Reflections

June , 2020

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:19-23

Greetings and Salutations in the Name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ! Peace be with you!

Sunday May 31st we celebrate Pentecost! Fifty days after Easter. The disciples, huddled in rooms behind locked doors ...fearful and afraid; not knowing what may be coming next! Where was the leadership? Where was a timeline when they may expect this fear to subside or end? Where was the Hope they had been promised? Where was GOD in all of this strife and turmoil?

What an uncanny parallel to the past 12 weeks that we have been hunkered down; isolating and quarantining when necessary. Families, friends and loved ones living in fear of the unknown, not knowing *what* to expect in the days and weeks ahead.

And yet ... and YET ... Jesus still comes to us today and breathes on US the Holy Spirit; the unsurpassable PEACE of God! May we lift our voices, REJOICING in the fact that, as Jesus promised, He has NEVER left us nor forsaken us! Alleluai! Praise God!

St John's has NOT closed! We remain vibrant and full of energy! It may LOOK a bit different ... but this Church of God and all of YOU remain as active and strong in faith as ever-before! And like the disciples, we are given the breath of the Holy Spirit, bringing God's Presence to all of our neighbors, as we go out to proclaim Gods' redeeming Love for ALL the world!

St Johns has been so fortunate to be able to share in on-line worship every Sunday morning with other area Lutheran churches. I remain so GRATEFUL for the leadership we have within our Water of Life Conference and the generosity of our area pastors who have graciously shared in their technical expertise - certainly not one of my gifts!

BUT...this Sunday, May 31st - PENTECOST - the Spirit of God will gather us together in the new virtual world we are quickly adapting to .. FROM ST JOHNS! Thank you to Mark Oppedahl and Kris Dzitkowski, who have been diligently working to make this happen! An email will be coming

out explaining how to easily access worship at 10 AM, followed buy a ZOOM fellowship at 11:10 AM. Please feel free to share this info with other, perhaps distant, family members and friends!

We all know these have been very challenging times! We are bombarded *daily* with what works, may work, won't work. We can discuss appropriate protocol with the best of anyone; abhor those who may not wear face masks; praise those who do ... and wonder and question and judge ... Who IS right?

Which is why we simply must take our medical advice from doctors and health departments and not rely on those who sadly seem to be more bent on the political "correctness" of how to proceed. The CDC continues to revise their various guidelines on how to return to business - "WORSHIP" - as normal. But we must make decisions that will protect the health and well being of ALL of us!

It's hard! We have been waiting for so long to return to the way things were knowing that they probably will never be quite the same. The "new normalcy" is anything but, "normal" as we once defined it.

And there is grief with that; a legitimate feeling of loss as we obsess over all manner of wants and worries and its easy to want to rush through things - get to the end of all this - and move on. There is simply no question that the Covid-19 pandemic has touched every one of us in some manner. And the reality is that it will continue to do so as we practice the appropriate protocol of social distancing, using hand sanitizers, wearing face masks when required, etc., even as we speak in hope of returning to our sanctuary, knowing it will be carefully and thoughtfully planned out by church council and the valuable input from other church members and the medical community.

But there is also excitement and joy in the incredible opportunities that are being presented! Throughout this entire pandemic - and moving forward - we need to remind ourselves that God and the Holy Spirit are actively involved in our lives and this world. In spite of our fears and worries and lack of patience God offers us a place of refuge and rest in the Truth of God's Love in Jesus Christ - renewing us in God's amazing Grace!

As the medieval English anchoress Julian of Norwich insisted - even in the midst of the most storied and terrifying pandemics of western history: the Great Pestilence, what we now call "the black death" — during which the bubonic plague ravaged England between 1348 and 1350 - she insisted, ***"All will be well and all will be well and every kind of thing shall be well"*** (Julian of Norwich, The Thirteenth Revelation, ch. 27). And it *SHALL!*

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

In Christ's Love for you all!

Pastor Jay

Our income was only $568 short covering our expenses in April. Many of you have been mailing offering and participating in electronic offering; thank you for your faithful stewardship!

April 2020 income and expense
Income: $11,047 ($42,645 year-to-date)
Expense: $11,615 ($52,728 ytd)
Shortfall: $568 ($10,082 ytd)

These numbers do not include $26,000 loan St. John's received April 17 from the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program. This is intended to help us with our payroll and utility costs during the COVID crisis. Later in June we will apply to have the loan forgiven.

The month of May is normally Legacy Month, when we reflect on the long history of our church and it's impact on our community, and encourage members to consider a gift above and beyond their regular pledge to help secure this legacy. The church council has decided to defer Legacy Month until at least August, but we welcome any gifts before then!

Council Highlights

Council met via Zoom for the second month in a row due to the Covid19 virus.

Dolphin Cabinets has re-scheduled the cabinet installation in Salzmann Hall for the end of May. It was supposed to happen in March but they had to shut down due to the Covid 19 virus.

A new railing for the lectern is being built. It will match the surrounding decor/wood.

Council has been discussing how and when we can resume in-person worship services due to the virus. At this time, we don't have a specific re-open date. Once we do have a date, there must have a detailed plan with how to handle new social/cleaning guidelines and assign duties to specific people. We will follow the ELCA's guidelines regarding the virus.

St. John's has been participating in weekly Zoom meetings for Sunday worship with other local Lutheran churches. Starting with Pentecost (5/31) the plan is to move away from the multi-church Zoom services and have our own services performed mid-week (only Pastor Jay & the musicians present). The service would be recorded and then members could view it on Sunday mornings.

We are excited to announce that this Sunday's church service will be streamed live from St. John's!

Instructions for watching/participating in worship Sunday May 31st at 10AM: To watch Sunday's service live, at 10 am go to St. John's new FaceBook page at https://facebook.com/stjohnselca. You should see a "Live Now" post, and when you click it the video will begin. You can also watch the service after the fact by going to the same page, then clicking Videos to see saved broadcasts. You do NOT need a FaceBook account to watch. However, if you do already have a FaceBook account, be sure to "Like" the church's page. That way a link to the broadcast should appear in your news feed when the service starts. The broadcast will not include the words to hymns or readings, so please print out the attached bulletin or bring it up on another device if you want to follow along.

Day of Pentecost

Pentecost derives its name from the Jewish festival celebrating the harvest and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai fifty days after Passover. Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the Holy Spirit as God's presence within and among us. In Acts the Spirit arrives in rushing wind and flame, bringing God's presence to all people. Paul reminds us that though we each have different capacities, we are unified in the Spirit that equips us with these gifts. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples, empowering them to forgive sin. We celebrate that we too are given the breath of the Holy Spirit and sent out to proclaim God's redeeming love to all the world.

If you are in need of any help, or know of anyone in need of help, please use the following information:

Food Hotline: 1.833.587.8322 For anyone facing food insecurities. No eligibility requirements. Also food available through Resources Unite, 563- 231-6280, and Dubuque Area Labor Harvest, 563-583-3933, which will also deliver the food to a persons home.

Co-Vid Legal Aid Hotline: 1.800.332.0419 In regard to eviction questions, unemployment, anything related to Co-Vid 19 LIHEAP: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program application date extended to June 30th with new income brackets. If you did not previously qualify, you may with the new brackets.

Sunday Morning Adult Study

LIFELONG LUTHERAN LEARNERS

When we are able to meet again, we will study the book of Galatians.

Health Beat … *The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the mental health of every American.*

"We are social beings. We like to connect and touch and be close to people, and we've had to change our behavior, which can create a feeling of isolation," says Patricia Thornton, PhD, a licensed psychologist in New York City.

"Focusing on preparedness, staying calm, reaching out to check on the well-being of others, and self-care will help you through this challenging moment in history. Remind yourself that COVID-19 is a serious but temporary illness, and that life will return to normal in time," says Deborah Serani, PsyD, psychologist. During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may experience stress, anxiety, fear, sadness and loneliness. And mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression, can worsen.

Thornton describes anxiety as an anticipated worry or rumination about something that might happen in the future. She says our world is feeling a "drumbeat of anxiety" due to the COVID-19. "Because the virus is a virus you can't see, and not enough people are being tested, you don't know who carriers are, so you're hyper vigilant about other people and surfaces you're touching and places you're going, which makes you more anxious because there is real danger, but the uncertainty and lack of information about the virus causes anxiety," she says. Thinking positively during a disaster is easier said than done.

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the demands of life. **Ways to cope with stress:**

- **Maintain a regular schedule**- stick to a regular bedtime routine, keep consistent times for meals, bathing and getting dressed, work or study schedules, and exercise. Also set aside time for activities you enjoy.

- **Limit social media** that may expose you to rumors and false information. Watch a reputable news source once or twice a day to keep apprised of what's happening in the world and COVID-19.

- **Distraction can get you away from the cycle of negative thoughts** that feed anxiety and depression. Enjoy hobbies that you can do at home, identify a new project or clean out that closet. Doing something positive to manage anxiety is a healthy coping strategy.
- **Focus on the positive things** in your life, instead of dwelling on how bad you feel. Maintain a sense of hope, work to accept changes as they occur and try to keep problems in perspective.
- **Use your spiritual life for support.** Prayer is powerful.
- **Set priorities.** Set reasonable goals each day and outline steps you can take to reach those goals.
- **Make connections.** Make sure you call, text, FaceTime, or Skype daily with others. During traumatic times, having a sense of connection and a feeling of community is essential for hope and healing.
- **Do something for others.** Find purpose in helping the people around you.
- **Support a family member or friend.** Come up with ways to stay in contact.
- **Add humor to your day** by reading cartoonists or watching funny movies and comedy shows.

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling helpless, sad, angry, irritable, hopeless, anxious or afraid. You may have trouble concentrating on typical tasks, changes in appetite, body aches and pains, or difficulty sleeping or you may struggle to face routine chores. When these signs and symptoms last for several days in a row, make you miserable and cause problems in your daily life so that you find it hard to carry out normal responsibilities, it's time to ask for help. Hoping mental health problems such as anxiety or depression will go away on their own can lead to worsening symptoms.

If you have concerns or if you experience worsening of mental health symptoms, ask for help when you need it, and be upfront about how you're doing. To get help you may want to:

- Call or use social media to contact a close friend or loved one.
- Contact Pr. Jay at 563/543-8882
- Call your primary care provider or mental health professional

<u>If you're feeling suicidal or thinking of hurting yourself, seek help.</u> Contact your primary care provider or a mental health professional. Or call a suicide hotline, in Dubuque, call 563/589-8280.

Mayo Clinic April 02, 2020, CDC April 30, 2020

Shirley Cocayne, Parish Nurse

Ministry of Stewardship

"Stewardship is everything that we do after we say I believe."
(Clarence Stoughton)

Being a Steward in the Time of COVID-19

A steward is a person given responsibility to care for something that is of value.

On airplanes we are instructed by the flight attendants (formerly called stewards and stewardesses) to "put the mask on yourself first before trying to assist others." To be good stewards, we need to take care of ourselves.

That means when we are going through situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to listen to our doctors and health experts, and follow their advice to help keep ourselves safe. You are no good to anyone else if you get sick yourself, so wash your hands, get enough sleep, keep yourself safe.

For some this may mean reaching out for support for food, housing assistance, and legal aid. (Contact information is listed in the Messenger for these agencies or by contacting the church office.)

Once we commit to taking care of the ourselves, we think about the people and communities that are important to us. Stewardship includes caring for not only our immediate and church families, but, also, our neighbors near and far.

Financial Stewardship in the Time of COVID-19

If you are in a financial position to do so, consider making a special donation to St. John or increase the amount of your regular pledge. Also, consider donating directly to non-profit organizations that are serving the most vulnerable populations at this time.

Sisters of St. Francis
Dubuque, Iowa

Almost Home
-serving our neighbors-

When a crisis happens, the Sisters of St. Francis want to help. Almost Home has been the recipient of a $5000 grant to help those we serve during the Co-Vid 19 Pandemic. As Executive Director, Sister Judy Stillwell and Sister Mary Claire O'Toole contacted me to talk about what I am seeing and experiencing in the wake of this virus on a local level; they encouraged me to apply for funds to help those we serve based upon the reputation of Almost Home @ St. John's.

I want to share some of the information that I included in the grant application; I am sure that some of you do not have the opportunity to actually observe Almost Home's service on your behalf and don't have the

opportunity to read my grant applications. Here is a very condensed version—but it will give you an idea of the present climate:

Disease hits our poorest neighborhoods disproportionally, workers are more likely to get sick, lack access to healthcare, have no insurance, and work in service-sector jobs—food sanitation, shipping, and delivery—all exempt from shelter-in-place. They double up in sub-standard rental properties—no laundry facilities, or even hot water! They come to St. John's Open Closet for clean clothes—we are distributing clothing, but running low on other basic needs that they request—it is an opportunity for us to intervene (with the Sister's help) to distribute proper sanitizing supplies, toiletries, laundry soap, bus passes, masks and gloves for wage-earners, and underwear for children—all items to keep them healthy and safe. We need funding to keep our staff safe with PPE—including no-touch thermometers. The people we serve are at-risk and needed help with basic needs long before CO-VID 19—it has exacerbated the situation and has drained our supplies.

I find great joy in the fact that Almost Home is supported by the Sisters of St. Francis who have done and continue to do so much for the marginalized people in our community. They understand the importance of St. John's Outreach Ministries.

Gwen Kirchhof

LSI
LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA
people focused • results driven

June 2020, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

Happy Father's Day!
At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we strive to build up and empower Iowa kids and families. For us, Father's Day is a time to celebrate all the fathers and male role models we see every day.
Through our Early Childhood Services, young men are learning to become dads. They're becoming confident and active in their child's life, and they are creating loving, bright futures for their families.

Many Iowa children entering foster care need a positive male role model in their lives. And through LSI Foster Care and Adoption, our licensed foster dads are there to help guide them.
This is only possible through your support of LSI! If you would like to make a gift, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Thank you for responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve

people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and Facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Creating Her Community

Paulynn had a dream of what she wanted in life: lots of friends, a job she loved, a healthy lifestyle, and a sense of community.

But it was difficult for Paulynn to leave the apartment she shared with her dad, Lee. Though Lee had dedicated his life to serving as his daughter's primary caregiver, they didn't have reliable transportation that could accommodate her wheelchair. And Paulynn's risk of seizures meant she always needed to be accompanied by her dad.

Despite the obstacles, Lee was determined to give his daughter the life she dreamed of. He enrolled her in LSI's Services for People with Disabilities.

Fifteen years later, Paulynn's dream has become a reality. Through LSI, Paulynn's team provides transportation that allows her to travel to and from her apartment with ease. While Paulynn is out, Lee is able to take a well-deserved break from his caregiving role.

With support from LSI, Paulynn is able to give back to her community. Each week, she helps package meals for individuals in need. She has created a community of her own through her volunteer work. And for every moment, her LSI team is there to support her. "We're very grateful for LSI," Lee says. "They've been really great supporting my daughter."

Julian of Norwich

(The following is from Mirabai Starr, Wild Mercy: Living the Fierce and Tender Wisdom of the Women Mystics (Sounds True: 2019), 175–176.) The medieval English anchoress Julian of Norwich bequeathed us a radically optimistic theology. She had no problem admitting that human beings have a tendency to go astray. We rupture relationships, dishonor the Divine, make unfortunate choices, and try to hide our faults. And yet, Julian insists, "All will be well and all will be well and every kind of thing shall be well."

Take that in. This assertion is meant to penetrate the fog of our despair and wake us up. . . . Julian repeats her declaration three times—most emphatically the third: All will be well and all will be well and every kind of thing shall be well. She does not ask us to . . . [relegate] everything that unfolds to the will of God, calling it perfect against all evidence to the contrary. She squarely faces the inevitability that we will miss the mark [what Julian calls "sin"] and that there is wickedness in this world. Even so, she is convinced that the nature of the Divine is loving-kindness, and she wants us to absorb this into every fiber of our being.

In her mystical masterwork The Showings, Julian shares that she used to obsess about sin. She couldn't figure out why God, who is all-powerful, wouldn't have eliminated our negative proclivities when he made the world. "If he had left sin out of creation, it seemed to me, all would be well." But what God-the-Mother showed Julian in a near-death vision [during her thirteenth revelation] was that all shall be well anyway. Not in spite of our transgressions but because of them. [Or, as FR Richard Rohr says: we come to God, not by doing it right, but by doing it wrong.]

Julian unpacks this for us [in chapter 27]. In doing so she dispenses with the whole concept of sin and replaces it with love. “I believe that sin has no substance,” Julian writes, “not a particle of being.” While sin itself has no existential value, it has impact. It causes pain. It is the pain that has substance.

But mercy is swiftly forthcoming. It is immediately available. Inexorable! It is frankly rude of us to doubt that all will be well. . . . “When he said these gentle words,” Julian writes, speaking of God-the-Mother, “he showed me that he does not have one iota of blame for me, or for any other person. So, wouldn’t it be unkind of me to blame God for my transgressions since he does not blame me?” The merciful nature of God renders the whole blame game obsolete. . . . In fact, it is when we stumble that the Divine looks most tenderly upon us. Our vulnerability is beautiful to God.

[1] Julian of Norwich, The Thirteenth Revelation, ch. 27. All quotes from Julian in this meditation come from this chapter.

The place which Jesus takes in our soul he will nevermore vacate, for in us is his home of homes, and it is the greatest delight for him to dwell there. . . . And the soul who contemplates this is made like [the one] who is contemplated. — Julian of Norwich

On that day, you will know that you are in me and I am in you. — John 14:20

Rainbow over St. John's

JUNE 2020

BIRTHDAYS

2 – Jeanne Leicht
7 – Linda Gomoll
8 – Linda Hillebrand
9 – David Speckhard
10 – Lori Kenniker
18 – Pastor Jay Ilten
20 – Tabetha Jentz
29 – Jenna Marie Cocayne
29 - Allisun Henry

ANNIVERSARIES

24 - Andy & Carolyn Oppedahl

ALTAR GUILD

Flowers: April Ahlborn
Supplies: Linda Gomoll
Set up:

***NOTE*: If your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect, please contact the Church Office at 583-6572. Also, if you have a change in your e-mail address or house address, please report it by emailing the office at stjohnslcoffice@gmail.com or calling with the update. Thanks so much!**

St. John's Mission Statement:

"Showing Jesus'
love by
inviting, welcoming,
worshiping,
and
serving".

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA
1276 White Street
Dubuque, IA 52001-5069
563-583-6572

Pastor – Rev. Jay Ilten---543-8882------jayilten@gmail.com
Parish Nurse – Shirley Cocayne---556-3859------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 Ahlborn - stjohnslcoffice@gmail.com
Custodian – Pierce Kohn
St. John's Cemetery - Tim Hedrick -- 581-5283 ---tenpindad10@aol.com
Church office - stjohnslcoffice@gmail.com
Church Website: stjohnselcadbq.org

Church Office is open 8:00 – 12:00 PM Monday, Tuesday and Thursday