



Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

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PASTORAL LETTER

Resuming Regular Sunday Schedule

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

Over the past four months we have become consumed with the COVID-19 pandemic and many things related to hygiene and health. We have been inundated by all manner of information and/or misinformation on many sides of the issue.

In this stressful time, St. Paul’s words above take on new depth and meaning. Instead of letting ourselves be consumed by the often “irreverent” news and information we consume on a daily basis, the apostle calls us to train ourselves for godliness—for living first and foremost as God’s redeemed people, confident and at peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. *“For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way.”*

Focusing on our physical health and wellbeing is certainly good and of “some value,” but training ourselves in godliness—in our Lord’s truth, life, and forgiveness—is better by far. It has “value in every way.” This is especially true in this time of pandemic. We *need* to immerse ourselves in our Lord’s Word of grace, truth, and peace. To do that, we especially need to return to our normal

routine hearing and learning God’s Word.

RESTORING NORMALCY & MAINTAINING SENSITIVITY

For this reason the Board of Elders has decided that it is good, right, and healthy to restore our regular Sunday morning schedule of both Divine Service and Christian Education. **Beginning Sunday, September 13, we will resume our normal Sunday schedule of:**

- 9:00 a.m. Divine Service**
- 10:30 a.m. Christian Education:
Sunday School & Adult Bible Class**
- 11:45 a.m. Youth Catechism Class**

If you still need or prefer an alternate Divine Service time due to COVID-related concerns, another opportunity will still be offered. We are moving the 11:00 Divine Service time to **Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., starting September 16.** This will be a repeat of the Sunday morning service.

The 9:00 Divine Service on Sundays will continue to be live-streamed on Hope’s Facebook page.

As was mentioned in my previous Pastoral Letter (available on Hope’s website), the 11:00 time slot on Sunday mornings was intended to be only temporary from the time we reopened in May. We are seeking to restore a sense of normalcy for Hope congregation as well as

maintain our sensitivity to the new COVID-related needs. By God's grace we continue to practice "kindness, humility, meekness, and patience" (Colossians 3:12) in these uncharted waters. We pray that the Wednesday evening Divine Service time will be a blessing to those who need or prefer it.

NOTE ON CHILDREN AND COVID-19

While the debate on reopening schools in our area continues to rage, we at Hope are confident that we can safely resume Sunday School. Those who teach Sunday School have been polled and are all willing to return to this blessed and important task. We are also confident that we can hold Sunday School with the same health and hygiene measures we have been using.

We also note what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said regarding children and COVID-19: "Early reports suggest children are less likely to get COVID-19 than adults, and when they do get COVID-19, they generally have a less serious illness. As of July 21, 2020, 6.6% of reported COVID-19 cases and less than 0.1% of COVID-19-related deaths are among children and adolescents less than 18 years of age in the United States."

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>, accessed 7/29/20)

ADAPTATIONS FOR MUSIC PROGRAM

After consultation with Kantor Janssen, Hope's music program will also resume this Fall, though with some adaptations. At this point, it is neither responsible nor safe to hold full choir rehearsals or have a full choir sing in the sanctuary. The space does not allow for good social distancing.

We will still have sung and instrumental music, however, because we can utilize smaller choral ensembles as well as soloists for vocal and instrumental music. Kantor Janssen is working well in these parameters and will communicate more with our musicians.

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." (1 Timothy 4:9-10)

As we struggle through these challenging times, we also "toil and strive" to trust our Lord first and foremost and

live together as His children. As St. Paul says, **"we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe."** This confident hope makes the toiling and striving worth it. It also binds us together to support one another and comfort one another with the love and forgiveness that our Lord has revealed on the cross.

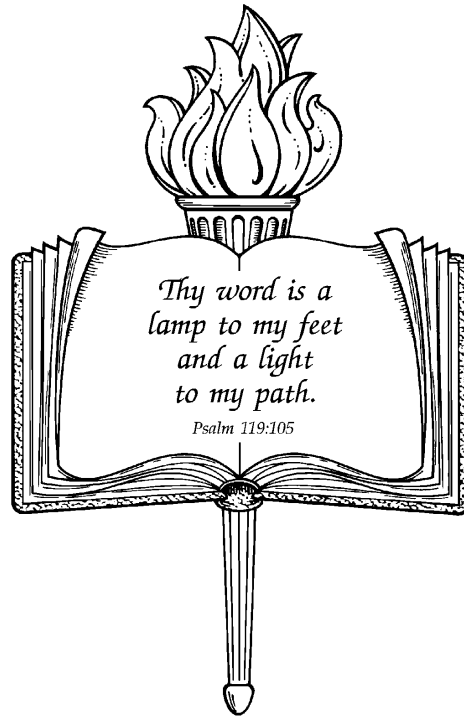
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LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter Article - August 2020

Winston Churchill reportedly said, "we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." According to Churchill then, our lives are defined less by what we have gotten and more by what we give away.

Our Lord's life is defined in this way. He gave completely of Himself for us. He became man for us. He taught the truth of God's Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserve because of sin. He gave of Himself in order to save us from sin, death, and hell. So it is that by giving completely of Himself, He got us for Himself, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace.

As it was for Jesus, so it is also for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. Giving softens our hearts and frees us from the worries of this world and making a living. For when we are singularly focused on

making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get.

That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives - our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the

Lord. It shifts our focus from asking "How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others?" to "What have they done for me lately?" We become more selfish instead of selfless.

But, when we give, we do not have less, and we do not become less. We

have more and become more. Because when we give, we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus, we are participating in the divine nature. As Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).



Notes from the Kantor

In the past five months I have written very little addressing the congregation from my post as Kantor. Part of that is due to an increased focus on worship during this pandemic. First it was getting a livestream set up in a way to convey a clear and meaningful worship experience for the members of the congregation. Second, I was learning to create bulletins that are much more detailed than our typical layout. Finally, what more could I say that hasn't already been said? When the social distancing measures began, then increased, the number of people putting their "content" online and in print skyrocketed. What more could I add? Why should I add to the "noise"? Many of my musical colleagues around the country began daily performances or sharing hymn stories. It's all great stuff, but what could I add to these prolific musicians and theologians? While some of it has died down, some has only gotten more emboldened. I've seen helpful devotions turn into political tirades and I've seen colleagues who just can't keep up with the workload. What seemed like a helpful offering for a few weeks became draining after many months.

Regardless of how you feel politically about this pandemic and how it is being handled, remember what St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians,

Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good.

(1 Thessalonians 5:13-22)

Be at peace and give thanks in all circumstances. Those are hard things to do when life is normal! Our human nature finds us uncomfortable with the idea that God is in

control. God has given us leaders to direct the actions of our society. God has given us medical personal to treat the afflicted. God has given us scientists to study and discover. God has given us the intellect to help us understand His creation. God has given us His Word to soothe our aching souls. God has given us His Son to die on the cross to forgive the sins of all humanity. God is in control. We have reason to be at peace and give thanks in all circumstances.

The 16th century kantor, pastor and hymn writer Martin Rinckart had some experience with trusting that God was in control. He served as pastor in Germany during the Thirty-Years' war (1618-1648), an extreme famine, and a devastating plague. The plague alone took the lives of more than eight thousand members of his community's residents, including his wife. He officiated at more than four thousand funerals, including mass funerals for up to fifty people. Even through the trials he experienced he continued to trust in the Lord and His blessings. We are most familiar with his hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God," which was likely written in the 1630's, right in the midst of a very trying time in history. Originally written as a mealtime prayer, the text provides us a rich reminder to be at peace and give thanks in all circumstances.

Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
and still is our today.

Lutheran Service Book 895, stanza 1

Stay safe, stay healthy, and most importantly stay...

Together in Christ,
Kantor Janssen

“Therefore everything in this Christian community is so ordered that everyone may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and [Sacraments] appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live on earth” (Large Catechism, II:55). Here’s what’s coming up in the Divine Service for August as we continue to learn and live the Christian faith and life.

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
August 2	Eighth Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 7:15-23	FALSE PROPHETS - Jesus warns us against false teachers and their deceptive teachings. It is God’s Word of grace that builds us up and gives us an eternal inheritance. Only good trees—those recreated by Christ—can bear good fruits.
August 9	Ninth Sunday after Trinity	Luke 16:1-9	The Wise Steward - The unjust manager gives us a lesson in wisdom. Christians are to be wise in their dealings in the world and not succumb to the world’s pressures and delights. We are called to use everything in life for Christ’s glory.
August 16	Tenth Sunday after Trinity	Luke 19:41-48	The Lord and His People - Jerusalem was blind to God’s gracious visitation in Jesus the Christ. Are we blind to God coming to visit us in His Word and Sacraments? Jesus wants His people to be attentive to His gracious presence.
August 23	Eleventh Sunday after Trinity	Luke 18:9-14	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector - The Pharisee worshiped himself, but the Tax Collector humbly confessed his sinful state. This is true godliness! God delights in people who tell the truth of their sin and live in His forgiveness.
August 30	Twelfth Sunday after Trinity	Mark 7:31-37	The Healing of the Sick - The Lord Jesus restores His good creation by opening our hearts to hear His Word and loosing our mouths to praise and confess Him. Thus healed, we confess not only Jesus’ forgiveness but also His creation.

**QUARTERLIFE FELLOWSHIP
LCMS Young Adult Group**

Quarterlife Fellowship is an LCMS Young Adult Group for those in their 20s/30s. They meet for Bible Study at Village Lutheran in Ladue on Tuesdays!

For information about their events, contact Joel Maichel <jrmdz6@mst.edu> or see the Quarterlife Fellowship St. Louis Facebook group. Join in and bring friends!

PRO-LIFE INFORMATION

There have been over 61,000,000 babies killed by abortion in America since 1973. What can Christians do to speak and act to protect God's gift of life? Lutherans For Life is a good place to start. They have Zoom meetings for instruction on topics like vaccines and over-the-counter abortions. These

can be viewed on lutheransforlife.org.

The Lutherans For Life website states, “The life issues of our time are much more than controversial political issues. They are grave spiritual issues, for they assault the Creator of Life and insult the Lord of Life. Our work equips Lutherans to be positive, life-affirming voices that uphold the truth of the God-given value of human life, both in local congregations and in society. Through this work we are growing the number of voices across the globe that spread the joyful message that every human life is created and gifted by God, every human life is someone for whom Jesus Christ died, and every human life is someone the Holy Spirit desires to call into an eternal relationship with Him.”

For more information, contact Judy Maichel, mjmaichel@juno.com