

MISSION & MINISTRY CONNECTION

Renewal “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”

Romans 12:2

2020 - REstoring

WHERE IS GOD

A question many ask when tragedies and disasters (like we see today) occur is “**Where is God in this?**”

We are living in a time of great fear because of the coronavirus and the recent protests, marches and pure violence in various places. But of course illnesses are nothing new and neither is the evil of murder. The history of the human race is filled with plagues and disasters, and violence and murder of all kind.

Our natural reaction is to question God when these things happen. That’s what our sinful flesh always does. “How could You let this happen?” “**Why?**”

Part of it is seeking answers and part of it is not understanding why there is evil in the world. We may even think we know better than God and that we don’t deserve anything bad to happen to us. The fact of the matter is that God created the world perfect, but man has ruined it with his sin. We are all sinful. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. We all deserve tragedies and disasters piled upon us. Really, our question should be, “Why am I so blessed and protected from tragedies and disasters? Why have I not had to face more tragedies in my life?”

The thing is that we cannot get very far with this particular line of questioning. We know that all plagues and disasters are the result of sin, both our own sin and the sin of others. We also know that God works good even from tragedy, but we cannot know why God allows any particular tragedy or disaster because He doesn’t tell us. We cannot answer what particular good He is working in any particular instance because He doesn’t tell us. “Who has known the mind of the Lord or who been His counselor?” (Rom. 11:34).

So, we cannot answer in particular, but we can answer in general. In general, tragedies are calls for repentance. As recorded in Luke chapter 13, some people told Jesus about Galileans who had been massacred by Pilate while they were offering their sacrifices. Jesus responded by saying, “*Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them: do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*”

In other words, we cannot say that because disaster falls upon someone they deserved it more than anyone else. You cannot say that based on what happened to someone they must be worse sinners. Jesus simply says, “No.” That is not how we are to look at the disasters around us. We are not to look at the disasters around us and think about the sins of others. The fact that someone dies in a disaster is no indication that they were punished by God for their sins. The righteous suffer with the unrighteous.

Disasters around us are not a call to repentance for those who died. They are a call to repentance for us. Unless we repent, we will all likewise perish. To repent means to be sorry for your sins and to trust that your sins are forgiven on account of Jesus' death for you. It is a turning away from sin to Jesus, our Savior from sin.

Again, we cannot answer in particular, but we can answer in general. In general, tragedies are used by God to work to strengthen our faith and trust in Him. In tragedy we see how fleeting this life is and we thus long for heaven. We see how unreliable and untrustworthy everything on this earth is. We see the face of evil in what takes place. In tragedy, God also reminds us that there is a remedy for death. There is a remedy for sin. There is a remedy for evil.

This is where we move away from what God doesn't tell us to what God does tell us. He tells us that He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us to save us eternally. He is our Savior. Jesus, the Son of God, willingly came to take on our flesh and suffer and die in our place. He came to save us from this world of sin and suffering. He came to save us from the hell we deserve because of our sin.

In Baptism we were united with Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). Thus, our Baptism is God's promise that we will rise from the dead as surely as Jesus rose from the dead. The forgiveness of sins Jesus earned on the cross is given in Baptism, so as forgiven believers, we will be raised to eternal life when we die from this life. That is God's promise to us.

Until Jesus returns we will all face death, whether through a disaster or otherwise. We will be ready for death through repentance and the forgiveness of sins. We will be ready for death because Jesus died our death in our place and has earned for us His inheritance – the inheritance of eternal life. Eternal life is promised to all believers where there will be no more hunger or thirst (Rev. 7:16) but a feast of rich food (Is. 25:6). There will be peace and weapons will no longer be needed as swords will be turned into plough shares and spears into pruning hooks (Is. 2:4). Death will be swallowed up as there will be no more sin, and God will wipe away tears from all faces (Is. 25:8).

In the midst of things we cannot know or understand, we cling to the promises of God. They are sure and certain. Psalm 46 tells us, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, and though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.”

Pastor Below

A Word from Deaconess Sarah Longmire

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! It is an absolute delight to be able to write a newsletter this month; it is a sign that we are opening back up! I greatly missed my preschool family and my church family over these long months under 'stay-at-home' orders. It is a joy to have positive stories to share with you!

First, on behalf of the preschool teachers and staff, I want to try to communicate how very grateful we are for your unwavering support throughout these last few months. We are especially thankful for the financial decisions made to pay our full salaries even though the tuition and income normally taken in by the preschool was absent. We were all humbled and truly blessed by your continued dedication to the mission and work of the preschool.

Although we were at home, we were still maintaining connections with our students and their families. I sent daily emails to families and was sure to keep them updated with decisions being made. I also was able to share Holy Week accounts in their entirety. That was truly a gift! Additionally, the teachers tackled the task of teaching preschool electronically with grace. Teachers read stories, made videos, held Zoom class meetings, and sent parents educational ideas throughout the entirety of the months at home. I am very proud of the effort and willingness they each showed during these strange times. The teachers also met virtually every Friday to check in and share how we were doing, how our families were doing, and how our students were doing.

In May, we had a final 'pick up parade' for all families to come back to school. The teachers had tables set up in the parking lot and as our students' families drove through we gave them final gifts and projects. We were also able to give teachers and students some closure; although we could not be together or even give hugs, it was amazing to be able to see everyone a last time before the summer break.

Ann Uschold, the Assistant Director, and I have been working over these past few months to organize and clean our storage spaces (those in the fellowship hall, the basement, and the shared classroom in our hallway). First, accept our thanks for sharing so much of your space for our preschool program. Second, we have been so very blessed with material goods that we were able to pare down quite a bit; we gave a sizeable donation of extra materials to St. Vincent-DePaul. A special thank you to Darrell Schelp for being one of our transporters (taking the donated materials from church to St Vincent's).

Throughout these past few months, I attended (virtually) countless webinars and Zoom meetings about reopening procedures, cleaning protocols, and childcare guidelines. Once St. Louis County published their summer camp mandates, the Early Childhood Ministry Board and I worked on writing our own LOL procedural plan. It was shared with the MMC; we decided to offer three weeks of short summer camp activities. We had limited enrollment and strict cleaning rules. God brought to us the right number of students and we can definitely declare our small summer camps as successes! They are not what we wish we could have offered or what we have offered in the past, but parents have been very grateful for what we have provided. The teachers have done an amazing job adapting to these new procedures! Thanks be to God!

With the success of camp, the Early Childhood Ministry Board felt that attempting a small VBS could be feasible. We had to cancel the big, community-oriented VBS which had originally been planned. However, we are currently in the process of planning a small VBS that will mirror what the preschool summer camps have been. The participants will come from our church families or preschool families. We have a limited number of spots. We will also be offering a virtual option! The dates for VBS will be July 13, 14, 15. If you are interested in helping, or have a child or grandchild interested in attending (in person or online), please email me: preschool@lolstl.org

Finally, our program will look different in the fall. Nancy Kyle, our Junior Kindergarten teacher, has chosen to retire. She has been a longstanding teacher on our staff (21 years!); we are very grateful for the work she has done! Additionally, I have been making plans and looking toward the fall with the hope that the least amount of restrictions will be in place. I have some back up plans in mind, but would rather plan for the most and have to pare back than wish I had planned for more. Our enrollment numbers look very good for the time of year we are in; I am getting calls and have been giving tours regularly. We will continue to pray that more families reach out; the witness and outreach we can do within this community is truly a gift.

Your Deaconess,
Sarah Longmire

There are a few exciting developments with outreach and church activities happening! First, Pastor Below did an extraordinary job teaching us through electronic means while we were sheltering in place within our homes. We at Lord of Life now have a YouTube page, Facebook page, and live streaming on our website! It was truly a gift to be able to see church while I was sheltering at home. I hope you have found these electronic resources to be beneficial for you as well!

Although we are back open (with certainly health and safety measurements in place), not everyone has returned to 'in-person' church attendance. Our services are still being live-streamed and saved on our various web pages. In addition, I wanted to let you know that I have been making 'kid friendly' videos each week; I am posting them on the YouTube Page. These messages are less than 10 minutes long and correspond with the Bible readings each Sunday. Even if you are an 'older kid,' I pray they will be edifying and encouraging to you and your family!

Finally, we are excited to announce that Lord of Life will have a seminarian student this fall! We are partnering with Concordia Seminary; Pastor Below will be mentoring a young man whose desire is to become a Lutheran Pastor. The name of our seminarian is Alex Bjoraker. To make this even more exciting...this young man is a former youth group member of the congregation at which I served in Traverse City, MI. I know Alex! He is very excited to come and serve at our church!

In Christ,
Deaconess Sarah Longmire

A Word from Lay Ministry

Passing Down the Faith

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁷ “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:5,7-9

The picture of passing down the faith can not be seen more clearly than the Lord promising to be with Joshua just as He was with Moses. The Lord furthermore charging Joshua to be strong and courageous and to meditate on the Word of God, the Book of the Law. All of this is a picture of passing down the faith.

God blessed us at Lord of Life by giving us the faith to be strong and courageous. We bravely reopened the church for public worship. The congregation was so faithful and patient as sometimes we fumbled with instructions as we attempted to maintain social distancing and follow all the new rules and guidelines. I know the first observance of the Lord’s Supper many congregants must have felt they were marching around Jericho as we walked along the outer walls of the church. But, all were faithful and followed every attempt to ensure worship endured at Lord of Life church

The reopening of the church enabled us to pass down the faith during the month of June. Three young men confirmed their faith by publicly confessing the Lord Jesus as their Savior. Joseph Young, Jesse Keel and Wiley Keel made confession and testified before the people and the entire spiritual realm that Jesus is Lord. They were honored with beautiful baptismal boxes built by Marty Schamber and personal banners created by Jackie Schamber. The boxes were filled with engraved Lutheran Study Bibles and other books to equip these young men. This is a picture of passing down the faith.

As of the writing of this news article, we will soon be passing down the faith as we honor four high school graduates. Katie Weiss, Kristen Roux, Regan Reed and Tom Churchill have exhibited the faith that has been passed down to them. Each of these young adults have demonstrated their Christian faith through service, worship, and music. They have emerged as young leaders of the faith. The Lord of Life family will bless these young adults with engraved Lutheran Study Bibles as they prepare to go forward being strong and very courageous now being responsible to pass down the faith to others. We look forward to this Sunday to rejoice with them and praise God for blessing the works of their hands.

It is the prayer of the Lord of Life Lay Ministry team that these Bibles given to our young people will be more than just books. We pray they would, as the Lord charged Joshua, mediate upon the Word. The Lord promises in Isaiah 55:11 “So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Acts 20:32

For His Glory
Lord of Life Lay Ministry

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” asked the rich young ruler. Jesus said, “You know the commandments.” And the ruler replied, “All these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:18–22)

As we listen to this, one question is raised in our minds: Is Jesus speaking to us also or only to the rich young ruler? In other words, is Jesus telling us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor? As good Lutherans, we answer: No! But why? Why should we not sell all that we have and distribute it to the poor?

The simplest explanation is this: If we sold everything we have, our wife and our children would be neglected. In other words, to sell everything we have and give it to the poor would ignore, even abandon, those whom God has placed in our care. Our money, everything we have, is not to be used solely for the church. But that doesn't mean it isn't to be used for the purpose God intends.

Everyone has three stations in life, three spheres in which we live and are to be of service to our neighbors. These stations are the church, the family, and society. We are members of all three of these by birth.

- We are born into the church by water and the Word of God, and our duties to others in the church arise from either our birth into the church or the birth of others by Baptism into it.
- We are born into a family, and our duties to others stem from either our birth into that family or the birth of others into our family.
- Finally, we are born into society, which is simply a further extension of our birth into our family. The duties we have toward other members of society come from either our birth or the birth of others into the same society.

All that we have and all that we are is to be pressed into service for the church, the family, and society. If we were to sell all we have and give only to one, the other two would be neglected, and our duties toward them would falter.

So consider your life and all that you have in light of these three stations. You pay taxes to support and help those in society. You provide food, clothing, and shelter for the members of your family. You save for college for your children.

But the one station that is usually thought of last is the church. Since the needs of the family and society are more immediate, the church is often given what is left over. This is not how it should be. Rather, we are to give of our first fruits – the best from off the top – even as Abel gave the best of his flock.

This requires forethought and intent. It means that you sit down and make a plan for what you will give from the beginning. It means sticking to it even when it seems there are other more immediate and pressing things.

This is all the more necessary now as we enter into periods of time while giving is low due to high unemployment or restrictions on meeting in church to give. If we love God, his gifts of forgiveness given through the means of grace we receive at church and only at church, then we will support the church just as we love our country and our family.

For all that we have and all that we are is given to us by our gracious and giving God. He spared no expense for us and our salvation. He gave up His Son into death so that our sins are forgiven, and we will live. What is more, He provides for all that we need for this body and life. And our lives in this world, among these three spheres of the church, the family, and society, are to mirror the generosity of the one who gave us life in all three by birth.

Don't let the church, your divine family, be ignored or even an afterthought. The church is nurturing you, bringing you up in salvation by Word and Sacrament for eternal life.



How do
I spread
the love
of Jesus?

July Circle of Concern Needs:

Jelly
 Pasta Sauce
 Dinner Helpers
 Canned Pasta
 Dry Potatoes/Beans/Rice
 Condiments
 Snacks
 Body Wash
 Laundry Detergent
 Hand Soap
 Bar Soap
 Conditioner

The Yellow Meal-A-Month Bags are on the Circle of Concern barrel in the entryway. Please take one, bring your items in those bags or a paper bag, and place them in the barrel. Circle has informed us that they can no longer reuse plastic grocery bags. They can only accept brown paper bags.

Our goal is 500+ cans each month. Thanks for your support!

July Baptism Birthdays:

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|------------------|------|
| Barb Below | 7/1 |
| Brianna Langness | 7/1 |
| Rita Walezak | 7/2 |
| Jason Marx | 7/3 |
| Kristen Roux | 7/7 |
| Vaughn Bremer | 7/8 |
| Alma Ayres | 7/9 |
| Harriet Pancoast | 7/10 |
| Lawton Drury | 7/15 |
| Lily Schamber | 7/15 |
| Mark Kammeyer | 7/22 |

Happy Birthday To:

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|-----------------------|------|
| Shellie Greer | 7/3 |
| Tracy Heaton | 7/3 |
| Eddie Marx | 7/3 |
| Betty Hagemann-Powers | 7/4 |
| Bill Loebig | 7/11 |
| Brandon Pounds | 7/12 |
| Marti Schlegel | 7/12 |
| Nancy Helms | 7/13 |
| Justin Roux | 7/18 |
| Hannah Schamber | 7/18 |
| Joseph Young | 7/19 |
| Mark Below | 7/21 |
| Megan Clasen | 7/21 |
| Jan Mantovani | 7/25 |
| Jason Marx | 7/25 |
| Jackie Schamber | 7/25 |
| Ben Schamber | 7/26 |
| Debbie Marx | 7/27 |
| Mark Bossi | 7/28 |
| Ed Goza | 7/31 |

July Wedding Anniversaries:

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|-------------------------|------|
| Jim & Jean Urban | 7/11 |
| Denis & Carol DuMontier | 7/18 |
| Brian & Patty Tampow | 7/18 |
| Mark & Barb Below | 7/27 |

Serving Teams

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|--------|-------|--------|
| Jul 5 | 8:00 | Team 5 |
| | 10:30 | Team 8 |
| Jul 12 | 8:00 | Team 1 |
| | 10:30 | Team 6 |
| Jul 19 | 8:00 | Team 3 |
| | 10:30 | Team 4 |
| Jul 26 | 8:00 | Team 2 |
| | 10:30 | Team 9 |

Lay Readers

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|--------|-------|-----------------|
| Jul 5 | 8:00 | Diane Wolf |
| | 10:30 | Mark Androff |
| Jul 12 | 8:00 | Mark Bossi |
| | 10:30 | Tom Churchill |
| Jul 19 | 8:00 | Mark Kammeyer |
| | 10:30 | Bob Finley, Jr. |
| Jul 26 | 8:00 | Janet Kammeyer |
| | 10:30 | Craig Young |

Counting Teams

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|--------|---------------------------------|
| Jul 5 | Daryl Hagstrom Jim Weiss |
| Jul 12 | Yvette Hagstrom Cindy Young |
| Jul 19 | Ken Rosemann Marilyn Evensen |
| Jul 26 | Linda Rosemann Dennis Oneal |

Lay Ministers

| | | |
|--------|-------|-----------------|
| Jul 5 | 8:00 | Ted Greer |
| | 10:30 | Nehemiah |
| Jul 12 | 8:00 | Justin Langrehr |
| | 10:30 | Brian Andrew |
| Jul 19 | 8:00 | Craig Young |
| | 10:30 | Joe Delmore |
| Jul 26 | 8:00 | Ted Greer |
| | 10:30 | Donnie May |

Altar Guild

Team #2
 Beth Bossi
 Kristin Dye
 JoAnn Erselius
 Linda Rosemann
 Jackie Schamber
 Cindy Young