

# The St. Johns Servant

St. Johns Lutheran Church

Park Rapids, Minnesota

April, 2020

## Here's Our COVID 19 Update

Over the past month, we've all had our lives turned upside down by the coronavirus pandemic. Just when you think you've got a plan worked out, things change and you have to figure out a whole new plan. That's what has happened here at St. Johns, too. First we changed worship times and limited attendance to ten people at each service. Pastor Neubauer got a crash course in live streaming. We were set. Then, Governor Walz gave the order



to "Stay at Home!" Now worship services are live streamed with just the few people needed to do the service actually there. We're testing online meetings for Bible study. We've brought back Dial A Devotion and more. Be sure to check out all the articles on how we can keep in touch and stay in the Word, even while we're "staying at home."

God's blessings to you all!

## Holy Week and Easter in The Time of COVID 19

It looks like we will all be staying at home for Holy Week this year. Our current plan is to live stream services. You can go to our website, stjohnspr.org and click the links to watch each service. There are also links to download bulletins. We're considering trying an Easter drive-in service but this is very preliminary, still just an idea. The best place to find current information is on our website or by calling the church office at 732-9783.

Palm Sunday, April 5, live stream at 9:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 9, live stream at noon

Good Friday, April 10, live stream at noon

Easter, April 12, live stream at 9:00 a.m.—Drive in worship?



## We Will Still Have Easter Lilies

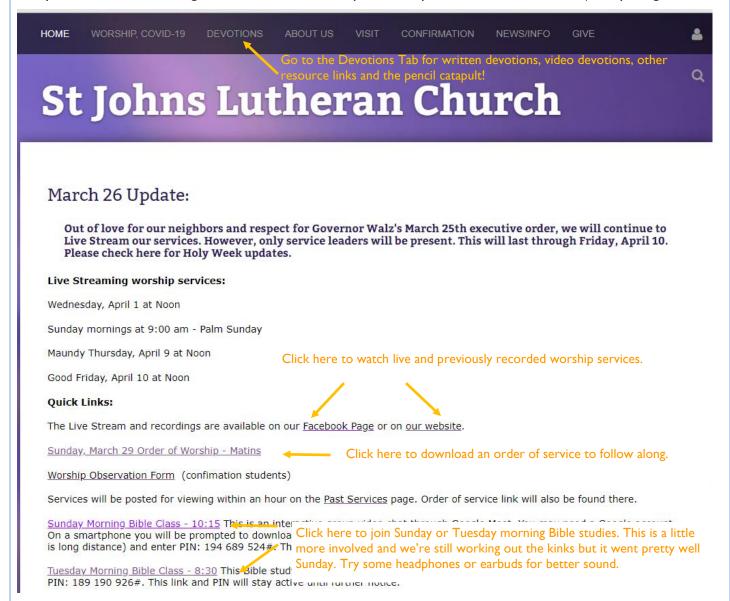


Back in the first part of February, we ordered 24 Easter lilies for Easter Sunday. Even though it looks like we will be streaming Easter worship in an empty church, we will honor our commitment to purchase them and decorate the altar area with the lilies. If you would like to help offset the cost of the lilies, our cost is \$8 per plant. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at church. You're welcome to stop in after Easter and pick up one or more lilies to take home.



### Got Internet? Check Out Our Website for A Variety of Options and Resources

If you have internet access, you can watch worship services, join an online Bible study, read or watch daily devotions, and even get directions to make a pencil catapult, all at our website, stjohnspr.org.



## We Want to Stay in Touch

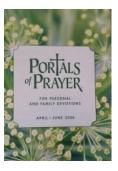
A few weeks ago we made an effort to call all of our church family and just check in with them. If you didn't receive a phone call/message, it probably means we don't have up to date contact information for you. We're hoping to call in the near future to check in again with everyone. It would be very helpful if you could fill out and return the enclosed form so we can double check addresses and phone numbers, etc. You can also list any needs, concerns or prayer requests you may have. You can mail the form back in the enclosed envelope or drop it off. Thanks!





## No Internet? You've Still Got Options

**Portals of Prayer**—We have the April-June issue of this perennial daily devotion booklet from Concordia Publishing House in three sizes-regular, digest and large print. Copies are available on a table right inside the front door. You can stop in and pick one up. Or call us before you come and we can run it out to your car. We can also mail one to you. Just call and request one from the office, 732-9783.



**Dial A Devotion**—Some of you may remember the old days when we had Dial A Devotion. You called in each day and got a pre-recorded devotional message from one of the pastors. It's back! We plan to have a new devotion recorded every day by noon, Sunday-Thursday. To access it just call our office number, 732-9783. If someone answers ask for Dial A Devotion. When you are transferred, press "9" and the devotion should begin. If no one answers and you get the recorded message, just press "9." Let us know what you think.

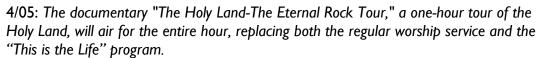


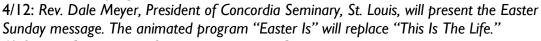
**The Lutheran Hour**—Listen to the Lutheran Hour every Sunday on KPRM 870 AM at 9:30 a.m. or KTIG 102.7 FM at 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. You can also listen on Sirius XM Family Talk Channel 133 on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. and any time on Ihm.org/sentradio. This month's programs are:

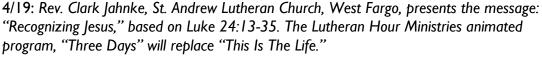


- 4/05 "There's Still Time"
- 4/12 "You Haven't Lost Me"
- 4/19 "The Great Pursuit"
- 4/26 "Rescue, Test, Rest"

**Main Street Living**—This is a locally produced TV program that includes a 30 minute worship service led by participating pastors of the Minnesota North and North Dakota Districts of our LCMS, along with a 30 minute Lutheran Hour program (normally "This Is the Life," along with occasional church-season specials). Programs are broadcast at 9:00 a.m. central time on FOX station KVRR Fargo-Moorhead Channel 15.1. This month's programs are:









4/26: Rev. Kirk Lee, Immanuel, Parkers Prairie, presents the message: "That You May Believe," based on John 20:19-31.

If your cable doesn't have KVRR, you can watch a different version (different pastors, mainly from Minnesota South) on WFTC out of the Twin Cities, on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.



## **Polar Plunge Nets \$995**

Pastor Newton really had his work cut out for him when it came to the polar plunge this year. First, the annual event at Lutheran Island Camp was cancelled this year due to lack of ice. No problem. This happened last year and the group found an alternate place to dip into icy waters. The next obstacle was finding some fellow plungers. This proved to be harder to do. In the end, Pastor Newton and his friend, Erik, were the only two up to the challenge. They trekked out to last year's plunge location and actually swam out into the open water and back. Brrr!



A video of the event was shown between services on March 15. Thanks to the Board of Parish Fellowship for serving root beer floats and everyone who gave so generously for the cause. Proceeds will go to help send our youth to the next National Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas in 2022.



## A Big Blood Drive Thank You!

A huge thank you to everyone who made our blood drive a **BIG** success. Amid concerns about the coronavirus and its restrictions, we still far exceeded our goals for donors on both days of the blood drive. 104 people were able to donate and 129 units were collected. Park Rapids is a very giving community!

Elayne Luiken, Blood Drive Coordinator

#### Lenten Meal Thank You

A big thank you goes out to all the groups who cooked and served the Lenten meals this year—Ladies Aid, Evening Guild, Youth, and the Board of Parish Fellowship. Having a meal available makes it easier to schedule time to attend worship and provides an opportunity for fellowship. We really appreciate all your hard work and delicious food!



## Have You Checked Out Our Online Giving Option?

Now you can give with a credit/debit card on our website or on your phone. Just go to our website, www.stjohnspr.org and click on the "Give" tab on the top right of the home page. From there you'll reach a page where you can give securely by entering the requested information. You can create an account or give as a guest.

To donate using your phone, download the "GivePlus" app from your app store. You can search for St. Johns, then create an account and start giving.

Please let us know how it works for you. Comments, questions, suggestions are welcome!



## **Stewardship Review**—February

Avg. Sunday Worship Attendance: 214

Total Offerings: \$38,844 Total Offerings, February, 2019: \$31,196
Total Expenses: \$39,763 Total Expenses, February, 2019: \$35,093
Difference - \$919 Difference - \$3,897

Avg. Weekly Offerings \$9,711 Budget/Week \$9,768 Kitchen Payable \$37,282

Avg. Weekly Expenses \$9,940 Budget/Month \$42,329

Difference - \$229

CNB Checkbook Balance as of 02/29/20: \$43,295 Our Healthy Balance Goal \$74,000 Less Dedicated Accounts - \$765 Raised so far \$43,262 Difference \$42,530 Still need \$30,738

## **Stewardship Review**—March

Avg. Sunday Worship Attendance: 128

Total Offerings: \$39,178 Total Offerings, March, 2019: \$41,604
Total Expenses: \$37,259
Difference \$1,919 Difference \$4,394

Avg. Weekly Offerings \$7,836 Budget/Week \$9,768 Kitchen Payable \$37,187

Avg. Weekly Expenses \$7,452 Budget/Month \$42,329

Difference \$384

CNB Checkbook Balance as of 03/29/20: \$44,887 Our Healthy Balance Goal \$74,000 Less Dedicated Accounts - \$1,130 Raised so far \$43,744 Difference \$43,757 Still need \$30,256

## How Did We Manage to Come Out Ahead This Month?

That's a good question. There are a few reasons. First, this month we received some large, once a year gifts. An option that many people are going to is donating a distribution from their IRA to the church once a year. These are often large gifts. Second, some of our "snowbirds" have returned and brought in their offerings to cover their time away. That also adds up to a sizable amount. Last, once the pandemic hit, several people have dropped off or mailed in their usual offerings and even went above and beyond their usual giving.



We are grateful for these gifts and pray that our financial situation will remain stable. We know that so many people in our congregation and community are facing very uncertain financial futures right now. We hope that as this pandemic progresses we will identify ways to help those in need. If you would like to give an offering you can drop it off at the church, mail it in the enclosed envelope or check out the article on the opposite page on how to give through our website.



#### Parish Planning Council Meeting, March 24, 2020

Call to Order – Executive Director, Rod Helm. Present – Pastor Newton, Pastor Neubauer, Ginny Ranisate, Connie Fondow, Brad Dahn, Shirley Potter, Mike Poole, Jerry Grudem, Pam Heeren, Elayne Luiken, Lori Griess – absent Brandi Backmann. Opening Devotion – Pastor Newton. Pastor's Reports – none.

Member changes – Motion by Jerry Grudem – second Brad Dahn to approve the following. Motion carried. Transfer Out: Duane Schultz, Grace, Sebeka, MN

Release: Gertrude Buckley, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, MN and Joshua and Jasmine Kruchowski, Jedidiah, Jeremiah, Nevis Church of Christ, Nevis, MN

#### **Board Reports**

Elders – Jerry Grudem

Continue to assist pastors when called upon as well as assisting with communion. Several elders participated in the "every member call" regarding the change of worship service schedules due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

#### Evangelism – Connie Fondow

No formal report given – will give full report at next PPC meeting. Connie did mention the board is planning for Christmas 2020 – Breakfast in Bethlehem. More info later.

#### Board of Christian Education – Lori Griess

Release Time: Attendance has been consistent, despite the flu. We have gained several students to add to the starting number of 135, so at this time we average about 140 students. Staffing has been good and we have been able to work with volunteers who have needed time off. Children have been busy with thank you cards for businesses that donated books for Valentine's Day. These books were really enjoyed by the children. At this time, due to the numbers we see the need for another 4th or 2nd grade teacher for next year to keep the classroom size around 10 students.

Sunday School/VBS: Attendance continues to be low. We are trying to find curriculum that will work for all the age groups. Concordia has a limited selection. Teachers have been very creative at designing their own lesson plans. We are starting to look at dates for VBS and next year's Children's Christmas Service. VBS program for this year is Rain Forest Explorers with possible dates of Aug 2-6 or Aug 9-13. This will be held this year in the evening in hopes that we will be able to involve more of our young parents. The Christmas Program date is December 13 during the 10:30 service time. Sarah Newton is leading a Bible study for our teachers at this time.

Preschool: Student numbers continue to stay stable with 39 students. Inspection was passed with no problems. Paperwork is becoming more involved as well as more requirements for the teachers as to continuing ed. Families are continuing to use the scholarship program. Budget for the year was approved as presented by Kim Neubauer. Adult Education: There will be no adult instruction class until next September. Adult classes, Bible studies continue to be offered at various times and days during the week. The book club has been well attended.

#### Church Properties – Brad Dahn

A blood drive truck hit the carport canopy last Tuesday and did some pretty serious damage. Their insurance company is working with us and has assigned an insurance adjustor to the claim. Brad met with him today and he believes it to be a major repair if not total replacement. We need to find a contractor to start getting some figures together. Mike Poole and Brad are working on a couple of small things in the kitchen remodel that have come up, and Jerry Eischens is waiting for a small opening in his shop schedule to finish the card rack in the social hall. We will be starting to plan a church clean up Saturday and making a list of things that need to be done. Once again Mike Riewer is doing a great job to keep the church clean and in tip top shape. Thanks, Mike! Thanks to Sanquist Construction for keeping our parking lots in great shape all winter, it looked like it was going to be a snow filled winter at the beginning, but it sure changed into a very nice one for us.



#### Parish Fellowship – Elayne Luiken

Our board sponsored the new member welcome on Sunday, November 24 between services. That same day we served a potluck lunch after second service before the semi-annual voters meeting. Our board served the Wednesday night meal during Advent on December 11. Fellowship board was in charge of decorating the church for Christmas on Monday, December 2. Cookies and Carols was held on Sunday, December 15 between services. Plates of cookies were put together and delivered to our shut-ins and other elderly members. Christmas decorations were taken down on Monday, January 6. Fellowship served the evening meal during Lent on Wednesday, March 6. Our board served root beer floats between services on Sunday, March 15 while Pastor Newton showed the video of the polar plunge.

Public Relations, Stewardship and Young People – no report

#### **Old/New Business**

#### **Finances**

Much discussion regarding our current finances and how to prepare for the future with regards to the lack of regular church service taking place and a large decrease in income. Ginny Ranisate had a prepared report on our current monthly expenses. She explained that of the total current assets approximately \$100,000.00 is available to spend without voter approval which includes the checking account and approximately \$40,000 in the LCEF Current Fund (healthy balance). Everyone is encouraged to continue giving to the church even though there is not a physical worship service.

Assistant secretary, Julie Warmbold, has not worked since March 16 because of possible exposure from her daughters who have returned home from college and Mike Riewer has been working reduced hours to care for grandchild. Brad Dahn and Rod Helm will have a conversation with both employees to discuss going forward in this uncertain time. The directors do not want to lose either of them as employees. Ginny stated that churches are exempt from paying unemployment.

After much discussion it was decided to proceed paying bills/salaries as normal and reassess in April.

#### Monthly Expenses

Building, Utilities, etc.	\$2,105
Salary (including benefits)	\$24,175
Missions	<u>\$6,250</u>
Total Monthly Expenses	\$32,530

#### Income Comparison

March 18, 2020 \$	\$1,456	March 22, 2020 \$2,602
March 20, 2019	<u>\$901</u>	March 24, 2019 <u>\$7,591</u>
Difference	\$555	Difference -\$4.989

Automatic Offerings per month is \$2390.

#### **Current Assets**

Checking	66,313.02
•	•
Dedicated Savings	40,937.21
LCEF Current Fund	108,396.65
Endowment fund	22,200.00
LCEF Youth	2,205.04
CNB Certificate of deposit	60,000.00
Total Assets	\$300,051.92

(Continued on page 11)





#### **Christian Education:**

Release Time: Attendance has been consistent, despite the flu. We gained several students so average is 140 students. Staffing has been good and we have been able to work with volunteers who needed time off. Children have been busy with thank you cards for businesses that donated books which were really enjoyed by the children. With current numbers we need another 4th or 2nd grade teacher for next year to keep the classroom size around 10 students.

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Adult Education: There will be no adult instruction class until next September. Adult Bible studies continue to be offered at various times and days. Book club has been well attended.

Church Properties: Planning a spring clean up day. Reviewed a quote for installing security cameras. Scott Olson has experience in selecting/ using cameras. We need to get more details and breakdown of price by item. Thanks to Arnie

Samuelson for replacing the two back tires on the bus. Plan to get a price quote for parking lot cracks and seal coating.

Evangelism: Monies in the fund originally designated for "Dawn's Room" will be gifted to the new Family Safety Network. Kathy Henry will let us know how they will plan to utilize this St. Johns' donation. A future newsletter article will inform the congregation.

Kathy Henry and Deb Luther will organize the spring Confirmand/Mentor Pizza Party on April 15. Pastor Newton will facilitate the "mixer."

Deb Luther plans to go to Diamond Willow on March 24 to facilitate BINGO. Any congregational member interested in assisting with this event any month during the year should let Debbie Luther know.

Ten new "My Church" books were ordered and received. These books are placed in baptismal gift baskets.

Laurie Kimball used sacred artistry to beautifully decorate small paper bags for the board. The bags will be filled with small lotion tubes, Chapstick, and mints. A croqueted cross with an attached informative tag about St. Johns Church will be included. Members of the board will make visits to our St. Johns members who are unable to attend Sunday worship ("shut-ins").

Members viewed a brief video of a church within the district that sponsored a "Bedtime Story Night."

The board will begin to investigate the feasibility of organizing a December event much like one that Lord of Glory Lutheran Church in Elk River hosted -"Breakfast in Bethlehem."

**Elders:** Worked on assisting elders for April and May. Approved having pastors assist with summer preaching for Gethsemane, Snellman as their schedules allow.

Parish Fellowship, Stewardship, Public Relations, and Young People: did not meet.



#### It Was A Great Year for Release Time

Another year of Release Time has come to an end. April 29 was supposed to be our final day to have the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with our students. While I am writing this we are NOT having class since the governor shut down all Minnesota schools. It is devastating to lose this time with the students. We had some fun projects and lessons planned and it is disappointing that we are unable to share them with the children.

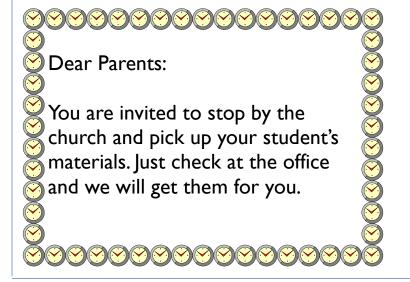
Please thank our teachers and helpers for doing a fantastic job again this year: Ruth Knaack, Laurie Kimball, Sarah Newton and helper, Betty Solberg, Sandy Phillips, Cheryl Breitbach and Pastor Newton and last but not least, Pastor Neubauer. Also a big "thank you" to all the ladies who helped watch George and Norah so Sarah could teach.

The program received some generous donations this year to help out our budget and we want to thank everyone who donated. Because of your generosity we were able to add a few extra projects, snacks including ice cream sundaes and take home tote bags.

It is a real honor and privilege to be able to have these children come to the church every Wednesday for religious Christian instruction. Faith Bridge cancelled their 7th and 8th grade classes due to a lack of teachers this past year. Pray this does not happen here at St. Johns and in order for it not to happen we really need a few more volunteers. If you feel God calling you to help out with this very worthwhile program, just let me, Ginny or one of the pastors know and we will gladly hep you become one of our team. We could desperately use another 2nd grade and 4th grade teacher for next year. This is so we can keep our classroom sizes down to 8-10 children per room. This allows us to get to know the children better when they are in smaller groups and no one is too crowded. I will wait anxiously to hear from you. We are all waiting to help you get started. You won't be on your own, just a new member of the team.

God's blessings,

#### Laurie Kimball, Release Time Coordinator



## **Baptism**

03/15 Colter Alan Sunram
Shelby Leckner and Jared Sunram





## **Sunday School Page**

We hope to have a link on our website, stjohnspr.org, for Sunday School resources by April 4!

#### Happy Birthday!

4/03 Kaden Gartner

4/03 Dylan May

4/04 William Sanquist

4/08 Eastyn Walker

4/11 Vivian Harju

4/17 Khloe Harrison

4/24 Clinton Koch

4/26 Natalie Tretbar

#### **Baptismal Birthdays**

4/04 Kaden Gartner

4/10 Kolt Safratowich

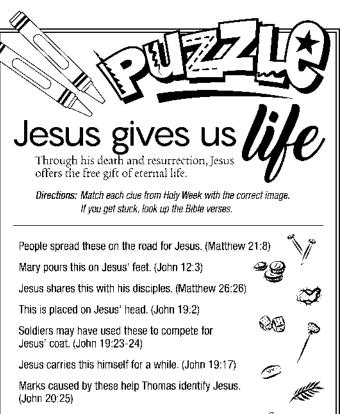
4/22 Vivian Harju

4/22 Rachel Ulvin

4/26 Grace Hockett

4/27 Hunter Schroeder





While on the cross, Jesus is thirsty and is given this. (John 19:28-29)

This is rolled away from Jesus' tomb. (John 20:1)

These are used to prepare Jesus' body for burial. (Luke 23:55-56)

These remain in the tomb after Jesus rises. (John 20:6-7)

Judas betrays Jesus for this. (Matthew 26:14-15)



Answer: palm branches, perfume, bread, crown of thorns, dice, cross, nails, vinegar on a sponge, stone, spices, linens, silver coins



Pastor Knaack taught the Sunday school students about Jesus healing the deaf man and about his own lifelong work as a missionary in deaf ministry. The kids were so entertained!

He taught us how to sign the first verse of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" and each student got a sheet to practice saying the Lord's Prayer in ASL. He did such a wonderful job!

Thank you, Pastor Knaack!





(Continued from page 7)

ABC Preschool – Pastor Neubauer presented information regarding the ABC School. ABC Preschool has been part of St. Johns ministry for 30+ years. As part of our financial consideration, they need to be considered also. Here are some proposals to consider.

March: Since tuition was collected through March, we propose to pay the teachers for the two weeks that were called off by the governor. Kim has developed learning packets for two weeks and she and Ruth have put them together. The month of March, as a whole, would require about \$2400 of ABC Preschool budget from St. Johns (this is the time of school year ABC relies on this budget in normal years).

#### April and May:

We are asking parents to pay \$15/month (probably one bill for \$30 for the rest of the school year). For the few who paid the whole years tuition, we would subtract this fee and return the two months of tuition. ABC will send out learning packets every two weeks. Included in the packet is a modification of the regular lesson plan. It will include learning activities in the various areas – science, math, reading, writing, craft activities and Bible stories. A Home Learning Packet menu has been added to the ABC website which will links to appropriate sites for more learning activities. The difference between "tuition" and salary and other costs will be covered by the ABC Scholarship fund and ABC's savings account. The Scholarship fund would not be drawn down below \$7,000 (currently \$10,700) and ABC savings will be used until it is drawn down to \$5,000 (currently it is at \$8,300). Kim Neubauer, as director and teacher and serving here for 25 years, would remain on developing the packets and being paid for 5 sessions/week instead of 7. Four pay periods remain. (Costs: 4 sessions/week cost ~\$3,000; 5 sessions/week ~\$3,700.) Teacher, Ruth Knaack, has said she does not want to be paid and won't be helping design the packets. Elayne Luiken has retired as preschool aide.

If school does not resume this year, Kim and Ruth would be paid for taking down and cleaning up the classrooms and the like. This happens in a normal year.

Projected costs to be taken from church budget, Scholarship and ABC Savings:

March \$ 2,400 (church budget)

April/May	\$3,740	
Misc. expense	<u>\$500</u>	(refunded tuition, postage)
Cost	\$4,240	
Tuition	- <u>\$600</u>	
Total Cost	\$3,640	

Connie Fondow stated that Kim should be paid for the entire remaining 7 sessions which would be approximately \$1500 more than what was proposed. The directors all agreed to Connie's suggestion. Ginny will use funds from the ABC Saving and Scholarship accounts first then reassess.

#### Future plans

Worship service – you can sign up to attend in person or watch livestream on Facebook. Dial a Devotion is back – call the church to hear a recorded devotional message – this would be helpful for those that do not have access to computer and internet services.

Adjourned. Closed with Doxology.

Respectfully submitted, Shirley Potter, Secretary



#### St. Johns Lutheran Church

803 West First Street Park Rapids, MN 56470

Phone: 218-732-9783 Fax: 218-237-9785 Website: www.stjohnspr.org

Pastor James Neubauer Pastor Joel Newton Pastor Bill Knaack



The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

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