

JULY 2020

*The Lord of...*

# LIFE LINE

*Special Edition Newsletter of Lord of Life Lutheran Church*



## Loving Our Neighbor

*by Pastor Paul*

*30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." -Mark 12:30-31*

Dear friends, last month I shared my promise with you that your congregational council would do everything possible to tend the safety and wellness of all of our people as we evaluate a return to in-person worship services. As I write this it is less than a day since the executive team met and ultimately pushed back our return to in-person services. I long to be together with all of you, to sing together, to share in the Sacraments, but that is not how God is calling us into community at this time. I believe God is calling us to love our neighbor. Here's what I mean. *(continued)*

The verses from Mark that I began with come from the larger context of Jesus' response to one of the teachers of Israel who asked Jesus which of the commandments is greatest (v. 28). Jesus doesn't hesitate, love God, love your neighbor... as yourself.

So loving our neighbor, Luther would argue, means wanting the best for them (hmm.. don't we want the best for ourselves and our loved ones as well?). So where am I going with this? Well, what does it look like to live out our lives in a time of a global pandemic and to model loving our neighbor?

Are you wearing a mask in public? To me it is easy to see that wearing a mask in public to protect my neighbor from being exposed to a lethal virus looks a LOT like loving my neighbor. Limiting gathering for worship looks like loving our neighbor (*you and your friends at church!*) by not exposing each other in a confined space for an extended time. Loving our neighbor looks like feeding the hungry (*see article below*) and checking in with each other. It looks like praying for our world, for scientists and healthcare workers, those who work and those who are out of work, for your church and for each other.

We say that we want to care for our congregation (*each other*), for our community, and for our world. I believe that making choices like the ones I shared, and especially right now, continuing worship online, touches on all of these. I miss being together in person, but I have also seen our reach expand to other states in our own country, and even as far away as Guyana! God is doing something as we model love for our neighbor and care for each other. God is doing something through each of us, the Holy Spirit is inviting us into new ways of understanding what it means to be the church and to participate in a life of faith.

If you are reading this and you haven't joined us for worship or the virtual coffee hour that follows, I want to encourage you to do so. Worship and these informal gatherings are the place from which we are sent out into our world to love our neighbor. They are also the places where we are reminded of what it looks like to be loved by God. May the peace of Christ enfold your lives and when the time is right, gather us in person once more.

JULY 2020

# From the Council President

Happy Summer Everyone!

Interesting year we are having. I sure hope everyone is enjoying their summer and being safe and keeping healthy.

The Lord of Life Church Council has met to discuss the reopening plan for in person worship. The plan is a four phase plan that requires the 14 day rolling average of Dubuque County coronavirus cases to be declining. We are still in Phase One which means the church is closed for in-person worship and any activities. Unfortunately, the trendline is going in the wrong direction.

The Council appointed a reopening task force to look at the things needed to be accounted for in reopening. These include how the worship space is configured, how many people are allowed to be present for worship, how cleaning is done, how people enter and leave the church, the wearing of masks, what is included in the service, ie singing, receiving of offerings, Holy Communion, etc.

You get the idea. A lot of things to think about. As part of that work the reopening task force targeted a soft opening to just council members for July 5th with a planned reopening of in person worship for the congregation on Saturday July 11th and Sunday July 12th. Due to the trendline going up instead of down, we are now looking at shifting in person worship to potentially begin the first weekend in August. Whether we can start worshipping in person that weekend depends on the virus and the trendline for Dubuque County. Worship services would be limited to 30 people including all of the worship servants. We would follow the normal summer schedule of Saturday at 5:00 pm and Sunday at 9:00 am. This allows for cleaning between services.

It is hard not seeing all of you in person. I yearn for when we can worship, sing and shake hands (or hug) again. Now is not the time to do that. Soon we will be able to get back together in person.

Until then, be safe my friends and may God's peace be with you.

Jon Dienst,  
Council President

## Virtual Coffee Hour

Virtual Coffee Hour - Join us for a virtual coffee hour following worship on Sunday morning! We'll start right after worship. You can join us by clicking [here](#). \*Note: this is a separate link from the worship link. Want to phone in? **Dial 1 312 626 6799** (US) and enter meeting code: 955 1671 9127 followed by password code: 390761.



## Worship Online

Worship online is our current reality and we give thanks to God for our partnership with our area ELCA Congregations for the partnership we have forged to provide Sunday services.

### **Sunday Mornings at 9:00 a.m.**

Link via our website | Phone in at 1 (312) 626-6799, then enter the meeting code: 887 508 411#

You can also now watch the service via our website's front page. We have embedded a live streaming window there, so just visit [www.lordoflife.online](http://www.lordoflife.online) and scroll down to the "live" window.



Pastor Paul has been leading a Monday evening Bible study for the past several months. We'll be taking July off, but we encourage you to join us in August to dive into scripture and share in community, online. In the meantime, we have tons of resources online!

Be sure to check out all of the resources available via our website! [www.lordoflife.online](http://www.lordoflife.online)

# Sunday School News

## **Volunteers:**

Although we do not know the exact timing of when we will all be together again at Lord of Life, I will be ready to have Sunday School start up in the fall. That means I am figuring out how to divide the age groups and starting to recruit teachers. There will be 3 Sunday school classes this year: prek-k; 1st, 2nd and 3rd; and 4th & 5th. In addition, there will also be a middle/high school class. Even if teaching is not your gift, there are many ways to help out. Cross Generational Sunday School will happen once a month and planning help is needed. Below are some volunteer opportunities.

Teach or team teach a Sunday School class. (1-3 Sundays per month) Substitute teach. (Occasionally) Help plan Cross Generational Sunday School. (Meetings once a month) Assist with large group opening. (3 times per month) Participate with Education Committee. (Meetings 3 to 4 times per year) Switch out contents of Busy bags. (About 3 to 4 times per year)

All of these volunteer opportunities contribute to the success of our ministry. Nothing requires a huge commitment, so please consider how you might help out.

**Bibles:** Three-year olds and Third Graders will once again be receiving Bibles in the fall. A Sunday will be designated for children to receive their Bibles. Watch for more information on this later in the summer.

**Registration:** Later in the summer Sunday School registration forms will be available. Please watch for those and get your children signed up for the new year.

**Cross Generational Sunday School:** The 2nd Sunday of the month will be Cross Gen again this month. Plan to attend Sunday School as a family and come explore your faith in fun in ways!

## An update from our treasurer

While June financials will not be completed for another week, it is important the congregation receives an update now on how we have been affected financially by this pandemic. As expected, (see table below) general giving has been negatively impacted over the last 4 months. If this trend continues for the rest of the year, general giving would be approximately \$20,000 below budget. However, this general giving shortfall is currently offset by lower expenses associated with no in person services and the \$25,000 Paycheck Protection Program loan, that I anticipate will be forgiven.

<b><u>General Giving</u></b>	<b><u>2019</u></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Vs Budget</u></b>	<b><u>% Under Budget</u></b>
YTD (Thru June)	126,748	122,156	130,000	(7,844)	-6%
<b><u>COVID Impacted Months</u></b>	<b><u>2019</u></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Vs Budget</u></b>	<b><u>% Under Budget</u></b>
March - June	83,492	78,466	86,667	(8,201)	-9%

While I am confident about our ability to meet our 2020 budget, it is too soon to predict how this will impact the \$50,000 in outstanding God's Mission pledges, 2021 general giving, or our next capital campaign scheduled for early 2021. The church council will continue to update the congregation about the financial situation as we learn more.

Alan Stache,  
Church Council Treasurer

*Thank You!*

For supporting giving to support our shared ministry!

# Drive Thru Food Pantry Serves Many

On Saturday, June 20th a small but mighty group of volunteers gathered at the church to care for our community through the distribution of groceries for folks who struggle with food insecurity.

Riverbend Food Bank delivered several pallets of pre-packaged boxes and our team placed the boxes in the cars of our guests as they drove through the line.



The groceries delivered included boxes of dairy products, boxes of dry goods, fresh fruit, and frozen chicken. It was humbling to see how many cars gathered in our lot for the distribution. Feeding hungry people is a way that Lord of Life continues to live out our mission statement, "Loved by God, sent to serve" for our community.

In addition to this drive thru effort, we continue to have regular visitors to our Little Food Pantry located in the parking lot. I am so grateful to all the volunteers who tend the pantry, shop for groceries, and model compassion for those who are food insecure. Last week I watched a little girl on her bike access the pantry for something to eat. Praise God for this ministry we share!

- Pastor Paul



## Keep Checking In

We keep hearing from folks who are so happy to hear from their fellow Lord of Life members! Cards, notes, phone calls, even text messages can make a difference in building our community and assuring each other along the way. Please take a few minutes each week to intentionally reach out and talk to someone from church.

## In the Mail...

Though we primarily share resources and updates electronically, if you are unable to access the Internet, please contact the office to arrange to have items mailed.



**Lord of Life**  
Lutheran Church

2899 Hales Mill Road  
Asbury, Iowa 52002  
563.582.7371  
office@lordoflifedbq.org  
www.lordoflifedbq.com