

# Mountain *Mover*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH | JUNE 2020

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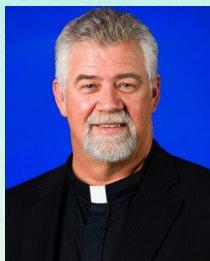
## THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY CONTINUES

As we continue our time of online worship, the church's ministry continues. We continue to model the love of Christ for our neighbors. Faith members Nicholas Walker, William Walker, Tom Karns, Steve Walker, Marcia Karns, and Laura Worth serve meals while wearing masks at Montrose Grace Place, a safe, welcoming environment for vulnerable homeless youth of all sexualities and gender identities, providing nourishment, healthy relationships, and hope for the future. These meals were prepared with love and boxed up to go for anyone that needed them.



# Scattered Thoughts

by Rev. Kerry Nelson, Senior Pastor



*When and what will it be like when we get to worship together in the same room again?*

The last time we worshiped together in person at Faith was on March 15. Since then over 100,000 Americans have died from Covid-19. As more and more people grow

frustrated with physical distancing, as more and more people gather in crowded spaces, more and more people will get sick and die. Those are the simple facts of life today and we need to take them seriously.

This pandemic will be seriously disrupting our lives for a long time to come. Things will begin to change when medical science has learned enough to develop reliable treatment methods and an effective vaccine. That takes time. Until then, we will take one thing at a time. We know eventually our sheltering-in-place practices will be relaxed enough that we are able to worship together again. We also know that, when that time comes, we will be returning to a very different new normal. Some things will be very different. A few things immediately come to mind that we might expect to see.

1. We will have to restrict the number of people in worship at any one service. Current government guidelines state that anyone 65 or older should continue to worship remotely. (That one is a real kicker for me - I would far rather see all of us worshipping remotely than some of us excluded because of age or heightened vulnerability.)
2. We will try not to physically touch things (or one another). Doors will be propped open. We won't use paper bulletins or pass offering plates. There won't be hymnals or Bibles in the pew racks. We won't have the bags of toys at the door for children. We will be very careful in how we distribute Holy Communion - if we celebrate Holy Communion at all. We won't shake hands at the door or hug one another.
3. We will sit in every third row of pews. Until the virus is under control, we will listen to music during worship, but we won't sing hymns. We won't hear from our choir.
4. We will not have common food together. We won't provide breakfast before worship or lunch after worship.

**Continued on next page...**



*Dear Mr. Vickary,*

*I cannot thank you enough for your gift. You make it possible for families around the world to cope with poverty and disaster. Thanks to you, lives are being changed. I've included a photo of your gift at work. Thank you for seeing the importance of helping those most in need.*

*Blessings,  
Jonathan Buach*

*Regional Representative, Donor Advisor*

A few months ago Faith Schools held a fundraiser to raise money for Lutheran World Relief to purchase farm animals. Here is the card we received from the recipients of our farm animals!

The note on the back of the picture reads: "Rose Nabyonga and her 9-year-old grandson, William, stand together on their family's farm in Uganda. Thanks to your generosity, Rose is learning better farming methods--like how to better prepare soil--and has more than doubled her maize and coffee production, which she depends on for income."

Thank you to Faith Schools for your generosity!



*The mission of Faith Lutheran Church is  
to follow Jesus in blessing the world  
with faith, hope, and love.*

**Continued...**

5. All of our Learning Groups, Bible studies, ministry team meetings, and board meetings will offer a choice to attend in person or to attend via ZOOM. That includes groups like Middle School Confirmation or First Steps at Faith, the adult catechumenate program that will begin in the fall.

6. Pastoral care, whether that involves the work of the pastors or the Faith Care Team, will be conducted either on the telephone or via ZOOM, except in times of deep crises.

I know – it is hard to imagine an entire worship service without a congregation singing one song together...but the aerosol transmission of this virus is much worse when a group sings. It is hard to imagine no Bibles in the pews or coffee before/after worship (bring your own!). Hard to imagine not hugging or even shaking hands. But it is best if we start imagining all of that for awhile because that is the way that it will have to be. At least for awhile.

When will we come together again? We still don't know. We DO know it will not be in June. The original guidelines called for a 14 day period of declining new cases and declining deaths. We certainly won't gather again until we clearly know that is where we are. There is little to no chance that will be in June. It might not be in July. Perhaps the earliest time we will gather will be in August.

Because of how contagious this virus is and its incubation period, new waves of sickness will quite likely follow each wave of reopening aspects of our public life. Whether or not that is true remains to be seen. Next fall might be worse than this past spring. We need to realize that more shelter-in-place orders might come along the way. We might start worshiping in the sanctuary for awhile and then be forced to take another couple of months off. Again, we don't know but we do well to imagine that could possibly be the case.

How can we make the best of this time? Here are four suggestions:

1. Consider hosting a "backyard Bible study." Pastor Tan and I would love to come to small gatherings of people for a time of study, conversation, and support. You could schedule these during the day with a group of retired friends or on the weekends if you are still fortunate enough to be working. Keep the groups to eight people or less. Provide adequate seating with physical distancing. Don't provide snacks or drinks (people can bring their own). Recruit a group. Choose a time. Let us know and we'll be there.
2. As the sheltering-in-place expectations begin to relax, consider creating some small "worship at home" groups. Invite some people to your home on Sunday morning to watch worship online together. If you have children, do the Sunday School lesson together. Share a meal after.
3. Stay in touch with others. Use your congregational directories to contact people just to see how they are doing. Informal support is often all we need to receive the encouragement that helps us through this time.
4. Shop for others every time you go to the grocery store. Until we begin worshiping together again, bring your extra groceries to a CCSC drop off site. Later you can bring them to church as the increased needs at CCSC pantries will quite likely last for many months to come. You can also order groceries online and have them delivered to CCSC.

We'll get through this!



## Teaching and Testing Physical Therapy Virtually Becomes a Family Affair

by Texas Women's University, College of Health Science

As part of their education, Texas Woman's [physical therapy](#) students need to learn and be tested on their skills before they can work hands-on with patients in clinics. The coronavirus pandemic cut that experience short for students this semester, but they still were able to stay on track thanks to the open-mindedness of Houston professor [Carolyn Da Silva, P.T., D.Sc.](#), and her husband's willingness to help.

Normally, Carolyn posts video demonstrations of physical therapy techniques on Canvas each year so students in her Neuromuscular Rehabilitation II course can watch and prepare for their own in-class instruction and eventual testing. But videos can only teach so much.



Carlos and Carolyn DaSilva

"These are the things you have to practice in real time," said Carolyn. "You can't just watch a video or read a book."

Since in-person instruction was not an option starting in March, the co-presidents of the student cohort presented a creative suggestion that Carolyn demonstrate in real time on her husband, Carlos, who they knew from the Houston campus. Luckily, Carlos was game.

"I was extremely honored to be a part of the mission of moving students forward," said Carlos, who has worked at TWU for 21 years and currently serves as Houston campus operations manager and product experience owner in IT Solutions.

But the idea was not without its challenges.

"We had issues with getting the correct camera angles, and Carlos wasn't familiar with all of the movements," said Carolyn.

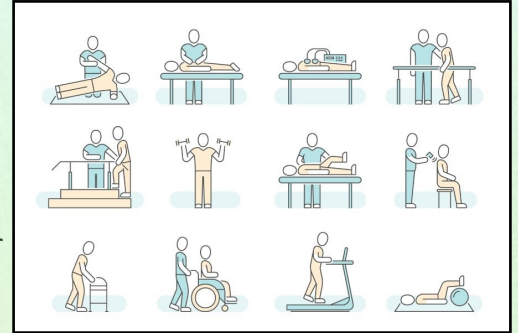
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Students also faced the additional challenge of not having access to the equipment commonly used in physical therapy to practice with, so they used brooms and mops for crutches, dining room chairs for wheelchairs and even stepstools for walkers.

Carolyn was especially mindful of the students' needs when it came time to testing their skills.

"I wanted to make sure they were doing well, so I asked them how their families were doing and talked to them first to put them at ease."

For the testing, called checkouts, the students instructed Carolyn on the movements to perform on Carlos since they were not able to perform the techniques themselves. Vanessa Juarez, PT, DPT, supplemental learning lab coordinator in Houston, also helped with the students' problem solving and practice time prior to the testing with the assistance of her husband.



"I felt that these checkouts went well," said one student. "It was a little difficult trying to provide instructions to both the patient and the caregiver at the same time and not being there in person to position certain things such as hand placements on the wheelchair/walker/etc., but I felt that these checkouts helped increase my communication skills and my ability to provide clear concise verbal instructions."

"I think that this scenario challenged me to use my words better for instructions to a patient/caregiver," commented another student. "Despite not doing the hands-on skill, it made me give clear and precise instruction to not only help the caregiver perform the skill but also the patient to feel comfortable and confident in my instructions and the caregivers' skills. Also, since Carlos was unfamiliar with PT lingo, it made the scenario more realistic, and he did an excellent job showing concern, asking questions and performing just like a real patient."

But the students were not the only ones who learned from the experience.

"I could see the view from the patients and understood that you have to trust in the health care providers," said Carlos. "I also felt the human part of it. Health care is not just science but compassion. We take things for granted when we are healthy, but we are grateful for the techniques to help us when we are injured."

For Carolyn, this different approach to instruction and testing could continue to be useful in the future.

"We still prefer in-person instruction, but one of the future formats needs to be in telemedicine," she said.

Even though it was a challenge, through it all, Carolyn held fast to what she believes is her primary mission at TWU.

"I want to keep the students healthy, help them learn everything they need to be successful and help them graduate on time so they can begin their careers."



## Luther's Theology: Sacraments

by Dr. Clayton Faulkner, Pastoral Intern



In this fourth installment on Luther's Theology, I will cover Martin Luther's theological understanding of the sacraments. In March I wrote on the theology of the cross, in April the priesthood of all believers, and in May law and gospel.

The Roman Catholic Church, from which Luther grew, recognized seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, holy communion, penance (confession), anointing the sick, holy orders (ordination), and marriage. Luther's understanding refocused the sacraments as things that Jesus commanded, things that Jesus modeled himself, and things the church has historically considered sacramental action. In these sacred actions, the word is mingled with earthly elements to inspire faith and offer a sign of God's grace.

Luther held onto three of the seven sacraments from the Roman Catholic tradition: baptism, holy communion, and penance (confession). Baptism and holy communion are universally observed because of the physical elements that accompany them (water, bread, wine).

In Luther's sacramental theology he was saying "yes" to physical elements. This was in part to counter spiritualist theology of the day that said there was no need for physical sacraments if we have faith in our hearts. The sacraments needed a physical component because they transmitted a physical reality. The grace that is given in the sacraments is real, received by faith alone.

This stands against the idea that we perform the sacraments for a received benefit. That would be salvation by works. Sacraments are not a work that we perform in order to gain grace. They are gifts that carry God's promise. Luther's sacramental theology is also against decision theology that says we have to do them in order to climb a ladder up to God. In the sacraments, God reaches down to us, meeting us in everyday elements that we encounter in our normal life.

Luther believed in the real presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. This was in contrast to Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer who thought that real presence was too superstitious. Whereas the Roman Catholic tradition explains Jesus' presence as transubstantiation (the bread and wine are transformed into Jesus' physical body and blood), Luther explained Jesus' presence in the meal as consubstantiation (Jesus' body and blood accompany and coexist with the bread and wine, they are "in, with, and under" it).

This is a mystery. God's presence is communicated to us in these everyday elements. In faith we receive Christ's promise of presence. We are not worthy to receive Christ's presence in this way, but God provides it anyway. This is our justification. We receive Christ's presence at the table not because of our own merit, but because of our need for grace.

Confession as a sacrament may come as a surprise to some, but it was placed very highly in Luther's understanding of sacraments. However, because there is no physical element to accompany confession, it is not universally observed as sacramental among Lutherans. However, in the foundational documents of the Lutheran Church, confession and absolution are named as a third sacrament. This is notably observed in Cranach's altarpiece that hangs behind the table in Wittenberg.

Why was confession and absolution so important to Luther? One reason is that it highlights our daily need for repentance. This is connected to our baptism. As people baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, we daily experience a dying to our old, sinful self, and a rising to new life in Christ. Repenting and confessing are like breathing to our baptism. Luther's emphasis on confession also stood against antinomian spirituality, which believes that following moral law is no longer needed because of grace.

In all three sacraments, Luther believed God was offering us new life every day. They are all means of grace and ways our faith is enacted. In baptism we trust that God is saving, calling, and claiming us as children. In the Lord's Supper we trust that God is feeding us with spiritual food, Christ's own body and blood. In confession and absolution we trust that God's forgiveness is sufficient for not only us, but the whole world. These sacraments impart God's presence to us when we trust in God's word.





## News from Faith Library—A Good Book Not to Read

by Laura Swanson, Parish Ed Team

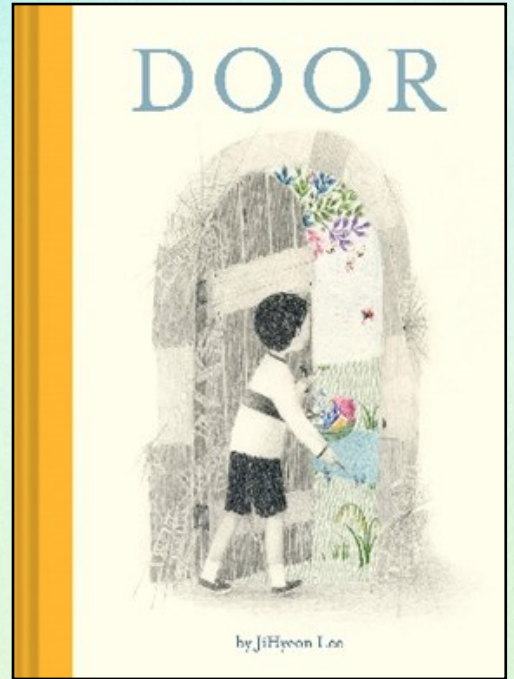
It is not unusual for me to receive a book as a gift, but the book I recently received was unusual; unusual because it was wordless!

Door, by JiHyeon Lee, is a whimsical book filled with color and artistry, but no words. Door unlocks the imagination using illustrations and lets me be the author! I've also enjoyed the book with my nine-year-old great niece. When she is with me, I let her be the storyteller and I listen intently to what she has to say. It has been a great source of "wireless" entertainment: just me, Amelia, and a wordless book.

If you have a chance to visit a bookstore, or are shopping online, you might consider adding such a book to your home library. With a little silence and some imagination, it might be the best book you've never read.

As a side note, Charles Spurgeon is credited with creating the first wordless book in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century while working in London. As a preacher, he used the then three page book to teach children about God's love. Later, more pages (color blocks) were added to include themes of spiritual growth and baptism. The book, simply called, The Wordless Book, can still be purchased today.

If you have an idea for an article for News from Faith Library please send us an e-mail at [library@faithbellaire.org](mailto:library@faithbellaire.org).



## Prayer Corner—Walking Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

by Peggy Porter

Read John 20:1-2, 10-18

Facial tissues aren't often provided for you at a barber shop, hardware store, or post office. But they are at a funeral home, because that's a place where people cry.

On Easter morning, the angels who spoke to Mary Magdalene didn't offer her a tissue, but they did ask why she was weeping. Jesus had the same inquiry, but he also asked her an additional question: "Whom are you seeking?" He didn't ask what she was seeking, because that would have focused her thoughts on an object that wasn't there, namely his dead body. Instead, he phrased the question as he did to direct her attention to him, now risen from the dead.

It is not wrong to shed tears as we mourn. Jesus wept too. But as you reach for the tissue, also grasp again the promise that death has been defeated. It is but a valley that we pass through with the Savior by our side. Because of him, we will rise to eternal life with never a tear to wipe away.

Pray: Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee. Amen.



## CCSC Food Pantry Drive

Christian Community Service Center is on the front lines of feeding people and meeting their basic needs. During this national COVID-19 crisis, CCSC is experiencing difficulty obtaining groceries from its distributors, so your food donations will help keep the shelves stocked.

You can drop off food donations at the following two locations:

1. Food Pantry at 3230 Mercer St. (77027) Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM and Saturdays 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM.
2. Food Pantry at 6856 Bellaire Blvd (77074) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM, CCSC's Bellaire food pantry is located in the church's Canterbury Hall on the east side of the church campus (the same side as KIPP Connect school). Go to the blue double doors of the building closest to the athletic field.

### Here's a list of items that will help the most:

- Bags with handles for packing groceries (paper, reusable, plastic)
- Pasta
- Hearty soups (with meat or beans)
- Canned tuna or chicken
- Boxed dry cereal
- Canned vegetables (all types)
- Canned fruit (all types)
- Cleaning wipes
- Toilet paper
- Bar soap
- Baby wipes/diapers (sizes 4, 5, and 6)





# Compassion Revolution

by Rev. Junfeng Tan, Associate Pastor



The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis. We have seen the enormously destructive and disruptive effects of the pandemic in many places of the world. We have also seen unprecedented responses at local, regional, national, and international levels. “Compassion” is probably one of the most frequently used words when it comes to characterizing our society’s many and varied responses to the pandemic, such as wearing masks, social distancing, caring for the vulnerable and the needy, testing and treating the sick. But do you know the connection between compassionate care for the sick and dying and Christianity? Do you know that Christianity spearheaded the moral revolution in human history?

In the ancient Greco-Roman world, compassion toward the poor, the sick and downtrodden was considered a moral weakness. For example, Plato (427–347 B.C.) said that a poor man (usually a slave) who was no longer able to work because of sickness should be left to die. The Roman philosopher Plautus (254–184 B.C.) argued, “You do a beggar bad service by giving him food and drink; you lose what you give and prolong his life for more misery.” Why did they think that way? Because “the Greco-Roman culture did not see the hungry, the sick, and the dying as worthy of humane assistance.... A human being only had value as a citizen, but very few people qualified as citizens. The physically ailing, the poor, and the lower classes (slaves, artisans, and other manual workers)... were not citizens in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans who were freemen. Noncitizens were defined as having no purpose and hence not worthy to be helped when their lives were in jeopardy” (Alvin Schmidt Jr. *How Christianity Changed the World*). The utilitarian and hierarchical morality of the Greco-Roman culture affected how the society responded to plagues: the sick and dying Athenians and Romans were often deserted by their fellow residents and even family members, who fled from a contagious plague.

Christianity started the moral revolution by advocating and practicing compassion in caring for the weak, the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, and the dying in the Roman Empire. Jesus healed the sick and taught his disciples to care for the least of his brothers and sisters. “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Matthew 25:35-36). The early Christians, in light of Jesus’ moral teaching and example, established the principle that to help the sick and needy is a sign of strength not weakness. They introduced the notion that because God loves humanity, Christians cannot please God unless they love one another. This was a revolutionary ethical idea.

During the plague periods in the Roman Empire, unlike pagans who abandoned the sick and dying, Christians stayed and cared for the sick and dying, including non-Christians, at great risk of their own lives. Historians have suggested that early Christians’ compassionate and heroic response to the plagues not only reduced the death rates of Christian communities by half but also helped the rapid spread of Christian faith. Many pagans were attracted to and joined the Christian movement because of Christians’ loving and compassionate acts toward everyone, regardless of their social, economic, and religious status.

In 313 A.D., Roman Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which helped establish a religious tolerance for Christians in the Roman Empire. The first ecumenical council of the Christian church was convened at Nicaea in 325 A.D. The first Council of Nicaea directed bishops to establish a hospice in every city that had a cathedral. The most important function of early hospice or hospital was to nurse and heal the sick. They also provided shelter for the poor and lodging for Christian pilgrims. By the middle of the sixth century in most of Christendom, in the East and the West, hospitals were securely established. “It is these Christian hospitals that revolutionized the treatment of the poor, the sick, and the dying” (Alvin Schmidt).

Today, Christians, people of other faiths, and people with no religious convictions work together to fight the coronavirus, to care for the sick and dying, to aid the poor and needy, to find medicine and vaccines to treat Covid-19. It is so because Christianity’s concept of compassion has permeated the society and transformed human morality.

Thanks be to Jesus, the Savior and Healer.



## Ways to stay connected with Faith Lutheran Church throughout the week:

### Monday

- Email update from the church

### Tuesday

- 7:00 PM - High School Group Zoom (<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/590031981>)

### Wednesday

- 10:00 AM - Grief Share Support Group Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/8324923858>)
- 7:00 PM - Weight God's Way Group Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8324923858>)
- 7:30 PM - Adult Learning Group Zoom -Bible study/prayer with Clayton Faulkner (<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2528585784?pwd=S1Q0ZIR0SnYvRVF6QnVXUTZnYnZXQT09>)
- 8:00 PM - Faith Chinese Fellowship Group Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/5497260963>)

### Thursday

- This Week at Faith email update from the church
- 7:30 PM - Faith Choir Group Zoom (<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/270119266>)

### Friday

- 6:30 PM - Women of Faith - Conversation/Discussion/Bible Study with Kathy Patrick (<https://zoom.us/j/394307598>)
- 8:00 PM - Faith Chinese Fellowship Group Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/5497260963>)

### Saturday

- Email update from the church with worship information

### Sunday

- 8:30 AM - Sunday worship in English ([live.faithbellaire.org](http://live.faithbellaire.org) or playback any time after)
- 9:30 AM - Learning Group for Kindergarten through 2nd grade (<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/105046495?pwd=SXdRT3BDaTMzMjcXK293MXIOZlI3Zz09>)
- 10:00 AM - Learning Group for 3rd through 5th grade (<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/285532915?pwd=NW9qSXIWTm5CdHE1Z1BHMFljK2diUT09>)
- 10:00 AM - Taking Faith Home Learning Group with Betty Becker (<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76504706707?pwd=Vlpmd2Y2YWRZb1A2aEhvbXdQUdHJdz09>)
- 10:30 AM - Learning Group for Parents (<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/9709559367>)
- 10:50 AM - Sunday Worship in Chinese (<https://zoom.us/j/5497260963>)
- 1:30 PM - Handbell Choir Zoom (<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/91561239583>)
- 4:00 PM - Confirmation Group Zoom for Middle Schoolers (<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/610343282>)







## News from the Children's Ministry

by Courtney Lerch, Children's Ministry Coordinator



The beginning of June marks the start of Summer Vacation: the time when parents expect to have their children staying home. Yet, we have already had our children at home for over two months. Think back to your childhood: How did you feel when Summer Vacation came at last? This year, our children won't experience that same excitement, that feeling of freedom, that anticipation of fun summer activities. Yes, there will be a certain amount of relaxation as they no longer have the class zoom meetings and schoolwork, but this summer will be different. Summer camps are cancelled, many fun summer locations such as public pools and water parks are closed, vacation plans have been cancelled or altered. It is important to remember that just because our children are no longer dealing with the change of having school at home, they are still experiencing a summer that differs significantly from a "typical" summer. As such, they will continue to need our support in navigating the emotions that come with our deviation from the normal.

As we now enter the third month of having our children at home all day, we also need to be generous with ourselves. By the third month of summer we are all usually saying how ready we are for the kids to go back to school! I know it is hard, but we parents need to find an activity that helps us relax and recharge and then be sure to schedule it into our daily routine. We still have about three months remaining with our children at home. Let's try to make the most of this time we have been given to be together as a family!

Here are some of the key resources that I have accumulated over the past few months. I thought it would be helpful for families to have everything together in one place.

### Family Devotions:

1. Use Faith5 as a format to help organize your family devotion time. For more information, go to [www.faith5.org](http://www.faith5.org).
2. Here are some of the Sunday School lessons from May that you can go through together as a family. They have a Bible passage, reflection, and discussion questions, as well as some great artwork and other activities for kids:

[May 3](#), [May 10](#), [May 17](#), [May 24](#), [May 31](#)

### Service Opportunities:

Donate food and hygiene items to the CCSC Food Pantry: [Devotion for kids](#) (food donation)

Create two recycling bags/containers at home: one for markers and one for crayons [Devotion for kids](#) (recycling)

*Continued on next page*





### **Videos:**

John's chapel videos: Here are the links for May, and we will continue to send videos out weekly in June!

May 5: <https://youtu.be/GhkySFzHDdc>

May 12: <https://youtu.be/aluqaFbf-x4>

May 19: [https://youtu.be/RR\\_kia-n0nE](https://youtu.be/RR_kia-n0nE)

May 26: <https://youtu.be/fQgOwpRQ3WQ>

Sing along (John and Kelsey leading lots of songs!): <https://youtu.be/ygbE9y9VIlw>

Sparkhouse Family Sunday School: They have put together a "Sunday School" video for each week from April 19-June 7—complete with songs and activities!

<https://www.wearesparkhouse.org/promos/family-sunday-school/>

### **Morning Watch Kids**

Search "Morning Watch Kids" on YouTube—they have videos for most weekdays throughout the whole quarantine period in which they lead a few songs and tell a Bible story. It is led by Lutheran pastors who were camp counselors when they were younger, so they do a great job of engaging the kids!

### **Sunday Zoom Sessions:**

I know some families were overwhelmed with zoom sessions the last two months of school. Now that those school zoom sessions have ended, consider joining us for our Sunday School zoom sessions!

9:30 AM: K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/105046495?pwd=SXdRT3BDaTMzMjcK293MXI0ZlI3Zz09>

10:00 AM: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/285532915?pwd=NW9qSXIWTm5CdHE1Z1BHMFljK2diUT09>

10:30 AM: Parents

<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/9709559367>



# "Good Friday" Pandemic?

by John Vickery, Director of Youth and Family Ministry



These are unsettling days. Our lives have been turned upside down, backwards, sideways, and every other direction imaginable. It is hard for me to remember a time before focusing on wearing face coverings, social distancing, and staying at home. The extended time of this disruption has become the new normal for me, and I am sure many others are feeling the same way. I no longer wake up each morning thinking that it has all been a dream, instead, I sit up each morning and find myself thinking about what I can do to change my monotonous routine, while also ensuring the safety of myself, my family, and others.

An excellent example of this is my new Sunday morning routine. Before the pandemic, I would get out of bed around 6:00 AM, and get ready for the day and leave for the church at 7:30 AM. When I arrived at church, there would be a few people who have already arrived, preparing the coffee, and they would greet me as I walked into the Fellowship Hall to set up Children's Church. Then I head over to the Faith Center to make sure that the rooms are open for Learning Groups. After all of the preparations are made, I go to the Sanctuary for worship. At the end of the services, I look around and see people talking with one another, sharing stories about their lives, sharing smiles and laughter, and exemplifying why we say that being a Christian is a team sport, a family. I usually would leave each Sunday with a smile on my face knowing that we are a church together.

Now that we are living in the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, many things about my Sundays have changed. Instead of arriving at 7:30 AM, I arrive thirty minutes later, to an almost empty church building. The Faith Center is locked and empty. There are only about ten people total on site to help make the live stream service happen. When the service concludes, rather than smiles and laughter, there is a somber feeling that hangs in the air. A feeling of sadness mourning the loss of what once was. A feeling of sadness that we are unable to gather. A feeling of brokenness.

The best way that I have come to think about these feelings is that each Sunday has the feel of Good Friday.

While the paraments may not be black, we may not be reading the Passion story in worship; but the sense of loss and anticipation are very much at work. This makes me wonder if this is the way that we ought to look at this season of pandemic; one long, multi-day Good Friday.

Think about it. Why is Good Friday so good if Jesus, a human life, died. It is the meaning of that death, the sacrifice that was made for our sake. In the same way, during this season of pandemic each of us are sacrificing various things to ensure that those we care about, our communities, and ourselves stay safe and healthy. And when this season finally comes to a conclusion and we are once again able to worship together in person, I have a feeling that there will be great joy that feels like the Easter morning worship that we missed this year.

The church has not closed. The church does not close. Even when we cannot gather, the church does not close.

Instead, the church adapts. We are the church together, and together we can still be a blessing to each other and our community.

Be safe, my friends.



## Continue to Financially Support Our Mission Through These Challenging Times

The ministry of Faith Lutheran is made possible only by the generous financial support of our members and guests.

As we have joined the rest of the country in moving our worship life online, we anticipate a possible significant impact on our congregational finances. Your continued support of the church and mission is ever more important. Since only about 30% of our giving comes through online giving or automatic bank drafts, we run the risk of losing 70% of our financial support.



### Here is how you can help...by giving online or through bank automated checks.

1. If you use the "bill pay" feature at your bank, 100% of your gift will come in a check sent directly to Faith.
2. Giving online at [www.faithbellaire.org/give](http://www.faithbellaire.org/give) can be very convenient but every gift costs the congregation a small service charge if giving by credit card. Giving online can be set up to give electronically by check (no fee) or credit card and there is also a feature to set up your frequency.
3. Mail a check to the church office using one of our prepaid postage offering envelopes. Please send an email to the church office at [info@faithbellaire.org](mailto:info@faithbellaire.org) and request for us to mail some to you.
4. If you are required to make annual IRA withdrawals, consider giving a portion directly to the congregation. Consult your financial advisor for the tax savings and charitable contribution impact of such gifts.

If you have questions about setting up online giving, processing a one time gift, or other types of gifts, please call Stacy Williams at 713-664-3381 or email her at [swilliams@faithbellaire.org](mailto:swilliams@faithbellaire.org).

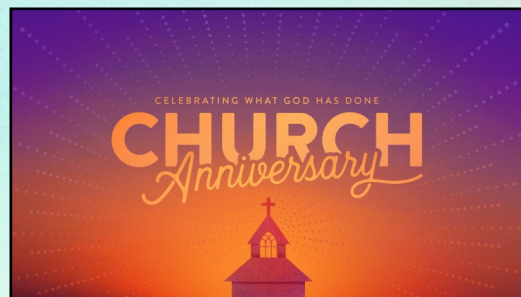
Here's our mailing address for your reference.

Faith Lutheran Church  
4600 Bellaire Blvd  
Bellaire, TX 77401



## Save the Date - 75th Jubilee Celebration

Faith is getting ready to celebrate an important anniversary. In January of 2021, the church will be 75 years old, and we are beginning to plan a year-long celebration to be launched in January 2021 and culminate in the closing months of that year. The plans will involve the participation of many groups and individuals. We invite everyone to become involved. Watch for an opportunity to sign up in the Connection Card, or call Stacy in the church office at 713.664.3048 or contact one of the co-chairs (George Amundson or Karen Elsen) to express your interest in helping.



## Salem Keenagers—Upcoming Events

**All Keenagers activities** for the month of June have been **cancelled**. This includes our **trip to the Blueberry Farm**. All money will be refunded.

### Mark your calendars for the following upcoming trip dates:

More information about these trips will be coming later. As soon as I know when the buses will be running again I will schedule the upcoming trips. I am really looking forward to Keenagers resuming their activities again.

- **Thursday, July 16** – Plans still in progress
- **Thursday, August 13** – Plans still in progress
- **Thursday, September 24** – Plans still in progress

PLEASE NOTE: All payments for bus trips must be paid in full at least a week before our trip unless you are on a waiting list or unless tickets need to be purchased in advance. Please use separate checks for each event. If paying in person, please place the money in an envelope and mark on the front of the envelope: the event, the amount, and your name. Please make all checks payable to Carole Knaub as Keenagers does not have a bank checking account. Checks may be mailed to me at 1802 Thompson Crossing Drive, Richmond, TX 77406. Please call me at 281-344-0312 if interested in any of the above trips. Remember, Keenagers is for anyone age 50 or older regardless of religious preference. Come and get involved and have fun.

### Faith Lutheran Church

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FaithBellaire.org

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Rev. Kerry Nelson

Rev. Junfeng Tan

Stacy Williams

Dr. Clayton Faulkner

John Vickery

Courtney Lerch

Kendolyn Pope

Yu Cao

Patricia Deckard

Alan Balus

Nettie Rodriguez

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Operations

Pastoral Intern

Director of Youth and Family

Children's Ministry Coordinator

Director of Faith Schools

Morning Office Coordinator

Afternoon Office Coordinator

Organist/Choir Director

Evening Facility Manager





# ELCA Reaffirms Commitment to Combat Racism and White Supremacy

5/29/2020 2:45:00 PM

*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8).*



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reaffirms its commitment to combating racism and white supremacy following the recent murders of Black Americans. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Dreasjon (Sean) Reed, and George Floyd were our neighbors. Ahmaud Arbery was chased down, shot, and killed by a retired police officer and his son while jogging in Brunswick, Ga. (Feb. 23, 2020). Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical technician, was shot eight times by Louisville Metro Police Department officers who entered her apartment while serving a "no-knock warrant" (March 13, 2020). Dreasjon (Sean) Reed, a 21-year-old from Indianapolis died after being shot at least eight times by an Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department officer (May 6, 2020). George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis while begging for his life, a block away from Calvary Lutheran, an ELCA congregation (May 25, 2020). As the Conference of Bishops, we condemn the white supremacy that has led to the deaths of so many unarmed Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color in our country. We grieve with, pray for and stand in solidarity with the families and friends of all whose loved ones have been and continue to be victims of injustices run amok, racist violence and the insidious venom of white supremacy.

The ELCA's social policy [resolution](#), "Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric," adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, states: "As persons called to love one another as God has loved us, we therefore proclaim our commitment to speak with one voice against racism and white supremacy. We stand with those who are targets of racist ideologies and actions." As church, together we must work to condemn white supremacy in all forms and recommit ourselves to confront and exorcize the sins of injustice, racism and white supremacy in church and society and within ourselves as individuals and households.

On May 21, the ELCA Southeastern Synod hosted a [webinar](#): "Becoming the Body of Christ – Condemning White Supremacy" in response to the killing of Ahmaud Arbery. This is one of many strategic opportunities happening across this church to address white supremacy and racist rhetoric. On June 17, we will gather again as church to commemorate the Mother Emanuel 9 and to repent of racism and white supremacy. An online ELCA prayer service, including leaders from across the church and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton as preacher, is being planned for June 17, 2020, marking the fifth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9. We encourage congregations to reaffirm their commitment to repenting of the sins of racism and dismantling white supremacy that continue to plague this church by marking this day of penitence with study and prayer leading to action. <https://www.elca.org/emanuelnine>.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop

