



THE MESSENGER

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD (LCMS)

Rev. Trevor A. Mankin, Pastor
Rachel Robins, Office Administrator

JUNE 2020

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From the Desk of Pastor Mankin

Greetings in our coming Lord and Savior,

Are we free to flee in a pandemic? Dr. Luther was well acquainted with pandemics and his pastoral approach can provide useful guidance in our time. The Black Death killed large portions of the population of Saxony during his lifetime. Pastors conducted thousands of funerals, even burring entire congregations. In 1527 AD, Luther's Wittenberg experienced an outbreak of the plague, prompting him to write a letter to a fellow pastor in Breslau concerning the question "Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague" (Luther's Works 43:119-38).

Can you flee at a time of plague, or are you bound to stay? There were strong opinions on both sides. Some thought fleeing showed your lack of faith. Others believed you were free to leave, provided you held no public office, and had no one was dependent on you.

Luther extols staying nor does he condemn leaving. "Since it is generally true of Christians that few are strong and many are weak, one simply cannot place the same burden upon everyone. A person who has a strong faith can drink poison and suffer no harm (Mark 16:18), while one who has a weak faith would thereby drink to his death." The strong must travel with the weak. "Christ does not want his weak ones to be abandoned." Luther does not make this a rule, nor does he bind the consciences of those who wish to leave.

Luther frames the question in terms of vocation according to the three orders or estates of the temporal (earthly) kingdom – church, civil society, and home (see Table of Duties in the Small Catechism).

Pastors and preachers, already engaged in spiritual ministry, must remain steadfast before the peril of death to bring comfort to the sick and dying. If there are sufficient pastors available, one may leave so as not

to expose oneself to danger needlessly. Luther cites the examples of St. Paul and Athanasius.

Public officials likewise must remain at their posts as ministers of God. "To abandon an entire community which one has been called to govern and to leave it without official or government, exposed to all kinds of danger such as fires, murder, riots, and every imaginable disaster is a great sin." Still, if they feel they must flee, they must ensure that the community is well-governed and protected by others.

The same applies to the household. "Fathers and mothers are bound by God's law to serve and help their children, and children their fathers and mothers." Where one is not needed and where ample provision is already provided, one has a free choice whether to remain or flee. "If someone is sufficiently bold and strong in his faith, let him stay in God's name; that is certainly no sin. If someone is weak and fearful, let him flee in God's name as long as he does not neglect his duty toward his neighbor but has made adequate provision for others to provide nursing care." To flee from death is not unbelief, but "a natural tendency, implanted by God and is not forbidden unless it be against God and neighbor."

Also, Luther counsels against despair and the assaults of the devil. The devil is to be rebuffed in two ways. First, by the victory of Christ. "If you have poison in your fangs, Christ has far greater medicine." Second, by the promise of God that those who minister to the needy are blessed in serving Christ. "If you wish to serve Christ and to wait on him, very well, you have your sick neighbor close at hand. Go to him and serve him, and you will surely find Christ in him, not outwardly but in his word."

Faith is not reckless. Afterall, God has given you your reason and all your senses and still takes care of them. (see First Article of the Creed) Luther has no

admiration for those who disdain the use of medicines and do not avoid places infected by plague but lightheartedly make fun of it to show how strong they are. For Luther, this is tantamount to suicide. "If one makes no use of intelligence or medicine when he could do so without detriment to his neighbor, such a person injures his body and must beware lest he become a suicide in God's eyes." Moreover, by needlessly exposing himself to disease, he risks infecting others and so becomes a murderer many times over.

Luther's advice combines faith with sound reason, medical science, and common sense, 1st and 3rd article gifts working together. Use medicine; take potions which can help you; fumigate the house; avoid persons and places where you are not needed. Those who are sick should be isolated from the general population, like the lepers of the Old Testament, states Luther, but they should not be abandoned in their quarantine.

Luther delivers pastoral care that neither burdens the weak in faith nor allows weakness as an excuse to flee responsibility. We are all responsible to ward off disease to the best of our abilities, but in emergencies, we must be bold enough to risk our health for the sake of others if that is necessary. "Thus we should be ready for both – to live and die according to God's will. For "none of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself," as St. Paul says (Rom 14:7).

In your Christian Freedom you may certainly care for your own health, and the health of those around you. If your faith is weak or strong, put your trust in Christ and do not let the devil drive you to despair. Live out your vocations which God has given you to the best of your ability, by loving Him and serving your neighbor. Use your God given gift of reason, and do not put the Lord your God to the test. Finally read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Word of God as often as you can.

Plagues are nothing new, and this too shall pass. But the Word of the Lord endures forever. Amen.

In Him,
– Pastor Mankin

FROM THE OFFICE

THE NEXT MESSENGER DEADLINE IS:

June 22, 2020

Please ensure your announcements/articles arrive at the church office by the date above if you would like them in the next Messenger. The Messenger deadline is the 3rd Monday of the month unless there is a holiday. Please place all messages and articles in the office mailbox located in the choir room or email them to office@messiahseattle.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

Congratulations are in order for two Messiah members! Trey Knudson is graduating from UCLA with a BS in Physics. He will attend grad school in geophysics at Stanford University. And Kelly Knudson is graduating Bellevue High; she will attend San Diego State University to study marine biology. Well done, you both, on all your hard work!

UPDATE ON TITHING

As of the end of the first week of June, all tithes collected at that point will be cashed. If for whatever reason your mailed tithe has not cleared by June 8th, please contact the office so we can track down errant payments. Thanks again for your flexibility and understanding during these difficult times.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I am sure that all of you are hungry for updates and word for as how Messiah is continuing to move forward during this global crisis, Council has met and made decisions regarding some planned events that were due to occur over the Summer.

RETURN TO IN-PERSON SERVICES

Although the specific dates for when in-person worshiping will resume, the council/elder teams are already building an action plan to align with local authority guidelines and to ensure the continued safety of the congregation. More details of this plan will be shared in a separate letter to the congregation in June.

SINGLE SERVICE OVER SUMMER

Due to expected restrictions around group gatherings, the plan to go to a single service over the summer has been cancelled for 2020.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This year's VBS has been postponed due to safety concerns in this current pandemic. We are still hopeful that we can find a time later in the year to hold VBS and an update will be provided in July.

CHURCH CAMP

The annual church camp originally scheduled in July has been postponed. An announcement on whether this camp will be rescheduled later in the year will be shared in the next Church Messenger.

COUNCIL/ELDER MEETINGS

These meetings are being held online and will continue to be conducted per normal schedule (please see the calendar in the newsletter for upcoming meeting dates).

I would like to send my sincere thanks to Pastor and all teams who have continued to support our congregation over the past many weeks. I look forward to the day when we all can be back together, however till that time, please take care and God Bless.

GET TO KNOW YOUR COUNCIL

Rachel Ferguson, Education

I'm originally from "the last best place" aka Montana. I grew up in a very small town before graduating from Montana State University with a degree in Business. I first met my husband, Andrew, in 2006 during a summer college internship with Boeing in Kent, WA. No sparks flew as we both had some growing up to do but in 2011 we reconnected it was a different story: I moved to Seattle in March of 2012, we were engaged in May and married in June of 2013.

In March of 2017 Andrew and I relocated to the UK for an overseas assignment with Boeing. We lived southwest of London in a relatively small town called Poole and took advantage of the ease of travel to mainland Europe and enjoyed our expat life.

We moved home to Seattle in November of 2018 and started preparing for the arrival of our daughter, Madeleine, born on July 26, 2019.

I've worked in technology, retail and the non profit sector but never had a job I truly loved until I became a mom. Big love to all you moms.

Church services and events were a large part of my youth and I'm thankful to have been raised in an LCMS church. I dabbled with "hip church" in college but ultimately, I knew something was missing for me and returned to an LCMS church where I was spiritually fed and nourished by the word and sacraments.

I am blessed to have found Messiah: It is a st the first church Andrew and I attended in Seattle and it's a very special place to us.

Andrew and I just bought a house in Edmonds and are excited to be homeowners. We are discovering just how much work a house entails (and how many trips to Home Depot!) We have a Cocker Spaniel named Ezra who we are looking forward to taking camping and hiking when quarantine ends.

I'd like to call out the wonderful children's education and the new infant class that is such a special group for new parents. I look forward to seeing my brothers and sister each Sunday at this class.

You may or may not know that I am the point person for the daycare that the church is working to start at Messiah. Please feel free to talk to me about any questions or concerns about this project. I look forward to talking with you.

Thank you for trusting me with this council position. I love Messiah and am happy to be able to serve in this way. I can't wait to see everyone when in person services resume.



June 2020

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	1	2 10:00 am Online Bible Study	3	4	5	6 10:00 am Online Bible Study
7 HOLY TRINITY 8:00 am - Online Divine Service 9:30 am - Online Fellowship Hour	8	9 10:00 am Online Bible Study 7:00 pm Council Meeting	10	11	12	13 10:00 am Online Bible Study
14 8:00 am - Online Divine Service 9:30 am - Online Education Hour	15	16 10:00 am Online Bible Study	17	18	19	20 10:00 am Online Bible Study
21 FATHERS' DAY 8:00 am - Online Divine Service 9:30 am - Online Education Hour	22 MESSENGER DEADLINE	23 10:00 am Online Bible Study 7:00 pm Elders Meeting	24	25	26	28 10:00 am Online Bible Study
29 TENTATIVE RETURN TO SERVICES 8:00 am Divine Service 9:30 am Education Hour 10:45 am Divine Service	30					

**SUNDAY OF PENTECOST
MAY 31ST**



**HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY
JUNE 7TH**