



APRIL EPISTLE



ST. PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH, SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (ECC)

APRIL 2020



Receiving and Giving the Love and Hope of Christ

210 E. Pleasant Street, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin 53066

262-567-5001 * FAX 262-567-1207 * Early Childhood Center 262-567-4881

www.splco.org

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2, ESV)*

25 March, A.D. 2020

RE: CONGREGATIONAL UPDATE PER WI "SAFER AT HOME" ORDER

Dear Members of St. Paul's,

Per Governor Evers' Emergency Order #12, "Safer at Home," we are extending the suspension of all public gatherings at St. Paul's until April 24, 2020, unless the Governor's order is suspended.

A few key items:

1. The **Sunday 8am worship service that is on the radio is also available online and for viewing online any time thereafter.**
 - a. Find links at www.splco.org for streaming video and worship materials.
 - b. The fully printed order of service will be posted on our website.
 - c. You may borrow a hymnal if you like. Please contact the office. You can pick one up, or one will be delivered to you. Or, consider ordering a hymnal for your home. They are on sale for \$20 from www.cph.org.
 - d. Due to safety and assorted logistical concerns, we are only able to offer traditional service online at this time.
2. Wednesday Lenten services will be available online.
3. **We plan to offer a full Holy Week worship schedule online.**
4. Thursday school chapel services will be available online at 9am.
5. Sunday School materials for the home are available. If you would like these materials, please contact the office.
6. There will be someone in the office from 8am-2pm, Monday through Friday.
7. Lord's Cupboard and Swaddling Clothes will distribute at scheduled times, but one-by-one, not in a group.
8. Because of the Governor's order, we will not be able to hold a voters' meeting at this time. The church leadership is pursuing all legal options to properly staff for the next school year.

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Pastoral Care

Emergency pastoral care is available. However, to limit social contact for the sake of all, non-emergency pastoral care is on hiatus through mid-April. The pastors and elders have a congregational "call list" and are progressing through the list, checking-in on our members. If you have a prayer request or something of pastoral concern, *please call the office!* 262-567-5001.

Offering Announcement (Critical)

In order to maintain the ministry functions, **it is critical that those with steady income continue to give sacrificially.** It is always important to give something, but **if your contribution has to be reduced because of your situation, do so in God's peace.** You can contribute in the following ways:

1. Mail your offering to the church.
2. Online. Go to www.splco.org, click in the upper right corner on the orange offerings/donate button to set up an account.
3. On your smartphone via the GivePlus app. Search your phone's app store for "**GivePlus Church**" to download and give through the app.

The Lord's Supper

In response to the pandemic and various novelty approaches to distributing the Lord's Supper, on 20 March 2020 the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod published *Communion and Covid-19* (attached). You can find this document and a host of other spiritual resources at Synod's web site (<https://www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/health-ministry/pandemic>). Please read the document found on the following three pages. It helps remind us of what the Supper is and how Lutherans have pledged to uphold it in our doctrine and practice.

"Given the clear guidance of medical and governing authorities regarding behavior that best minimizes the spread of infection," (*Communion and Covid-19*) the pastors and elders have decided it is wisest *not* to resume distribution of The Lord's Supper *at this time*. We view this chiefly as short-term "care for the neighbor" issue. We echo the words of the CTCR:

As great as the hardship is when we cannot receive Christ's body and blood, the hardship ought not be "resolved" in ways that promise an uncertain "sacrament" without the absolute assurance that Christ intends. It is better humbly and repentantly to ask the Lord for the regular administration of the Sacrament of the Altar to be restored to us, together with an end to the "deadly pestilence" that is killing thousands of souls who are precious to God, their Creator (see Psalm 91; Jonah 4:11). (CTCR, *Communion and Covid-19*)

That is what we will continue to do: ask The LORD to end this deadly pestilence and restore our communion. The pastors and elders will revisit this issue and issue an updated communication on the Supper by mid-April. I plan to write a weekly update letter like this one and record a brief video update for our web site and social media.

Dear God, send us your Spirit, that we may fix our eyes on Jesus, hold preaching and your Word sacred, and care for our neighbor. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Lance O'Donnell, Senior Pastor

Worship Schedule: ✕ Saturday 5:00 p.m. ✕ Sunday 8:00 a.m. Traditional in the Church
✕ Sunday 10:30 a.m. Contemporary in the Church ✕ (Summer) Wednesdays 6:30 pm Lakeside ✕
Time to Grow (Sunday School) Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

Communion and Covid-19

The current crisis caused by the coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic is disrupting every facet of life for our entire continent and for most of the world. Increasing restrictions on social ties and connections—“social distancing”—while endorsed by most medical authorities are now also being mandated increasingly by governing authorities. Among the practices of social distancing is the avoidance of group settings—settings such as Christian worship.

A growing number of LCMS churches are suspending services temporarily because of Covid-19. This presents significant challenges for Christian life and the church’s well-being. Christians treasure his Word and Sacraments and so we treasure regular corporate worship. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...” Similarly, we treasure fellowship with one another and know that the Word tells us not to forsake meeting together so that we can continue to encourage each other (Hebrew 10:25).

The Small Catechism summarizes the Lutheran understanding of the importance of public worship in its teaching on the third commandment: “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.” As a consequence, we hold services each Lord’s Day and at other times, and encourage all members to attend regularly in order to receive the gifts of Christ in Word and Sacrament. At the same time we have not made a law of Sunday worship. We know that our services are not something we are doing to earn a place with God. Jesus tells us that “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). There are times when the obligations of Christian love may lead individuals *not* to worship with a congregation. A church member with a bad cold, flu, or another contagious disease will generally refrain from attending services lest he or she infect others. Congregations have canceled services entirely in order to protect their members during inclement weather. Understandably, then, in the current circumstance, many LCMS congregations have again determined that they should suspend services for a time out of love for those who might contract the deadly Covid-19 virus.

Such churches are able to find various ways to help members to hear the Word of Christ richly. From telephone calls to emails to website messaging to instant messaging to sermon streaming, the Word is being heard and received in the midst of the coronavirus. But what of the Sacrament of the Altar? The forgiveness of sins is not prevented when one cannot commune, for it is delivered by the Gospel as it is read and preached and spoken by the royal priesthood and also in the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Supper as well as in Absolution. But it is only in the Lord’s Supper that we eat and drink Christ’s very body and blood. It thereby offers a special assurance that is proper only to it, just as Baptism has its own assurances. The inability to commune is therefore no small matter, but a true hardship!

We know, however, that the church has known this hardship at other times and not only in our own time. During the early years of colonial America, Lutherans often went weeks or months without the Supper. Congregations without a pastor are often unable to receive the Lord’s Supper in their services because supply pastors are unavailable—sometimes for lengthy time periods. And, in the early 20th century during the great influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, many Missouri Synod churches were not able to meet for any services during a period of time. We are not in uncharted territory.

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Some unsatisfactory solutions to the unavailability of the Sacrament have been suggested at the present time. One is that a pastor speak the words of institution from the church during a streaming service while everyone communes at home. Another is to have the pastor consecrate elements in the presence of elders or deacons who would in turn administer them to members. While the hunger and thirst for the Lord's Supper that leads to such measures is both understandable and commendable, the solutions are nevertheless faulty.

A video streaming "consecration" with words spoken by the pastor remotely and communion elements in member homes is almost identical to an approach that the CTCR addressed in 2006¹ in which the Commission said:

1. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus with words and actions spoken and carried out by him in the direct presence of his disciples (Matt. 26:26-28). Throughout history, the church has sought to be faithful to Christ's practice in this regard. Pastors speak the words of institution in the presence of the assembled congregation, thereby giving assurance that we are "doing this" as our Lord has instructed us to do (Luke 22:19). Whenever the actual words and actions of the celebrant in consecrating the elements are intentionally separated (by time, distance, or technological means) from the distribution and reception, no assurance can be given that our Lord's instructions are being heeded and that the body and blood of Christ are actually being given and received for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith (cf. fn. 15 of the CTCR's 1983 report *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper* [TPLS]).

Moreover, this approach turns the words spoken by the pastor from a proclamation into an incantation of sorts. This, too, was addressed by the CTCR:

- . This practice lends itself to the unscriptural notion that the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper are present by virtue of the "incantation" of the pastor in some way, shape or form, rather than by the gracious power of Christ and his Word. "Concerning the consecration," says the Formula of Concord, "we believe, teach, and confess that no man's work nor the recitation of the minister effect this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but it is to be ascribed solely and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (FC Ep VII, 8; quoted in TPLS, 15). While it is true that "the regularly called and ordained pastors of the church are to officiate at the administration of Holy Communion" (TPLS, 17-18), it is only "through Christ's word and its power"—not through the mere "sound" or "recording" of the voice of the pastor—"that Christ's body and blood are present in the bread and wine" (TPLS, 14).

Novelties such as these in the practice of the Lord's Supper will inevitably lead *away* from the Sacrament itself as instituted by Christ to humanly-instituted *techniques* by which the Sacrament is purportedly being given. Note the third point raised by the CTCR in 2006:

3. As emphasized above, the focus in our celebration of the Lord's Supper must always be on the gracious word of Christ—the word that gives assurance to hearts weighed down by guilt, doubt and fear that the great gifts promised here are truly given and received. The Commission says: "To...insert some personal idiosyncrasy into the consecration is to detract the people's attention from the Sacrament. The congregation's focus is to be on Christ's word and invitation. The celebrant is a servant to sharpen that focus" (TPLS, 15).

¹ The CTCR responded to a question about DVD consecration. While there certainly are some dissimilarities between the question at that time and the present question about a video streaming consecration, the similarities are so strong that we are referencing the 2006 opinion extensively here. See CTCR, "Opinion on DVD Consecration (2006)" at <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=7ZiqCqGn3FiMMtQcbrfFQuPjffn9AoMQ>.

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The Lord's Supper is intended to strengthen faith in God's forgiving grace, a faith which counts on the Word of Christ's promise that the bread and wine are His body and blood. To introduce doubts or uncertainty about the Sacrament negates this purpose. We can be thankful that God in His mercy has not given the Lord's Supper as the only "means of grace." Instead, he showers us with His grace. The Gospel is not silenced, forgiveness is proclaimed, Baptism will be administered even in emergencies, and Baptism is lived out daily by means of repentance and the new life that God's Spirit enables us to live in any and all circumstances.

We also cannot support the suggestion that a pastor may consecrate elements with the elders or deacons, who would then administer them to members. The CTCR counseled against this practice on theological grounds in *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper*, pages 26-27 (see also page 13 which opposes distribution without the *Verba*).² Moreover, given the clear guidance of medical and governing authorities regarding behavior that best minimizes the spread of infection, we note that this suggested practice introduces two potential opportunities for the transmission of Covid-19. The first is the interaction between the pastor and the elders/deacons. The second is the interaction of the individual elder or deacon with the communicant(s) in the home.

As great as the hardship is when we cannot receive Christ's body and blood, the hardship ought not be "resolved" in ways that promise an uncertain "sacrament" without the absolute assurance that Christ intends. It is better humbly and repentantly to ask the Lord for the regular administration of the Sacrament of the Altar to be restored to us, together with an end to the "deadly pestilence" that is killing thousands of souls who are precious to God, their Creator (see Psalm 91; Jonah 4:11).

In this uncertain time, let us encourage every baptized child of God to be fervent in seeking opportunities to hear the Word of God as it goes forth from written sermons, letters, websites, emails, streaming videos, and other means, to read the Word in their homes, to implore God to end this plague and preserve His church, and—as His royal priesthood—to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

In closing, we wish to echo the CTCR from 2006.

Finally, it is important to note that this response of the Commission is in no way intended to pass judgment on the motives of those involved. . . . The sole purpose of this response is to promote and encourage the proper practice of the Lord's Supper in faithfulness to the teaching and example of Christ, so that doubts and questions may be replaced by faith in Christ's gracious word, promise, and presence.

Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., Chairman of the CTCR
Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, Executive Director of the CTCR
Rev. Larry M. Vogel, Associate Executive Director of the CTCR
Endorsed by the CTCR on March 20, 2020

¹ The CTCR responded to a question about DVD consecration. While there certainly are some dissimilarities between the question at that time and the present question about a video streaming consecration, the similarities are so strong that we are referencing the 2006 opinion extensively here. See CTCR, "Opinion on DVD Consecration (2006) at <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=7ZiqCqGn3FiMMtOcbrcFOuPjjfn9AoMQ>.

² CTCR (1983), <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=421>.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 5th
Richard Fredrick
Delores Schultz

April 9th
Gary Feldschneider

April 12th
Jim Steinberg

April 15th
Grace Olson

April 18th
Albert Falstad
Kenneth Runyard

April 19th
Ruth Kern

April 21st
Lee Corneliuson

April 23rd
Virginia Meintz

April 26th
Marilyn Peterson
Arthur Schuck

For our members 70+ years



MEMORIALS

Betty Kragenbrink	\$20.00
Marcella Neitzel	\$25.00
Shirley Dibble	\$25.00

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
 CHURCH AND SCHOOL
 (The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)
 210 E. Pleasant Street
 Oconomowoc, WI 53066-3050
 262-567-5001

WORSHIP & STUDY

Saturday	5:00 pm
Sunday (Traditional)	8:00 am
Sunday (Contemporary)	10:30 am
Bible Class	9:15 am

Pastor Lance Armstrong O'Donnell 567.5001 x217
 Pastor Steve Scharnell 567.5001 x216
 Director of Parish Music, Allison Madkie 567.5001 x214
 Principal - Jill George 567.5001 x213
 FAX 567.1207
 Website: www.splco.org

RADIO BROADCASTS:

8:00 am Sunday Worship
 Live on WTKM 104.9 FM/1540 AM
 & www.wtkm.com

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (ECC)

Christian Pre-School & Day Care
 Director Christine Flores 567-4881

Epistle Editor-Heather Scheuer

Newsletter deadline for articles,
 announcements and features is the
 2nd Wednesday of the month

PLEASE ADVISE THE CHURCH OFFICE OF
 ANY ADDRESS CHANGES

St. Paul's Ladies Aid

Coming soon—tentatively set for Tuesday, May 12th, our Mother ~ Daughter ~ Friend Banquet. This year's theme is "Women Dressed in God's Word." The banquet will be held at the newly remodeled Oconomowoc Golf Club. Watch the bulletin for further details.

Lord's Cupboard donations needed

We are in need of canned fruit and/or fruit cups, pasta, jelly (plastic containers), paper towels and, of course, toilet paper. Gift cards to Dollar Tree and Aldi's would be appreciated also. Any donations can be dropped off between 8:00am-2:00pm Monday-Friday (office hours).

We are trying to reach out to our community in need-the elderly and all school families. If you are aware of someone who needs help, please contact the church office or call Mary Hickenbottom at 414.333.3421.

Prayers are needed for our families and our volunteers. God bless us all!

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Transferred from another LCMS Church

Lori Ford – Hales Corners Lutheran Church, Hales Corners, WI

Baptized 1902 Confirmed 1113

Adoption Group



We would like to invite those who have adopted, those in the adoption process, foster parents, adults who were adopted themselves, and birth parents to an adoption discussion group. The children are welcome too so they can have fellowship time together. Please join us!

TBD

"Parenting struggles and what others should know about adoption"

Please bring something to drink, a snack to share with the group and be ready for great discussion and fellowship! If you have any questions or would like more information please contact us at Jackie Meyer at 920-279-5840 or Dave Meyer 920-279-5860. You can also email us at jackiedave1018@gmail.com

"Not flesh of my flesh nor bone of my bone, but still miraculously my own. Never forget for a minute you didn't grow under my heart, but in it."

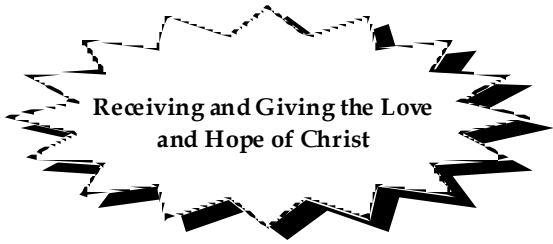
-Fleur Conkling Heyliger

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APRIL 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 12:15 pm Lenten Worship LIVE @ splco.org	2	3	4 8:30 pm AA Meeting
5 8:00 am Traditional Worship LIVE @ splco.org or on the radio at WTKM 104.9 FM	6 12:15 pm Holy Week Worship LIVE @ splco.org 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Open Pantry	7 12:15 pm Holy Week Worship LIVE @ splco.org	8 12:15 pm Holy Week Worship LIVE @ splco.org	9 12:15 pm Maundy Thursday Worship LIVE @ splco.org	10 12:15 pm Good Friday Chief Service LIVE @ splco.org OR 7:00 pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service LIVE @ splco.org	11 8:30 pm AA Meeting
12 6:00 am Sunrise Worship LIVE @ splco.org or on the radio at WTKM 104.9 FM 8:00 am Traditional Worship LIVE @ splco.org or on the radio at WTKM 104.9 FM	13 6:00 pm Swaddling Clothes Ministry	14	15	16	17	18 8:30 pm AA Meeting
19 8:00 am Traditional Worship LIVE @ splco.org or on the radio at WTKM 104.9 FM	20 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry	21	22	23	24	25 8:30 pm AA Meeting
26 TBD	27 6:00 pm Swaddling Clothes Ministry	28	29	30		