
CONNECTION

Our Savior Lutheran Church

Mesquite, TX

December 2020

What's Next For Worship in the Weirdness of 2020

Worship has been wacky, to say the least this year. When and where and even how has changed almost from Sunday to Sunday. From in-person to on-line to in-person and back again. We moved from the worship center to centrum to drive-thru to outdoors to worship center to centrum... and, we pray, some day back to the worship center. No one could have predicted this.

But, surprising as it sounds, this is nothing new. From age to age, from crisis to crisis, the people of God have always had to adjust. Rarely have people of faith been able to sit back and relax ... or rest on their laurels. Not in the Old Testament. Not in the New Testament. Not in the early church. And not now.

The people of Israel went from tent to tabernacle to temple before settling in at the synagogues of Jesus' day. The early Christians went from house church to catacombs to cathedrals before the model of modern-day houses of worship. Formats changed for a multitude of reasons: war, famine, exile, persecution, and now COVID.

We are always on the move, always in transition. The book of Hebrews describes it well. *'For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.'* (Hebrews 13:14). In a sense, COVID has turned us all into nomads, pounding tent pegs into the ground each night asking, "Where will be we tomorrow?" or "Where and how will we worship this Sunday?"

Perhaps this can be turned into good news. The church is at its best on the move... moving out with grace and healing in a broken world. God alone knows the answers to when the pandemic will end, when things will return to normal, and when our worship pattern can be more predictable. Until then, our faith gives us the strength to be flexible, the Holy Spirit gives us the freedom to adjust, and God's Word gives us the hope to find joy moving together ... into God's gracious future.

At this point, Christmas Eve and Day worship remains a mystery, but we will let it be God's surprise. In the meantime, this is a glimpse—however temporary—of what the season of Advent looks like. Midweek Advent Services will follow the theme *"Getting Ready for God's Wedding."* Both 7:15pm Wednesday services and 11am Sunday services will continue on Facebook Live... but always stay posted to the Phone Tree for any last-minute changes. The church must always be ready to adjust, remember?



November 29	-First Sunday of Advent	11am
December 2	-Midweek Advent Service "Setting the Table"	7:15pm
December 6	-Saint Nicholas Sunday	11am
December 9	-Midweek Advent Service "Selecting the Wardrobe"	7:15pm
December 13	-Santa Lucia Sunday	11am
December 16	-Midweek Advent Service "Trimming the Lamps"	7:15pm
December 20	-Katharina Von Bora Sunday	11am
December 23	-Virtual or In-Person Christmas Caroling	6pm

Lutherans Look Outside Themselves

RELIEF FOR HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA

Most of 2020 has been inwardly focused: our safety during a pandemic, our politics during division, our economy during the coronavirus. There is a true danger that Luther called "*nen curvatus est*," to be curved in on oneself. While Lutherans don't brag about themselves (maybe because we have no fame or celebrity status to brag about), there's one thing that Lutherans do well. Lutherans engage the world in humanitarian efforts: disaster relief, immigration, world hunger, and world relief. Leading the relief effort



Lutheran
World
Relief

after disastrous category 4 and 5 hurricanes in Honduras and Nicaragua has been Lutheran World Relief. I was surprised to hear Matt Hackworth interviewed twice on NPR to describe the dire situation of people in those devastated countries. Hackworth is Senior Advisor of Lutheran World Relief and coordinator of those relief efforts. On the best of days, there is poverty and starvation. Now, during a pandemic, the hurricanes have wrought unfathomable destruction. We can be proud to have such a powerful Lutheran voice challenging us all to look outside ourselves to bring help and hope to others. If you would like to make a special donation to the efforts of Lutheran World Relief, simply send a check or offering designated as such to the church. Checks should be made out to Our Savior Lutheran Church.

We have been worried about celebrating Thanksgiving under the duress of COVID-19, but at least our plates will be full. The plates of many around the world have been empty for a long time, and it is important to recognize our blessings with Thanksgiving and our opportunities to be a giving people. That's the Lutheran way... or better yet, that's Jesus' way.



Another Outreach Opportunity With Matching Funds

Perhaps the most famous Lutheran in the United States, Rick Steves, will match any donation to Bread for the World, an affiliate of the CROP Hunger Walk. A donation of \$100 or more entitles you to a gift of Rick Steves various travel shows. Visit www.bread.org.

Speaking of Outreach... Buckner Children's Home

Once again, Our Savior will be collecting Christmas gifts for children in Buckner Children's Home. Unwrapped gifts of socks, mittens, underwear, pajamas, and toys for children of all ages (0-18 years old) are needed. Sizes zero to adult are appreciated. Buckner Children's Services were very excited and grateful for all the wonderful gifts these past couple of years. Let's help to make all children feel special this Christmas! Collected items will be picked up and delivered on December 20th. To make sure someone is in the office, please call before dropping gifts off at the church.



It's Reformation 500 Anniversary Time

Every month there's something new to remember about Martin Luther and the Reformation. On December 10, we're going to light a huge bonfire to commemorate Martin Luther's burning of the Papal Bull on December 10, 1520. Well, the fire department may not appreciate a bonfire, but we'll figure out some way to light a fire of God's Grace and keep that light shining for the next 500 years. Any ideas to celebrate? Outdoor s'mores perhaps?

Looking for Santa Lucia



On December 13, we will commemorate Saint Lucy on her festival day. We could use a younger girl/woman to play the part. Let us know if you're interested.



Christmas Eve/Day in Limbo?



What to do on Christmas Eve and Day will depend on so many factors. In limbo are things like decorating and poinsettias and luminaires. We won't have answers to any of those questions until we know more about the virus. Perhaps the quiet service could work if we can't do regular worship. Please let us know of your thoughts and ideas. Either way, together or on-line, Christmas and Christ will come with joy!

Nancy's Health Notes

In the past, I have written about grief but approaching grief in a different way. Often when one hears the word grief, the first thoughts involve death of a person. In reality, grief is much broader and experienced in a variety of situations. This year has been a year filled with grief. Yes, there is the sadness knowing so many people have died due to COVID-19. Grief is also experienced from the loss of a job, of a pet, of normal daily routines, of close contact with friends and family and loss of traditions including Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our OSL families have grieved missing the regular services. Each person has losses that are significant to them that cause feelings of grief.

Recently, Marie Mazza and I took part in a webinar entitled *The Unwanted Gift of Grief*. This program was sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Parish Nurse Association. The speaker was Tim VanDuivendyk, DMin, Retired Chaplain.

Regardless of the cause, each person grieves differently and is helped differently. Grief does not suddenly disappear but is a process that is referred to as the wilderness. Learning how to journey through the wilderness, each individual will identify those feelings and actions that help them.

Following are some of the FEELINGS that could be used to learn new actions and thoughts:

- Emotional catharsis is a release that opens the way to new thoughts and actions;
- Grief accumulates teaspoonful by teaspoonful;
- Grief needs to be traveled through not traveled around;
- Discuss your emotion with a trusted friend, colleague or mentor who knows how to listen;
- When anxious or fearful identify why;
- Pray real open and honest feelings toward God.

There are ways to THINKING that create new feelings and actions:

- Think positively;
- Think that God will see you through the wilderness;
- You may know a negative but do not dwell on it;
- Develop gratitude even for small everyday things.

One's ACTIONS can lead to new feelings and thought:

- Positive actions lead to positive feelings and thoughts;
- Talk with loving people;
- Be a part of change instead of avoiding change;
- Offering love and service to others energizes the individual;
- Develop a daily prayer time.

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS can transform you through the wilderness:

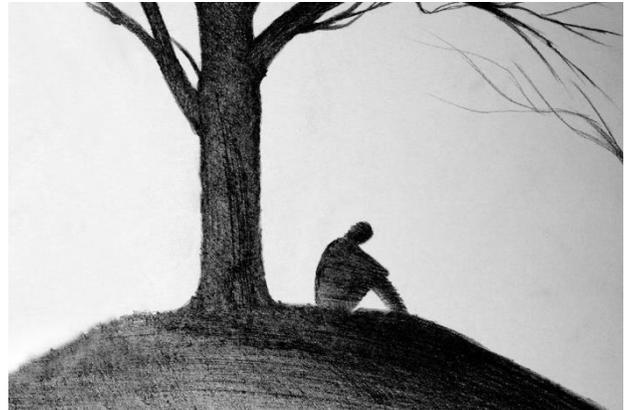
- Come to believe that God is with you in the wilderness;
- Change is an unwanted gift but a gift;
- Learn to balance letting go of and holding on to;
- Develop the faith of letting go, letting be, and letting God.

As I said at the beginning, this has been a very difficult year for everyone. It is my hope that each person may find at least a small element that will guide them on the journey through the wilderness of a very difficult year.

God's peace and love.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice; And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Nancy Wilson, RN, FCN



Sneak Preview for Sundays in December

Who says we can't travel to Europe? That's where we're going for three December destinations this Advent. We'll travel to three European countries to meet three saints. Even though December seems like a long way away, we are getting set to celebrate three saints on successive Sundays. December 6—Saint Nicholas of Turkey, December 13—Saint Lucy of Sweden, December 20—Saint Katherina—not of Sienna, but of Wittenberg, Germany. We'll not only travel to Europe, we'll travel through time from the 4th to the 16th century, and then it will be time to meet two other saints who did a little bit of traveling themselves, without a passport—Mary and Joseph as they head to a place called Bethlehem. More details to follow.

December

Birthdays

Date	Name
2	George Brockmann
	Todd Ranta
3	Caleb Ramirez
5	Barb Krause
	Darlene Morton
	Rachel Phares
6	Betsy Hardi
7	Irene Moore
9	Fe Aguirre
	Betsy Brockmann
10	Kirk Helm
12	Rich Wood
14	Barbara Hunter
16	Ashley Lubben
	Mary Stovall
17	Christy Anderson
18	Mary Murray
	Stacy White

22	Bobbie Chubbs
24	George NoLan
	Cole Rockwell
25	Cody Hardy
	Tessie Murphy
27	Carol Murray
28	Veronica Ernst
	Cade Skyles
30	Paula Fincher
31	Betty Haven



Baptisms

Date	Name
6	Judy Hocker
	Marie Mazza
11	Darren Mann
12	Lucas Holmes
18	Bobbie Jean McClatchey
20	Mitchell Belz
	Jerry Hearn
22	Gordon Johnston
	Mackenzie Reggia
	Rita Salmons
25	Valente Chavez
29	David Shafer
30	Adama Ndomahina
	Zainab Ndomahina

Wedding Anniversaries

Date		Years
13	Richard & Betty Mastin	51
17	Michael & Debbie Zimmermann	26
19	Stacy & Lisa White	11
22	Gerald & Frances Hare	52
28	Coen & Michelle Enright	18
29	Kevin & Michelle Finamore	18
31	Mike & Julie Williams	44



Prayers for Those in Hospice Care

Eleanor Adix and Kathryn Utroska have shared a close friendship over the years. They are also our dear friends. Now, Kathryn and Eleanor share another part of life's journey, as both are in hospice care. Lift them up in your prayers as all our journeys lead to our Lord, who is our greatest friend. (Please refrain from phone calls and texts at this time.)

Lifting Up Those Who Grieve

We pray for those who continue their journey of grief: Sonja Conoly at the loss of her mother, Clara Sandback; Bill Hutchinson at the loss of his brother, Jim; and Helen Henson at the loss of her son-in-law.

Stay Safe and Stay Healthy

We say those words for everyone during the coronavirus, but we especially remember in prayer those who are going through difficult diagnoses. Shari Murphy continues treatment for kidney cancer. Sally Nelson continues treatment for aggressive leukemia. Gordon Johnston and Betty Haven dealing with cancer. Chip Martinize with heart problems. Amy Ismail is recovering from surgery. This list is far from comprehensive, but please call the office on any updates or additions... and in the meantime, stay safe and stay healthy.

World Hunger Christmas Letter

My donation is enclosed in the amount of \$_____

Name _____

Telephone# _____



CONNECTION

Our Savior Lutheran Church

411 North Town East Blvd.

Mesquite TX 75150

Office: 972-226-0510

Fax: 972-226-0722

www.oslmesquite.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Worship—8:30am, 11:00am & 5:30pm

Sunday School—9:45am

Pastor—John Schelter

Non-Profit Org

U.S. Postage Paid

Mesquite Texas

Permit #98

Announcing Community Garden- Non-Bake Sale- Fundraiser

Each year around this time, the garden team offers baked goods to the congregation in hopes of raising enough money to sustain itself for another year. This is especially important this year, since the garden has quadrupled in size and therefore, increased its costs. It also means we can contribute much more food to serve the many people in long food lines.

This year's fundraiser will be a little different with the pandemic limiting us. Instead of offering baked goods, we are asking for your support in contributing a check to OSL with "Community Garden" written in the memo.

To make it more interesting, for contributions of \$40 or more, you can access our drive-thru, pre-order pick up system to receive a unique gift. Simply call for an appointment time from Black Friday through Dec 10, and bring your check at pick-up time (Call John at 469-235-5745).



That unique gift is "Pet Broc, the Edible Houseplant", a limited edition, one-of-a-kind, conversation piece, for you to keep or give as a holiday gift. Get several Pet Broc's for those who are hard to shop for. The potted broccoli comes with a full set of instructions, and will provide delicious vegetable portions. There are only thirty Pet Broc's available, so hurry and order before supplies run out.

Any amount of contribution would be greatly appreciated, Pet Broc or not. Thank you for having sustained us in the past, and we look forward to having everyone come visit our newly expanded garden soon.

—John Ernst

December 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Each Sunday 8:30am Worship Service 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 5:30pm Worship Service		1 9:30am Mother's Day Out	2 7:15pm Advent Service <i>"Setting the Table"</i>	3 9:30am Mother's Day Out	4	5
6 11:00am Saint Nicholas Sunday	7	8 9:30am Mother's Day Out	9 7:15pm Advent Service <i>"Selecting the Wardrobe"</i>	10 9:30am Mother's Day Out	11	12
13 11:00am Saint Lucia Sunday 12:30 Council Meeting	14	15 9:30am Mother's Day Out	16 7:15pm Advent Service <i>"Trimming the Lamps"</i>	17 9:30am Mother's Day Out	18	19
20 11:00am Katharina Von Bora Sunday	21	22	23 6:00pm Christmas Caroling (Virtual or In-Person)	24 Christmas Eve Service ?	25 Christmas Day Service ?	26
27	28	29	30	31		

