

THE MESSIAH HERALD



APRIL 2020

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

3 SOUTH THIRD STREET

MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059

717-436-6213

VICAR -- SAMUEL LEISTER

CHURCH WEBSITE: www.mlcmifflintown.org

OFFICE EMAIL: mlchurchoffice@gmail.com

TREASURER EMAIL: mlchurchtreasurer@gmail.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL --- 9:15 AM

WORSHIP -- COMMUNION -- JUNIOR CHURCH --- 10:30 AM

CHILDRENS SERMONS OFFERED EVERY 1ST AND 3RD SUNDAYS!

[USS-ARK NEWSLETTER](#)

[THE LUTHERAN MAGAZINE](#)

"Growing God's Love"

The Messiah Herald



THROUGH THE TEST OF TIMES

Dear Messiah Family,

The Lenten season began with the same celebrations, worship practices, and choices of fasting as have been done for almost 2000 years. The Ash Wednesday service at Trinity in McAlisterville was well attended and included a community choir, clergy, lay leaders, and Bishop Barbara Collins. The season of Lent continued with Sunday worship, Lenten Teas and Wednesday evening worship services in the community. At Messiah the Sunday morning Lenten fasting of the snacks and coffee became a reality. Much of our yearly routine came to an abrupt halt with the initialization of social distancing. Fasting of the snacks became fasting of worshipping as a group in the "church" building.

Now more than ever, we recognize that the Christ's Church is not just the building and worship service is more than the gathering that takes place Sunday morning. Christ's Church IS all God's people working and serving as one in the Love of Jesus. We have seen an increase in other ways of worship and service. Phone calls, cards, emails, FaceTime, Facebook, YouTube and Zoom have become paths to "gathering" and sharing the Good News. Fasting of gatherings remains and will continue through a day of deliverance from this modern plague. Many members of our congregation have taken up their cross to help and care for others of our Messiah family and well beyond. Sunday Soldiers have and are making cards and mailing them. Needlers continue to assemble quilts at home while using their skills to make masks for health care workers. Still others are making phone visits and have offered assistance with delivering groceries and medicines. These are just a few of the ways folks have stepped up to "worship" and service others near and far.

On the first Sunday when our congregation gathers again in the church building, we will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This will include Holy Communion, Easter liturgy and Easter hymns. We will continue from that Sunday with the church season and liturgy but may celebrate other church festivals which we may have missed.

In the meantime, please continue to worship and pray in your homes. Set a time each day to read scripture, sing hymns, and pray. This is a great time for families to worship together. Involve the kids with choosing and reading Bible verses and hymns. What are their favorite readings, hymns, and prayers? When you make phone calls, make readings and prayers a part of the phone worship (kids can help with the phone calls). Set goals for your Bible time and prayers.

Linda and I plan on remaining at home until a go-ahead is given for an exodus. I will continue to provide an online worship service Sunday from the historic Tuscarora Baptist Church next door. Additionally, with Linda's assistance, daily readings and prayers will be brought to you via the internet.

May the Holy Spirit guide and be with us all!

Vicar Samuel Leister

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING

Carole Baker	Kevin Kint
Jane Ann Baney	Malin Kint
Donna Barton	Pam Lawson
Lindsey Barton	Carol Lyter
Bob Bell	Carlen McClure
Nick Beward	Charlie, Amanda, & Isabel Meinsler
Joyce Bradley	Messiah's TEEM
Andrea & Bob Cameron	Tami Metz
Pam Campbell	John Miller
Linda Clark	Larry Miller
Terry Coder	Shirley Miller
Leann Crimmel	Jim Minick
Will DeLancy	Madison Norman
Guy Dillman	Austin Parker
Fred & Dot Dowling	Noel Peachey
Richard & Esther Dunkelberger	Dave Phelan
Renee Dzikowski	Butch & Sandy Pines
Bobbi Ellis	Betty Ranck
Neil Fisher	Keith Ranck
Jerald (Jerry) Foltz	Mary Sanders
Ed Fraker	Mackenzie Shearer
Bentley Fulkroad	Ronald Shearer
Joan Fulkroad	Tim Smith
Terri Gayer	Mike Sparks
Edie Kay Gill	Bob & Jeanette St. Clair
Paul Goss	Dorothy Towsey
Jeanette Gross	Rich Walters
Josh Hohol	Tim Weston
Curt & Judy Houtz	Dottie Wilson
Jennifer Hutchinson	Diana Wise
Matt Hutchinson	Jim Woltman
Denny King	Mackenzie Wray
Brenda Imes	Dorothy Zeiders
Curt Kint	Linda Zimmerman

PRAY FOR OUR SHUT-INS

BROOKLINE RETIREMENT VILLAGE

(92 VILLAGE DRIVE, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059)

Jane Marhefka

BROOKLINE MANOR

(2 MANOR BLVD., RM. 226, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059)

Gail Henderson

BERRY'S PERSONAL CARE CENTER

(3 ALEX CIRCLE, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059)

Carol Simonton

HONNEMAN HOUSE

(58 HONNEMAN HOUSE DR., APT. 108, THOMPSONTOWN, PA 17094) Ruth Cisney Ray Bramm

LOCUST GROVE RETIREMENT VILLAGE

(69 Cottage Drive, Mifflin, PA 17058)

Esther Rhine

AT HOME

Max Ernest

1099 William Penn Hwy.
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Margaret Guss

20 South Third Street
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Mona Lawson

2792 William Penn Hwy.
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Minnie Minick

187 JAM House Road
Mifflin, PA 17058

Edith Nipple

1482 William Penn Hwy.
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Sieber & Ona Stoner

23591 Route 35 North
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Velma Suloff

4460 Route 333
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Ken & Kay Stuck

66 Eighth Street
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Kitty Walters

P.O. Box 61
Port Royal, PA 17082

Jim Yetter

128 Manbeck Drive
Mifflintown, PA 17059

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

APRIL 1 – Zeb Berry

APRIL 3 – Shirley Covert

APRIL 5 – Jan Smith

APRIL 11 – Anne B. McNaight

APRIL 15 – Steve Bahorik

APRIL 20 – Slone Smith

APRIL 24 – Hunter Berry

APRIL 26 – Steve Berry

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!

APRIL 10 – Dave and Jan Smith

APRIL 20 – Gene and Lois Crissman

APRIL SERVANTS

ALTAR GUILD

Mar. 30 to April 26.....Diana Wise & Cynthia Smith
April 27 to May 31.... Tawny Mummah & Tammy Smith



WELCA met on Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 7 P.M. in the Young Adult Sunday School Room.

Cynthia Smith presented the program on The Prodigal Son from the viewpoint of seminary students from three different countries; America, Tanzania, and Russia. In recapping this well-known Biblical story, it was interesting as to what the students from the three different countries remembered as the important parts of the story. One last item Cynthia presented to the group came from the perspective of Mary as Jesus's Mother. Did she talk to him as a child about his birth, the angel who told her of his birth, his father, what his future held for him. Did she recite the Magnificat to him. Do we ever think of Mary in this light as a Mother who cared for her son.

Old Business: Barb thanked everyone for their help with the Lenten Tea and reported that each week the Teas have increased by 1 and each week there have been different people attending.

We continue to collect items for the Health Kits and will start School Kits closer to June. Barb will gather items for the Health Kits and present them to the congregation so they can see what we are collecting.

New Business: Barb received information on the collection and delivery of the quilts and kits for 2019. It is all displayed on a large map that will be placed on the wall somewhere in the Adult Sunday School Room for the Congregation to see where their donations have gone.

Linda reported that the Day of Learning

and Renewal will be held in Milton on April 18th. *(This has now been CANCELLED due to COVID-19!)*

Juniata Valley will hold its Cluster meeting on Saturday, April 25th at Guante's coffee shop on William Penn Highway. We will have a light lunch and gathering. The lunch will consist of a variety of items from the menu for everyone to try. Further details will follow.

Linda reported to the group that she was approached by someone and asked if the Needlers could display quilts on the quilt rack all year long and not just for blanket Sunday. The group agreed and we will try to display different quilts during the year.

We closed our meeting with our Purpose Statement and retired for refreshments brought by Linda Leister. Everyone enjoyed the ice cream and the snacks. Thank you, Linda.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED

Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June 2020 at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove. Synod delegates should also plan on attending the Juniata Valley Conference Assembly (date to be announced). If you are interested in serving, please contact Vicar Leister or the church office. Among this year's speakers and guests will be **The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

CHRIST IN OUR HOME

A reminder to anyone who would like a daily devotional to jump start their day. There are plenty of devotionals in "Christ in our Home," which can be picked up and are FREE.....and are located at the back of the adult Sunday school room. Get yours today!

ORGANIST/MUSICIAN NEEDED!

Due to the "retirement" of June Bricker, Messiah will again have an opening for Church Organist for weekly services starting in mid-April, which includes Wednesday evening choir rehearsals, except during the summer months. Allen Digital Electric Organ and upright piano. Candidates should contact Bob St. Clair at stclairb@embarqmail.com for more information, including salary. This is currently a half-time position. Additional information about the church and congregation can be found at www.mlcmif-flintown.org.

MESSIAH PRAYER LIST

If you wish to be included on the email recipient list for the Messiah Prayer Chain, please send an email to Vicar Leister at sleister@gmail.com.

MAUNDY THURSDAY BREAKFAST

Due to the Coronavirus situation, the Maundy Thursday Breakfast scheduled for Thursday, April 9th has been **CANCELLED**.

SUMMER AT CAMP MT. LUTHER

Kate Swailes is once again serving as our congregation's camp person with Camp Mount Luther again this year. She has information on programs for the summer. If you have additional questions, you can contact her or the camp office at 570-922-1587 or cml@campmountluther.org. Since our congregation has a camp person, each camper from our church will receive Camel Bucks from Kate for use at the camp store this summer! Campers who have attended camp at Mount Luther in the past, will soon be receiving the camp brochures in the mail.

For more information on Camp Mount Luther or to print the camp registration form, visit www.campmountluther.org. Submit your

camp registration form to Kate along with a \$50 payment payable to Messiah Lutheran Church which will go toward the non-refundable deposit. We ask that you submit your registration form and payment to Kate prior to April 15th so that we receive the early registration discount. The remaining portion of the cost of camp will be covered by various fundraising events, donations, etc. Kate will submit the registration forms to Mount Luther.

UPCOMING PPC AND VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MEETING DATES

- † Sunday, May 17th – 7:00 PM – PPC Meeting
- † Sunday, June 21st – After Worship – Voter's Assembly – PPC Election Approval

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone at Messiah for all of the cards and prayers we received in the loss of our loved one, Mary Ernest. Thanks also to Vicar Sam for all of his support, and to the ladies who prepared the luncheon following the Memorial Service. Everything was greatly appreciated.
MAX & ELEANOR ERNEST



DAILY BIBLE READINGS AND PRAYER FOCUS

APRIL 1 ----- PSALM 143
THOSE EXPERIENCING DESPAIR

APRIL 2 ----- PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11
THOSE RAISING YOUNG CHILDREN

APRIL 3 ----- PHILIPPIANS 1:21-30
LOVED ONES ESTRANGED FROM EACH OTHER

APRIL 4 ----- PSALM 31:9-16
PEOPLE SUFFERING ALONE

APRIL 5 ----- MATTHEW 27:11-54
THOSE WHOSE VOICES ARE NOT HEARD

APRIL 6 ----- JOHN 12:1-11
ALTAR GUILDS AND COMMUNION SERVERS

APRIL 7 ----- JOHN 12:20-36
TRAVELERS WHO ARE LOST

APRIL 8 ----- JOHN 13:21-30
PEOPLE WE CONSIDER OUR ENEMIES

APRIL 9 ----- JOHN 13:1-17, 31B-35
THOSE STRUGGLING TO FORGIVE A HURT

APRIL 10 ----- JOHN 18:1 - 19:42
PEOPLE JUST LEARNING WHO JESUS TRULY IS

APRIL 11 ----- ROMANS 6:3-11
THE NEWLY BAPTIZED

APRIL 12 ----- MATTHEW 28:1-10
THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH CELEBRATING EASTER

APRIL 13 ----- MATTHEW 28:9-15A
PEOPLE PRESSURED TO KEEP WRONGS QUIET

APRIL 14 ----- COLOSSIANS 3:12-17
PEOPLE WHO DESIGN OR MAKE CLOTHES

APRIL 15 ----- PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24
PEOPLE FEELING REJECTED

APRIL 16 ----- COLOSSIANS 4:2-5
THOSE WHO ARE DISTRACTED

APRIL 17 ----- 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11
PASTORS SERVING IN A SOLO CALL

APRIL 18 ----- PSALM 16
COFFEE FARMERS

APRIL 19 ----- JOHN 20:19-31
CAREGIVERS

APRIL 20 ----- 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-20
CONFIRMATION AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

APRIL 21 ----- JONAH 1:1-17
THOSE FACING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

APRIL 22 ----- JONAH 2:1-10
PRESENT-DAY PROPHETS

APRIL 23 ----- PSALM 116:1-4, 12-19
THOSE CELEBRATING GOOD NEWS TODAY

APRIL 24 ----- ISAIAH 26:1-4
THOSE IN FINANCIAL DISTRESS

APRIL 25 ----- MARK 1:1-15
YOUR NEIGHBORS

APRIL 26 ----- LUKE 24:13-35
SOUP KITCHEN MINISTRIES

APRIL 27 ----- 1 PETER 1:23-25
GARDENERS

APRIL 28 ----- PSALM 134
FAITH FORMATION LEADERS

APRIL 29 ----- JOHN 21:1-14
PEOPLE WHO ARE STARTING OVER

APRIL 30 ----- EXODUS 2:15B-25
REFUGEES

CONTACT FOR NEEDS OR CONCERNS

If anyone has any needs or concerns, please contact Vicar Sam Leister. If you or someone you know is ill or hospitalized, please let Vicar Leister know as well. He can be reached at 717-436-8589 (home), or 717-348-1020 (cell), or email at sleister@gmail.com.

THINKING OF OUR SEXTON!

Our dedicated church custodian, Dave Phelan is having some health issues and if anyone would like to send him a card, his address is **PO Box 186, Mifflin, PA 17058**.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Friday – 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

MESSIAH ATTENDANCE AND OFFERINGS – MARCH 2020

DATE	ATTENDANCE	TOTAL OFFERING	GENERAL FUND OFFERING	OTHER FUNDS OFFERING
March 1	48 – Worship 18 – S. S.	\$8,256.00	\$2,411.00	Sunday School -- \$43.00 Benevolence -- \$105.00 Building Fund -- \$170.00 Church Camp (<i>Donation from Soup Sale</i>) - - \$360.00 Memorial Fund -- \$5,150.00 Flowers -- \$17.00
March 8	60 – Worship 28 – S. S.	\$3,156.00	\$2,277.00	Sunday School -- \$25.50 Benevolence -- \$95.00 Building Fund -- \$295.00 Church Camp -- \$100.00 Flowers -- \$93.50 Memorial Fund -- \$270.00
March 15	NO	SERVICES	DUE TO	CORONAVIRUS
March 22	NO	SERVICES	DUE TO	CORONAVIRUS
March 29	NO	SERVICES	DUE TO	CORONAVIRUS

If you want to add your name to the birthday/anniversary list, or know someone you would like to acknowledge, please let the church office know at mlchurchoffice@gmail.com.



PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God, our peace and our strength, we pray for our nation and the world as we face new uncertainties around coronavirus. Protect the most vulnerable among us, especially all who are currently sick or in isolation. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to health care workers, especially as their work caring for others puts them at great risk. Guide us as we consider how best to prepare and respond in our families, congregations, workplaces, and communities. Give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY MARCH UPDATE

In February 2020, the Food Pantry served 317 families – 786 of your neighbors! A big thank you to Matamoros UMC for volunteering on Saturdays in February.

Join our family! We are always looking for a few good volunteers!

If you could help by donating the items below, we would be very grateful.

FOOD PANTRY BASIC NEEDS FOR APRIL

All non-perishable foods; Shampoo, deodorant;

Cleaning Supplies: Laundry detergent, dish soap, all-purpose household cleaners.

DONATIONS OF CASH AND GIFT CARDS ARE ALSO APPRECIATED!

PO Box 44, 114 N. Main St, Mifflintown, PA 17059

Phone: 717-436-9718

Hours: Tue 9-12 and 1-5, and Sat 9-12

*PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY.

(CONTACT PERSON: GLENDA FULTZ).

Email: jcfoodpantry@embarqmail.com



Our vestibule is open 24 hours a day to receive donations. Cash, checks, or gift cards may be deposited in the vestibule's mail slot. *Non-perishable foods and non-food items may be dropped off at any time in our vestibule. Please deliver perishable foods only when someone is here to receive them. Thank you!

RECYCLING NEEDED!

The person who has done the recycling for Messiah for many years has asked if someone else would like to take over this project. If no one volunteers, each person who brings something to the church that needs to be recycled will be asked to take the item(s) back home to recycle it (such as cans, plastic, and cardboard). If you are interested in doing this project, please contact the church office at 717-436-6213.

THANK YOU, JUNE!

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Ephesians 5:19

As many of you know, June Bricker is “retiring” from playing for Sunday services, but will fill-in from time to time, as needed. Her final Sunday at Messiah was to be Palm Sunday, April 5th. However, with the onset of the coronavirus in Pennsylvania, that changed....making her last Sunday at Messiah as March 1st.

We would all like to thank June for her four years of playing at Messiah and for the love, music,

and prayers she provided while here. We wish she and Jim the very best in their retired time together and for all that you have done to add to our community of faith.

Again, thank you, June, for your service to Messiah -- the beautiful music you provided added so much to our times of worship. God Bless!

MUSIC SUNDAY

Music Sunday this year will be on **Sunday, June 7th** and do we have a group for you! The gospel quartet “Brothers in Grace” will be our guests for the service. This is their second visit to Messiah and will be performing during the morning worship service, which begins at **9:15 AM**. We hope you to pack the church for this special service on Holy Trinity Sunday, so mark your calendars now!

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School teachers and substitute teachers will be needed for the fall in the youth department. If you are interested, please contact Linda Clark at Church or by calling 717-348-8262.

GREETINGS TO ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF MESSIAH,

Peace and blessings to all during this season of LENT. As we move through this solemn season leading us to GOOD FRIDAY and EASTER, we give thanks to God for all that we enjoy: our time, our family, our friends and our community. This Lenten season is very different as many of us are self-isolating in our homes hoping and praying that this Coronavirus soon diminishes, and our friends and family remain safe from its effects. Our special prayers are needed for all of those who are still working to provide the essentials of life – especially our health-care givers and grocery store workers and truck drivers.

The Boards of Witness & Outreach and Compassionate Care remind us of our MLC Faith and Vision Statements as these are our guides for times like these and for the recovery we face this coming year.

OUR FAITH: *WE CONFESS JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR AND THE GOSPEL AS THE POWER OF GOD FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL WHO BELIEVE.*

OUR VISION: *TO GROW GOD'S KINGDOM BY ENRICHING OUR FAITH AND EXPANDING OUR WITNESS WITHIN OUR CONGREGATION, OUR COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD.*

To help guide us, the PPC has written our Mission Statement:

OUR MLC MISSION: *TEACH GOD'S GRACE THROUGH FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS, THROUGH STUDY OF GOD'S WORD, THROUGH SERVICE TO OTHERS AND WITNESS TO ALL.*

Although our ability to join in close fellowship is being challenged, we can still observe the other three. We can study God's word at home and through discussions by phone or email. Many of our friends need our help so we must serve them as we can. By doing those two things we are witnessing our faith to others. Our mission never ends although our life undergoes significant changes.

CHALLENGE FOR THE DAY:

- #1 - Call one person who may need your help and offer that help.
- #2 – Check on your neighbors to learn if they have any needs or just to chat.

CHURCH BUILDING CLOSED: Our building is closed to all group gatherings until further notice but our church secretary, Judy, is still going to the office as the work of the church moves onward. Call the office, 717-436-6213, if you have questions or needs.

YOUR CHURCH OFFERING: Our MLC mission work continues as do our church building expenses. Therefore, if you are able, please send your financial offering to the church office by mail or drop it through the mail slot in the front office door. Please use the regular offering envelope if you have them. Otherwise, use a plain envelop being sure to label the amounts and funds for your gift. If your offering is not labeled it will be placed in the general fund account and used for whatever is needed.

MLC WEBSITE: Please utilize our church website, www.mlcmiffintown.org, as it contains:

Weekly Bulletins archived back to 2010
Monthly Newsletters archived back to 2011
Contact information for Church "leaders" and secretary
Recordings of services
YouTube videos of Vicar reading prayers, sermons, bible readings
Bible School Photos/Videos
Weekly Attendance/Offerings
Church Calendar
ELCA News and Links
Camp Mount Luther Information and Pictures
Altar Guild Information
Baptismal and Confirmation Information and Forms
Important Information posted when needed/necessary

NEEDS: If you find that you cannot get the assistance you need please contact Larry Wise, 717-994-2289 for help. He will find someone to assist you. Please don't hesitate to ask for help.


BLESSINGS TO ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

Yours in Christ,
The Boards of Witness & Outreach and Compassionate Care:
Cynthia Smith, Larry Wise

Singing and making melody in their hearts...

BROTHERS IN GRACE

GOSPEL QUARTET



Because of His Amazing Grace

Date: JUNE 7, 2020
Place: MESSIAH LUTH. CHURCH, MIEFLINTOWN
Time: 9:15 AM, during AM Worship Service

APRIL 2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2020:
ALL SERVICES AND EVENTS AT MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
CANCELLED DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS.**

THE RESURRECTION

WE HOLD SO CLOSE TO OUR HEARTS
THE CROSS WHERE JESUS DIED,
BUT SO MUCH MORE THAN THE BLOOD-STAINED CROSS
IS THAT JESUS CAME BACK TO LIFE

THE STONE'S BEEN ROLLED AWAY;
THE TOMB LAY OPEN AND BARE —
THEY LOOKED FOR HIM, AND THEN THE ANGEL SAID
THAT HE IS NO LONGER HERE

OH WHAT JOY THEY MUST HAVE FELT
TO SEE HIM JUST ONCE MORE,
TO EAT WITH HIM, TO DRINK WITH HIM,
TO RECEIVE HIM BACK AS LORD

SO MUCH DID HE ACCOMPLISH
THROUGH HIS DEATH UPON THE CROSS
AND IN HIS RISING FROM THE DEAD,
HE RECONCILED US BACK TO GOD

NOTHING ELSE COULD BRIDGE THE GAP
THAT SIN HAD WRENCHED APART —
NOW WE CAN FREELY GO TO GOD
AND RECEIVE CHRIST IN OUR HEARTS.

© BY M.S. LOWNDES



Photo credit: Sammy Moore

WE WANTED TO SHARE A POEM WRITTEN BY A FRANCISCAN PRIEST LIVING IN IRELAND WITH HIS REFLECTIONS OF THE LOCKDOWNS THAT ARE HAPPENING AROUND OUR GLOBE.

(SHARED WITH US BY MESSIAH PARISHIONER ANNE B. MCNAIGHT)

Lockdown by Brother Richard:

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighborhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbors
in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality

To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
SING

COVID-19 RESPONSE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP EATON



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear church,

The last couple of weeks have been trying ones for everyone across this church. Our synods, congregations and ministries are facing challenges that they've never faced before. Being church together means more now than ever before.

The churchwide office is launching a comprehensive Covid-19 response across the ELCA beginning today. We have three new approaches designed to provide several levels of support for our most vulnerable congregations and ministries. These three approaches are Daily Bread Grants, Here to Serve, and the Covid-19 Response Appeal.

DAILY BREAD GRANTS

ELCA World Hunger is announcing the immediate launch of Daily Bread Matching Grants. Through these grants, ELCA congregations can raise funds for their feeding ministries using an online fundraising platform and will receive a grant of \$500 from ELCA World Hunger. Up to 100 Daily Bread Matching Grants are available for ELCA congregations on a first-come, first-served basis, with the possibility of more grants becoming available in the future. Apply or donate [here](#).

HERE TO SERVE

The churchwide organization is inherently a resource in support of the members, congregations, synods and partners of the ELCA. During this time, Domestic Mission will pivot to a project-based, service-oriented structure so this church knows we are here to serve. By the first week of April, we will launch a chat function on ELCA.org along with an 800 hotline for prayer, support and questions that will be answered by our staff. As soon as these channels are live, we will let you know.

COVID-19 RESPONSE APPEAL

It's more important now than ever to support our church across the country through these difficult times. We will begin to raise funds to support our congregations, ministries and synods. This effort will launch the week of March 30 via email and social media with a special form online to donate.

In addition to our new three-pronged response, our work continues in providing and updating resources on [ELCA.org/publichealth](https://www.elca.org/publichealth). We are also still at work in the world. Our global mission work continues and grows in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are working with our global companions to provide support where we can. Learn more about that [here](#).

I am proud to say that even during challenging times, we continue our service in living out the mission of this church: *Together in Jesus Christ we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully.*

Peace and be well,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MARCH 30, 2020 UPDATE FROM BISHOP COLLINS

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, greetings in the name of Christ.

An excerpt from this morning's devotion:

Save me, O Lord, from my enemies; I have fled to you for refuge.

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

Let your good spirit lead me on a level path.

For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life.

In your righteousness bring me out of trouble. Psalm 143:9-11

God our refuge, in times of distress and challenge you provide a safe place for your people to dwell. Keep us from all harm and teach us your will, guiding us in paths of righteousness. Amen.

Today marks another extension of the directive to “shelter at home” – this time, throughout the month of April. In many ways, this seems unfathomable. It's hard to wrap my brain around this and I worry how you all are doing in the midst of this total disruption of our norm. And just when I find myself slipping into that space of worry, I am reminded of the safe place that God has provided for us, spiritually and physically.

Yes, as congregations of this synod, we will follow the directives and guidance provided by those keeping watch over this pandemic. We will suspend in-person worship and in-person gatherings and meetings of ten or more people throughout the month of April. And when we do feel the need to gather in person, in those very small groups, we will do so with the utmost precautions taken. Indeed, this is not the time to challenge necessary actions – for the health and well-being of all.

But it is a time of creativity! For those of you who can access the web on your computer or phone, just look at all of the creative and wonderful ways that God's Word is being proclaimed. There are so many people reaching out, connecting, sharing and caring for one another. Faith communities are “taking over” Facebook. ZOOM and Facetime have become the means of “seeing” one another. Daily prayer, Bible studies, and online worship services are everywhere you look – what a blessing!

I want to offer my gratitude to rostered leaders who are spending triple the time in worship and teaching preparations to provide these online offerings. I'm grateful to all who are creating resources for kids and families of things to do while they are home together. I also give thanks to all of our congregational members who are taking time to check up with other members and neighbors by way of phone calls or cards, who are running errands and delivering meals to doorsteps. There is so much, and so many people to be thankful for in these days of sheltering.

But I also acknowledge the challenges we face. How do we provide pastoral care when we can't be physically present? How do we help folks grieve and celebrate the life of a loved one when funerals can't take place as we would like? What do we say to the couple who has planned and waited for their wedding day? What can we do for our students who are missing classmates, graduation celebrations, performances, sporting achievements and the like? And how can we be there for those who have lost wages, whose places of employment have shut down, who struggle to pay bills? These are things that don't have easy solutions. But...we can figure out something, together. Are there not Biblical examples of communities coming together to meet the needs of the whole?

I want to share that there are steps being taking to seek financial resources to help various ministries. Churchwide is reaching out to specific entities to request financial assistance for synods and we are looking at our own synodical assets to see what funds are available to offer assistance to our congregations. We are also asking folks, as they are able, to continue to send offerings to their congregations either by mail or through the online giving app that some congregations have in place. As you consider your giving in these days, keep in mind that there will be members who won't have even a widow's mite to share.

All of these blessings and challenges remind me of a word that has been key in my ministry – RELATIONSHIPS. To trust in the relationship God has with us. To understand that we are in relationship with one another as the body of Christ. And to be present, as that body of Christ, in relationship to the world around us. Every day we have the opportunity to strengthen and build upon all of these relationships, even in and especially with this time of social distancing. This is a time to put aside our fears and worries and rest assured in these relationships.

Allow me to close with one more scripture reference:

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

In these days, we are reminded to be still and rest assured that God is with us. As the church, let us also be good examples to our communities in practicing safe distancing while, at the same time, discovering new ways of being church together for the sake of our congregations and for the sake of our communities. May we all be safe while we all strive to be the church.

Shalom
Bishop Collins

