



St. Paul's Epistle

February 2021

Church Council Minutes—January 14, 2021

Those in attendance: Richard Christie, Leanna Hasbargen, George Aitchison, Kyle Morrison, Ken Leerssen, Dave Wright, Leonard Morrison, Tony Lucek, Sally Batdorf and Pastor Quast by phone

Chairman Richard Christie called the meeting to order and gave the opening prayer. There were no additions to the agenda. The Minutes and Treasurer's reports were reviewed and approved.

Briefs: 1) The Elders schedule will be filled out further when services resume. 2) The Security Committee is on hold until further notice. 3) The roof repair was discussed. 4) There was no written report by Pastor. He updated via phone. 5) Ashley Hasbargen delivered the hygiene kits to Lutheran World Relief. 6) A letter has been sent to all members regarding suspending in person due to the lockdown in Ontario. 7) The proposed church budget for 2021 was discussed and approved. 8) The annual voters meeting is on hold. 9) Richard Christie and George Aitchison volunteered to do the annual financial record review. 10) A convention referendum requesting to postpone the synodical and district conventions for another year was discussed and approved. Richard Christie and Leonard Morrison will place our vote on behalf of the church. 11) Parsonage rental value was set at \$650 per month for 2021. 12) There will be no scheduled Council Meetings until further notice. A special meeting may be called as needed.

Membership changes: Removed by death: Ray Gorder on December 15, 2020.

Dave Wright motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ken Leerssen. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by ~ Sally Batdorf, Secretary



MSL Northland is a weekly, half hour televised ministry, produced in Duluth, Minnesota. We bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to you, wherever you're at. Services are led by pastors from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod from throughout the Arrowhead region of northeastern Minnesota and north-west Wisconsin. Where to find us... KBJR Channel 6, 9:30 a.m. Sunday mornings.

Upcoming Services: January 31st, Pastor David Schoessow, Superior, WI

February 7th: Pastor Matthew Kohl, Cloquet, MN

February 14th: Pastor Robert Franck, Duluth, MN

February 21st: Pastor Mark Peske, Cohasset, MN

February 28th: MN North District President, Rev. Don Fondow

Coronavirus: Nothing new about disease ... or the need for the Gospel

By Rev. Dr. Mark Wood

There's really nothing new about the new coronavirus (also called COVID-19). Human history is filled with instances of epidemics, plagues, and pandemics. The Bible speaks about plagues and widespread diseases in accounts of the past and in accounts of our future. Deadly disease is nothing new. Neither is the greater threat to mankind.

In Revelation 9, we read about the horrible destruction that will one day ravage the earth. The figurative language of this chapter has caused many people to speculate about the exact nature of the three plagues discussed here. Whatever they may be (and it's very unlikely that they are coronaviruses), verses 20 and 21 make it clear that mankind faces a far greater problem than these plagues.

"The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts." (Rev. 9:20-21)

While the world around us is fixated on COVID-19, how to respond to it, and the fears of contracting it, there is something that is a far greater threat to them than they realize. Many people in our neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and even our families are more concerned about a disease with a 1-2% mortality rate than a condition with a 100% mortality rate — a condition that every one of them has already contracted.

We know that this greater problem is sin. We also know that handwashing, antiseptic wipes, microbe-trapping face masks, and isolation cannot spare any of us from the deadly consequences of sin. Only the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ can save us. People's concern over COVID-19 is an opportunity for us to engage them in conversations about our mortality and the certainty of death. It is an opening for us to speak God's Word into a situation that can only be answered by God's Word. In the face of the COVID-19 threat, with all its fears and uncertainties, we can shine as people who have certain hope and faith.

Our response to COVID-19 should show the people around us that we live in faith, not fear, and that we are filled with hope. Our hope is not in science, technology, or medicine. Our hope is in the One who has given us these good gifts and the greater gifts of life and salvation through the forgiveness of our sins. Your response to the COVID-19 threat should include making good use of the "reason and senses" and all that God has given us "for this body and life" (*Luther's Small Catechism*). By all means, follow the sound advice of medical professionals and public health officials to protect yourself and your loved ones from this virus. But do not fear. You are God's own child washed in the waters of Holy Baptism, cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and filled with hope. As you prepare to deal with the challenges of a widespread disease, remember to also prepare to share Good News with "anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Through your faithful witness during a public health crisis, it is possible that people in your life will repent and receive the healing that only Jesus can provide. It's true: There's nothing new about the new coronavirus. But, in COVID-19, there is a new opportunity for us to bring Good News to our dying world.



February is Heart Health Month!



To keep you and your loved ones safe & healthy on Valentine's Day and all year long: BE ACTIVE, BE AWARE, BE PREPARED, BE SAVVY, BE SENSIBLE, BE SAFE, BE WATCHFUL, BE BALANCED, BE INFORMED, BE SMOKE FREE, BE GERM FREE!

- Signs of a stroke: *Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms or legs *Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others *Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes * Sudden severe headache with no known cause
- Signs of a heart attack: *Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain. *Discomfort in other areas of the upper body can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach. * Shortness of breath often comes along with the chest discomfort but it can also occur before chest discomfort. * Other symptoms may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.



IF YOU THINK THAT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS HAVING A HEART ATTACK CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY!

February 5 is heart health day, wear red!



From the LCMS Website.....

QUESTION: Would you please explain the significance of Ash Wednesday? I've seen some people in the past with black ash crosses on their foreheads.

ANSWER: *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice, a commentary on Lutheran Worship*, one of our Synod's hymnals, says this about ashes on Ash Wednesday: "Other customs may be used, particularly the imposition of ashes on those who wish it. This ancient act is a gesture of repentance and a powerful reminder about the meaning of the day.

Ashes can symbolize dust-to-dustness and remind worshipers of the need for cleansing, scrubbing and purifying. If they are applied during an act of kneeling, the very posture of defeat and submission expresses humility before God."

The use of ashes on Ash Wednesday is a more recent custom among most LCMS congregations, although some have done it for decades. The ashes are usually derived from the burned palms from the previous Palm Sunday.

Experience will show, however, that in obtaining ashes this way, it doesn't take many ashes to "ash" a whole congregation. Like sin, they are very dirty and go a long way. One palm leaf will produce enough ashes for several years. Usually the pastor takes the ashes on the end of his thumb and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each worshiper, saying these words: "Remember: you are dust, and to dust you shall return."



A PRAYER FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

February Birthdays

Happy birthday to these members celebrating their special day!

Feb. 4: Arlo Lucek

19th: Louie Swenson, Bev Moorhead, Kathy Gorden

26th: Rita Anderson, Roberta Christie

8th: Ken Leerssen

20th: Marc Gorden, Dave Wright

9th: Stephanie Morrison

21st: Jean Houska

11th: Michelle Hopkins

22nd: Paige Wold, George Aitchison

13th: Jeanette Aitchison

23rd: Amy Morrison





FROM THE PASTOR

Greetings, beloved of the Lord, in Jesus' name!

We are now well into the New Year of 2021, and yet not too much seems to have changed. A pandemic still threatens the world, and while there is hope for the successful distribution of a vaccine, this will take some time to accomplish, and only time will tell how effective these things are in combating this threat. As the Psalmist declares (146:3), "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation." We are admonished, as children of God, not to place our trust in men: be they politicians, doctors, or anyone else. Our trust is reserved for the Lord—who can and does work through men, to be sure—but our trust—our faith—is reserved for the Lord alone who can and has delivered our salvation from sin and death. Indeed, as the Psalmist continues (146:5), "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God..." So, we continue to rejoice in all things, because we have the Lord God as our hope and Savior. The Lord God who took on human flesh and suffered and died for all of our sins.

As we enter the month of February, we are mindful of the fact that February 17 marks Ash Wednesday, the start of the penitential season of Lent. Often times in world history, when there has been outbreak of war, famine, pestilence, etc. the church has responded with humble repentance. Such is what the season of Lent is all about. We examine our Lord Jesus' suffering and death on our behalf, and we are moved to repent of our sin—and to look to the cross of Christ for mercy and forgiveness. I encourage each of you to take this opportunity to cry out to the Lord and confess your sin.

We all have sin of which we need to repent. We all have sin that clings to the darkest recesses of our heart, leading us into temptation against God's Word and will. Yet there is no place so hidden that the redeeming light of Christ's grace and forgiveness cannot penetrate. That is why we, as Christians, are so freely open about our repentance. For we know that there is no sin too big for God to forgive. Jesus' blood covers it all. His righteousness is ours by faith!

And so we may have great joy, dear friends, even in the midst of suffering and trial, of sober penitence. For it is our God and Lord "who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous" (Psalm 146:6b-8). You are righteous in the Lord! For you have been set free from your sin and sorrow by the Lord of life and joy. Your eyes have been opened to the healing, gracious presence of God in Christ Jesus. So, you are not bowed down with the weight of guilt and shame—with the looming threat of death! No, indeed, in your Baptism into Christ you have already died and been raised to life. All your sins have been washed away. What have you to fear? Nothing and no one. For you belong to Christ Jesus, now and forevermore.

So remember, beloved, no matter what occurs in this life, "The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!" (Psalm 146:10). Praise the Lord, you His people! Praise His name to all generations! For the Lord is God. He is the Ruler and Creator of all. We who hope in Him have nothing to fear. Thanks be to God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

God's peace be with you all.

Pastor Quast