

The Dove

Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church—Anchorage, AK (LCMS)



APRIL
2020

Rev. Kyle Mietzner, Pastor

Our Plan

I'm almost at the end of my 14 day quarantine after returning from outside. Once I've completed this, if I'm still in good health, I'll probably keep doing the same thing that I'm doing now... staying inside, like most the rest of you have been doing anyways. Thank you to everyone who has helped me out during this time. You've dropped off groceries, wood glue, and even beer for me. This has been wonderful to see how willing you are to help your neighbors in need. Even though we're distant from one another, and suspicious of everyone these days, it seems as if we are also being reminded of how much we need one another. We're not built to stay alone. No one knows how long this will last, but my guess is that we're in this for months, not weeks, and hopefully not years.

Churches are approaching this challenging time in different ways. Some have ceased all operations, while others have encouraged large gatherings. Neither of these are wise. My goal is to acknowledge the difficulty of our separation, yet lead faithfully and confidently with the joy and freedom that Christ has given to His church. This is the time for your baptisms to really shine. This is a season in which we will feast upon the Word, though we fast from the Eucharist. Here is what we are going to do:

- 1 - **Services on the internet.** I am not going to pretend that I'm preaching to a church full of people. I'm not going to pretend that this is normal. Instead, we will pray the prayer offices of the church together. These historic offices are meant to be prayed at home. My goal is to lead your family devotions twice a week. The rest of the week is up to you! Matins and evening prayer are meant to be prayed at home, daily, and led by the laity.
- 2 - **Bible Study on the Internet.** We held our first online study this week, and will be reading through Paul's captivity letters (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon). I do not want to overload you with our usual multiple studies. We will most likely keep this to one study a week. It is important for us to keep in contact with one another around the Word.

I'm also publishing *Devotions for the Diaspora* on a near daily basis. This is an audio devotion which normally lasts 6-9 minutes drawing from the Bible and church history. So far, I've been sharing tidbits from all sorts of characters in church history who dealt with isolation and plague. They're all quite hopeful and cheerful in the midst of great trials. You can find this on zionanchorage.org/sermons or on the Zion Facebook page.

3 - **Confession and Absolution.** I've received a few inquiries about having corporate confession and absolution in our online services. I appreciate the desire to receive absolution. As we have it in our Divine Service, it is meant to be confessed and received *corporately*; together. We are not together right now. Rather, this is a time to make use of individual confession and absolution. Maybe you've never used this particular gift? The general form can be found on page 292 of your Lutheran Service Book.

4 - **Individual Pastoral Care.** The normal means by which a pastor cares for his people is through the liturgy, by means of Word and sacrament. This is not a normal time. In some sense, we are all shut ins for the moment. I'll do the best I can in preaching and teaching, but I still care for each and every one of you. I'll do my best to maintain contact with you. If you feel like you are drifting, give me a call or send me an email. I'm only busy if you give me things to do!

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5 - **Individual/Home Devotions and Prayers.** As I noted above, this is a time for the Word to be amplified. It might be that your home has never prayed together or sung a hymn together. Now is the time to develop and maintain your discipline. You have been given tools to use! Your Bibles, Hymnals and Catechisms are waiting to be used! I commend for your use the *Daily Prayer* section on pages 294 - 298. Some of you may be used to praying

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matins or evening prayer, and I encourage and laud these efforts. **Please let me know if you need a hymnal.** We have plenty of them that are not going to be used in the next while. You can borrow them, so long as you bring them back! I will soon be publishing readings for Holy Week and Easter Week.

Do not lose hope. Do not despair. Our Lord often appeared to the frightened disciples, beckoning them, "Do not fear!" Christ is risen! Joy is yours! Christ is the light of the world that no darkness can overcome! The church has survived wars, epidemics, schisms, and all sorts of tomfoolery. We will survive this, and be returned back to our home, dwelling in the house of the Lord. We've only been scattered for a few weeks now, but already, I yearn so greatly to be gathered back together with you around the altar. Stay safe. Keep others safe. Say your prayers. Please do let me know if I can be of any help to you. Additionally, feel free to make any suggestions. While I'm trying my best, I've never done this before, and it is frankly the most difficult thing I've had to deal with as a pastor. We're all in this together, just like we've always been.

Peace be with you. Christ is risen!

+Pastor Kyle Mietzner

PS. I'm including this article from a 1918 edition of the *Lutheran Witness*, during the Spanish Flu epidemic. I appreciate the author's calm tone, and the perspective of potential growth that these challenges bring:

"Family Devotions.-- During the present epidemic, the Boards of Health of many cities have requested that congregations close schools, churches, and Sunday-schools until the danger had passed. Not only our pastors, but also the ministers of other churches advised their people through the public press, or otherwise, that during the closing of the churches they should read the Scriptures at home and have family prayers. In those homes in which this had been a custom before it was easily arranged. To others it was a novel experience. It is to be hoped that some who tasted the spiritual delight of family devotion will continue the practise in the future. Let no one imagine that the churches or the pastors fear that people will take to prayer in the family and neglect public services. The family that enjoys the reading of the Scriptures and family prayers during the week is the one which is most ready to visit the house of God whenever the doors are thrown open. The more members of a congregation practice home or family devotions, the better will be the church attendance in that congregation. That father and head of the house who gathers his household together each day because it is his intention and determination: "I and my house will serve the Lord," -- that father will be of the same mind on the day when the churches are open and the pastor proclaims God's Word.

Are you looking for some good work to do? Would you do something to glorify God, something whereby you may show your gratitude towards the Savior, something whereby you may be yourself blessed, and whereby you may bless your neighbor, something whereby you may be a blessing to your whole country? Institute family devotion daily in your home. Go about it in a cheerful, friendly, evangelical manner. If that is daily done, you have accomplished something that will bless you and yours in time and eternity."

CHURCH NOTES

Christian Education Opportunities

Most Christian education activities are on hold. We have begun a Tuesday 7pm bible study via Zoom. If you, or someone you know, weren't included on the email invitation, please contact the Zion office and/or Pastor to be added to the distribution list.

Helping Hands Meal Prep

Our outreach program to help feed residents at Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House is temporarily suspended. Due to COVID-19, Clare House is not accepting food prepared by outside sources. Also, the Brother Francis occupants are being housed at the Boeke and Sullivan arenas at this time.

Pioneer Home Christian Fellowship

Suspended temporarily.

Birthdays

Ruta Cukurs	4/3
Linda Graham	4/4
Roman Wisroth	4/11
Elena Wisroth	4/15
Carter Dickerson	4/19
Brooke Hartman	4/22
Adrienne Fleming	4/27



Anniversaries

Ralph & Cheryl Erickson	4/2
Sid & Stephanie Anderson	4/18



Church Contacts

Church Office:	338-3838
Preschool Office:	222-3838
Pastor's cell phone:	(336)944-2394
Church address:	2100 Boniface Pkwy Anchorage, AK 99504

Worship Services

Services for the time being are being led online via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/zionalaska/live/>. At the time of the service, look for the video with the **LIVE** button. You do not need a Facebook account to view the services. Simply click 'Not now' if prompted to 'login or create an account'. In some instances, you may need to enter a 'type what you see' code (these are usually case-sensitive) but you should be directed after that. There is an order of service PDF for each service posted on our [ZionAnchorage.org](https://www.zionanchorage.org). These can be printed to follow along, or use a hymnal if you have one. Here is the current schedule. Note that all past service videos are in the videos section if you miss one. There are also links from the website to the Facebook page now.

Holy Week

April 9	7pm	Maundy Thursday Evening Prayer
April 10	7pm	Good Friday Chief Service
April 11	7pm	The Great Vigil of the Resurrection Evening Prayer

The Resurrection of Our Lord

April 12	9am	Pre-service Hymn Sing
	9:30am	Easter Day Matins
April 13	7pm	Easter Monday Evening Prayer
April 14	7pm	Easter Tuesday Evening Prayer
April 15	7pm	Easter Wednesday Evening Prayer





Zion Lutheran Preschool

Is there anything too difficult for God? Jeremiah 32:27 says “I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” During this time, as we are hunkered down, being alone together, it is important to not only have faith but to have hope!

Hope is motivated by faith. We trust in God to have our best interest and fight our battles. Is there anything that God is not capable of doing? My God is never late, He is right on time. And His timing is perfect. These are unknown times, but we can be encouraged that, as we pray and praise God in the midst of this storm, our faith is stronger. He is our help in times of trouble. God is with us and for us always.

Our current situation with this COVID-19 virus is scary. God is our refuge and strength to get through this together. He has done great things for us in the past, and He has given us calm, peace and rest. If we look at how big our God is instead of how big this problem is, we won't be living in worry, fear, or panic. So many have died from this virus, my father included, so it is easy to worry about others because of this silent killer. Putting our confidence in our God first, then our officials, to guide us in the right direction, we can get through this together.

Gloria Vuocolo



STEWARDSHIP

On the topic of stewardship, one of the most common questions a person might ask is *not* whether a Christian should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Of course, Christians should give to their church.

The most common question: “How much should I give?” But what they really mean is this: “Should Christians give a tithe of their income to their local congregation?” So, let’s look at why you should or should not tithe.

Following are some reasons often offered for why Christians *shouldn’t* give a tithe to their church.

Some say you shouldn’t tithe because it isn’t expressly commanded in the New Testament. Lacking that command, there is no “Thus saith the Lord” and no “should” for giving a tithe to your congregation.

Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these, together with treasures (money), add up to more than a tithe.

Still others say they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church.

And there are those who think Christians shouldn’t tithe because of fear. If they tithe, they are afraid their gift will be misused, and they are afraid they won’t have enough to get the things they use, want, or need.

Following are some reasons for why Christians *should* give a tithe to their church.

Even though the New Testament doesn’t specifically command Christians to give a tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to tithe and did. On top of this, St. Paul often describes the giving Christians are to do in similar terms as a tithe: a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of their income (1 Cor. 6:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here’s another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? The reason for the Old Testament tithe was to support the full ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry.

What does it say in the New Testament? “The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther put in the *Small Catechism’s* Table of Duties to cover what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we’re not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let’s answer this by asking a different question about something entirely different. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? There is, after all, no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest we have, and it states simply for Christians to not neglect gathering together. Even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments. It is the goal.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? I’d expect that conversation would be something like this: “I’m glad you’re still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God’s promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation, and to receive His gifts in the Word and the Sacraments. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I’d really like you to try to attain it.”

This same conversation is how we should approach the topic of the tithe. It’s not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, the church is ecstatic that you’re giving when you’re giving in all these ways – time, talents, and treasures.

Lutheran Social Services of Alaska

The LSSA Food Pantry continues to operate during these troubling times. Our numbers are increasing dramatically as we are now serving many who have recently been laid off in our community. Close to half of who we see on daily basis are new and most have never been to a food pantry. We are receiving many phone calls in a day asking how they can access some food.

We are pre-packing food boxes for distribution and we are practicing social distancing during distribution. We have also been given permission to discontinue signing for the TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) and the CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program or senior boxes) during this emergency so they do not need to touch a pen or the desk.

We are thankful that there is a lot of food in the TEFAP system at this time. Presently we are boxing canned beef, pork and chicken, mac-n-cheese, raisins, canned peaches and apricots, dried fruit, peanut butter along with frozen shredded cheese, pork loins, shave ham and ground beef. What we are needing to purchase each day we are open is bread and Franz Bakery does not have much on their shelves in their retail store.

The one item that we had a good supply of and that is disappearing from our desks rapidly is hand sanitizer. We are down to just a few bottles left. We need to find a way to secure the bottles to the desk or if anyone knows where we can purchase wall units please let us know.

On a sad note we said goodbye to Ryan Chernikoff who has been our Food Distribution Manager for over 6 years. His last day was March 25th and we are sorry that we couldn't host a farewell party for him. Ryan's new position is with Cook Inlet Housing Authority and his office will be two blocks away on Spenard Road. Ryan's replacement is also named Ryan. Please help me welcome Ryan Winpigler to his new position with the LSSA Food Pantry.

Thank you to all who donated Easter baskets to the food pantry this year. The baskets are of many different styles and colors but they all were similar as they contained the message of Easter. What a blessing it is to be able to share the Gospel in such a heartfelt way. These baskets come as a huge relief to parents who may not have otherwise been able to afford an Easter basket and will be a great surprise to the children who receive them! We will be distributing Easter Basket through April 9th. Thank you to Betty Anderson for all her work coordinating the distribution of the baskets.

Please keep LSSA, our staff, volunteers and our clients in your prayers as we continue struggle in response to this new disaster called COVID 19. We appreciate the support.

Together Caring for Others,

Alan Budahl, Executive Director
Lutheran Social Services of Alaska
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907-272-0643

THE STORY CONTINUES... ONLINE!



Join us on Saturday, April 18 as CPC brings the 2020 Tea & Auction to the web!

33 years of stories about amazing people coming together to support the life-affirming mission of **the Community Pregnancy Center**.

33 years of people sharing their creativity and heart for the unborn.

Each “Tea” has allowed CPC to play a part in thousands of stories of women and men making not only a choice for life for their unborn child, but an ABUNDANT LIFE for their family.

With a long story like this one – we won’t let the corona virus keep us down. GOD HAS WORK FOR US TO DO! How? We “reboot” by making a few changes, and take the 33rd Annual Lunch, Tea & Auction ONLINE. We look forward to you joining us on SATURDAY, APRIL 18 (note a new date) at 12:00 noon in the comfort of your own house!

Join us online to be a part of continuing the stories the Community Pregnancy Center is a part of every day.

The “Tea” will be streamed on YouTube Live. (You will be able to interact with us in real time through the comments section).

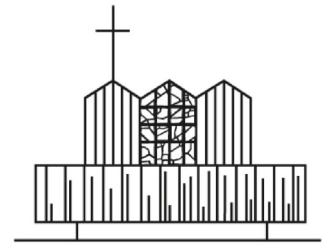
If you are unable to join us on the 18th – it will be available on YouTube to watch at your convenience!

The Auction will move to a separate online auction service and be open over the weekend.

Please check <https://cpcanchorage.com/get-involved/news-and-events/spring-gathering/> or the Friends of CPC Facebook page for updates, or contact Anjali at development@cpcanchorage.com or 337-9292.



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APRIL

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 9:30am Matins Service-FB live	30	31	1-Apr 7pm Evening Prayer - FB live	2	3	4
5 Palm Sunday 9:30am Matins Service-FB live	6	7 7pm Zoom Bible Study	8	9 7pm Maundy Thursday Service	10 7pm Good Friday Chief Service	11 7pm Easter Vigil Service
The Resurrection of Our Lord 12 9am Easter Hymn Sing 9:30am Matins Service-FB live	13 7pm Easter Monday Service	14 7pm Easter Tuesday Service	15 7pm Easter Wednesday Service	16	17	18
19 9:30am Matins Service-FB live	20	21 7pm Zoom Bible Study	22	23	24	25
26 9:30am Matins Service-FB live	27	28 7pm Zoom Bible Study	29	30	1-May	2

Services for the time being are being led online via Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/zionalaska/live/>.