

MEMORIAL MESSENGER

July 2020



But now this is what the LORD says, the LORD who created you, O Jacob, the LORD who formed you, O Israel.

Do not be afraid, because I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are Mine.

When you cross through the waters, I will be with you.

When you walk through fire, you will not be burned, and the flame will not set you on fire.

I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Isaiah 43:1-3a

It's understandable that we and others ask, "How much more, Lord?!? Isn't this enough?!?" On top of what for months has affected every nation on earth and every state in our nation, other tragedies have brought additional woe. I think of the torrential rain in mid-May leading to two dams failing in the Midland County region and resulting in catastrophic damage. You have other examples. *How much more, Lord?!? Isn't this enough?!?*

Those are legitimate questions that God's people have been asking Him ever since sin ruined the perfect universe God created. Those are questions also asked by people who only have a passing knowledge of God, and who assume that God's greatest role is to use His power to keep people safe in this world.

Whether trouble swamps much of the world, only a particular region, or just a family or individual, God is where He has always been, and doing what He always does: govern the universe for our good and to His glory. The trouble happened not because God Almighty ignored His world or that region or our family. The Almighty God allows trouble at times to remind His world or a region or us individually what He does and desires.

God does not promise that life in this world will be nothing but peaches, ice cream, and sunny days. We are sinners living in a sinful world beset by trouble everywhere. How wonderful that God tells us this life is just a journey for us to our forever home in heaven, won for us sinners by His suffering far worse than a pandemic or loss of business or flood damage! The Son of God came to earth to suffer hell for the world so sinners will live with Him forever through faith in what He has done to rescue us. "*You are Mine. I am the LORD your God, the Holy One, your Savior!*" No world-wide tragedy, national disaster, or personal sorrow changes that.

Because of that, several thoughts fill the hearts of God's people when troubles threaten or disasters strike. The first? *Holy God, I deserve so much worse than this sorrow. I deserve to burn in hell forever because of my daily rebellions against You. I repent of my sins and beg for Your pardon.* That is followed by, *Gracious Son of God, You entered our sinful world to suffer the forsakenness of hell so that we sinners won't have to suffer that. Thank You! I trust Your salvation won for the world. I rejoice to know that this troubled life will not last, and that my life with You in heaven's perfection will never end!* And then, *Grant me, LORD, what I need each day to live, trust in Your payment for my forgiveness, and a life that lives thanks You in everything!*

How much more will the LORD allow us to endure as a world? A nation? A family? A person? Only He knows. But we already know how it turns out. This life is only temporary. No matter how terrible things get, our relationship with the Savior endures forever because His loving kindness endures forever. We let that truth fill us. We express that truth to those around us who are hurting. We live that truth in days of joy and sorrow.

Pastor Voss



IN-PERSON WORSHIP services have resumed. Procedures to keep worshippers as safe as possible from infection have been adopted; those procedures have been emailed to our members, as well as distributed to those who we know do not have internet access. They can also be found on our website under “About Us” on the dropdown menu. If you desire a copy of those procedures, please let the church office know and we’ll be happy to send it to you.

COMMUNION OFFERED Those who are at risk and/or are not yet comfortable with gathering in church for worship are encouraged to contact Pastor Voss for receiving Communion privately – either at home or at church. He will be delighted to do so at our earliest mutual convenience.

OUR SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE continues. There is one Sunday service at **9:00 AM** beginning that morning. Most weeks there will be a **Thursday evening service at 7:00** which will be the same as the following Sunday’s service. This summer schedule will continue through Labor Day weekend.

NO THURSDAY SERVICE There won’t be a Thursday evening service on **July 23** since Pastor Voss will be on vacation that week. If there will be any other summer Thursdays when there is no service, we’ll let you know.



FOREVER WITH THE LORD Just before the stay-at-home order was issued, and then during the months that no in-person worship services were held, four of our members were called home to heaven by their crucified and risen Savior Jesus:

Janet Mead James Ganton Reginald Robinson
Caroline Kasischke

We thank our gracious God for blessing the lives of their loved ones and friends with their company during this earthly life.

We ask the God of all grace to comfort their surviving loved ones, dear friends, and all others who mourn their deaths with the peace and joy in knowing the souls of **Janet, Jim, Reg, and Caroline** are now with Him forever!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

As of this writing, it is yet to be determined whether this summer’s VBS will be held in-person with a limited number of children, or will be offered via recorded lessons that are posted on-line. The Board of Christian Education is waiting for more families to let us know their family’s opinion about having an in-person VBS.

If VBS is held in-person at our school, it will be for the children of our congregation and school who are **3-years old through entering 5th Grade**, and for children in that age range who are guests of our church and school families. The reason for limiting the invitation this summer is to allow the children to spread out in our classrooms, observing social distancing to some extent.

The in-person VBS would be held **the mornings of Monday, July 27 – Wednesday, July 29** from **9:30 – 11:00** each of those days.

Once a decision has been made about VBS, we will announce the decision via email and our weekly church bulletin, and let you know other VBS details.



CONFIRMATION SUNDAY We are working with the families of our youth confirmands to determine the best Sunday for them to be as our re-scheduled (from May 3) Confirmation Sunday. It will be in either August or September.

NOW ENROLLING Throughout the summer, our Lutheran Elementary School faculty is available to visit with and provide information to families that are interested in enrolling their children or grandchildren in our school and preschool. Please give to our teachers or to Pastor Voss the names of anyone who would like to be contacted with more information about our school and preschool.

Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by September 1 and preschool children must be 3 years old by September 1.

IF YOU HAVE ACCESS to the internet and get this *Memorial Messenger* that way, please let us know and we will no longer print a copy for you.

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

PASTOR'S REPORT – I'm working with the parents of our two youth confirmand candidates to determine a Sunday for their Confirmation. Catechism Class instruction was completed on May 18; we used Zoom for the last six weeks. We usually have three sessions for the 8th Grade students to review and prepare for Confirmation Sunday.

WELS Congregation Mission Offerings through the end of May were down about \$250,000 from the same time frame in 2019. That's a significant drop from the previous month and bears close attention. Congregations from our district have submitted CMO that is about \$130,000 less than the amount submitted for the first five months of 2019.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – A number of preschool families paid for May even though our board decided that no preschool tuition would be required for May this year. We thank them for their gifts.

Christ Light links and child devotions were posted for our church and school families on our websites during the months when there was no school.

A "now enrolling" post was placed on our school's Facebook page.

Isaac and Sophia graduated from our fifth grade last month.

Mrs. Leitz is pleased with where the three and four year old preschool students are in their development and all will move to the next level for next school year (except the one real young 3-year old who joined our preschool in January).

This summer we will discuss with the faculty what our options will be should distance learning be needed at any point in the new school year. Much it to be determined, including possible distancing requirements, technology needs, and video instruction platform to use.

Our faculty reports excellent cooperation from parents and students regarding new learning arrangements.

The Board of Christian Education thanks Nora Stanton, Jill Rusnak, Kathy Fedewa, and Laurie Voss for their faithful service this past Sunday School year.

Pastor Voss, as principal, sent the 2019-2020 mission thankofferings from school to Martin Luther College.

We had a school year closing service and recognition on June 8 in the school parking lot.

VBS 2020 – In-person sessions will be held with appropriate protocols July 27-29 (3 days) and shortened morning sessions (9:30-11:00). This depends on responses from parents of congregation children and of school students when they are contacted. We will seek to limit enrollment so we can spread out in the classrooms. The board has called Pastor, Mrs. Leitz and Mrs. Domke to teach this year, with Mrs. Fedewa as organizer possibly of Zoom work/use and activities for the students.

A letter was distributed to parents at the closing service regarding our remote learning: What worked OK from March 16-May 29? What didn't work well for you during those months? Do you have computers and internet access at home?

Based on replies to the letter, the faculty and board will know which families have issues with internet access during the day and will assess technology needs for our students.

BOARD OF ELDERS – The Elders discussed the online recorded services. The services seem to be going well. We are considering continuing to record and put services online even after our normal worship at church resumes.

A new organist and HymnSoft schedule for July through December is being prepared. The Elders thank our organists and HymnSoft operators for using their God given talents to edify our worship services.

The Elders discussed receiving door offerings for sister congregations in the Midland area that have been affected by flooding. We will likely have a door offering in the coming weeks, once we start getting close to our normal attendance numbers.

The Michigan Lutheran Seminary Concert Choir will be here on Sunday, October 18. We will have one service at 19:00 AM that morning.

The Elders spent a lot of time discussing how we are going to resume worship at church. As we resume worship services at church, members will be reminded about social distancing, wearing masks entering and leaving church, avoiding visiting inside the church and how we will distribute Holy Communion. All of these items have been communicated to members via email, printed copies for those who don't receive email, as well as during pre-service announcements.

The Elders recognize people have different opinions and level of comfort regarding in-person worship. The Elders remind those with underlying health concerns and those who are not comfortable at this time coming back to church that they will still be able to access our recorded worship services online.

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP – We urge members to share service links with others as a way of doing Friendship Evangelism from a distance.

We thank Laurie Voss for her work with uploading recorded worship services and Facebook posts for our members and other visitors to our website.

We thank Dan Kasischke for getting the First Quarter statements out.

The board discussed equipment that would need to be purchased, licenses that would need to be secured, and other costs that would be associated with continuing to record worship services once in-person worship at church has resumed. We will continue to do research about this.

We request that the school gym be reserved for our church picnic on Sunday, September 13.

We discussed thankoffering counting work and how to cover the weeks when counters are not available due to concerns with handling money and checks.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – The lawn mower at school is ready. We thank volunteers who mow our church and school lawns!

The heavy rain in May had water leaking into the parsonage basement. The church remained dry.

Parsonage windows have been delivered and waiting for an install date.

Pat Crandall has been working repairing and painting as needed at school.

The parsonage roof got a roof treatment June 8.

We discussed snow plow options for this coming winter. Todd spoke to a contractor who is going to give us a price for clearing the north lawn area.

We discussed Covid 19 facility usage, with the Council stating we will follow the executive order which states: "Indoor social gatherings and events of more than 10 people are prohibited." And also "Other businesses and activities that necessarily involve close contact and shared surfaces, including gyms, will remain closed for the time being." That being said, there are no basketball practices allowed at this time.

We discussed the need for hand sanitizers to be placed around the school and church entrances, bathrooms, etc.



SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR JULY SERVICES:

<u>9:00</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Greeter(s)</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
7/05 - #7 D. Kasischke	S. Unruh	D&T Wood	D&R Hoag
7/12 - #6 C. Rhodea	K. Unruh	V&J Domke	S&G Houser
7/19 - #5 S. Houser	T. Wood	L. Tobia	B. Janecke
7/26 - #4 J. Zoran	R. Olin	G. Withey	J&S Janecke