MAY 2020

Reflections

by Pastor Jay

> *Do not fear, for I am with you,*
> *do not be afraid, for I am your God;*
> *I will strengthen you, I will help you,*
> *I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.* (Isaiah 41:10, NRSV)

Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ! Alleluia!

When I wrote our last Messenger *Reflection,* little did we know we would still be in the throws of this pandemic - at least I sure didn't! Granted, we ALL have had to learn a lot: the ZOOM on-line worship services and attempting to join these mysterious "chat" rooms (which we're getting better at!). How to navigate Facebook "live-streaming! Face-time on our phones, etc. Today, I had over 80 texts from the "Lutheran Brotherhood" as they all spoke a sophisticated jargon of cameras and audio and cables and monitors … I KNOW they were not expecting me to contribute. :)

I'm not sure how *you* are adapting, but I know *I'm* certainly struggling with all the changes! But I'm LEARNING! Thank you, Lord! … An old dog CAN learn new "tricks!" I remain so GRATEFUL for their expertise in this high-tech digital, on-line, ZOOM-ing world, that we've been able to join in our collaborative, all ONE worship experience, giving Praise and Glory to our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ! Alleluia! So in THIS case, the *Means* DO justify the *Ends!* Thank you to all who are making this happen!

In the MEANTIME, we persevere! We struggle! We question! We have our ups and downs and numerous FEARS! It can be such an emotional and SPIRITUAL roller coaster! And that is MOST understandable! And not to make light of it … but HANG ON! Because we are NOT through with this yet!

So what does one DO? Where does one GO? … to find Peace and Serenity in the middle of something few of us have ever gone through, let alone understand?

The GOOD NEWS is we do NOT go through ANY of this ALONE!!! And where we GO is to Jesus Christ! *"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7). *"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7).

Some of you are familiar with the man, St. John of the Cross (1542-91), perhaps best known for his phrase "dark night of the soul," although *he* never uses the term. What he did speak of was the dark night of the *senses* and the dark night of the *spirit* in his treatise titled simply *The Dark Night.* But here was a man who knew extreme suffering.

He was a contemporary of St Teresa of Avila who was involved in reforming the Carmelite Order and creating a NEW order called the Discalced Carmelite, which John supported. Which is why he ended up in prison, arrested by the “old” mainstream Carmelites. He spent nine months in a tiny closet that had formerly served as a latrine. There was not enough room to lie down, and the only window was far above his head. Twice a day the friars took him out and flogged him, demanding he denounce what they considered was the heresy being committed by St Teresa. He never did.

John eventually escaped but it was during this incarceration that he experienced the “dark night” that he would later write about. Feeling abandoned by God. Questioning God’s existence. Feeling his soul was dried up; not able to pray; life, meaningless. Empty.

And yet, as he discovered - as Jesus has promised ALL of us - he was NOT forgotten nor abandoned. And he went on to memorize and eventually write the most beautiful love poetry to God because of the darkness and suffering he went through. To quote from another article in the Messenger entitled, “John of the Cross: Poet, Pastor, Mystic,” it is the hard times, the dark times, that bear the Spirit of God, the Spirit who “broods over the waters of death and has power to work a resurrection … In our darkness, he finds Jesus’s darkness; and what he echoes is the impact of Easter!”

Resurrection! Thanks be to God who gives us *Hope to New Life in Christ!*

This is the joyful courage and hope we are given as we share in the mystery of Easter and meet our Risen Lord in our own homes, behind our own closed doors! We are not alone! *The Risen Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8)*

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of God's Son Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Christ’s Love for you all!

Pastor Jay

St. Teresa

The following poem was found in St Teresa’s own prayer book after her death, known as “Teresa’s Bookmark.”

Let nothing disturb you.
Let nothing upset you.
Everything changes.
God alone is unchanging.
With patience all things are possible.
Whoever has God lacks nothing.
God alone is enough.**

Teresa of Ávila, “Nada te turbe,” from Starr, Passionate Mystic, 24.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & THANK YOUs

Congregational Council

The Congregational Council did not meet during the month of April. The Executive Committee did meet using via Zoom. Plans are being made to use Zoom or another method for the May council meeting.

Treasurer's Report

The suspension of church services at the end of March had an impact on our regular offering: General income was $5,455 short of covering expenses for the month. This brings the first quarter shortfall to $9,514 and leaves $32,210 in the general fund for future shortfalls.

March 2020 income and expense
Income: $10,603 ($ 31,598 year-to-date)
Expense: $16,058 ($41,113 year-to-date)
Shortfall: $ 5,455 ($ 9,514 year-to-date)

We understand not everyone may be able to maintain their giving during this time, but if you can, you may mail your offering to the church office. You may also sign up for electronic giving; contact treasurer Mark Oppedahl if you want information on this.

Lent offerings through March were $492, which went to Almost Home.

Last December St. John's received a bequest from the estate of former member Art Schmalz. Our policy is to gift 10% to a cause of the church council's choosing. The council decided to make that gift to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Dubuque, to support their meal program for kids. The amount was $1,176.

On April 16th St. John's and Almost Home were approved for a $26,000 loan from the CARES Act's Paycheck Protection Program. We have eight weeks to use this for our payroll and utilities. After that if we have maintained our employee headcount, the majority of the loan should be forgiven. We are thankful for this extra means of funding for our important ministries during this time of crisis.

Worship During the Month of May

Join us at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings for live worship on the internet or by telephone.

To access ZOOM on the internet copy and paste or click on this link:

[https://wartburgseminary.zoom.us/j/887508411]

Or to listen to the worship service call (**312) 626-8679** and enter the Meeting code **887 508 411#**.

Food and Living Assistance

If you know of anyone who is having "food insecurity," food is available and will be delivered to a persons home through Labor Harvest. Food is also available through Resources Unite, which has an extended pantry.

Carry-out food is available through the downtown churches that sponsor meal sites.

If you know of someone facing rent or utility shortfalls, there is funding available on a referral basis only. Please contact Pastor Jay or Almost Home Executive Director, Gwen Kirchhof or the office to assist in a referral.

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

St. Mark Youth Enrichment

In response to our gift of $125 to St. Mark Youth Enrichment, Beth McGorry wrote:
"Every child deserves a hero, someone who is there to help them excel in life. Today, you were that hero. **Thank you!** …

Your gift ensures these kids in the Dubuque and Western Dubuque are have a healthy and enriching environment. This would not be possible with out support from heroes like you. … Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart! You are making a difference in the lives of children in our community."

Lutheran Services of Iowa

"Please know this is a crucial time to support our staff across Iowa, and we are so thankful for your partnership. **Thank you** for responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service!"

"COVID-19 is creating severe financial strain for many organizations, including LSI. But nothing will stand in the way of our mission of hope and healing. LSI social worker Megan is still providing critical services to teenagers in the Polk County Juvenile Detention Center." Click on the following link to read her story …

https://mailchi.mp/lsiowa/join-lsis-circle-of-compassion-2680466?e=1631df75fc

Quotes

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22

"Laughter is a sunbeam of the soul." Thomas Mann

Reports, Articles and More

Parish Nurse—Health Beat

The corona virus that causes COVID-19 mainly **spreads from person to person**. When someone who is infected coughs or sneezes, they send droplets containing the virus into the air. (COVID 19 is detectable in the air for **three hours**) A healthy person can then breathe in those droplets. You can also catch the virus if you touch a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes.

COVOD 19: What you Need to Know - Part 2
Here's **a guide to how long it can live on some of the surfaces** you probably touch on a daily basis.

- **Metal** - doorknobs, jewelry, silverware, etc.: **5 days**
- **Wood** - furniture, decking, etc. : **4 days**
- **Plastics** - packaging like milk containers and detergent bottles, subway and bus seats, backpacks, elevator buttons, etc.:**2 to 3 days**
- **Stainless steel** - refrigerators, pots and pans, sinks, some water bottles, etc.: **2 to 3 days**
- **Cardboard** - shipping boxes, etc.: **24 hours**
- **Copper** - pennies, teakettles, cookware, etc.: **4 hours**
- **Aluminum** - soda cans, tinfoil, water bottles, etc.: **2 to 8 hours**
- **Glass** - drinking glasses, measuring cups, mirrors, windows, etc.: **Up to 5 days**
- **Ceramics** - dishes, pottery, mugs, etc.: **5 days**
- **Paper** - The length of time varies. Some strains of coronavirus live for only **a few minutes on paper, while others live for up to 5 days.**

What You Can Do
To reduce your chance of catching or spreading coronavirus, clean and disinfect all surfaces and objects in your home and office every day. This includes:

- Countertops
- Tables
- Doorknobs
- Bathroom fixtures
- Phones
- Keyboards
- Remote controls
- Toilets

Use a household cleaning spray or wipe. If the surfaces are dirty, clean them first with soap and water and then disinfect them.

(continued on next page)

Keep surfaces clean, even if everyone in your house is healthy. People who are infected may not show symptoms, but they can still shed the virus onto surfaces.

After you visit the drugstore or supermarket, or bring in takeout food or packages, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Do the same after you pick up a delivered newspaper.

Sources: WebMD April 24, 2020, John Hopkins Medicine April 20, 2020

Parish Nurse—Health Beat

part 2

COVID 19: New Symptoms

The CDC is now warning there are **nine main symptoms** for COVID-19.

The common symptoms, which may appear in some combination within 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus, are:

- Dry cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (Temperature greater than 100.4 F)
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills, “Rigors”
- Muscle pain, “Myalgia”
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. In addition to the above diarrhea and/or severe vomiting have also been reported.

If you have any of these **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately:**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 if you have a medical emergency: Notify the operator that you have, or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

Sources: Mayo Clinic April 24, 2020, CDC April 26, 2020

Shirley Cocayne, Parish Nurse

Almost Home

To the Congregation of St. John's: **Thank you** for your continued confidence and support as shown by your generous Lenten donation which was directed to Almost Home. We are doing our best to continue our commitment to serve and expand your ministries in the midst of this Co-Vid 19 Pandemic. I have shared some of the things we have been doing with the Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Almost Home Advisory Board and now I would like to share them with you.

- I have been attending a weekly "Human Service Nonprofit Provider Disaster Response Meeting" via Zoom; it is sponsored by United Way. We assess everyone's needs and see how we can assist each other and share our various resources. The Open Closet has been busy working with Opening Doors to keep their women and children clothed. We responded to the Dubuque Rescue Mission's request for twin sheets and pillowcases. We provided 2 gallons of hand sanitizer to the Dubuque Police Department at the onset of the virus when they were in need. We supplied Sinsinawa Dominican Nuns with a case of gloves.
- I continue to search for grants and funding; many of our regular grantors are experiencing change themselves and are re-directing funds to immediate disaster needs.
- Chris Berlin has applied the first coat of paint on the Men's Bathroom downstairs; he will also do the Women's. Prior to the Co-Vid 19 crisis, this was supposed to be completed by Dubuque Days of Caring, but this activity has been cancelled.
- Chris continues to ring the St. John's Church bell every evening at 8pm on behalf of the Congregation and in solidarity with the Dubuque Ministerium until this virus subsides.
- Ruth has been supplying clothing to people in need by referral and appointment only. They call ahead and one member of the family comes and enters through the back door and all social distancing rules apply. The Open Closet has summer clothing available but has left winter clothing as well. If we can't reopen before August, we will be heading back into winter season. When we do open, Ruth anticipates that we will be offering a "personal shopper" style—at least initially, volunteers will shop with customers lists. This will ensure people really needing clothing will get it and cut down on people just browsing.

Always planning ahead and wanting to keep things interesting, Ruth asked me to send out a **special invitation** to everyone and I am including it in her own words:

> "We are going to 'launch' our reopening of the Open Closet, whenever that might be, with a video on Facebook of anyone involved with the Open Closet in any way and who would like to, by doing a line dance to 'Cotton Eye Joe' amongst the rails! If you would like to join in with this, here is the link to the tutorial (deemed the easiest!)" https://youtu.be/3d0F1PjknC0

The staff and volunteers of Almost Home are very resilient, and we adapt to the daily changes we encounter; we look forward to the future and will continue to serve our neighbors in the downtown neighborhoods of Dubuque.

With Blessings and In Solidarity,
Gwen Kirchhof

A Change of Pace

provided by Pastor Jay

I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on 'Wheel of Fortune.' Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.

I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.

Still haven't decided where to go for Easter ----- The Living Room or The Bedroom.

PSA: Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.

Homeschooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 teacher fired for drinking on the job.

This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog and we laughed a lot.

I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?

I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to Puerto Backyarda. I'm getting tired of Los Livingroom.

Day 6 of Homeschooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year". I'm offended.

Excerpt from the Prologue to the Ascent of Mount Carmel, by St. John of the Cross

A deeper enlightenment and wider experience than mine is necessary to explain the dark night through which a soul journeys toward that divine light of perfect union with God that is achieved, insofar as possible in this life, through love. The darknesses and trials, spiritual and temporal, that fortunate souls ordinarily undergo on their way to the high state of perfection are so numerous and profound that human science cannot understand them adequately. Nor does experience of them equip one to explain them. Only those who suffer them will know what this experience is like, but they won't be able to describe it

(John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, Prologue, 1. See The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3rd ed. (ICS Publications: 1991), 114–115).

John of the Cross: Poet, Pastor, Mystic

The following is an excerpt from *The Impact of God: Soundings from St John of The Cross*, written by Father Iain Matthew, a contemporary Carmelite priest from England. In this passage he explores the mystical and symbolic power of the "night" for John and how it can encourage us and give us hope *today.*

(Father Iain Matthew is a contemporary Carmelite priest from England and author of *The Impact of God: Soundings from St John of The Cross*. In this passage he explores the mystical and symbolic power of the "night" for John and how it can encourage us today). Richard Rohr

Poet, pastor, mystic, John [of the Cross] is first a witness to the impact of God in his life. He has taken the risk of surrender, and can speak with the authority of one who has been there. He testifies to a God who, precisely, is pressing in to meet, to change, and to fill us in our deepest need. . . . Love changes people, and John's witness to God's love may help us to trust and to be brave.

A generous God is fine when things are running smoothly. But what [about] when they are not and darkness is invading? What [about] when trusted patterns have broken down, or we feel too far gone to bother even trying? We dwell at outer limits, and some events in life—loss, failure, stress, sin—remind us of the threat of chaos.

That is where John of the Cross stands: at the threshold of uncertainty; and he assures us that what dwells beyond is not simply chaos. The darkness bears the Spirit of God, who broods over the waters of death and has power to work a resurrection. . . . In our darkness, he finds Jesus's darkness; and what he echoes is the impact of Easter. . . .

Night: we cannot stop it, or hasten it; it just comes, and it teaches us every twenty-four hours that we are not in complete control. John does seem to think there is something important here. Others speak of growth, suffering, purification, but 'we are calling' it 'night'; [1] calling it '"dark night," very appropriately' [2] . . . .John's Toledo imprisonment and escape gave to the symbol 'night' its full weight. . . . [For him] the symbol is able to carry humanity's pain, able to hold even such a sense of alienation from God that the inner self feels dismantled. . . . That is the resonance of the symbol for John. Night signifies that which comes upon us and takes us out of our own control; it announces that as the place of resurrection. A God who heals in darkness—this is John's word of hope in a destabilized world.

[1] *John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, book 1, 1.1, as cited in Matthew, 160.
[2] *John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Prologue,* as cited in Matthew, 160.

Iain Matthew, *The Impact of God: Soundings from St John of The Cross* (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd: 1995), 1, 3, 51, 55–56.
Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations. Center for Action and Contemplation 1823 Five Points Road SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105 USA

Following written by Lysa Ter Keurst

I love knowing God made us full of potential and purpose. He made us to produce fruit. Good fruit. Fruit that brings glory to God, our vinedresser.

He made us to reach out, not pull back.

He made us to believe the best before assuming the worst.

He made us to freely give grace, realizing we so desperately need it ourselves.

He made us to add goodness, see the beautiful, and rest in the assurance of His lavish love for us.

The fruit we bear in our lives is the evidence of His Spirit in us. It's not that we are perfect by any means. But on a consistent basis are we demonstrating what Galatians 5 lists as fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

The way we treat others, speak to others, demonstrate patience with others, notice others and honor others will either validate or violate what we say we believe. The very best sermons aren't those preached from a stage but rather those lived out in everyday life.

What a needed reminder for us all today.

*Lysa TerKeurst is an author, speaker, and president of Proverbs 31 Ministries.

CALENDAR

Tuesday, May 12, 6:00 p.m. Congregational Council, meeting via internet

WORSHIP

Until further notice:

Live via internet on ZOOM: [https://wartburgseminary.zoom.us/j/887508411]
Live via telephone: (312) 626-8679, entering Meeting ID/code 887 508 411#.

May 03	Fourth Sunday of Easter	9:00 a.m.
May 10	Fifth Sunday of Easter	9:00 a.m.
May 17	Sixth Sunday of Easter	9:00 a.m.
May 24	Seventh Sunday of Easter	9:00 a.m.
May 31	Day of Pentecost	9:00 a.m.

PRAYER CONCERNS

If you have a special prayer request, please let us know so we can add them to the Sunday prayer list.

BIRTHDAYS

05 – Clyde Adams
06 – Micayla Hillebrand
10 – Dorothy Kobs
10 – Colton Hedrick
11 – Ashley Cocayne
23 – Mark Oppedahl
30 – Dawn Faust

ANNIVERSARIES

01 – David & Julie Theis
05 – Gary & Bridget Schlichtmann

Remember to check your email for announcements and changes.

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church
1278 White Street
Dubuque, IA

St. John's Mission Statement:
"Showing Jesus' love
by
inviting, welcoming,
worshiping,
and
serving".

Pastor, Rev. Jay Ilten, (563) 543-8882, jayilten@gmail.com
Parish Nurse, Shirley Cocayne, (563) 556-3859 or scoke2@aol.com
Contemporary Music Director, Barb Keough — keoughb@mercyhealth.com
Traditional Music Director, Carolyn Oppedahl — carolyn@oppedahl.com
Almost Home Executive Director, Gwen Kirchhof —
execdirector@almosthomedbq.org
Secretary, April Alhborn **—** stjohnslcoffice@gmail.com
Custodian, Pierce Kohn
Church office - stjohnslcoffice@gmail.com
Church Website: stjohnselcadbq.org
St. John's Cemetery, Tim Hedrick, (563) 581-5283 — tenpindad10@aol.com
Church Office Hours — 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM Monday,Tuesday and Thursday