

SEPTEMBER 2020

*The Lord of...*

# LIFE LINE

*Newsletter of Lord of Life Lutheran Church*



## **God with us in the storms... (and how Lord of Life is Responding)**

*by Pastor Paul*

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." - John 14:27*

I've heard and read a number of comments about 2020 and what an awful year it has been. Some have even joked that it should be used as a curse word in the future. I'm not sure about that, but I am sure about one thing. God is with us in the storms of life.

Remember back to January when we all wondered what those folks around the world were doing to spread a virus so quickly? Remember the uncertainty that led up to Sunday, March 15th? That was the last date for in-person worship services as usual. I distinctly recall the urgency to figure out how to live stream a worship service in less than a week. I can look back at the last 5+ months and see so many places, so many ways that I have been blessed, that Lord of Life has been blessed. So I thought I'd share a few of these here as a way for us to understand that God is, indeed, with us in the storms we face.

First, from a personal perspective, though I came into my ministry here with a higher than average set of skills for technology, it was through the network of friends I had established over years that I was able to learn, struggle, and implement the technology needed to meet the demands of a new digital ministry at Lord of Life. Had God not blessed me with these friendships, this effort would have been far more difficult.

*cont'd*

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Let's talk about how Lord of Life has remained outwardly focused during the pandemic, and more recently in response to a literal storm.

Through my work with the **Almost Home** Advisory Board, in your behalf, I have been blessed to see the amazing work being done on behalf of the homeless. Almost Home has helped homeless men find safety, hope, and a path forward to return to work and health. It's truly incredible ministry that we have supported with dollars and presence.

Partnered with Almost Home is **The Open Closet**. Lord of Life members continue to support the Closet through the donation of clothing and supplies. A recent drive for clothing for teenagers, held through social media and email, yielded amazing results and the Closet was able to help get teens clothing to start the new school year without being ashamed for lacking decent clothes to wear. There's more. Lord of Life members have been the tops for donating blankets and quilts to this ministry. In the past month, the Closet has given out more than 60 blankets, many stitched and prayed over by Lord of Life members!

**Storm cleanup** is ongoing in Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities, and Lord of Life has been there to help. As of the writing of this article for the newsletter, crews have visited Cedar Rapids for two consecutive weekends to aid with tree removal and cleanup. Here's what one of the recipients of our efforts had to say.

*"It's difficult to put into words. I've never been in a situation where so many people have reached out to help my family. At the end of day 6 with not power and one large pine tree still resting on my roof, I find myself overwhelmed with trying to process what happened this week, yet overflowing with gratitude. Friends and strangers alike came together today to help us clear our backyard from the aftermath of Monday's Derecho storm. Together we accomplished, in just a few hours, what would have taken us weeks to do ourselves. Thank you!" - Julie B., Cedar Rapids*

Exhausted, we pushed on to help more families. At the second location, nearly done and even more tired, we heard about an elderly gentleman and one volunteer with a handsaw helping. I told our crew about the need and Mark Oehlert's response gave me chills. "That won't do. We need to go." The second weekend was much the same, more helping and caring for community and loving neighbor.

We are **feeding hungry people**. Our Little Food Pantry continues to see regular use and our volunteers are tending to the need by showing up every morning to restock the pantry. In recent weeks we also hosted a drive through mobile food pantry, and we will continue to offer these mobile pantries in the weeks to come.

These are a few of the ways that Lord of Life is blessed to be a blessing in the storms of life. Will you join me in giving thanks to God for these blessings and for the assurance that, even in the storms of life, God goes with us? Do not be afraid. God is here and God is at work through God's people.

Thanks be to God.



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# Thank You Lord of Life Members!

Storm Cleanup in Cedar Rapids after the Derecho in August. Not all our folks are pictured because were moving so fast helping others!



Brandon and Pastor Paul in front of one of the 10' high piles of debris. Thanks to our members who came to the aid of our neighbors in Cedar Rapids!

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## Worship & Virtual Coffee Hour Now with One Link and One Number

Beginning September 6th we will have ONE link for Zoom and ONE phone number to call in. This means that you will no longer need to leave the Zoom call in order to join the coffee fellowship time. We think this will simplify things tremendously and provide for a much more natural transition. Sort of life filing out of the sanctuary and into the Gathering Space at church.

As before, you will be able to click on the Worship button on our website, or you can note this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5635827371?pwd=Y2ZaWEVZU0RucjdieFNwSThkTGdaUT09>  
If prompted to enter a password, use "Luther" without the quotes.

**Dial 1 312 626 6799** and enter meeting code: 563 582 7371 followed by password code: 456037.

## Virtual Office Hours

Pastor Paul invites you to join him for virtual office hours each **Wednesday morning from 9-10am**. Stop by and say hello, ask questions, make an appointment, share a good joke. Find the link on our website. Not computer savvy? Call the church office any time.

## Morning Bible Study Options

Pastor Paul invites you to join him for a reading of the lessons for the week ahead. A handout is provided on our website, along with a link to join the Zoom meeting. Join him on Monday mornings at 9:00am or Monday evenings at 7:00pm. Be sure to check out all of the resources available via our website! [www.lordoflife.online](http://www.lordoflife.online)



## Worship Now from Lord of Life

Beginning September 6th worship services will be led by Lord of Life only. We are grateful for our partnership with the other congregations of Dubuque, but the time has come for us to step out on our own in the online worship world. This means you will hear from familiar voices for things like the readings, prayers, music, and of course, Pastor Paul who will be preaching each week. We are excited for this new beginning and we pray that you will be as well.

If you are someone who normally volunteers to serve the worship service and are interested in participating, please contact Pastor Paul or the church office for details on how we will do so prior to resuming in-person services.

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## Worship in the Parking Lot? Absolutely!



On Saturday, August 22nd, we entered a new era of worship at Lord of Life when we gathered in the parking lot at church for an outdoor, socially distanced, worship service. We had a huge turnout, and as a bonus, we had two neighbors who live behind the church parking lot who sat on their decks and joined the service! How about that?

It takes a lot of volunteers to make a service like this happen, so please allow us to thank our fantastic Worship & Music Team led by Val Kennedy and our tech support guy hiding behind the trailer, Jon Dienst, for helping us sound good. Thanks, also, to Kevin Curoe for providing the flatbed trailer (aka chancel) and leading the parking lot crew. Special thanks to Morgan Kennedy for her help packing the worship bags. What a wonderful evening it was!



*The Greeting Team hard at work!*

## Worship (x2) in the Parking Lot in September

We had so much fun, we're going to offer TWO parking lot services in September! Twice as many opportunities for you to sign up to attend a service with Holy Communion. This time you will have the option to bring lawn chairs to sit in front of your vehicle or on the grass behind the parking lot. If you choose this option, please know that you will be required to wear a mask and maintain a determined, safe, social distance.

As with the August version, we will ask you to register for the service so we can control the number of vehicles in the lot. If you choose to park your car in the upper lot and carry lawn chairs to the designated seating area, you may do so as well.

To register, please visit our Sign Up Zone page via the website, Midweek eNews, or Saturday Worship News emails. You can also call the office to reserve a spot.

See you Saturday, September 12th and 26th at 5pm.

\*\*In case of bad weather, please see the website for updates.

# From the Council President

Greetings everyone!

Are we tired of COVID-19 yet? I am. I just wanted to give everyone a run down on what your church council has been doing in the last few months and how we are planning for an eventual re-start to in-person worship. Remember...the church has not closed, only the building has.

Over the last few months the council has met and discussed how to re-start in-person worship. Stopping in-person worship and re-starting in person worship are two completely different animals and the former is a lot easier to do. The council has looked at multiple plans developed by the Synod, other churches, and the ELCA. We have been working with Dubuque area area ELCA congregations to review plans and discuss approaches to re-starting. The Lord of Life Lutheran Church council agreed to a **4 phase reopening plan**. Moving from one phase to another requires us to look at the rolling 14 day Dubuque County trend line to make sure it's decreasing. Here is a cliff notes version of the plan:

**Phase 1** - We are here now. No in-person worship or meetings in the church facility.

**Phase 2** - We allow in-person worship with a total of 30 people in the building. No singing. No Communion. Everyone wears masks.

**Phase 3** - We allow in-person worship with a total of 70 people in the building. No singing. No Communion. Everyone wears masks. Coffee service resumes but socially distant. *(I'm sure we are all missing Jim's coffee)*

**Phase 4** - Hallelujah. We are back worshipping normally with singing, communion, normal fellowship and holding meetings.

With all phases...if the rolling 14 day average goes up, we will revert to an earlier phase.

Based on the counts in Dubuque County we could begin worshipping in-person Labor Day weekend. However, we as a council decided to wait a few weeks to see how things go with back-to-school. I'll admit we are a little nervous and want to see how the testing and virus spread goes. The current plan is to start phase 2 and resume worship September 26th/27th. We will continue the Saturday/Sunday schedule of worship we normally do in the summer to facilitate cleaning between services and see how attendance goes. We will continue to have the Sunday online service. Stay tuned to the weekly newsletter for any potential changes. We will have some drive up worship opportunities in the next few weeks so look for that.

Kudos to Worship and Music for all the work they have done. Thank you to our landscaping committee folks for keeping plants watered and looking nice. Thank you to Mission and Outreach for securing more food pantry funds and maintaining the little food pantry. Thank you to Property Management for keeping the church in good shape and coordinating little repairs here and there. Thank you to Parish Education for working on a Sunday School program during a pandemic. Sunday School will happen but will look different. Thank you to our Stewardship team and Treasurer for looking at finances and helping plan a way forward for us to continue in mission despite the pandemic. Thank you to everyone in the congregation for being flexible and supporting those in leadership. Finally, thank you Pastor Paul for your ministry during this difficult and crazy time. We are very fortunate to have your skill set. They don't teach multimedia streaming worship in seminary!

It's been tough but we continue to do ministry. Care for our Congregation (call on each other and see how folks are doing), Care for our Community (Food pantry, mobile food pantry, Open Closet, etc) and Care for the World (Cedar Rapids/Marion tree cleanup). Let's keep doing what we have always done and do God's Work with Our Hands. Remember, we are not closed. See you in Church!

In God's Peace,

Jon

# From the Treasurer

## Financial Update - July Year-to-Date

The financial update through July is very similar to the report given last month. General giving through July is 6.1% below budget and 1.7% below last year. The shortfall in revenue is easily being offset by lower expenses which are 9.6% below budget and 7.7% below last year. We should easily be able to meet our 2020 net income budget and I would like to thank everyone for their support of the church in these challenging times.

While I am confident about the operational budget, I am less certain when it come to paying our mortgage. July was the first moth where a portion of our mortgage was paid for by non God's Mission Campaign funds. This is not surprising given the timing of some 3 year pledges is uncertain. We still have \$48,500 in outstanding pledges and if 90% are fulfilled, our mortgage will be paid for until February of 2021. I would encourage everyone to carefully review their mid-year giving statements and if you will be unable to meet your Gods Mission pledge, reach out to myself or the church office to let us know so we can plan accordingly.

Additional financial updates will be shared with the congregation in the monthly newsletter and as the council plans for the 2021 operational budget and another fund drive to cover our mortgage,

Thank you for your continued financial support to the church and all of the other ways you support the important work the church does.

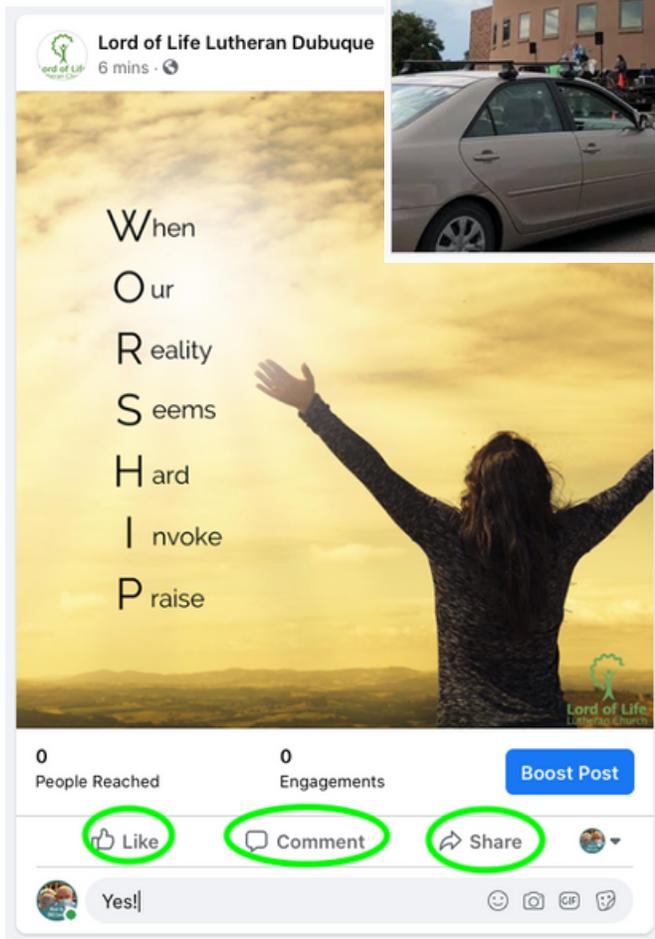
Alan Stache, Church Council Treasurer

<u>July YTD</u>	<b>2019 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Total Budget</b>
Member General Giving	144,903	142,410	151,669	260,000
Hunger	1,077	688	875	1,500
Lent/Advent	1,071	913	1,000	1,300
Other Giving/Income	1,115	527	1,369	2,400
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>148,166</b>	<b>144,539</b>	<b>154,913</b>	<b>265,200</b>
Benevolence	12,291	10,577	12,494	21,000
Evangelism	1,519	0	2,110	3,750
Stewardship	797	676	728	1,250
Music & Worship	12,387	13,786	12,838	22,013
Faith Formation	2,487	198	8,825	16,700
Ministry/Pastoral	64,540	69,554	68,985	115,761
Church Home	33,854	26,859	30,131	46,800
Administration	24,965	19,415	19,971	34,230
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>152,841</b>	<b>141,068</b>	<b>156,082</b>	<b>261,504</b>
<b>Net Gain (loss)</b>	<b>-4,675</b>	<b>3,470</b>	<b>-1,169</b>	<b>3,696</b>
Mortgage - (\$6,252/month)	43,764	43,764	43,764	75,024

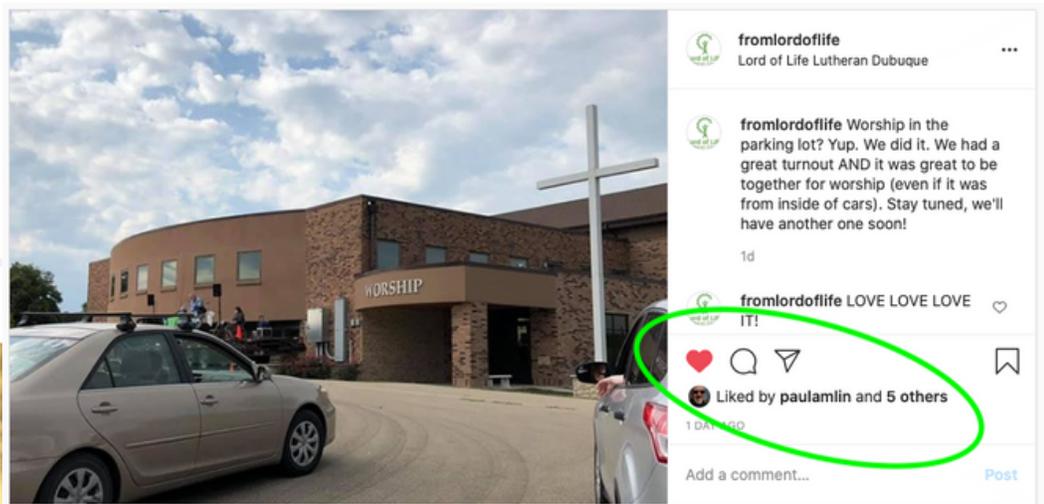
# Join Our Social Media Team!

No matter your circumstances or abilities, if you are on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn, you can help us spread the Good News by joining Pastor Paul and our new Social Media team! Here's how it works...

1. Like, Comment, Share - See a post by Lord of Life online? First, **Like** it on Facebook or click on the heart symbol on Instagram. Make a **comment**. These don't have to be perfect, a simple "Amen" for a prayer or "Yes!" or "Thank you for sharing this" will work well. Next, **Share** the post with your friends! When you do these things it tells the algorithm that our posts are important and that other people may want to see them as well. It pushes our posts up in the order and helps others learn about Lord of Life.
2. Rinse and repeat. Yup. That's it. Do these things regularly and you will be helping us spread the Good News via our social media outlets, and all it cost you was a couple of taps of your keyboard.



Facebook Sample



Instagram Sample

## Top Tip!

In Facebook, visit our page and click on the three dots next to the magnifying glass below the "Learn More" blue button. Then click on "Follow Settings" then select "See First" under News Feed and "Standard" under the Notifications section. Now you will see all the posts from your congregation!

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## Sunday School News

The first Zoom connection for Sunday School will be Sunday, September 13th. Watch for emails with the time and Zoom link. This will be about a 20 minute meeting that will try to follow the Faith 5 structure of Share, Read, Talk, Pray, and Bless. We want to share God's word and connect with kids and their families during this time we are not meeting in person. I know Zooming with kids is an adventure, but I hope you will give it a try.

Activity kits for families will be delivered in early September. These kits will have weekly devotions and activities to help you explore the week's Bible story. Some of the activities will tie into the Zoom connection, but most can be done apart from that. I hope this will be a way for families to grow in faith together. Bibles for 3-year-olds and 3rd graders will be delivered along with the kits in early September. I will be in touch with families receiving Bibles about delivery dates with the hopes that we can do a blessing as we hand the Bibles over. It is a special thing to receive a new Bible and we want to honor that even though it is not happening during a church service.

Sunday School children and their families are invited to a virtual campfire! On Sunday September 13th, at 7 PM there will be a Zoom connection campfire. S'more supplies will be included in the activity kits being delivered in September. Pastor Paul will have a fire going. Troy will lead some camp songs. Everyone can come socialize and enjoy s'mores! Watch weekly emails for a Zoom link.

## Confirmation Update

### Grades 7 & 8

We are completing registration and a complete schedule will be available soon. We will utilize a hybrid model for classes this Fall. We will also, *pending a large jump in cases of covid-19*, hold an outdoor, socially distanced campfire to kick off our confirmation year on **Saturday, September 19th at 6:30pm** at Pastor Paul's home. You'll need to RSVP to Pastor Paul or Kim Barnes, bring your own chair and s'mores fixings. We'll have a socially distant conversation about the new confirmation year.

### Those Preparing to Affirm their Faith in October

Pastor Paul will be meeting with the youth preparing for Affirmation of Baptism in October to work on faith statements. Please note that you still need to register for confirmation. We will kick off our time together with a campfire on **Sunday, September 20th at 6:30pm** at Pastor Paul's home. Bring a chair and some s'mores fixings. We will be discussing the Creed, so you may wish to read through it ahead of time. Please RSVP to Pastor Paul or Kim Barnes.



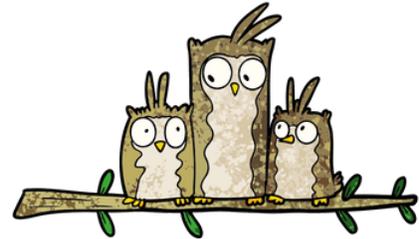
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## Older Wiser Lutherans (Online!)

Pastor Paul is inviting YOU for an online social gathering with our Older Wiser Lutherans group! It's been too long and it'll be fun to see your friends, or to hear from your friends who join by phone. We may even have a game to play. So grab your snack and beverage of choice and join the fun of being together online.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5635827371?pwd=Y2ZaWEVZU0RucjdieFNwSThkTGdaUT09>  
If prompted to enter a password, use "Luther" without the quotes.

Dial 1 312 626 6799 and enter meeting code: 563 582 7371 followed by password code: 456037.



O.W.L.s  
(Older Wiser Lutherans!)

## Virtual Office Hours with Pastor Paul

Stop by and say hello, share a joke, ask a question, make an appointment with Pastor Paul or just hang out for a bit. Come and go as you please, 9 AM-10 AM on **Wednesday** Mornings.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5635827371?pwd=Y2ZaWEVZU0RucjdieFNwSThkTGdaUT09>  
If prompted to enter a password, use "Luther" without the quotes.

Dial 1 312 626 6799 and enter meeting code: 563 582 7371 followed by password code: 456037.

*Thank You!*

For giving to support our shared  
ministry at Lord of Life!

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# Welcome Back to School!



## Back to School Prayer

O God, we give you thanks for the gift of education and for all the people who use the gifts You have blessed them with to make education happen for our children. Bless teachers, administrators, support staff, bus drivers and students as they return to classes at home or online this day. Grant safety, health, and wisdom for the days, weeks, and months ahead. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Phoning Others: A Gift for Both of You!

Throughout the pandemic we have encouraged our members to phone each other to check in. Did you know there's actually a benefit for both the recipient AND the person making the call? Yup. It's true. Not only is it a wonderful way to express care in our congregation, it's also healthy for us to have human interactions, even if by phone. So, each call YOU make is a gift for both of you! Who might you call this week?

## 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.

