

THIS IS NOT AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME!

I have heard it said that “this is an unprecedented time.” That is not true! People have had to deal with a communicable disease before. You might have heard about the “bubonic plague” or the “black death” that killed millions of people in the Middle Ages. In Luther’s time there was an outbreak of this disease in Wittenberg, Luther’s hometown. At that time he was asked “Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague?” He answered that question in a letter which you can read online at:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogLW.pdf>.

In his letter Luther speaks about the duty we have to one another. As I read his letter, I thought about the health care workers who are still on the job, putting themselves at risk so that they can care for others. In the same vein, I am thankful for other essential workers who are doing their duty, making sure that we have what we need.

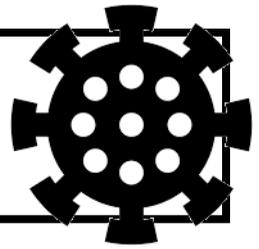
Luther also speaks positively about things like: avoiding places and persons who might be infected and making use of medicines that might help. We would call it a “no brainer.” Luther says it this way: “If one makes no use of intelligence or medicine when he could do so without detriment to his neighbor, such a person injures his body and must beware lest he become a suicide in God’s eye.” So, I think, Luther would tell us today to wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. He would also say that there is a place for social distancing.



But, Luther was first and foremost a pastor. In his letter he encourages Christians to be fervent in prayer and to make use of God’s Word. It is important for us to “learn through God’s Word how to live and how to die.” That’s why I am so thankful that we have been able to use the internet and the radio waves to continue to share God’s Word in this time for His Word teaches us to live and do our duty and care for ourselves and for others. But, most importantly, God’s Word teaches us how Jesus did His duty and died for all of those times when we have not done our duty and done as God would have us do. Through Him we have forgiveness and life, now and forever.

**PLEASE READ:
IMPORTANT
MESSAGE**

C O V I D – 1 9



A LOOK AHEAD

As we continue to navigate the “new normal” it is difficult to plan for the near future. It’s hard to plan for the month of May, that alone the summer, when we are unsure of when the state will “open up”. As this newsletter is being prepared, a “stay at home order” is in place for Minnesota until May 4th. The governor has not said if he will extend the order past that date.

If he does extend the order that will mean that we not be able to have services inside our church, so we will continue to put them online and on the radio.

If Governor Walz does not extend the order that will probably not mean that life will go back to the way things were before COVID-19, we will still probably have to do things like practice social distancing and wear masks. We may be able to have services, but that might mean households will have to maintain a safe distance from others. The way we do communion may also change.

One thing that will happen once we are able to have services again is that the first service we have will be a communion service regardless of whether or not it is the first or third Sunday of the month.

The thing is we don’t know what we will be able to do in the coming month and months. So please check our website (www.stjohnaitkin.org) or Facebook page for up-to-date information. Or, you can call Pastor Becker (218-927-3922) to find out the status of things. If a “stay at home” order continues past May 4, 2020 look to the following:

SUNDAY WORSHIP:

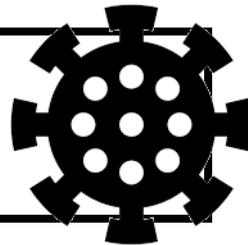
Sunday worship services are being recorded through May. You can access a video on our website (www.stjohnaitkin.org) or on our Facebook page. The order of service, which includes printed text is also be available. Or, you can listen on the radio – KKIN-94.3FM each Sunday morning at 9:00 am.

OFFERING:

Thank you to those who have mailed your weekly offering throughout this “stay home” order. We appreciate your continued support. Even though we are not able to have a “normal” church service, the church’s expenses continue (about \$14,000 per month). Please mail offerings to St. John’s Lutheran Church. 324 3rd St. NW, Aitkin, MN, 56431. We are also working to get “Online Giving” up through our Website and will keep you posted on that. Thank you for your continued support of our church.

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COMMUNION:

For those wishing to receive communion, please contact Pastor Becker (home: 218-927-3922) so that arrangements can be made to receive private communion at church. This can be done while still maintaining social distancing.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Online Sunday School lessons are available through May 3rd on our website. At this point we will have completed our lessons for the year. Sadly, it will also mark the end of our Sunday School year, but we will try and do some sort of celebration when we are able to get together again.

CONFIRMATION:

Two will be confirmed at some future point. Confirmation Sunday had been scheduled for April 19th, but because of the “Stay at Home Order” that didn’t happen. The two that will be confirmed are: Maggie Borseth and Justin Backstrom. Thankfully, prior to the cancellation of school, all lesson material had been presented and the remaining classes were to be used for review.

Classes for the 7th Grade class will continue through much of May using an internet platform called “Zoom.” They are completing their study of Bible stories with the death and resurrection of Jesus, life in the early church, and the missionary journeys of Paul.

ALL OTHER CHURCH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES:

Please watch for updates of all Spring/Summer groups and activities on our website, as we navigate through the next month.

Right now many of us may feel afraid, frustrated, anxious, angry, or are hurting. If you are going through a time like that today, know that God is with you, He cares about you, and He has your life in his hands, and if you are struggling today, make your prayer, “Lord I believe, help my unbelief.” These are the words spoken by a desperate father to Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. God is faithful to us in our struggles and He is faithful to you today as well.

If you have any questions, concerns, or in need of anything, please reach out to Pastor Becker or any of the Deacons at any time.

*In Christ,
Pastor David Becker*



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Serving Our Community

REQUEST FROM AITKIN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Recently we received the following request from Brea Hamdorf of Aitkin County Health and Human Services:

Good morning church and community partners,

I hope that you are all doing well in this time of increased anxiety and uncertainty. I would like to thank you for the work that you are doing to support our communities. The CDC now recommends that everyone wear cloth face covers in the public where social distancing may be difficult. Many of the essential businesses in the county are in search of these face covering for their employees. I am asking you to reach out to church members to ask them to make these masks for the businesses. Every mask counts in the efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the county. Please urge your members to make extra masks to donate to the community. I have included instruction on how to make the masks. First Lutheran Church in Aitkin is graciously assisting with this effort by collecting and then distributing them to area essential businesses. Donations can be dropped off at the West office entrance Wednesdays and Friday from 8-10 am or call 218-927-2028 to arrange a drop of day and time.

Thank you for your assistance,
Brea Hamdorf, BSN, PHN, CLS
Disease Prevention & Control, Aitkin County Health & Human Services”

ST. JOHN'S RESPONDS:

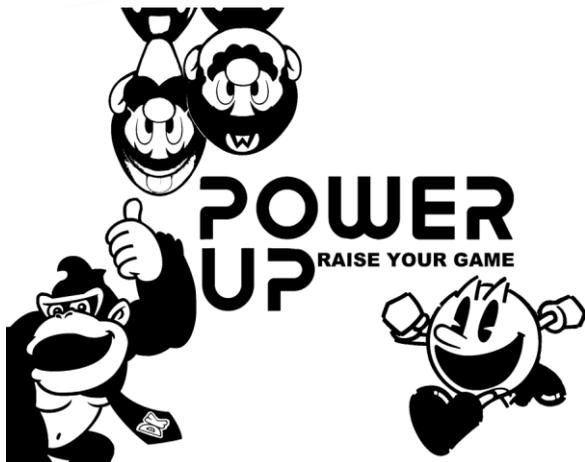
Joy Janzen is heading up our congregation's response. If you would like to help with this community project, please contact Joy at 218-927-6119. The mask pattern is available on our website at www.stjohnaitkin.org.



A special thank you to our amazing members who have already contributed to making masks: Debbie Schultz, Joy Janzen, Kathy Pearson, and Florence Landrus.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH + YOUTH NEWS

Important information for youth and their parents to know



As the Sunday School year nears to a close, we would like to thank our teachers and our families for making it a great year. The kids have enjoyed Bible stories of Moses, Joseph, and of how the Holy Spirit led the Apostles. The kids did an amazing job sharing the birth of Jesus during our Christmas Children's Service, as well as singing each month during worship. We've made some great memories together and are blessed to have so many amazing kids in our congregation. Thank you!

GOD'S POWER HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO LEAD A GODLY LIFE. 1 PETER 1:3A



GET READY FOR VBS!

JULY 27 – JULY 31 8:30AM – 11:30AM

Register on-line at www.stjohnnaitkin.org

We are still hopeful that by the end of July we will be able to share the love of Jesus with our children as we armor up for God during a very exciting and wintry themed VBS week – Knights of the North Castle. We will keep you posted as events unfold. Watch for details on our website and on Facebook.

Volunteers are needed & appreciated. A sign-up sheet will be available in the entryway. Thank you so much for your help.

IF WE ARE NOT YET ABLE TO GATHER TOGETHER BY JULY, WE ARE LOOKING INTO OFFERING A VIRTUAL VBS EXPERIENCE FOR OUR KIDS.



The St. John's Bulletin Board



Wonderful, amazing, brave, strong, loving, and kind are just some of the words we can use to describe the moms in our lives. Hugs, laundry, story time and homecooked meals are only a few ways they show love for us. Now it's our turn to show our appreciation for all the things we love about our moms. This Mother's Day help us celebrate our moms (either alive or in heaven) in a very special way. Go to www.stjohnnaitkin.org for more information... we need everyone to participate!



Richard Orr, age 78, passed away peacefully on March 24, 2020. A celebration of life service will be held at a later date.

Ronald Tibbetts, age 68, passed away on April 9, 2020. A public gathering of friends and family and military honors will be held at a later date.

POSTPONED EVENTS:

The following are postponed events that are still to come once we get the "all clear" from the governor.

- Quarterly Voters' Meeting
- Annual Chicken Dinner
- Kids Against Hunger – Family Event
- Church Pictorial Directory

CURRENTLY SCHEDULED EVENTS:

The following are still on the calendar until we hear different. Help is needed with each event. Please watch for sign-up sheets.



Aitkin County Fair

Summer is just around the corner and so is the Aitkin County Fair. This is a great time to share St. John's with our community.



Polka Worship Service

It's time to "Raise the Roof" in a lively worship service that everyone enjoys. This year money raised supports a new roof for St. John's. There will be a German dinner following worship.





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Blessings on your special day!

Grace Anderson	May 01	Andrea Thornbloom	May 17
Brittany Peterson	May 01	Danelle Tibbetts	May 17
Sampson Perrine	May 02	Jeff Van Horn	May 17
Kailey Plekkenpol	May 02	Ashley Pohl	May 18
Bill Thompson	May 02	Werner Panning	May 19
Christina Harmon	May 03	Tracie Becker	May 20
Monica Moore	May 04	Mallory Weimer	May 20
Mark Splittstoser	May 04	Greg Landrus	May 21
Lola Ann Weimer	May 04	Mike Quale	May 21
Elizabeth Hill	May 05	Stacey Bolster	May 22
Amanda Boettcher	May 05	Joseph Bender	May 23
Ron Ladwig	May 05	John Bender	May 23
Heidi Warriner	May 06	JaNaye Johnson	May 23
Quinten Crowther	May 07	Gretchen Buhlmann	May 24
Robin Van Horn	May 07	Muriel Kingsley	May 24
Chris Wold	May 07	Cassa Ruschmeier	May 25
Carol Shields	May 08	Roger Goff III	May 26
Brandon Wold	May 08	Jim Shirilla	May 28
Ashley Gibbons	May 09	David Wilke	May 28
Jeff Larson	May 10	Jason Wold	May 28
Gene Pagels	May 11	Peyton Niemeyer	May 29
Chloe Othoudt	May 12	Evelyn Panning	May 29
Roy Van Horn	May 12	Steve Wold	May 30
Trevor Borseth	May 15	Rodney Larson	May 31
Stephani Nelson	May 17		

**The birthdays listed are from our church records. Any mistakes are unintentional. Please notify the office of any mistakes, deletions, or if you do not want your birthday listed.*

TOGETHER IN MISSION | NEWS FROM THE NEUENDORFS

James & Christel Neuendorf, our “Together in Mission Missionaries” recently sent the following:

“Back in early March we planned for the health department to do a workshop on how to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 and other airborne contagious viruses. We were a bit too late as curfew hit Puerto Rico a few days prior to our workshop.

In preparation the congregation put together bags of hand sanitizer, soap, a Bible and some other items. Since the workshop didn’t happen, we were left with 50 bags of needed items that we couldn’t hand out.

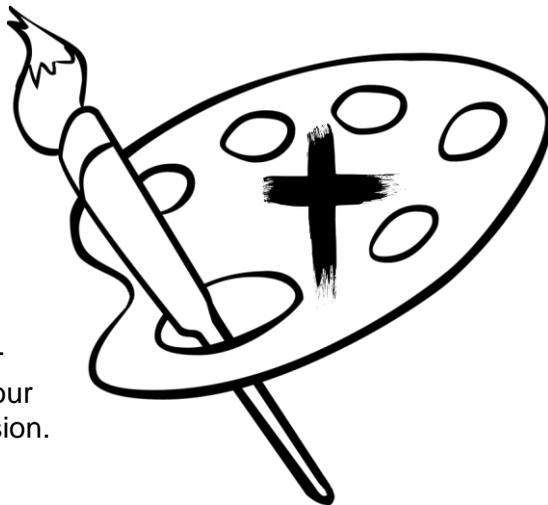
Our temporary church location is right next to a pharmacy (who owns our building). They are still allowed to be open, so we gave the bags to them to pass out to those who needed the items. They then added Panadol (Tylenol) to the bags and other items as needed by their clients.

There have been various times over these last few months where we have thought, “Well, that just didn’t work out” and well, it didn’t work out how WE thought it would, but the Lord knew and has worked through our flawed thinking and planning to care for His people. To Him be praised.

We were hoping to offer art and craft classes at CARD (Mercy House) starting in March, but that has been put on hold. We have since taken to Facebook and have begun to offer classes via Facebook Live. Missionary Ruth Maita has been teaching classes every Friday morning.

We made an ad on our Facebook page that the first 15 people to respond to our class would receive a watercolor packet. We had an awesome response and were able to mail out our watercolor sets and other supplies that we have received as donations and church information in each pack.”

If you would like to give toward the support of our Together in Mission Missionaries please place your offering in an envelope marked “Together in Mission.





Minnesota North District
THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

A MESSAGE FROM JEFF LEE MISSION & MINISTRY

The following appeared in a recent e-news of the Minnesota North District:

Dear Friends in Christ,

Rahm Emanuel served as the Chief of Staff under President Obama. He is credited with the idea that you should “Never let a crisis go to waste.” By that, he meant that there are real opportunities to effect changes during a time of crisis. Charles Doyle of the University of Georgia, co-author on the forthcoming Yale Book of Modern Proverbs, has found that this expression is now commonly applied to economic or diplomatic crises that can be exploited to advance political agendas, but he traced it back at least as far as 1976, when M. F. Weiner wrote an article in the journal *Medical Economics* entitled “Don’t Waste a Crisis —Your Patient’s or Your Own.” Weiner meant by this that a medical crisis can be used to improve aspects of personality, mental health, or lifestyle. (August 13, 2009 blog written by Fred Shapiro).

Personally, I turn to Romans 8:28: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.” That doesn’t mean that all things are good, but God can work good in all things.

So what good can come out of a pandemic? In an April 2, 2020, opinion piece in the *Jerusalem Post* by Joel C. Rosenberg entitled; “Millions of Americans say coronavirus a ‘wake-up call’ from God” reports “a stunning 44% of Americans polled said they see ‘the global coronavirus pandemic and economic meltdown’ as ‘a wake-up call for us to turn back to faith in God,’ as ‘signs of coming judgment.’”

In the March survey, 22% of non-Christians polled said that the crisis is causing them to start reading the Bible and to listen to Christian sermons online even though they usually do not search online to learn more about Bible prophecy and God’s plan for the future of mankind and have more spiritual conversations with family and friends.

40% of self-identified Christians report to be reading their Bible more than ever and watching or listening to Biblical teaching and Christian sermons online since they cannot go to church. The survey was conducted by McLaughlin & Associates, a nationally-respected polling company, from March 23 through March 26. The questions were asked of 1,000 likely American voters. The poll had a reported margin of error of +/-3.1%, at a 95% confidence interval.

We live in a time of fear and unrest. Even though we may be sheltered in, I have witnessed more outreach taking place by our District Pastors and rostered Church Workers. I do not take glee in the crisis we are in –but I know that God can, and does work all things for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. Get the Word of God’s Grace out into our communities that the people in our communities may know that we have a sure and certain hope in a loving God who redeems us to be His children. To God be the glory.

In His Service,
Rev. Jeffrey A. Lee