



St. Luke Lutheran Church
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Editor: Jo Klein

St. Luke Lutheran Church

Connect, Grow and Serve.

Parish Times June 2020



The Pastor's Perspective...



"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

At the end of the summer 2018, I received a call from the International School of Oslo and was asked to fill a long-term teaching position for a first-grade teacher who would be on sick leave for the year. After accepting the position, it was a whirlwind of gathering resources and quickly learning what needed to happen two days before school started. As I prepared for this job, my biggest hurdle was learning about the various types of digital equipment I would be using in the classroom and the IT department got me ready to go with a laptop and seventeen Ipads for the children. The first week started with a bang and I was off running. The second week of school was a bit more challenging after I returned early on a Monday morning to find that every piece of technology in the room had been stolen over the weekend.

As I looked around for the place the intruder entered, I noticed our classroom's large narrow glass door with a handle was broken. The glass window had both an outer and inner pane; the outer pane was shattered in a thousand different pieces, but still held in the frame. The inner frame was intact, but when looking out the window, one saw only brokenness. I had to look through what looked like cracked ice to see the view outside. During that Monday morning outdoor break time, I sent the children out to play, walked out to supervise them and soon found two girls sitting on the cement walkway directly outside our classroom. They were picking up the few small shards of glass from the outer window which had fallen out. They were trying to put them back into place like a puzzle. Of course we teachers immediately put a stop to this so no one would get hurt. The girls said they just wanted to put it back together again and they were trying to make a match with the pieces. This was clearly understandable, but not safe.

Due to money and time, it took months for the door to be replaced, so each day I looked outside through the window's cracks and brokenness. It was a daily reminder of the brokenness we all experience and are touched by because we are human and live in a complex and difficult world.

I found this picture of the broken glass from my first-grade classroom recently and reflected on those cracks in light of our current situation. The cracks I looked through every day parallel the cracks of sadness, sorrow, disconnect and grief I have felt for the last few months since we entered the COVID-19 pandemic. I also recognize these cracks as holy crevasses in which God goes deep.

With or without the pandemic, we all experience brokenness; in ourselves, our families, within our congregations, the larger communities we live in and the world. Some of the cracks in our lives are more visible, while others are not. The global pandemic, isolation, addiction, loneliness, separated relationships, poverty, death of loved ones, a cancer diagnosis, infertility, or the loss of a friend, all feel like sharp broken shards. Looking at the brokenness of our lives, we often yearn to put things back together the way they were before, so we can feel restored and made whole again. Like my first-grade school children who tried to pick up the broken shards, we as Christians often do the same. We are the hands that look to match the pieces so they fit back together, but so often, they don't. We can't go back and make them fit like they did before. *(Continued on page 2.)*



June Birthdays

- 2 Lynda Mathison
- 3 Arlene Drier
- 8 Phroah Mathis
- 10 Andrew Stadem
- 16 Brian Spray, Evan Nelson
- 18 David Tews, Alex Grzywinski
- 21 Pastor Dave Person
- 22 George Heriot, Diane Nelson
- 24 Christine Olson, Allan Amlee
- 25 Jenifer Drier, Carter Alcenot
- 27 Sandi Gordon
- 30 Karl and Charles Gaarder

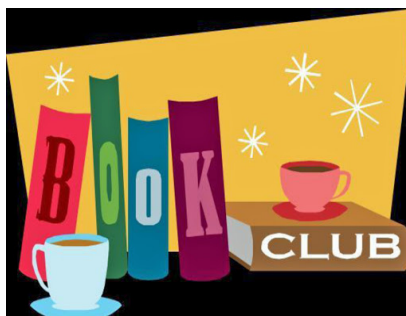


June Anniversaries

- 8 Roger & Dianne Diestler: 1963
- 15 Jane & Ken McGrew: 1991
- 18 Allan & Phillis Amlee: 1955
- 23 Patricia & Mark Stadem: 1990
- 27 Jeff & Chris Kingsey: 2014

Tree Removal

In May, the Church Council signed an agreement with TJW Property Service, LLC (church lawn service) to cut and remove 9 dead pine trees for \$2,500. The removal was deemed a safety measure in preparation for the Farmers Market and the eventual return to occupying our church building on a regular basis when it is safe to do so.



Our first St. Luke/St. Mark Zoom Book Club meeting has been set for Wednesday, July 8 at 6:30 pm! All are welcome! The first book will be "Almost Everything: Notes on Hope", by Annie Lamott. We thought the subject was fitting. If you are not familiar with Lamott, she is warm, wise, spiritual, earthy, and very funny.

Two reviews for Almost Everything: "Anne Lamott is our wickedly funny, self-deprecating, insightful guardian angel, and she's given us the gift of hope" —Pasadena Star News "Plenty of us have grown to trust Lamott's spiritual compass. We settle in quickly here, knowing just around the next sentence she might pry open our heart, and pack in truths we will mull long after we've put down her pages... Again and again, Lamott steers us in and out of the canyons and potholes of despair." —Chicago Tribune

You can find used copies of this book online at quite good prices. After the first book club meeting, we can poll folks on book choices, moving forward. We are excited to get this rolling....hope you plan to join us!

(Pastor's Perspective continued from page 1.)

While it is uncomfortable to be in our brokenness with these cracks and shards, hidden opportunity lies within them. If we allow them to, they will change, shape and mold us in new ways. Taking the time to pray, reflect upon, listen to God's Word for us, along with being honest, vulnerable and open with ourselves and others, will lead us into the holy work of God's restoration in our lives. We can't go back to being what we were before, because we are in a new reality. It is important to remember that restoration is not our work, but God's. God, our creator, puts our broken pieces back together through Christ's life, death and resurrection. Why? Because at the heart of it all God loves us more than we can imagine and we are his children.

Our brokenness is contained within the larger framework. This is God's love, holding us together, cracks and all.

The love of God mends our whole being. The love of God washes over us and gives us strength in the uncertainty of these days. The love of God shines light in those cracks, healing and allowing us to go forward in new life. The love of God knows no bounds and finds its way into places that were thought impossible. The love of God will see us through this pandemic. The love of God has always gone before us and always will.

No matter what, no matter how broken, no matter how messy, or lovely or sad or ugly and beautiful life is, we are in it together. Like the broken shards of glass held together by a frame, you belong to and are held together in the family of God. Nothing separates us from the love of God we all share in Christ Jesus, nothing.

Pr. Emily Rova-Hegener



LOAVES AND FISHES at St. Matthew's Catholic Church continues to produce 100+ to-go dinners for the needy. Workers from St. Luke in April were Christine Olson and David Elliott. May workers were Kay Reich and the Landenberger family. Join us the fourth Monday of each month; it is truly a feel-good volunteer opportunity. Interested? Contact Joyce Bluel at JBluel@comcast.net for details. God's work, our hands!

President's Corner



I am so proud of our congregation members supporting the many efforts in place to keep us “together” with online services and repeat access, online chats and meetings, calls, cards, and our Council addressing new needs. There are two topics I’d like to share with you: (1) a joint church photo directory; and (2) a new opportunity to share your talents on the Smart Team.

Two members from each church have been discussing how we can produce a new photo directory during this pandemic. David NedreLOW and I started meeting in April with Dianne Testa and Bonnie Jellinek (St. Mark) to make a plan. Not knowing when the social distancing will end (if ever), we discussed producing our own joint directory. St. Mark has actually done this before. We believe we can create two separate directories in the same binding. One cover will be a St. Luke church photo and the member information, and the other cover will be a St. Mark church photo and their members. This allows us to invite **you** to be part of the creating process. An email/mailling to all members of both churches will have all the directions/suggestions for completing a form and submitting a photo. We will work with the homebound members/families to find recent photos. It is an opportunity for each of us to work on this project at the same time. Please refer to a separate article in this newsletter and be sure to save the instructions received in an email or mailed letter. Any questions can be answered by David at nedre004@umn.edu or me at suemc1493@gmail.com.

We are also in the process of forming a St. Luke Smart Team with members from our congregation to determine how and when we will meet once we have the Synod and ELCA’s suggestions for reopening dates and practices. We are looking for members to share ideas and any expertise on keeping safe and healthy in our church home. The Smart Team is a suggestion from Bishop Lull in a recent email. Please consider offering your talents and time as part of your stewardship to this very important team.

The St. Luke council will meet on Tuesday, June 16 at 6:30 if you wish to send us something for the agenda.

A last note. Our friend, Pastor Keller, recently wrote online about the Serenity Prayer. You’ll recognize it: “God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference.” Did you know there was more to this prayer? I didn’t. It goes on: “Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.” Pr. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote this for a sermon in 1943. Wow! Doesn’t that say it all? It is so hard for us to “let go and let God” direct us, but who better to lead us in uncertain times? Find what is good about this isolation. Keep positive about the future. I am looking forward to a new “normal” when we can all be together again. Until then, please keep safe and healthy and try to feel positive about whatever our new normal will be as a church family. Miss you all.

Sue McNeill

Time of Transition for St. Mark Administrator and Music Director, Marty Brueggemann

The St. Mark Council Leadership received word of Marty Brueggemann's resignation as church secretary and music director, effective April 24th. It is with gratitude and deep thanks that we acknowledge Marty's work and ministry at St. Mark and St. Luke. (He and Becca shared conducting the joint choir.) He is not leaving our community, but stepping away from these staff positions. We will find a time to acknowledge and thank Marty when we are able to return to our buildings.

During this time of transition, Jo Klein, office administrator from St. Luke has graciously offered to continue sending out the daily e-mail blasts, worship information, bulletins and monthly newsletter. All communication is generated from St. Luke at this time.

The voicemail is being checked daily at St. Mark, so if you need to speak with Pastor Emily, please call the church office and leave a voicemail message. She will respond as soon as possible.

Congregational Coaching Continues for both St. Mark and St. Luke

The congregational coaching teams, (Jackie Brueggemann, Eric Michelson, and Karen Larson from St. Mark and Sue McNeill, Becca Ruiz, and David Tews, from St. Luke) have been meeting online on a regular basis with Pastor Mary Frances, congregational coach based out of Chicago. Mary writes the following about the work that has begun:

"Often I work with clergy and congregations to help them set goals and create a path to achieve those goals. The Bishop contacted me because the leaders of St. Mark and St. Luke, along with Pastor Emily, had determined that there wasn't a clear path for communication, expectations and decision making. My work here will be to help create a road map for clarifying these issues and provide tools to help make the path smoother in the future.

We have created a behavioral covenant, a way that we agreed to be in relationship with one another, and are beginning to look at expectations and where there is need for clearer policies and procedures to support your ministries. We have much work to do in the next several months. There will be times I meet with the leaders alone, time when we will ask Pastor Emily to join us and perhaps even a time with both teams gather together. The leaders will work together to determine how best to share their work with the larger congregations. We ask for your prayer as we set forth in this joint partnership and look forward to sharing our work with you."

Saint Luke Appreciates Your Continued Donations

Even though church services are currently suspended, you can still donate to St. Luke to help support our mission to serve the people in our congregation and in our community. A new "Ways to Donate" page on St. Luke's website explains how you can donate in three ways—by mail, online, and using a mobile app.

Giving online and through a smartphone or tablet is now possible because of St. Luke's new account through Vanco, a company that processes donations electronically.

You can make electronic donations using a credit or debit card or by withdrawal directly from a bank account (EFT transaction). EFT transactions are preferred because the fees are lower. For more information, go to our website (saintlukechurch.org) and click "Ways to Donate" at the top of the page. Your gifts are appreciated



GIVE FROM THE HEART



Musings from the Music Director

I want to thank everyone who has contributed (or considered contributing!) to our new "offering" with your photos and art. It enhances our services every week and I feel more connected to all of you. I hope you feel a little more connected too! I will keep trying new ideas and finding new ways for all of us to create art together. I also want to thank all the choir members - bells and vocal - for your hard work this year. I miss our rehearsals and working with all of you. I was ambitious (a little too ambitious at times) and you all trusted me to help you reach our goals. Thank you for your trust, your work and your wonderful talents! The season ended unlike any other choir year, as with so many things, but you all inspire me still every day. I'm sorry we didn't get the chance to share some of our last songs, but I look forward to the day when we can safely rehearse and perform together again. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

-Becca Ruiz

A New Photo Directory is in the Works!

You have received an email or letter about our forthcoming St. Mark/St. Luke photo directory. Since we are still in the midst of social distancing, it would be wonderful if we could get a photo jpg that you have taken of you and/or your family. Feel free to take the photo outdoors. Please remember that for this purpose, we want very much to **see your face(s)**...not the scenery. If you have a family member who is on our prayer list, we would appreciate a current photo of them you may have taken prior to the pandemic, or a favorite photo of your choice. If you are unable to provide a photo of them, it is our intention to do all we can to take a photo at a later date or see if one may exist in our church event photos. If you have questions, please contact David NedreLOW at nedre004@umn.edu or Sue McNeill at suemc1493@gmail.com, your representatives on the Church Directory Committee. Thank you for sharing in the gathering of information and photos for this unique joint directory.



Farmers' Market

PLEASE, we need volunteers for the St. Luke Farmers Market! Volunteers can do the whole 7:30am to 1:30pm shift, or they can do half a shift: 7:30am to 10:30am or 10:30am to 1:30pm. Safety is paramount. There will be **face masks, hand-washing stations, and physical barriers/ground markings to enforce social distancing.** The market begins June 13 and ends October 3. Can YOU help? Please prayerfully consider your part in this worthy cause. Please contact secretary@saintlukechurch.org with your availability. Thanks!

Parish Board News:

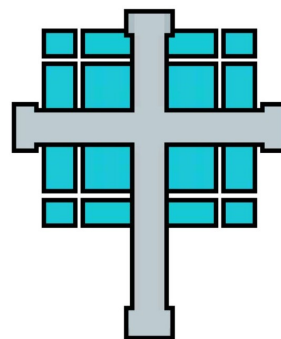
As we continue to deal with COVID-19 issues, it has become clear that entering our worship spaces will be a challenge. Because of that, the St. Luke and St. Mark Councils are asking people to consider serving on Smart Teams for both congregations to plan for a staged opening of our churches.

Before COVID-19, in February 2020, the Parish Board brought concerns regarding our current worship times to representatives of both church councils. Alternate worship options were discussed. A timeline was created to discuss worship times with our congregations and have a congregational vote. Both councils approved these at March meetings, but COVID-19 has delayed those plans. We have decided to share the worship options created at the February meeting with you. We do not know when we will be able to resume "normal" worship times, so any date for making a decision is not being discussed right now. Worship options will be emailed to members (or mailed to those who require postal communications) and posted on our Facebook pages. Any additional information will be shared through email blasts, newsletters, mailings and in-person meetings as needed. Please contact Wendy Bjorklund at wlbjorklund@stcloudstate.edu if you have questions.

The Parish Board wanted to create a logo that could be used for Shared Ministry promotions. Eric Michelson gave the team several options that included a combination of the logos from both churches. A logo was approved by the Parish Board and both councils; see below.

The Parish Board is trying to find a way to have a drive-in shared worship service. Cars would be parked at safe distances from each other; worshippers would stay in their cars and listen to a service via short wave radio transmission. Target month: July. Stay tuned for more information.

The Parish board also is exploring ways we can serve the community by creating food bags similar to the Blizzard bags created last fall. Again, more information to follow!



The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. ~Numbers 6:24