Dear members of St. James, we are still in a state of social distancing so we are continuing to have Facebook live services on Sundays at 10:00am and Wednesdays at 7:00pm. The Wednesday service is going to be geared toward the younger children as they cannot gather together yet either. We are going to wait to celebrate Holy Communion until we are able to gather in larger numbers. If you cannot wait, I can give private Communion to those who so wish as I do for shut-ins, either at the church or at your home. Please call me if you so desire.

**Please for the sake of our fellow citizens, follow the directives of our government**. 1) If you or any member of your family does not feel well, stay home. Do not go to work or send your children to daycare. 2) If you do get COVID-19, please call the church office, and leave a message to let us know of your illness. 3) If you are concerned about your own compromised health, stay home, work from home, and seek to stay connected to your church family at home. If you desire spiritual counseling or communion at home, arrangements can be made by calling the pastor. 4) You may not be afraid because of your faith or your good health, but others may be struggling. Respect their fears, seek to encourage them, and pray for them. St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:9-13 “But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” In exercising your freedom do not harm the faith of those who are weaker.

**Some options include: viewing “Main Street Living” at 10:00 am Sundays on KDLT-NBC Sioux Falls or on the web at** [**www.mainstreetliving.com**](http://www.mainstreetliving.com)**. “This Is the Life” also is aired at 10:00am on Sundays. The Sunday morning service at St. Paul’s in Pipestone is aired on radio on KLOH 1050AM at 11:30am.**

**Included in this issue are some upcoming services lessons and hymns: If you need a hymnal, please stop by the church and sign-out a hymnal. Portals of prayer are also in the entryway.**

**Pastor will be available in the church office Monday – Friday from 9:00am-Noon** to receive calls and set-up appointments to meet with families or for any other spiritual concerns or questions. If he is out of the office a note will be posted as to when he might return. The elders will be monitoring the situation and bring updates as needed through KLOH radio 1050am and our web page at “stjamesholland.com” or on facebook under St. James Lutheran Church.

It is my prayer that this “social distancing” will be short lived and things will return to normal quickly. Be assured, you are in my prayers, and I hope you continue to pray for all who are affected by this outbreak**. In His Service, Pastor Petrich**

**Some Thoughts on Truth Today**

Truth appears to have changed lately. In the past there were obvious foundational truths that everyone seemed to recognize, but that is no longer the case. The modern mind-set is intent on declaring there are no foundational truths and is redefining everything. How does one know what they know? How do they know it to be true? From sex, creation, marriage, religion, evil and good, all objective truths concerning these issues are up for grabs. The world posits that there are no objective truths that are universally true for all. Truth is relative in that it changes from person to person. One person’s truth is another’s folly. The world suggests that truth can be known only intuitively, that you have to decide what is true for you. Since there is no “truth,” one cannot and should not impose their truth upon someone else.

It shows itself today’s expressions. “Whatever,” shows that the listener does not have the same understanding as the speaker on an issue and what is worse, that there is no attempt or care to try and understand. “You need to follow your heart” and “I need to find myself” express the understanding that nobody can tell someone else what is true about a situation and how to resolve it. The individual is the only one who can decide what is true and in turn what to do. “Truth” would limit freedom and not allow people to always follow their heart.

“Following your heart” can lead to self-destruction, let alone the destruction of society. The bible clearly states what comes out of the heart. “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” [Matthew 15:19] Yes, there are also good things associated with the heart, but how does one know which are good and which are wrong or evil? One needs guidance especially since one knows that one cannot always trust the heart. Our own conscience tells us that.

God sent his Son Jesus to help find the way to absolute truth: truth not only about our relationship to him, but truths concerning our relationships to each other and truths concerning the world around us. Jesus came to guide people back to the truth about God’s concern for us and how we are to live here while waiting for his return. The Scriptures are quite plain. One does not need interpreters to tell them what God means when he says things. Often interpreters change what God clearly states to follow their own hearts desires. His word is true. When one denies his truth, the end results in disaster.

Jesus’ death and resurrection are historical facts that prove what he says is true. God loves each of us and wants to save us all. However, He is not a God to force himself on anyone. Rejection of Him and His truth leads to places no one wants to go. Listen to him when he says, “I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.” [John 10:10]

***Sunday Lessons and Hymns***

**Sunday April 26th**: Psalm 116:1-14; Acts 2:14a,36-41; I Peter 1:17-25; Luke 24:13-35.

HYMNS: #483 “With High Delight”, #743vs1-3,6 “Jesus Priceless Treasure”, #575 “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”, #578 v1-4 “Thy Strong Word”, #655 “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”, #918 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer”.

**Sunday May 3rd**: Psalm 23; Acts 2:42-47; I Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

HYMNS: #685 “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”, #666 “O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe”, #710 “The Lord’s My Shepherd”, #692 “Praise to You and Adoration”, #711 “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”, #770 “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”, #709 “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”.

**Sunday May 10th**: Psalm 146; Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a,51-60; I Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

HYMNS: #645 “Built on the Rock”, #644 “The Church’s One Foundation”, #584 “Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing”, #464 “Church of God Elect and Glorious” #660 “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”, #912 “Christ Is Our Cornerstone”.

**Songs for Wednesday, April 29th**

**IT'S A HAPPY DAY**

1. It's a happy day, and I thank God for the weather,

It's a happy day, and I'm living it for my Lord.

It's a happy day, and things are gonna get better;

Living each day by the promises in God's Word.

1. He’s the only Way, God’s own Son the Savior,

He’s the one and only Way for He’s comin’ to take me home.

He’s the only Way, and I’ll praise his name forever,

running around with my feet up off the ground. [Repeat vs 1]

**“Easter Song”**

Hear the bells ringing, they’re singing that we can be born again!

Hear the bells ringing, they’re singing, “Christ is risen from the dead!”

**Refrain:**  The angel upon the tombstone said, “He is risen just as He said, Quickly now go tell His disciples that Jesus Christ is no longer dead!” Joy to the world, He is risen, Alleluia! He’s risen, Alleluia! He’s risen, Alleluia. [Repeat]

**He Is Risen**

He is risen! He is risen! He is risen from the tomb like He said. (Amen!)

I’m forgiven ‘cause He took away my sins.He loves me. He is risen! He is risen!

He is risen from the tomb like He said. (Amen!)

He is living And I’ve got to tell the world (I love Jesus)

I’m gonna clap my hands I’m gonna stomp my feet.

I’m gonna jump I the air (Whee!) ‘cause Jesus is alive!

He is risen! He is risen! He is risen from the tomb like He said. (Amen!) [Repeat]

**The Victory Song**

I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,

the grave is empty, won't you come and see? (twice)

***The Lord, my God, my strength, my song and now He is my victory! (twice)***

The Lord is God and (clap) I will praise Him,

my fathers's God and I will exalt Him. (twice)

**Songs for Wednesday, May 6th**

***“The Sheep Song”***

**Chorus**: **I just wanna be a sheep. Baa, baa, baa, baa (Repeat)**

**I pray the Lord my soul to keep I just wanna be a sheep. Baa, baa, baa, baa**

1. I don't wanna be a pharisee - (echo) PHARISEE? (repeat)

Cause they're not fair ya' see, I don't wanna be a pharisee (chorus)

2. I don't wanna be a sadducee - (echo) SADDUCEE? (repeat)

Cause they're so sad ya' see, I don't wanna be a sadducee (chorus)

3. I don't wanna be a hypocrite - (echo) HYPOCRITE? (repeat)

Cause they're not hip with it, I don't wanna be a hypocrite (chorus)

4. I don't wanna be a Canaanite - (echo) CANAANITE? (repeat)

Cause they raise cain all night, I don't wanna be a Canaanite

***“The Beach Story”***

1. Just a few weeks after Easter, The disciples had a wish,

So they rowed a boat together, Hoping they could catch some fish,

Though they tried, their nets were empty; A man called them from the beach.

“Let your nets down on the right side; All the fish are in your reach.”

**REFRAIN: Oh we want our Jesus Shepherd to gather us in,**

**[Good Shepherd, Go Good Shepherd!]**

**Since He knows our names and frees us from our sin.**

**He’s our Savior and our friend, And His loving has no end.**

**So let’s follow Him. Let the good life now begin!**

1. As the fish were all unloaded, Jesus fixed a breakfast meal;

Then He talked to Simon Peter, “Let Me offer you this deal.”

“Do you really, really love Me?”

“Lord, You know You own my heart.”

“Then go feed My lambs and lead them; I will help you do your part.” REF

***ENDING:*** So let’s follow Him. Let the good life now begin.”

***“One in a Hundred”***

Have you heard about the little lost sheep who was one in a hundred?

He was missed by the shepherd who knew

That he often had wandered. Since the sheep were doing fine,

He left the ninety-nine To look for the lamb he knew.

The good news is the lamb in the story is you! (ewe)

**REF: So if you’re one in a hundred or one in a million,**

**Or if you’re feeling lost as if you’re one in a billion,**

**Don’t you know? Jesus loves you so! You’ll never, never, ever be alone.**

The good shepherd went to rescue that lamb,

Though his supper was cooking;

Although many hungry animals growled,

He just kept right on looking. When that lamb was found at last,

The shepherd held him fast, So glad that his search was through.

The good news is the lamb in the story is you! (ewe) **(REF)**

***“The Baa Baa Song”***

**REF: Baa ,baa, He’s the Good Shepherd ; Ev’rywhere I go He knows.**

**Baa, baa, He is my Savior; I will follow where He goes.**

1. Jesus loves me, Finds me, cares for me,

Watches, saves me, Leads baa-ck home. REF

1. I was so lost—Where do I begin?

He paid the cost For my sin.

1. I was so scared, Storms would frighten me,

I will not fear, He’s with me. REF

***Some thoughts shared by District President Lucas Woodford***

*“And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” (Luke 24:2-3, ESV)*

Once as a teenager, while on a band trip to Florida, a buddy and I decided it would be cool to be buried in the sand on the beach. To make it interesting, we decided to dig a hole deep enough so that we could be buried up to our chins while standing up. Brilliant, right? Maybe not.

At first, as the sand was pushed down on my feet and legs, I thought this was “pretty cool.” But as the weight of the sand began piling on my stomach and chest, I started to think I was a fool.

By the time the sand was up to my chin, the weight of the sand was tremendous. The load of the sand felt like it was crushing my chest and smashing my legs. I couldn’t move. I was trapped. I felt like I was suffocating. I was immobilized and helpless. Cemented in place, I was petrified in a tomb of sand. It felt like my very life was being drained from my body. (Note to self: Don’t ever do that again!)

Life is full of figurative burials.

Have you been buried before? I wouldn’t wish that crushing feeling on anyone else. Yet even if you have never been buried in sand like I was, my hunch is that you have been buried by life. No doubt, you have had points in your life when you were in it up to your neck, when you felt immobilized and helpless, when you felt like you were buried in a tomb of sand and the life was being drained from you. Life’s figurative burials can be just as crushing and unexpected as if you were trying to have fun at the beach with a buddy.

Maybe you have been buried in questions:

* “If God is so good, why does He let bad things happen?”
* “Why did God let my baby die?”
* “Why did God let me lose my job?”
* “If Jesus is the light, why am I in the dark?”

Questions aren’t the only things that can bury us. Maybe you have been buried in disappointment:

* “You’re just not like your older brother!”
* “You’re nothing like our last boss!”
* “You’re just not the husband I thought you would be.”

And then, of course, there are all our responsibilities. Papers to grade, parents to call, cows to milk, fields to plant, deadlines to meet, family to see, bills to pay.

Finally, we can’t forget about how the past can consume us: the minute we lost our temper, the hour we lost our purity, the day we lost control, the years we lost our priorities. ***Buried.***

We are in it up to our necks. We are six feet under. We are suffocating, immobilized, helpless. ***Jesus can relate***.

Buried—in it up to His neck, immobilized and rendered helpless by the nails in His hands and the spikes through His feet. His very life drained from Him, Jesus Christ died and was buried. He was sealed in a tomb. ***Jesus was dead.***

Or at least that’s what the women thought early on that first day of the week:

*“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.” (Luke 24:1)*

No doubt, these women and the disciples were buried in questions, buried in fears, buried in hurts, buried in guilt. They were in it up to their necks, suffocating in their shame, immobilized by disappointment. ***Jesus, their Lord, had died.***

But then they came to the tomb.

*“And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” (Luke 24:2)* ***Jesus is buried no longer***.

The story of Jesus Christ does not end “crucified, died, and was buried.” Rather, Easter declares, “The third day He rose again from the dead!” (Apostles’ Creed).

Our Lenten journey leads us to this reminder. There is life in the tomb! And because Jesus’ life is our life through baptism, even when we are buried by life or when we are finally buried in death, Jesus brings us abundant life.

He knows what it is to be buried, both figuratively and literally. Thus, He says:

*“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)*

Yes, all who are buried in the harshness and the hurts of life, all who are buried by the guilt and the shame of life, and all who are buried by the grief and sorrow of life—Jesus brings rest for your weary soul and abundant life to your fearful heart.

Sin is cleansed, shame is removed, burdens are lightened, and sorrow is turned to hope. That’s the power of Christ’s life in you. In fact, as no tomb could hold down the body of Jesus Christ, be assured that no tomb can hold down the body of those who die believing in Him. ***We are buried no longer***.

There is no greater assurance of this than when you go to the Lord’s Supper and eat of His body and blood. When you have the Lord’s body and blood in you, it means that you have the power of a death-defeater coursing through your veins! You have the absolute assurance that no tomb can keep you down.

This means that every time you go to the tomb of a loved one who died believing in Jesus Christ—who died having His body and blood in them—know there is life in that tomb. Jesus Himself proclaims it:

*“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” (Revelations 1:17b-18)*

When you are buried with Jesus, there is always life in the tomb.

Thus, when you are buried by the burdens and the sorrows of this life, turn to Jesus and rest in His love. The things making you feel crushed no longer have a hold on you. Jesus has a hold on you!

Baptized into His life, fed by His sacramental body and blood, we are wrapped into the life of Jesus right here and right now, unto all eternity. Questions, disappointments, responsibilities, and our past no longer consume us or give us our identity. Our identity is rooted in the freedom from death and burial that Christ freely gives us.

This Easter, may Christ—the life of all the living—fill you full. Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia! Your brother in Christ, *Pastor Lucas*