

Living Faith Messenger

2020 Spring Edition

From the Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Troy Billow

"Bridge Over Troubled Water"

Spring 2020

As all of us have witnessed in our country since March 15th that things can change quickly and dramatically. Our safety and security have been torn away from us suddenly and now our world and nation are experiencing a global pandemic along with a plummeting financial market causing a broken economy. We are now living in very troubled times and walking through a sudden storm we were unprepared for.

Remember when Peter along with the other disciples were caught in a sudden storm out on the sea of Galilee *"Buffeted by the waves, Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind and sky, he was afraid and began to sink, he cried out 'Lord save me!'"* It's when Peter looked away at the wind and the frightening circumstances surrounding him that he began to sink instead of keeping his attention and faith focused on the Lord in that vital moment. **As Jesus' followers in 2020, this is the same kind of moment we face now needing the same kind of faith and focus** to keep calm and maintain peace in the midst of this terrible health scare and economic panic. Don't let the waves of anxiety pull you under, it's a different kind of sudden storm for us today, but the same faith is needed to keep the waves of fear beneath our feet. Spend time alone with Him and in His Word, He is your peace and the Captain of your destiny.

A special song came to my mind this week by Simon and Garfunkel called **"Bridge Over Troubled Water"**. Paul Simon testified that the song was based in Gospel music he was listening to at the time he wrote this piece. In 1970 it was their biggest hit ever,



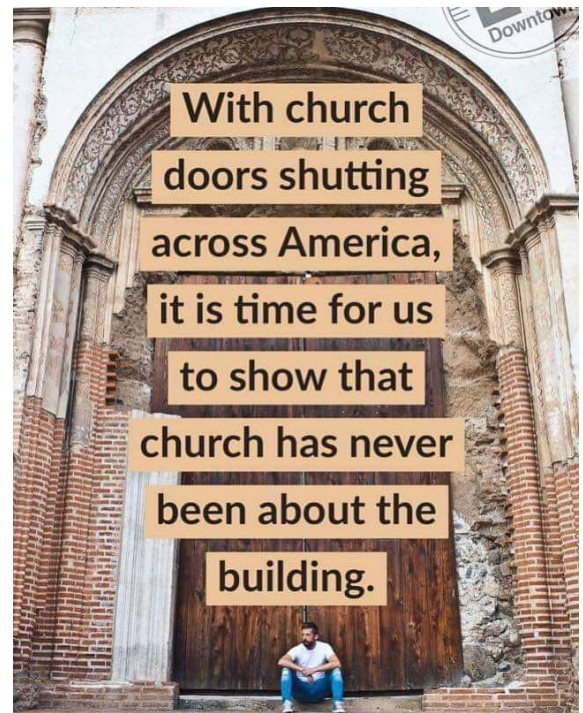
grossing more than 6 million dollars, and it was nominated as "one of the best songs of all time" by Rolling Stone Magazine. This song obviously struck a deep chord of comfort at that time in the hearts of everyone who heard it.

Some of the lyrics say – "When evening falls so hard, I will comfort you, O when darkness comes, when pain is all around, If you need a friend, I'm sailing right behind you, like a bridge over troubled water, I will ease your mind, I will ease your mind." These words seem reminiscent of things Jesus might say. The truth is, He never promises to prevent the storms of life, but He did promise to be with you in them like He was with Peter that day "I will never leave you and I will never forsake you" -Jesus.

Dear Christian, *this is who Christ is for us – He is a bridge over troubled water* and when darkness and pain are all around, He can be our stable comfort and ease our troubled mind. When we see our security become disrupted and society dramatically change overnight, and as we all watch the clock of history wind down to the final days, our only real safety and security will be found in Knowing Christ, our Bridge to safety.

In my prayer, Pastor Troy

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HIS JUDGMENT COMETH AND THAT RIGHT SOON

You will remember this verse on a plaque on the wall of Warden Samuel Norton's office in the film *Shawshank Redemption*. Is this an appropriate saying for our time in America? You be the judge. Here are a few examples of the many that could be cited.

On September 11, 2001, our nation was brutally attacked by radical Islamist, mostly from Saudi Arabia, at the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania. In the aftermath, many American's returned to church and our services were full. Slowly but sadly, it all faded over time as things got back to normal; and we eventually killed the head of the terrorists, Osama Bin Laden.

Since then, we have returned to business as usual. The next president changed his mind about marriage being between a man and a woman. The White House was aglow with the colors of the rainbow. Each year, over a million people attend the gay pride parade in Chicago, and many others at gay parades around the world.

We have become a nation that worships at the feet of our star athletes. We kiss and bow down to their trophies. Idolatry is rampant in our America founded on the principles of God and the Bible. Pleasure, sports and family events become a higher priority than the church and worship on Sunday.

We now have open persecution of Christians in our country. Church and Synagogue shootings shock us with the death of God fearing and loving people, committed to worshipping their Lord each Sunday. They are the new martyrs.

Violence on our streets is rampant with so many innocent children being gunned down each week in Chicago. The police seem powerless to stop it. Or, our leaders are not willing to pay the price to check it. The many roving gangs who control the drug trade, worth millions of dollars, shoot at each other indiscriminately.

And now, what do we have, a pandemic? It appears we could be moving toward a total shutdown in our cities and neighborhoods. In order to maintain peace in such a move, it will take the National Guard to stand watch, to stop the looting, burning and complete civil disobedience. Remember Detroit in 1967? I was there.

So, with the Covid 19 wreaking havoc on our nation and the world, what would you call this? Maybe Warden Norton's plaque on the wall is prophetic: *His Judgment Cometh and that Right Soon*.

Pastor John Billow

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Someone You Should Know

Rob Thompson



"I was an only child with two sisters from my Mom's first marriage (her husband died). My Mom and Dad brought me into this world on December 14, 1959 when they were both approximately 45 years old. I was my Dad's only child. My early life was pretty normal, I did well in school and began playing the piano at the insistence of my mother at the age of 7. I am still playing today, over 50 years later.

Edith and I met over 15 years ago. We were married May 30th, 2015. We live in Oak Lawn with Derek (9), our nephew who is now living with us. He was born in Harlingen, TX.

I do have three sons from my first marriage, Dan (36), Eric (34) and Jacob (27). I also have a granddaughter, Kennedy (6), from Eric and Brandy. My son Dan is married to Bridget and living in Worth with their two dogs. Jacob is working with his brother Eric, currently in Europe, where they are doing Fiber Optic Engineering work. My parents are both deceased, Kennedy Thompson (died 2007), Mary Thompson (died 2004). My parents had a very strong and positive influence on my life. My mother was raised Catholic and my father, Mennonite. They came together in the Lutheran Church, which is where I was baptized as an infant and confirmed at the age of 14 (1974). It was during this process I was led to salvation by my pastor, Pastor Langrebe."

How did you discover the old Moraine Valley Community Church? What attracted you?

Edith and I discovered Moraine Valley Community Church one Sunday when we were searching for a church we could call home. We had gone to several churches in the area, both large and small, but just didn't connect with either the preaching or the people. We had actually planned to attend another church, but the service began at 10am, and we noticed that MVCC's service began at 11am. What we saw as an "accident" was actually God's plan all along. When we arrived that fateful Sunday at MVCC, we were greeted warmly by the members and we both remember sitting in the back row of the sanctuary at Savior Divine Lutheran Church (our host church building). As we left the building, I asked Edith what she thought and she replied, "we were home". We found a church that believed in teaching and preaching from the Bible. The music was uplifting and inspiring. At the end of the first service, Mark DeBauche (original drummer) came over to greet me and asked if I was a musician....not quite sure how he knew that, but he just smiled when I responded "Yes."

Are there any stories you would like to share? How did you come to know the Lord?

There are many stories that I would like to share, but I will share one very important story about my wife and how her faith and determination has truly guided me to be the Christian man I am today. I was pretty satisfied that my parents had done the right thing raising me as a Christian. I went to church every Sunday, was part of the youth group, attended my confirmation classes and ultimately became a member of the Lutheran Church back in 1974. I was also an acolyte at the Lutheran Church, I can share more of that later if someone wants to hear that story. My wife was raised Baptist and attended Christian schools during her entire formal education process, but she impressed me so much with her knowledge of the Bible and how the Word of God impacted her throughout her life. It was this inspiration and how God brought us together, two broken people, who truly wanted to do the right things going forward, that I decided to be baptized as an adult at Moraine Valley Community Church. I did give my life to Jesus at the age of 14, but I truly renewed that vow, when I was baptized as

an adult. I was baptized on the same day as Noah Juarez. It was a very special day and I have never looked back. Jesus is my Savior and my guiding light through this world as I continue to work to be the best Christian husband, father and leader that I can be with God's help.

What advice would you like to give our younger generation?

Begin early in your life to focus on God's Will, God's Way and God's Time. It is truly not about you; it is about

God. Serve God, honor God, Glorify God and you will be on the best path in Life. To be a true follower of Christ, learn to sacrifice those things that you want and focus on the needs of others.

And last but certainly not least, how would you like this story to end? Any quotes or wisdom you can share?

"As we certainly live in interesting times to say the least, I have found several Bible verses that have given me guidance, comfort and hope for the future:

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Isaiah 41:10

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I AM YOUR GOD; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

"Put the Lord first in your life, put Him at the front of everything you do, pray to him daily and continually ask him for guidance and He will listen.

~Thank you for sharing your story with us!

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Prayer List

Please be in prayer for the following:

1. Protection from Covid 19
2. Continued growth.
3. Donation of property.
4. Continued blessings for our Sunday School and Youth Group.
5. Protection for our churches, pastors and their families.

Thank You, Father, for answered prayers and
Your Presence in our lives!

Please Pray

God's presence and peace for our homebound members:

Sarah Delgado, Emmitt & Marion Hays, Leroy & Marilyn Crettol, & Helene White

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"God's Warriors" is our new Young Adult Group (ages 18-40) meeting monthly to discuss life as Christians, facing different obstacles, getting to know one another and building lifelong friendships. If you would like more information call Katy Heinrich (513) 267-0074.

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Birthdays

April

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| <i>Pat Curtis</i> | <i>Apr. 5</i> |
| <i>Samantha Gonzalez</i> | <i>Apr. 6</i> |
| <i>John Beechy</i> | <i>Apr. 8</i> |
| <i>*LeRoy Crettol (homebound)</i> | <i>Apr. 8</i> |
| <i>Katy Cox</i> | <i>Apr. 14</i> |
| <i>Isaias Bustamante</i> | <i>Apr. 15</i> |
| <i>Hannah Blasier</i> | <i>Apr. 25</i> |
| <i>Becca Gehle</i> | <i>Apr. 30</i> |

May

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| <i>Sarah Delgado</i> | <i>May 1</i> |
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May (cont.)

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| <i>Christine Billow</i> | <i>May 2</i> |
| <i>Janet Tomany</i> | <i>May 2</i> |
| <i>Marion Kirkland</i> | <i>May 5</i> |
| <i>Linda Bryk</i> | <i>May 10</i> |

June

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Kimberly Healy</i> | <i>June 10</i> |
| <i>Zelma Locke</i> | <i>June 18</i> |
| <i>Maygen Stork</i> | <i>June 21</i> |
| <i>Chris DeBauche</i> | <i>June 23</i> |
| <i>Clarence DeBauche</i> | <i>June 24</i> |
| <i>Sharon Robison</i> | <i>June 28</i> |
| <i>Lilli Houdek</i> | <i>June 30</i> |

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Elsie's Pantry

"Nourishing Body and Soul since 2000"

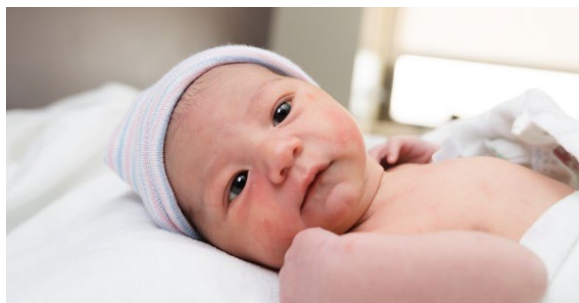


We are open through the Covid 19 pandemic thanks to David Skowronski, Matt Birk, Chuck, Jane and Karen – the faithful volunteers who know there is a need and are willing to feed those hungry families (last week there were 63 families consisting of 197 people). We are expecting the numbers to increase. To maintain safety, Clients are not permitted to leave their cars; pre-boxed canned goods, produce, pastries, meat and breads are brought to them reducing the risk of contact.

Those who serve: David Skowronski-Coordinator, Karen Walsh-Co-Director, Pastors John, Troy and Marty, Bob, Carmen, Chuck, Daryll, Donna, Gloria, Herb, Jackie, Jane, Joyce, Joanne, Juana, Linda, Matt, Naomi, Scott, Tom and Tommie – Elsie's Pantry Staff

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Introducing:
Eliot J. Bustamante



Eliot J. Bustamante was born Feb. 13 at 5:39 am. He was 7lbs 15oz and 21.5 inches long. We have all been doing well. Isaías and Esmeralda love their new brother and both are good helpers. We are all so grateful for the support and love from our church family during this time. Thank you to everyone that gave us diapers, wipes, meals and made sure to lift us up in prayers. We can't wait to worship again with everyone and introduce Eliot to the Living Faith Family. – Chucho and Megan Bustamante



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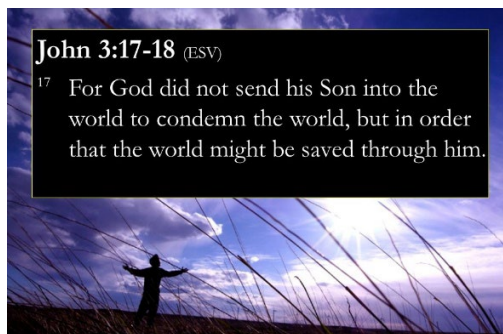
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

From: Beth Heinrich

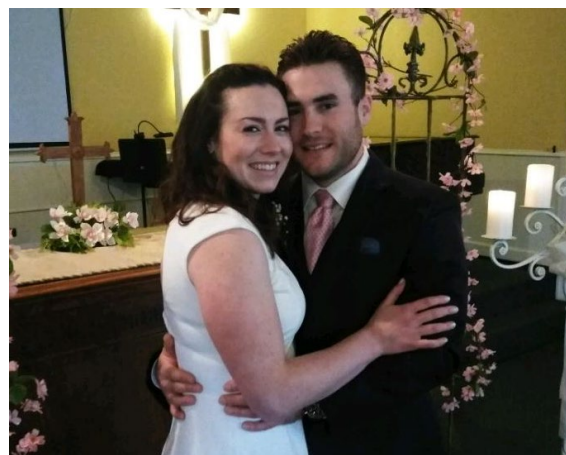
If there are any articles you would like to see or someone you would like to highlight please make sure I have that info by the end of May. Our next newsletter will be the summer edition coming in June. Please email me at beth.heinrich62@gmail.com Thank you!

John 3:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.



Congratulations Kenny & Bree Wirth
March 27, 2020



From Your Council of Leaders

It certainly has been an unusual time lately. Two months ago, no one would have guessed that the entire United States would be virtually shut down, and all of us sheltering in place. Our political leaders have decreed we should 'shelter in place' and practice 'social distancing' to keep from spreading the Coronavirus-19. Sadly, that means we had to suspend our Living Faith Community Church meetings, as well. No Sunday sermons, no Thursday Bible Study or Living Faith Youth Group. No Band of Brothers and no Circle of Sisters. And, even more sadly, no worship services during Holy Week, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and not even a joyful Easter Sunday.

We look forward to the time it is again safe for our physical health to meet again to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Meantime, I encourage you to increase the time you spend reading your Bible. Reach out by telephone to someone you haven't talked to for a while. Encourage your children and teach them Christian values.

Our church has a subscription to Right Now Media that provides Bible studies, teaching programs for both men and women, and lots of children's programs like Veggie Tales to teach Christian principles. If you currently aren't signed up with Right Now Media, you can send an email to roybeehn@comcast.net to receive an emailed invitation where you can sign up with your email and your own password. There is no cost to you. Please take advantage of the site.

May GOD keep you and yours safe. I look forward to seeing you soon.

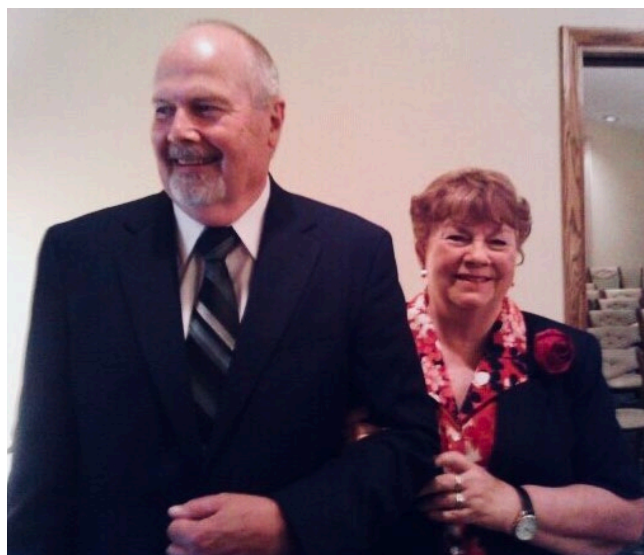
~ Virginia Beehn

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Happy 60th Anniversary

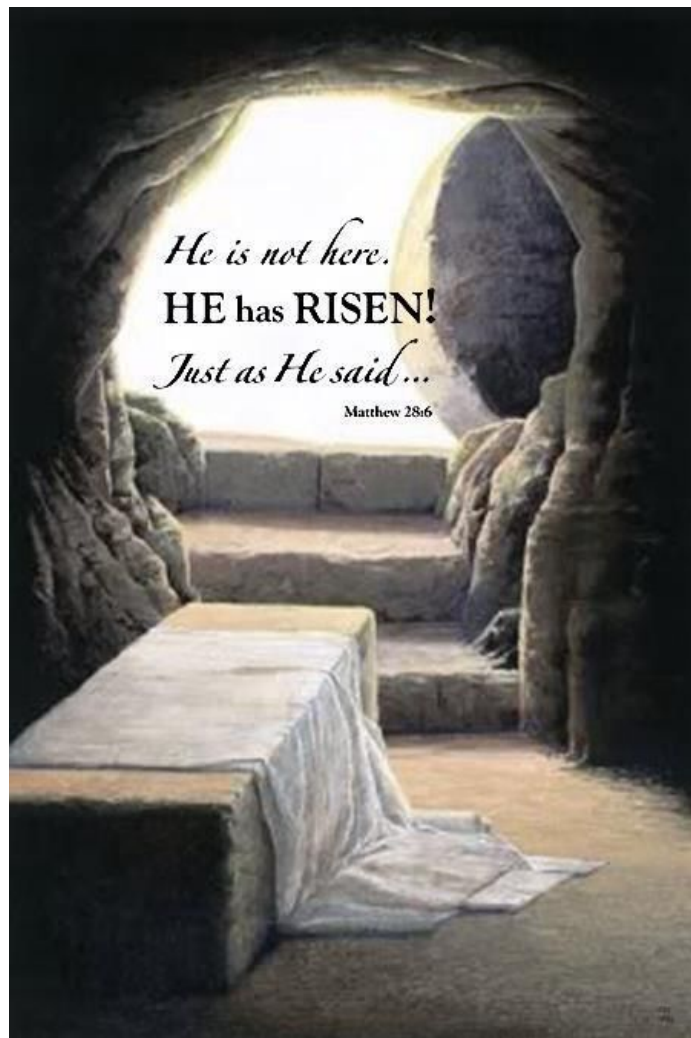
Pastor John & Carol Billow

April 23, 1960



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*Wishing you all a very
blessed Easter*



A Prayer for Our Leaders

Dear God,

Would You give our leaders wisdom, discernment, and strength. Keep them healthy, safe, and rested so that they can guide us through this time.

Give our **government leaders** wisdom on how to stop the virus and stabilize our economy.

Give our **spiritual leaders** Your discernment on how to meet people's needs as they glorify Your name and encourage the Church.

Give our **medical leaders** insight into how to stop the virus. Strengthen their resolve and honor their hard work in creating a treatment for COVID-19.

Give our **civic leaders** inspiration, courage, joy, and strength to meet the needs of their communities.

And **help us**, as leaders in our communities, to display courage, hope, generosity, and kindness.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

YouVersion

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380 High Road Lockport, IL
60441

Dated Material
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Stamp

Living Faith Messenger

The Quarterly Newsletter Of
Living Faith Community Church