

Does the Bible have something to say to us during the COVID-19 pandemic? How do we feel about our faith during times like this when we are out of control in ways that we normally do not experience?

I've been thinking a lot about this question, and I've been seeing the responses of various communities as to how they are treating their faith during this time, and it is a fascinating thing to observe. Here's some of what I'm noticing.

I'm noticing that we aren't used to this anymore. We are not accustomed to being out of control, to being put in our place as a human race. It was a gradual thing that happened over time, this attitude that developed. But it showed itself to me when I happened across an article from a newspaper covering a church anniversary of some 75 years ago. In that article it mentioned the agricultural activities of the community, and I remember vividly the language that was used. It spoke of "wresting from Mother Earth her stores of wheat and grain." There was other similar language used, but that's the portion that stuck with me. For all of history, it was a chore to work the ground, a labor, and the effort required was often a high price to pay. Now I'd grown up in the time where heavy machinery was putting much of that in the past. We had developed means to address much of the risk and the threat of farming. It was not perfect by any means, but it was a far cry from what it used to be for the entirety of the world's history. We were maximizing production and minimizing workload. And to look around even further, I was living in an age where virtually anything I wanted (that I could afford) was available to me at the click or tap of a screen.

Do you know what I'm talking about? We had gotten to the point where we might have thought that the world was tamed. We could certainly fool ourselves without much effort into thinking that we had the world under control. I know that there are those times when hurricanes remind us of how powerful the world is, or tsunamis show us the destructive power of the elements. The tornado that tore through Wilber back in 2005 was horrible and the hailstorm of 2014 left us with things to rebuild. But we'd gotten better and better at handling those moments. The world was largely our servant, our resource, our domain. And then this.

I think in many ways we have been humbled by our own limitations, reminded about just how human we truly are. The challenges we're facing cover a wide range of disciplines including the health fields, our political fields, our scientific fields, our economic fields, our community fields, most any field of life. We cannot rely upon our own reason or strength at the moment.

This kind of a world, the kind where we don't know what to expect, where we don't know who to trust, where we are looking for answers to why the world is so messed up, is the world of the Bible. Think of what the world itself must have been like before 100 years or so ago and the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The world has changed so much since for us in the past century as to what we are capable of, but before that, the world didn't change all that much. That world was predictably unpredictable, unkind, and unforgiving in so many ways, and the gods that the world worshipped reflected that reality.

Into such a world, our God speaks a refreshing word of hope. The Bible says no less than 365 times, in some form or another, to "not be afraid." The Bible showcases a God who created all things "good" and who comes to the rescue of the world when we break it and we harm ourselves. The Bible speaks into a world in chaos a commentary on how we got ourselves into this mess, how we continue to take for ourselves at the expense of others, and how God responds when we do.

There are some very interesting details as well when it comes to Sabbath practices as laid out for the people of Israel when they come into the promised land. We never spend time on these anymore, either teaching them or observing them, but they were called to allow the land to rest every 7th year. The land was itself a character in such a scenario. They were not to plant or to harvest every 7th year. That was crazy! Why would God command such a thing? The warnings connected with that practice were severe, that they would lose the land if they did not abide by those commands. For them, the exile to Babylon was in many ways connected to their failure to allow the land to rest after being reminded over and over again, because they did not keep sabbath faithfully.

I am not at all making a direct comparison here, not at all saying that COVID-19 is our own fault for failing to keep any part of God's commands to us, but the parallels are interesting to ponder and hard to ignore.

There are parts in the Bible that mandate for periodic and scheduled rest for ourselves AND for the larger creation, and they are vital elements in the Bible story. And here we find ourselves in a forced rest.

We are learning in real time that we need each other in every way imaginable. The Bible teaches us this.

We are reminded that death is a part of the world we live in. The Bible has dealt with this at length.

How long will this last? Only God knows. The rest for the land at the time of the Babylonian Exile was about 50 years. This one ... probably ... won't be that long.

Peace, Pastor Panning

## ***Trinity Lutheran Church Minutes***

March 19, 2020

Due to social distancing required by the Covid 19 virus a formal meeting was not held. All reports, as well as, an agenda and information were provided by the chair, Tim Garrison. Members were requested to contact Tim if there was a need for additions, corrections, or further information. That agenda, as well as, reports are available in hard copy form in the church council secretary book and will serve as the minutes for March 2020.

Church Council Secretary

Jane Stokebrand

Trinity Lutheran Church- Council Meeting

March 25th 2020

1. Reports
  - a. Secretary's report
  - b. Treasurer's report
  - c. Investments \$46,466.23
  - d. Memorial \$18,147.75
  - e. Suggestion box {none}
  - f. Committee assignments
    1. Spiritual life and growth {tabled}
      - a. Social [Jane] {tabled}
      - b. Worship [Adam] {tabled}
      - c. Evangelical/stewardship [Lana] Tabled
    2. Youth development
      - a. Parish ed [Jane] Sunday School and confirmation will not be meeting until further notice
      - b. Youth group [Brian] Youth Group will not be meeting
      - c.
      - d. Confirmation [Tim] Pastor will be forming a plan to get the rest of the confirmation classes made up. We do not have anyone getting confirmed this year so that is not a concern
    3. Care management
      - a. Property [Arlyn]
      - b. Parsonage {Darcy is making progress in cleaning up the parsonage and we will get the carpets cleaned when she is done
      - c. Clean up day {postponed until further notice}
    4. Pastors report
    5. Old business
      - a. Constitution update { will have a report on this when we hear back from the Synod}
      - b. Ushers and greeters { I believe we have ushers and greeters taken care of}
      - c. others
    6. New business
      - a. Chairs {tabled}
      - b. Meet with Wilber last Sunday in March 29<sup>th</sup> 9:30 before combined service {will be on lined from DeWitt}
      - c. Easter sunrise breakfast will be cancelled
      - d. Pastor is working with our Lutheran cluster and forming a plan for a possible joint Easter drive in service. Also more details will be coming for Holy Week services
      - e. Comments on the on line services?
    7. Call committee [Arlyn] { the call committee will not be meeting until Covid 19 is under control}
    8. Adjourn

9. Lord prayer
  10. Communion assistants
- Next meeting April 15th 7:30 ?

Council members

I have made notes by the items above and have included last months minutes, and the current balance for the memorial fund, investment fund and our current financial status. These reports will be approved as presented unless someone has a correction that needs to be made. I talked to Pastor and our cluster is looking at doing a drive in Easter service at the fairgrounds in Beatrice and possibly some similar services for Holy Week. We have cancelled the Easter Breakfast and also the Easter lilies. Jenn told me that Tri County has cancelled classes until May 1<sup>st</sup> so it could be another month before we meet at church. I have talked to some other people about the drive in service and St Johns in Beatrice has had a lot of success with theirs so this might be something we could adopt until things cool down a bit. If you have any suggestions or comments feel free to give me a call

Thanks Tim

402-683-4630

402-230-0749

		Treasurer's Report March 31, 2020		
	Bank Balance as of 02/29/20			\$20,721.29
		<u>Income</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	
	Offering	\$17,162.14		
	Other Deposits	\$117.75		
	Total Income			\$17,279.89
		<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	
01-00	Pastor Salary	\$1,875.00	\$1,875.00	
01-01	Financial Secretary Salary	\$412.48		
01-02	Secretary Salary	\$439.69		
01-03	Organist Salary	\$375.00		
01-04	Custodial Salary	\$490.62		
02-00	Mileage	\$342.04		
02-03	Culligan	\$16.50		
02-06	Pastor Housing	\$562.50	\$562.50	
02-07	Pastor Social Security	\$186.47	\$186.47	
02-08	Pastor Portico	\$390.97	\$390.97	
02-09	Pastor Health/Dental/Vision	\$475.25	\$475.25	
04-00	Postage	\$134.20		
04-02	Office Supplies	\$684.04		
04-04	Office Equipment	\$136.57		
04-05	Accountant Fees	\$130.00		
05-00	Village Utilities Church	\$272.39		
05-01	Village Utilities Parsonage	\$105.67		
05-02	Natural Gas Church	\$623.44		
05-03	Natural Gas Parsonage	\$76.72		
06-04	Vanco E-giving Fees	\$44.95		
07-01	Devotional Books	\$72.50		
07-03	Copyright/Streaming License	\$62.10		
08-00	Telephone Church	\$175.48		
	Total Expenses			\$8,084.58
	Previous Months Checks that Cleared			\$752.56
	Available Cash as of 03/31/20			\$29,164.04
	Outstanding Checks			\$3,490.19
	Reconciled to Balance on Bank Statement 03/31/20			\$32,654.23
		<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>Account Balance</u>
	Other Accounts:			
	Benevolence (Savings Account)	\$85.07	\$0.00	\$335.08
	Capital Improvement Fund (Savings Account)	\$7.74	\$0.00	\$4,934.66
	ICVF Grant Funds Deposited 9/1/19 TLC General fund		<u>Disbursements</u>	
09-00	Care-A-Lot		\$0.00	\$333.33
09-02	Confirmation (Mentor)		\$0.00	\$333.33
09-02	Confirmation (Liz)		\$0.00	\$333.34
			\$0.00	\$1,000.00



**Worship Committee** will meet... TBD

**WELCA board** will meet... TBD

**Hope Circle** will meet... TBD

**Church Council** will meet...TBD

**Shalom Circle** will meet... TBD



All members of the Congregation will be asked to remember the home bound and those in need of visitation during your month assigned. Service List Leaders and Circle Chairperson are responsible for contacting facilities to set up visitation dates and/or times for playing bingo or other planned activities. **May – Service Group 3**



**ELECTRONIC GIVING**

Just as you rely upon receiving income on a regular basis, Trinity Lutheran relies on your regular contributions. Trinity Lutheran appreciates the efforts of congregation members to make consistent donations throughout the year. To assist you, the church provides a convenient electronic giving option for setting up regular contributions. To donate, visit the church website at [www.trinitylutherandewitt.com](http://www.trinitylutherandewitt.com), locate the link to our online giving page and follow the instructions.



**Weekly Offering**

Date	Attendance	General Offering	Benevolence Offering	Property Offering	E-giving Offering
3/29	-	\$9840.00	\$50.00	-	\$55.00
4/5	-	\$3492.26	\$125.00	-	\$524.10
4/12	-	\$280.00	-	\$10.00-	\$1000.90
4/19	-	\$155.00	-	-	\$1305.53



**PASTOR TRAVIS PANNING**

Trinity/DeWitt: 683-3225  
First/Wilber: 821-2846  
Cell Phone: 239-5291  
Email: [pastorpanning@gmail.com](mailto:pastorpanning@gmail.com)

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Wednesday/Friday 9am-12noon at Trinity/DeWitt  
Thursday/Saturday 2pm-5pm at First/Wilber

**SECRETARY - JENN UHER**

Church: 683-3225  
Email: [tlcdewitt209@gmail.com](mailto:tlcdewitt209@gmail.com)  
Cell: 402-245-8198

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday 5pm-6:30pm  
Wednesday 10am-12noon  
(Updated Hours will be posted on Office Door)

# MAY 2020

<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>
					<b>1</b> Creo Klasek	<b>2</b> Alex Tietjen
<b>3</b> Johanna Scherling	<b>4</b> Layla Miller Cooper Smith Craig Wollenburg	<b>5</b> Drew Garrison Teran Koch Mark Roesler Jill Strouf	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Curt Schuerman	<b>8</b> Joshua Muehling	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> Marvin Schuerman Mandy Smidt	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Suzanne Hinzman Doug Schwan	<b>13</b> Cory Rahe	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Penny Holtmeier Leonard Saathoff Jenell Koch Kinzie Klasek
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Tanner Baker Tayden Gronemeyer Becky Kaelin	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Wendy Klostermeier -Barnits Shelby Parker Joshua Scherling	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> Chase Barnts Ashley Garrison	<b>25</b> Steve Klostemeier Jaime Weber	<b>26</b> Angie Baker Jackie Placek	<b>27</b> Roland Placek	<b>28</b> Travis Garrison	<b>29</b> Brad Garrison Trinity Garrison Nicole Morrissey	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

**PLEASE KEEP** the family of Ann Novak as they grieve their loss, Don Wollenburg, Brian Stokebrand & Family, Mallory Chavez & Family, Chelsea Tietjen & family, Roman Dunn (great grandson of Jan & Alan Dunn), Jim Burger, Jack Garrison and Tina Groathouse in your prayers.

**DRIVE-IN and LIVE STREAM COMBO WORSHIP on May 3rd.** You're invited to worship at Trinity from your car or from your home via Zoom/Facebook Live on May 3rd. Worship will be at 9:30. We will broadcast over radio for those in proximity to the church. Further details to come as plans are made.

**WORSHIP SERVICES WILL BE HELD ONLINE ONLY - LIVE STREAM until further notice!**

Pastor Panning will start the Live Stream about 15 minutes early as to allow people time to "come in and sit down." The stream can be found on Facebook on either the First Lutheran or Trinity Lutheran pages or You can join on Zoom... This is a recurring meeting, Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/5131704161>, Meeting ID: 513 170 4161... Password: 961555

**ZOOM Bible studies** on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Same meeting ID and password as Sunday worship.

**The May Calendar and May Service Leaders are not included in the newsletter** as all Services are Live Stream Only and TBD for now. Questions? Contact Pastor Panning, Tim Garrison or Jenn Uher or check our Facebook page or Website for further details.

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY** WILL NOT MEET IN MAY

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY** WILL MEET WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 and WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 at 6:30 AM

**PLEASE CONSIDER USING E-GIVING** as we still need everyone's financial support to pay our monthly bills. If you require assistance in setting this up, please talk to Pastor Panning. Go to [www.trinitylutherandewitt.com](http://www.trinitylutherandewitt.com), and click the green OFFERING button and follow the instructions.

*Hope Circle – No Report*

*Lutheran Men in Mission*

May- LMIM

We are continuing the next study in our series in May titled Financial Stress: Making Ends Meet.

May 6 Topic 3 Taking Responsibility: Option 1 "Parable of the talents" Matthew 25:14-30 and Option 2 "God is faithful; we should be too" 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18. May 20 Topic 4 Tough Decisions: Option 1 "Parable of the shrewd manager" Luke 16:1-15 and Option 2 "Don't worry" Matthew 6:19-34. 6:30am start time with coffee. Come join us if you are able and healthy!

*Shalom Circle – No report*

*WELCA – No Report*



# KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS...

## SERVICEMEN

**SSG – Brock Johnson**

**Deployment Address:**

**Darin Bartlett**  
332 AEW/ECS  
Unit 61804  
APO AE 09321

**Darin Bartlett Family**

209 W. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Knob Noster, MO 65336  
[Bartlett\\_Riley@yahoo.com](mailto:Bartlett_Riley@yahoo.com)  
*(Mary Garrison's Son)*

**Matt and Meighen Friesen**

CMR 480 Box 487  
APO, AE 09128  
*(In Navy in Stuttgart, Germany)*

**Please continue to keep these members in your prayers:**

**Janice Buhr**

Villa at Flowing Springs  
2211 Sunset Dr. #225  
Beatrice, NE 68310

**Beryl Beerenstrauch**

Clark Jeary  
8401 S. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Apt. 320  
Lincoln, NE 68516

**Eileen Damkroger**

103 N Juniper  
DeWitt, NE 68341

**Herb Rehm**

Wilber Care Center  
611 N Main  
Wilber, NE 68465

**Richard Wollenburg**

Heritage Crossings  
501 N 13<sup>th</sup> St.  
Geneva, NE 68361