, mass murders, cruel acts of injustice, and wars) are just the groaning of a world longing to be redeemed by our loving maker. God is at work in the mostly silent and hidden acts of kindness and charity that are going on all around us if we would only focus on them instead of the barrage of fear and contention that screams from our TVs and computer speakers every day. We had over 50 people gather in their cars on

Easter Sunday to listen to our church chimes. Every time I call someone to check in on them, I'm told stories of other saints of our church who have called them and helped them in so many small ways. Families are connecting in new ways. Moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas are hearing from their children and grandchildren from all over the country. People worry whether we'll ever be able to get back to "normal." In the first place, what is normal has changed with every generation. Do you think any of us would be able to thrive in the world our grandparents and great-grandparents lived? Just as the Great Depression, World War II, and even the Great Recession of 10 years ago

changed us forever, this experience will, too. But we can decide whether those changes are for good or ill. In the meantime, put your focus on godly matters: the beauty of nature, the warmth of loved ones, the blessings of God's Spirit all around us. The world can get too much with us: we need to get more with God.

May God bless you all in this time of contemplation and spiritual growth.

God's blessings,
ζ:-0 >+
Pr. Bob

*God is at work in
the mostly silent
and hidden acts of
kindness and
charity...*

A Call to Prayer

A Call to Prayer in the Time of Pandemic

This is a call to prayer, to be practiced every Tuesday at noon. Use it daily, if you wish.

Read: Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pray: Follow each petition by naming specific individuals or needs; add additional petitions as needed.

For those who are ill
For those with little access to healthcare
For healthcare workers
For those who feel isolated
For those who are in unsafe places
For those who are anxious or worried
For leaders facing difficult decisions
For those who continue to work in challenging settings
For those driven by greed or careless disregard

Reflect: Reflect on these questions. You may even be inspired to journal daily with these questions.

Consider our resource Journaling
Create your own sacred writings.

Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves
(Matthew 22:39).

How are you loving yourself today?

What is your self-care strategy?

How are you loving your neighbor today?

For we will rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks in all circumstances. (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

Submitted by Jane Ebersole



Women of the ELCA

WELCA Calendar of Events for May

(Subject to change, check with your leaders to see if you will still be meeting)



May 6
May 12

May 12
May 18
May 31

WELCA Board Meeting, 10:00 am, Zoom Meeting
Martha Circle, 9:00 am in the Church Library
Hostess: Pat Stacy
Leader:
Rachel Circle, Dinner Out
Hannah Circle, Dinner Out
Cookie Sunday – Hannah Circle

Visit Our Website
www.1stLutheranChurch.org



Staying Focused

Hopefully by the time you read this we may be back to a “new normal”. In the meantime, please continue to



.....**worship** with us
online at
www.1stLutheranChurch.org.

....**pray** in your home or
in the church. The nave is
open Monday—Thursday
from 8:30 to 6:00 and 8:30 to
12:00 noon on Friday.



... **contact** us at
419-422-2638 or
flcFindlay@gmail.com



Online Sunday School

In addition to having the service on line, we are also offering a family Sunday School option. The link below has a video lesson that aligns with the lectionary reading for each Sunday through June 7. There are activities that can be downloaded that follow the lessons.

<https://www.wearesparkhouse.org/promos/family-sunday-school>

For our weekly Sunday School Lectionary go to:
<https://youtu.be/Wmo5MOJXypM>

We miss meeting with the youth and their families and can't wait to be together again! God's Blessings to all. —Julie Buck



Maria Schell	5/1	John Biggs	5/12	Randy Waller	5/22
Susie Polder	5/3	Robert Smith	5/12	Heather Betts	5/25
Caleb Short	5/4	Judith Luth	5/15	Jessica Betts	5/27
Patricia Stacy	5/4	Aaron Needles	5/15	Parker Haudenschild	5/27
Marsha Granath	5/5	Reed Needles	5/15	Karen Breen	5/28
Nicole Needles	5/5	Laurie Scott	5/15	Todd Thompson	5/28
Julie Dittmar	5/7	Joseph Baker	5/17	Kahle Thorbahn	5/28
Jane Wise	5/8	Chloe Nielsen	5/17	Mark Rose	5/29
Avery Johnson	5/9	Abigail Zawisza	5/17	Lawson Gerdeman	5/30
Joshua Short	5/9	Raelyn Sherman	5/18		
Arthur Wilde	5/9	Paul Brockman	5/22		
Christian Nielsen	5/11	Joshua Leopold	5/22		

Birthdays

Anniversaries

Bart & Jenny Welte	5/6/2000	20	Jeff & Jennifer Kamm	5/21/1988	32
Philip & Rianne Roos	5/7/1975	45	Paul & Sue DeMoss	5/23/1959	61
Rick & Leslie Dudics	5/19/1984	36	Jeffrey & Angela Nunn	5/31/1997	23

Letters to the Editor

Our Coronavirus Story

The last 5 weeks did not turn out as originally planned. I was supposed to be in Vancouver at the moment, for my godchild's dance competition and first communion. From there, I was to fly to Oakland, California in early May, where Tad would join me for a week long visit with our daughter and son-in-law. All of that has been postponed. Instead, I've done more cooking than usual. I spend my days in stay-at-home apparel, watching Midsomer Murders, Star Trek the Next Generation and The Beverly Hillbillies, with the occasional Hallmark or Lifetime movie thrown in. While watching these wonderful shows, I work on counted cross stitch. No idle hands! I've enjoyed lovely daily walks in the neighborhood, and conversation with fellow walkers by talking very loudly across the street from one another. Mowing the lawn has become a pleasurable pass time. My weekly trip to the grocery store has become a much anticipated event.

I do get a bit anxious at times, worrying about our son. He is a hospital pharmacist in Columbus, and is directly involved with Covid-19 patients. But, I turn to God in prayer during those anxious moments.

However I also have much to be thankful for. I'm thankful to Pastor Bob and Pastor Chris for

the continued worship services. And thankful to Miriam and Jane for the music. And to the others who are helping. Tad and I look forward to those every Sunday morning. I'm thankful for zoom meetings where friends can keep in touch. I'm very thankful for FaceTime where we can visit with our grandsons almost every day. I'm especially thankful for the 3 weeks that I spent with my 88 year old mother in the Azores just before travel became restricted. And thankful for the weekly phone conversations that we are able to have. Most of all, I am thankful for God. I know that we will get through this time with his help. — Maria and Tad Schell

Luke 5:16

Meaningful to Me Today

Prayer Group—We meet on a conference call on our phones. It is so powerful. In addition to the prayer list, we

- open with devotions
- share new concerns/updates from Pastor
- share our personal prayers for people & family, etc.
- pray for our congregation a “Letter of Time” on our second round through the membership list
- end with the Lord's Prayer

Join us, pray for us. I am thankful for a continuation of our recent studies. — Robin Bowman

Music to My Ears

I went to listen to the bells with Sable [my dog] on April 19th and sat by the garden. About half-way thru the “concert” Sable laid down and went to sleep. She thought it was time for the sermon:) — Robin Bowman

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy hearing the chimes since I have been home. I live a block away, south of the church. Sometimes I can hear them clearly and other times not, but I wanted to say how much of a blessing they have been. Thanks.

—Kathy S.

A Note of Thanks

A note to say thank you for the delicious meatloaf sandwiches, chips, fruit and cookies. We appreciate all the work from the kitchen crew and the ladies standing outside and serving with a smile. May God bless you as you are being His servants. In His Service—The Momphers

Farewell My Friends

A fond farewell to the members of First Lutheran. I would have liked to say “good-by” to you in person, but that was not possible. I have enjoyed my time with you and thank you for the kind notes sent to me. May God bless you as you continue to do God's work in the world. After April 8th my address will be 6544 Forest Creek Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46227; phone number 317-974-9772.

— Carol Bridinger

Evangelism

Good News Garden Awakes!

As we reflect back on the last few weeks (keep in mind our churches closed down on the weekend which began with Friday the 13th and ended with the Ides of March!), I calculated that this is the 13th season for the Good News Garden. Jerry Bryant has weed-whacked the cover crop and plans to till as soon as the ground is dry enough to do so. If you are looking for a good family project, you could germinate some seeds for planting later this month. Marilyn Schweitzer coaxed 3 cucumber seeds from dirt in a jar, and now the “seedlings” are about 7” tall and looking for a bigger home! So, “LIFE” wins!

One of my favorite Martin Luther quotes is “Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in **springtime**.”

Remember....we are resurrection people. If you don't believe it, visit the southwest corner of the Good News Garden, and see what the perennials are “up” to.

—The Garden Committee

Community Dinners Go On!



Thanks to the 10 or so volunteers who ventured out in masks and gloves to put together the “grab and go” April (and, most likely May) Community Dinner. Thanks, as always to Joe Spoon for picking up the Panera Bread, The Routson-Hall family members for being such faithful bread-cutters and baggers. Panera's “doughnation” program feeds not only the Community Dinner folks, but the bread not taken was used by City Mission and LSS. We were pleased to “stimulate the local economy” by using The Fern Cafe meatloaf for sandwiches and Mitchell Candy Co. for the desserts (although Tom and Linda also donated about half of the cookies!).

I know many of you cake bakers are frustrated not to be able to donate cakes, but we felt the best option for the dinners was as little contact as possible, hence packaged desserts. So the meal consisted of a meatloaf sandwich, an orange (God packaged that one!), a bag of chips, and sleeve of cookies all placed in a paper bag—NOT Styrofoam or plastic bag...just had to get in an Earth Day plug.

There were 70 folks served on a rather crummy Palm Sunday (chilly and misty), but the last 25 or so meals went to workers at Kroger, which was a good thing.

We plan to do the same for May 3rd. If you have kids at home or you are bored, you could write/decorate a short note or Bible verse, and we will pack that in the bags that Sunday morning. You could place them on the table in the east entryway. Our experience from the flood of 2007, when the kitchen was out for seven months, tells us this kind of sack lunch is actually much more expensive, but certainly a way we hope brings our community one step closer to God.

— Jane Ebersole

Food Cart Requests



Dish Soap
Paper Towels
and Vegetables

All donations benefit LSS



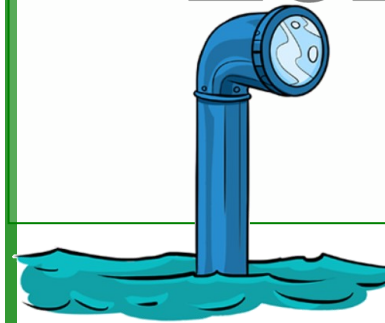
Instead of going afar on a Mission Trip, churches and community members will gather volunteers to do yard work, painting, and make house repairs in one day.

The 2020 Backyard Mission Trip has been rescheduled to **August 1st**. For more information, please contact Nick Thomas at: nthomas@thermatru.com.



2020 VISION

for Stewardship



Coming up for a better look

FIRST FRUITS GIVING

The first fruits of your grain, your wine, and your oil, as well as the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. Deuteronomy 18:4

As soon as the word spread, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.

—2 Chronicles 31:5

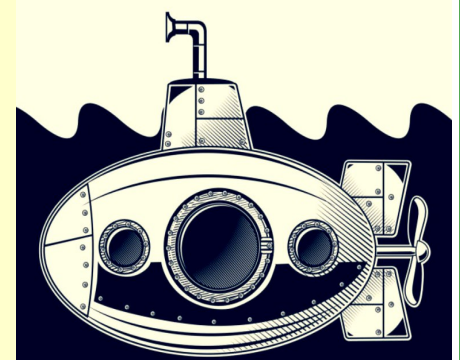


The message was clear throughout sacred scripture. We are called to give to God first. Yet, how do we give “first fruits” in a society where we no longer bring our produce, our livestock or our fresh baked bread to the temple to be shared with the community? It is helpful to still think of our giving in terms of food. If God were coming to dinner at your house, would you serve the Lord the finest meat, your best recipes and your richest dessert? Or would you reheat leftover macaroni and cheese? If you wish to offer God “first fruits” or your very best, here is what you need to do. Make the check you write to God the first check you write every week or every month. Don't wait to see what is leftover. Instead, give a planned and generous gift to God first and trust that what is left will be enough for your needs. When you put God first in your life in this very simple way, you will be serving the Lord as an honored guest in your heart.

- Bernadette V. Cabe

First fruits giving requires the theological premise that our possessions and assets ultimately belong to God. All that we have in life is a gift from God! Faith-filled, first fruits giving is our opportunity to return to God a small portion of God's abundant blessing in our lives. Moreover, these blessings are not limited to financial assets or possessions. Most of us can examine our own lives and find numerous blessings, perhaps even some astounding miracles. As Christians, we are called to give to God “what is right, not what is left,” as the popular quote from a church marquis states. God calls us to offer our “first fruits,” not the “leftovers.”

- Kevass J. Harding



Library News



Happy Easter. Happy Spring. It seems we have spent much of March and April praying for and with one another, to end the pandemic and to keep our family and friends healthy. As of mid-March, while in the Florida Keys, we were in our own quarantine. All activities had been cancelled, no new campers were allowed, any campers on short term contracts had to leave. And then the only road to the Keys was closed to southbound traffic. Key West just closed shop. Not a whole lot to do but go to the grocery. But we were virus free in Big Pine Key.

Paul and I are not the only ones, however, with stories throughout all this. I am sure you all have them as well. I envision a publication soon titled The Covid-19 Toilet Paper Heist.

Also, something I learned quickly is to avoid at all costs exposure to the rumor carriers. Oh my land...if we had believed all the stories that some of the campers heard, read, or apparently imagined...

I read twenty-three books while in the South. Set in Russia, Anna Karenina was the wordiest yet most riveting story. The zaniest was the true story 88 Pianos: A Recumbent Adventure Across America concerning a gentleman who rode his recumbent bicycle from ocean to ocean, all the while looking for 88 (the number of piano keys) pianos that he could play along the way. The most spiritually rewarding was Untie the Strong Woman.

The most informative was McIlhenny's Gold, telling the story of tabasco sauce. Another book, The Book of Useless information, is the topic of a later newsletter article!

Now, let's talk about something else – how about starting a prayer journal? I saw a beautiful paperback workbook on line and when I received it, I thought "I could make one of those and make it very personal to me."

Open a notebook or one of those dedicated books that we often use for journaling. Mens' books are often bound in leather!

On the left page, leave a space for the "week of _____". Use the left half of the page to list what you are thankful for during that week. As you write during the week, tell the Lord you ARE thankful.

On the right half of the same page, allow for spots to list items under "Teach Me" and "Guide Me". While you list items here during the week, pray.

On the right page, mark one section "Things in my heart", another "Highlights of the week", and finally "Special prayers and requests".

At the top of one of the two pages, write a Bible verse to guide you for the week.

Or...create your own journal to suit your needs.

Why create a Prayer Journal? Because it forces each of us to "sit a spell", think about and talk to God. It forces us to take time to say "Thank You". It forces us to sort through what we need, to explore where we could use help, (*Pam, notice the Oxford Comma!*) and to look into our hearts. In these very trying times, how can we go wrong?

Love you all. Stay Healthy. God bless and keep reading.

Kathy Brooks
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It is not

the
new
normal

It IS our

BLESSED
FUTURE