

Our Saviour's Call

The monthly newsletter of
The Lutheran Church of Our Saviour

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A partner in the ministry of Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries

Pastoral Team

Rev. John J. Gropp – 412/680-7867 Rev. Brenda Henry – 412/390-8005
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MOTTO

“Love one another, as I have loved you.” John 13:34

July – August 2020

We are pleased to announce that we resumed worshipping in the Sanctuary on Sunday, June 21st, with restrictions in place. Please see the enclosed letter.

The following is June's pastor's article from Pastor Gropp:

Dear Partners in ministry,

I find myself in an uncomfortable position because in 44 years of pastoral ministry I do not think I recommended we cancel on site services; or for that matter, even personally not attended on site Sunday worship more than a handful of times. And now it has gone on for many weeks during which time we have had to learn a myriad of new skill sets that have taken us all outside of our comfort zones. Listening to the news media, regardless of which view you turn on and where you stand on the issues, is almost nauseating; not to mention how many times have you heard me say, to reopen you need to put together a plan where you are socially distant, socially isolating, physically separated, “spread out and sit as far apart from each other as you can?” It is a confusing time to say the least.

So where do we go from here when everything is changing so rapidly? It seems the “old norms” and realities, as individuals, families, communities, and even in the Church, are being shifted and everything is up for grabs. Or is it? In the mantra words of my mother's favorite T.V. program of the late 1960s, Star Trek, **“We Boldly Go Where No One* Has Gone Before.”**

How apt it is that we are now many weeks into this Coronavirus pandemic. For us in our PLUM churches, it all began at the beginning of our 2020 Lenten journey when we cancelled all on site worship services for the sake and safety of our communities on the 3rd Sunday in Lent, the 15th of March. As is true with everything we have done within our 11 congregations strong, 15-year-old cooperative ministry, we (as able), have found new ways to support each other in worship, meetings, and carrying on our ministries. But this is nothing new. Imagine those early disciples and their first Lenten, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost journey (13 weeks). We, like the early disciples, can come out of this in a better place if we remember the lessons we have experienced, because we know the end of the story. We know that for Christ it was not just suffering and death. It was defeating death and instituting “new life.” It was the tearing down the curtain in the temple and opening the church to a new day.

For the disciples then and us today, the first forty days of Easter was a time to get their/our bearings as they/we walked with Christ into the new reality. Then Ascension happened and “POOF” Christ was gone. Oh, to be sure, the disciples (and we) tried to go back to life/church as usual and 10 days later, 50 days after his resurrection, (on Easter, CHRIST IS RISEN, HE IS RISEN INDEED, ALLELULIA!)

“SWOOOSH”

PENTECOST – The Coming of the Holy Spirit

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Acts 2:1-4

The “church” then and now is changed forever. Through the touching of God’s Spirit, the people of God became Christ’s presence for the world. And no matter how hard they/we try to go back to business as usual, there will always be new avenues that push us ahead. May we never forget those many millions and their families who served us on the front lines: the clerks, cleaners, first responders, food workers, sanitation workers, medical personnel, etc. to get us through this pandemic that in the 10 weeks over 100,000 Americans lost their lives (for perspective, 58,220 soldiers died over 9 years in the Vietnam war). Biblically once we are touched by God’s Spirit, life ceases to be about me. Jesus’ words resonate this fact; “For God so loved the world that he gave....”; “given and shed for you....;” “I’ve come that you might have life....;”

As we reopen our churches, may we be ever mindful that it is not about us. As Bishop Kusserow clarified and pointed out to our synod pastors on Monday, “this is not a sprint nor a marathon, because there are no markers as to how far we must go or where the finish line is.” This is life and as Jesus states: “*And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’*” Matthew 25:40. May this be what drives us as: **“We Boldly Go Where No One* Has Gone Before.**

God’s Blessings on all you do as together we celebrate Christ’s presence in our midst.

Peace,
Pastor John J. Gropp

Pastor Koch’s July article:

CONTINUING OUR STUDY

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.” (Isaiah 65.17)

We have benefitted greatly from the technology that has enabled us to meet, to worship and to study together using the Zoom application on our various devices. It has enabled us to take care of business, to greet one another and to keep in touch. New acquaintances have been made and old acquaintances have been strengthened.

We recognize that we are in a new, critical time. The covid-19 pandemic has interrupted our usual way of being present with one another. Now some of our congregations are starting to open their buildings, cautiously. The disruption of our civil order brought on by the increased awareness of the inequities in our society and the violence that has been promoted by some and condemned by others has made it painfully clear that we live in a divided nation. Racism has been deeply embedded in our society and its culture. We can no longer ignore or turn a deaf ear to the neglect of some and the indifference of others.

I commend to you Isaiah 65 which presents the possibility that God is using this time ‘to create a new heaven and a new earth.’ God declares that the original intent of creation is that all creation would live in harmony and unity having mutual respect for one another. God intended that all should be adequately provided with the fruits of the earth and live in a healthy, safe and peaceful community.

The summer study series, which will begin on July 7th, is entitled “The tensions of being in relationship: Reflections on broken covenants and ways of healing.” We will use a variety of media and center on the current issues of our day. It is our intention to be frank and honest in our presentations and to struggle together to know and work toward solutions that reflect God’s creative work in our world and among us.

The summer series will meet in two identical sessions weekly: Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. and Thursday at 7:00 p.m. One of the pastors will lead each session. You are invited to attend one or both sessions each week. As always, our study will be grounded in the Word of God, in our experience, and in our hope for the future.

In order to participate by video, go to Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541> or by phone: +1 646 876 9923 US. The meeting ID is 401 596 541.

ALL ARE WELCOME – MEMBERS AND GUESTS ALIKE!

May God bless our time together, and may we find new hope in the midst of chaos, anger, and confusion.

Pastor Paul Koch, on behalf of the PLUM Pastoral Team

Treasurer's Report

The following is the year-to-date financial report as of the end of June:

Offerings/Other Income	\$30,574
Expenses	\$36,224
Deficit	\$5,650

Parish Register

Death

Martin Horensky 6/12/20

Gift for Our Saviour!

Martin Horensky passed away a few weeks ago. **We have been informed that he named Lutheran Church of Our Saviour as a beneficiary on his Thrivent insurance policies.**

Graduate Recognition

We would like to recognize our four 2020 graduates.

Carter McCurdy — Carter graduated from Yough High School and CWCTC (Votech – with honors). He is attending Eastern Gateway Community College for their Information Technology program.

Heavenlee McCurdy — Heavenlee graduated from Seton Hill University with a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration/Marketing with a minor in English/Creative Writing.

Noah Dudek — graduated from Penn State with a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Management/Marketing.

Daniel (DJ) Dudek — graduated from IUP with a Masters of Science degree in Biology. In the Fall he will be going to the University of Texas in Arlington for his PHD/Quantitative.

Congratulations to all of you!

Thank You from Karen McDonough

Thank you so much for all the prayers, cards, and phone calls I have been receiving due to my health problems and my recent hospitalizations. They are greatly appreciated.

Karen

Thank You from Chuck Hershey

I would like to thank everyone for all the prayers and nice cards I have received. They are very much appreciated.

Chuck Hershey

Thank You from Rose Peters

Thanks to everyone for the lovely cards, the thoughtful notes, and all the prayers. I so appreciated hearing from all of you. After six weeks, my cast is finally off, and I’m getting used to using my right hand again!

Love to all,

Rose

Garden of Faith

The garden is up and growing! In June, Debbie Massimino took 8 heads of lettuce to the Irwin Food Bank. We lost two heads of cabbage, but the remaining two are hanging in there for now. Time will tell how they handle the hot, dry spell. Tomatoes have been tied up once and look good, we have a few small peppers, and flowers on the zucchini. Garlic

should be picked next week, freeing up some space for beans. Meals on Wheels started to accept fresh food on June 29th, so if that continues to be the case, any future vegetables picked will be delivered there.

“To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.”

Blessed Bundles Update

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Number of Volunteers</u>
May	52	127	8
June	46	112	7

The \$250.00 dollar Thrivent Action grants were received for May by Barb Pergar and for June by Jane Atkins. We have also had donations of diapers, baby items as well as a monetary donation from Zion Lutheran Church in Greensburg. We received a monetary donation of \$545.65 from the St. Peters Lutheran Church in Evans City – it was their Lenten offering collection. Thank you all so very much! We would also like to thank our faithful "adopt a box" families who continue to generously donate a box of diapers every month.

We applied for a Pittsburgh Foundation Grant with wonderful guidance from Pastor Koch. We were notified at the beginning of June that we were approved for a \$4,000 grant from the Foundation!! God works in truly amazing ways!

With Westmoreland County going into “the green,” we decided to open Blessed Bundles up for families to obtain some summer clothing for their children during our June distribution. We followed CDC guidelines by spacing the tables as far apart as possible to have everyone socially distancing. All parents who entered were required to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer prior to entering the social hall. We let only 15 people in at a time and everyone was required to provide a phone number for contact tracing purposes. A huge thank you to Frank and Janet Feltes as well as Barb Pergar for helping us sort out all the winter clothes and to get the summer clothes out of storage in time for the June distribution.

If our volunteer crew feels comfortable participating in the upcoming distributions, we welcome their help! Masks are required as well as social distancing for the health and well being of our incredible volunteers. Please do not feel obligated to attend especially if you are in the high risk category for the COVID-19 virus. **It is more important that you stay healthy at this time!**

Our next distribution dates will be July 18th and August 15th.

G and J Dollars for Rise Against Hunger

Hopefully, we as a joint ministry within PLUM, will again prepare meal packets for “Rise Against Hunger” at a still undetermined date. We are increasing our goal from 15,000 meals to 20,000 meals! Each church within PLUM will need to raise approximately \$350.00 (they have not yet calculated the exact amount). We started raising the money needed now by collecting "G and J" dollars. **We are asking everyone to look at the dollar bills they have and consider donating any dollars they receive with the letter "G" for God and "J" for Jesus to this ministry.** *(When looking at the dollar bill, there is a letter in a circle to the left of the picture of George Washington.)* There is a collection jar in the back of the church where you can place your special "G and J" dollars. **If you are still not comfortable coming to church, please save your “G and J” dollars in your own container until you can bring them here.**

Prayer List

Please review the following prayer list. If your family member or friend no longer needs to be on the list, please let us know so we can update it.

Please include these people in your prayers:

Our Members – Rose Peters, Lois Smith, Cassie Rinker, Karen McDonough, Lil Fresch, Ryan Park, Brett Massimino, Diane Clem, Mitch Atkins, Chuck Hershey, Betty Beranek, Luyviana Petersen, Margaret Achtzehn, Kitsy Cochran, Carol Godor, Mark Smith, Henrietta Solomon, Chuck Rubbo, Karen Smith, Glenda Ann Wareham, Sandy Fry, Robin Prady, Tom Cochran, Steve Solomon, Brian Bergman, Janet Feltes, Carol Miller, Aaron Solman

Our Friends – Tom Miller, Sara Stumme, Lance Lewand, Nathaniel Lewand, Jane Ramer, David Wilhide, Kelly Haley, Valerie Sas, Tammy Smiley, Cheryl Hayes, Keira Longo, Dennis Pollock, Nancy Stepinsky, Debbie Yutzy and family, Darcy Riazzi, David McCurdy, Kelly Ward, Bruce Hayes, Kyle Wertman, Tim Hamilton, Karen Dunn, Jenni Stevenson, Pat & Dennis McCarthy, Mary Lou Campbell, Jennifer Miebach, Steve Plecko, Alex, Bernard Socha, Suzanne Whitacre, Joan Hall, Joyce Hollick, Bryce Patrick, Kristin Cherone, Rob Zarate, Tracy Zarate, Ruth Sileo

Our Shut-ins – Eugene Woods, Irene Vozel, Lucy Gracan, Bill Malis, Pat Palm, Donna Churilla

Blessed Bundles' Families & Friends – Layla, Delaney, Jacob, Zac, Alrya, Nicole, Alanis, Alexis, Traedyn

Birthdays

<u>June</u>		<u>July</u>	
Joseph Field	6/1	Christy McManus	7/1
Doris Siegel	6/1	Mitch Atkins	7/2
Elwood Parker-Wood	6/7	Heavenlee McCurdy	7/2
Zachary Reed	6/7	Marie Reed	7/2
Megan Robison	6/7	Jonathan George	7/6
Brandon Park	6/10	Thomas Eisaman	7/12
Glenda Ann Wareham	6/14	Tracie Ulmes	7/15
Steven Solomon	6/23	Fallyn McNamara	7/16
Patricia Dash	6/24	Mike Seymour	7/21
Amanda Frieze	6/24	Taylor Frieze	7/23
Dan Miller	6/24	Ethan Smith	7/23
Megan Scherff	6/27	Charles Hershey	7/28
Irene Vozel	6/27	Katelyn Seymour	7/28
Karl Rosengarth	6/28	Anna Mae Critchlow	7/29
Nicholas Zitcovich	6/28	Dannon Johnson	7/29
		Zachary Seymour	7/30

August

Diane Johnson	8/1
Pam McCurdy	8/3
Toni Hardin	8/4
Nicolina Bergman	8/5
Carol Moore	8/5
Allen Brutsche	8/6
Sandra Plecko	8/6
Nicholas Ponebshek	8/10
William Malis	8/11
Margaret Achtzehn	8/13
Brooklyn Evans-Labanish	8/14
Sandy Helbling	8/18
Noah Dudek	8/20
Dana Atkins	8/25
Diane "Dee" Weaver	8/26
Riley Hardin	8/30
Jessica Turberville	8/30
Joseph Sapp, Jr.	8/31

Have a wonderful birthday! To those whose birthday already occurred, Happy Belated Birthday! We hope you enjoyed your special day!

If your birthday did not appear on the list or if it's incorrect, please notify us so we can update our records.

Can Collection for Recycling

We're still collecting **aluminum cans** (example: **pop and beer cans**) for recycling. Please bag them and **drop them off in the entranceway outside the kitchen door. Don't forget to pop off those tabs first!** The Thrivent Pop Tab Challenge will most likely be an annual event and we can get a jump on the next event.

Council Meetings

Council met on April 14th via ZOOM.

Members present: Lars Bohman, Sandi Bergman, Debbie Massimino, Diane Johnson, Pam McCurdy, Jane Atkins, Ken McDonough, Pastor Gropp, Vicar Mandy Gilberti

Member absent: Robin Prady

The following action took place:

- *Motion was made and seconded to accept the corrected minutes of the March 10th meeting. Motion carried.*

Council met again on May 12th via ZOOM.

Members present: Lars Bohman, Sandi Bergman, Debbie Massimino, Diane Johnson, Pam McCurdy, Jane Atkins, Ken McDonough, Pastor Gropp, Vicar Mandy Gilberti

Member absent: Robin Prady

The following action took place:

- *Motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the April 14th meeting. Motion carried.*

Council met again on June 9th here at the church.

Members present: Lars Bohman, Sandi Bergman, Debbie Massimino, Diane Johnson, Pam McCurdy, Robin Prady, Ken McDonough, Pastor Gropp, Vicar Mandy Gilberti

Member absent: Jane Atkins

The following action took place:

- *Motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the May 12th meeting. Motion carried.*

Those wishing to view full council/congregational meeting minutes can do so once they are approved at the following meeting and are made available in the church office.

Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
1570 Clay Pike
N. Huntingdon, PA 15642
*(A partner in the ministry of
Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries)*

Church Office - 724/863-2591

licos2@comcast.net

<https://licos28.wixsite.com/lutheranchurchirwin>

Hours: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Tuesday - Friday

Rev. John J. Gropp, PLUM

Members, Ministers

Jane Humlan, Secretary

Worship Services

Sunday at 11:15 a.m. at the church

Sunday at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

Zoom by phone: +1 646-876-9923 ID: 401596541

VISION STATEMENT

We believe God's vision for the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour is that we become:
a loving community whose Christ-like love for others embraces everyone, including those who have yet to experience the love and acceptance of Jesus Christ, Our Savior.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a family of believers:
Renewed through worship,
United by Christ's call,
Bearing His love into the world.



STAY WITH. RAISE UP. SEND OUT.

GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.