



Acts of Faith

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Kewanee, Illinois



May 2020

Volume 20 Issue 5

Pastor Paul Weber home: 309-764-3144 cell: 309-716-4759 email: chapemcc@gmail.com

There's really nothing new about the new coronavirus (also called COVID-19). Human history is filled with instances of epidemics, plagues, and pandemics. The Bible speaks about plagues and widespread diseases in accounts of the past and in accounts of our future.

Deadly disease is nothing new. Neither is the greater threat to mankind. In Revelation 9 we read about the horrible destruction that will one day ravage the earth. What the three plagues discussed in this chapter are exactly is unknown, but they make it clear that mankind faces a far greater problem than these plagues. *"The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts."* (Revelation 9:20-21)

While the world around us is fixated on COVID-19, how to respond to it, and the fears of contracting it, there is something that is a far greater threat to them than they realize. Many people in our neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and even our families are more concerned about a disease with a 1-2% mortality rate than a condition with a 100% mortality rate — a condition that every one of them has already contracted. We know that this greater problem is sin. We also know that handwashing, antiseptic wipes, microbe-trapping face masks, and isolation cannot spare any of us from the deadly consequences of sin. Only the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ can save us.

People's concern over COVID-19 is an opportunity for us to engage them in conversations about our mortality and the certainty of death. It is an opening for us to speak God's Word into a situation that can only be answered by God's Word. In the face of the COVID-19 threat, with all its fears and uncertainties, we can shine as people who have certain hope and faith.

Our response to COVID-19 should show the people around us that we live in faith, not fear, and that we are filled with hope. Our hope is not in science, technology, or medicine. Our hope is in the One who has given us these good gifts and the greater gifts of life and salvation through the forgiveness of our sins.

Your response to the COVID-19 threat should include making good use of the "reason and senses" and all that God has given us "for this body and life" (*Luther's Small Catechism*).

By all means, follow the sound advice of medical professionals and public health officials to protect yourself and your loved ones from this virus. But do not fear. You are God's own child washed in the waters of Holy Baptism, cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and filled with hope.

As you prepare to deal with the challenges of a widespread disease, remember to also prepare to share Good News with *"anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"* (1 Peter 3:15).

Through your faithful witness during a public health crisis, it is possible that people in your life will repent and receive the healing that only Jesus can provide. It's true: There's nothing new about the new coronavirus. But, in COVID-19, there is a new opportunity for us to bring Good News to our dying world.

By Rev. Dr. Mark Wood @lcms.org

National Day of Prayer: May 7, 2020 is the National Day of Prayer observance. While the number of people you pray beside in person or in the same room may be different this year, the prayers we pray will be multiplied and amplified. Across our homes, neighborhoods, cities, states, nation and the world through many creative and innovative ways, all are planning to "Pray God's Glory Across the Earth!"

Worship services at Faith have been temporarily suspended due to Governor Pritzker's order to stay-at-home through May.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

May's Calendar

- May 03 Fourth Sunday of Easter
- May 07 National Day of Prayer
- May 10 Fifth Sunday of Easter
Mother's Day Observance
- May 17 Sixth Sunday of Easter
- May 21 Ascension Day
- May 24 Seventh Sunday of Easter
- May 25 Memorial Day Observance
- May 31 Pentecost (Red)

Elders List:

- Wayne Becker: 309-853-8783
- Kevin Hull: 309-852-0801
- Ron Larson: 309-853-5111
- Mike Leezer: 309-286-3014
- Ted Sturtevant: 309-853-8203
- Wendell Hier 309-853-8388

Graduations: If you or your son, daughter, or grandchild is a member, and known to us at Faith and is graduating from high school, college, or trade school this spring or summer, please notify us of their name, graduation date, and future plans by Monday, May 18th, to be recognized in our newsletter.

Those for Whom We Pray: Please include the following in your thoughts and daily prayers.

Our Faith family: Cari Bridgewater, Betty Godke, Tootie Godke, Bonnie Nuding , Nancy Tudder, Cheryl Snyder, Marvin Newman, and Heidi Heinrich.

Friends: Jeff Bowman, Karen Wright, Rev. Burnell Eckhardt, Sue Copeland, Ron Pettit, Kent West, Evelyn Weber, and all military personnel and first responders.

Inactive Members: Pray the Holy Spirit bring them to the understanding of their need to be in regular worship in church on Sunday, and that we as their brothers and sisters in Christ would reach out to them.

CID: Our campus, prison, deaf, and Hispanic missions in the District need your prayers and support.

Our World: That Lord of all will bring healing to those who are sick, comfort to those who mourn, and an end to the spread of this virus.



Prayer Requests: Have someone or something that you would like Pastor Weber to include in either his personal prayers or in our public Prayer of the Church, please notify Pastor Weber via e-mail or phone.

REMEMBER: Please contact the office and inform us of any changes of name, address, marital status, e-mail, phone, and cell phone. E-mail addresses are most important in these changing times to communicate with each other.

SIGNS OF HOPE

Gary and Mary Hahn found these yard signs retailed on line at Concordia Supply Company, and donated several of them for our congregation to share a message of Hope with our community.



May Birthdays

Mary Hahn	5/01
Jenny Leezer	5/01
Jacob Townsend	5/06
Michelle Croegaert	5/11
Wendell Hier	5/15
Nancy Gillespie	5/21
Jeri Erickson	5/26
Louis "Chip" Wager	5/31

Baptism Dates

Melisa Carper	05/27
Eric Cervantez	05/28
Ethan Cole	05/26
Cindy Ganschow	05/09
Mary Hahn	05/22
Cheryl Snyder	05/30
Miah Townsend	05/07
Heather Weber	05/10
Rev. Paul Weber	05/16

Lutheran Hour Ministry Radio Program

Station	City, State	Freq.	Day & Time
WKEI	Kewanee, IL	1450 AM	Sun 5:30 AM

Wedding Anniversaries

LaJean and William Breedlove	5/02
Dawn and Kevin Hull	5/23
Mary and Gary Hahn	5/24

1 Peter 4:10 – “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.” God's grace is His undeserved mercy toward us. And what do we have that is not a gift flowing from God's grace? He means for us to use all these gifts in service toward our neighbor. And chief among the ways we serve one another is to support the Church's work of bringing God's grace to more of God's people.

Even during these difficult times Faith's ministry continues to have bills and expenses to be paid. The canceling of church services in person has impacted offerings. Thanks be to God some members have continued to send their gifts to the church via mail. God's people are by nature generous. They know the love of Jesus and how “He who was rich for your sake became poor.” They love because Christ first loved them. The church does have a small reserve in our general fund, but we struggle even in good years to meet our needs.

If your family is undergoing financial crisis please notify Pastor or an elder so we may provide whatever assistance we can offer. If you know of someone who needs other assistance or counselling to get through this pandemic, share this information too.

Please consider continuing to give your offerings, even though we have been/are unable to gather together in the church building for worship. If you are able to keep your support going, please mail your gift to Faith Lutheran 620 Hepner Dr. Kewanee, or to Sue Cervantez (Treasurer) 510 McKinley Ave Kewanee, IL 61443.

Our hope and comfort in the sacrifice of our Lord and His promise never to leave or forsake us! Please stay safe, stay strong in faith, pray often, and whenever be prepared to show Christ's love to others.

Landscaping Ministry: Spring has sprung and the grass is growing and so are the weeds. Our landscaping committee (Kevin Hull, Glen Godke, Ted Sturtevant, and Gary Hahn) is already working to spruce up our grounds by spraying weeds, cutting and trimming grass and bushes. Plans are made to replace our drain tiling on the south side of the building. There are numerous sink holes in the campus area here. The lawn has been treated this spring to control the foxtail that was so prominent last summer.

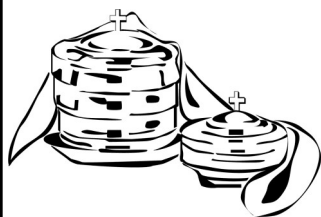


Council Action: The Church Council is coming up with plans and preparations to resume worshipping services in a safe and appropriate manner when CDC and local restrictions are eased. Such ideas are providing facemask and hand sanitizer, maintain personal distancing, and revising communion procedures. Pastor Weber continues to serve his obligations at EMCC, and he is willing to make personal visits if requested.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

What's Going on Here? There are times when the obligations of Christian love may lead individuals not to worship with a congregation. A church member with a bad cold, flu, or another contagious disease will generally refrain from attending services lest he or she infect others. Congregations have canceled services entirely in order to protect their members during inclement weather. Understandably then in the current circumstance, many LCMS congregations have again determined that they should suspend services for a time out of love for those who might contract the deadly Covid-19 virus.

Such churches are able to find various ways to help members to hear the Word of Christ richly. From written letters to emails to website messaging to instant messaging to sermon streaming, the Word is being heard and received in the midst of the coronavirus.

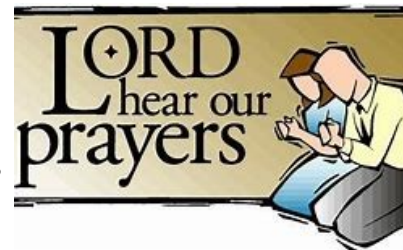


But what of the Sacrament of the Altar? The forgiveness of sins is not prevented when one cannot commune, for it is delivered by the Gospel as it is read and preached and spoken by the royal priesthood and also in the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Supper as well as in Absolution. But it is only in the Lord's Supper that we eat and drink Christ's very body and blood. It thereby offers a special assurance that is proper only to it, just as Baptism has its own assurances. The inability to commune is therefore no small matter, but a true hardship!

We are not in uncharted territory. As great as the hardship is when we cannot receive Christ's body and blood, the hardship ought not be "resolved" in ways that promise an uncertain "sacrament" without the absolute assurance that Christ intends. It is better humbly and repentantly to ask the Lord for the regular administration of the Sacrament of the Altar to be restored to us, together with an end to the "deadly pestilence" that is killing thousands of souls who are precious to God, their Creator (see Ps. 91; Jonah 4:11).

In this uncertain time, let us encourage every baptized child of God to be fervent in seeking opportunities to hear the Word of God as it goes forth from written sermons, letters, websites, emails, streaming videos, and other means, to read the Word in their homes, to implore God to end this plague and preserve His church, and—as His royal priesthood—to "proclaim the excellences of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). From LCMS website

Coronavirus Prayer: Spare Your people O Lord. Preserve us from this and every illness. Give healing and strength to those who are sick, protect those who care for them, and grant us steady minds and calm hearts in face of fear. You have borne our infirmities in this human flesh and purchased us with your own blood. Keep us in this faith and embolden us in love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. LCMS/ Coronavirus insert.



Streaming a Service: We may not be able to be together in the sanctuary, but we can still see a church services and hear God's Word. You can view the Concordia Lutheran-Geneseo service on Facebook page www.facebook.com/geneseolutheranchuch (you don't need a Facebook account to view them), or through their church website www.geneseolutheranchuch.com, under the "teaching" then "video" tabs. Sunday worship begins at 8:30 am, and Rev. Mueller has daily devotions as well.

Other LCMS services are available too. Sermons and bulletins are posted there too. Just Google them.

Remember Mothers: Mothers play a vital role in church and society — a reality the world seems to despise these days. Very often, mothers are at the forefront of handing the faith down to the next generation. As Paul wrote to Timothy: "*I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well*" (2 Timothy 1:5). In the Church, a mother's influence can extend far beyond her biological family. Paul says in Romans 16:13: "*Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.*" In some way, God used this unnamed woman to nurture, to mother, the great apostle Paul. Let us be grateful for all the mother-figures in our lives — whether they're related to us by blood, or faith, or both. Remember with awe that the Creator once chose a humble virgin to become a mother and be the means for bringing His saving presence into the world. From LCMS website