Saint John Lutheran Church, Bellmore NY
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May 2020

Mission statement: *We are a community of faith that is: gathered for worship and fellowship, empowered by Scripture and the Sacraments, strengthened for service and sent forth as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ.*

Join us for worship at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings (currently online).

The Eagle

Pastor's Corner

What have you been doing since you began the lockdown? If you are a parent of a child in school, your teaching skills have been maximized. The word "homeschool" has taken on a new and personal meaning. Getting use of your own laptop may be a thing of the past, while your student is using it for school-related projects. You have a new appreciation for teachers, and you marvel how they could take on a classroom, keep them all seated and get them educated.

If you are older, you may be spending long hours alone, trying to think of ways to fill the day. There is only so much television you can watch. Your phone, rather than the internet, is your lifeline. You are thinking of singlehandedly bringing back the art of letter writing. The thought of going outside your door for any reason appalls and scares you. If you have family who can bring you groceries, you count yourself blessed.

If you have a job you can go to, you count yourself lucky, but are nonetheless worried about spreading the virus or getting it. If your job allows you to work from home, you count yourself lucky you can stay in, but the isolation is a burden, no matter how many Zoom calls. If you have lost your job, the betrayal, pain and fear are real. The uncertainty of the coming days is scary. Your moods may be a problem.

If you have the virus, you're scared. Your doctor, your family and friends are your lifeline. Your battle with this virus is a lonely one. You can't talk on the phone because of the cough. The uncertainty is crushing.

If you are taking care of someone with the virus, you're scared. The responsibility is crushing. The doctor, your family and friends are your lifeline. The battle with this virus is a lonely one. You pray with all your strength you don't get it. The uncertainty is crushing.

If you are in healthcare, you're scared. You want to serve - everything within you wants to help and be of service to win this war - you are a trained professional, but this is a battle like no other. You may be wondering again what kind of monster you are battling, and do people who want to reopen the country understand how vicious

Continued on page four

Staff at Saint John:

Pastor: Rev. Nancy Rakoczy

Office Manager: Ms. Janet Pescatore

Deacon: Ms. Charlene Drewes

Organist & Music Director: Ms. Quinn Anderson

Newsletter Editor: Ms. Jennifer Cline Sargent

Sexton: Ms. Kristina Kamps

Congregational President: Mr. Tom Sargent

Inside this issue

Lectio Divina 2
Birthdays 2
News, Notes & Greetings 2
Christian Ed 3
Council Update 3
Thank You To 3
Worship Opportunities 4

Special points of interest

- While many of our events had to be postponed or canceled, we will be able to gather once again in the near future. In the meantime, please support local businesses like Guy Anthony's and other restaurants by getting take out or buying gift certificates to use in the future. Give back the support we've enjoyed from our local merchants in the past.

Lectio Divina - New Meditation Style

We have started the practice of Lectio Divina (Latin for Divine Reading) on Tuesday evenings @ 7pm via Zoom. You may wonder what is Lectio Divina, (pronounced, lex-ee-o di -veen-a). It is an ancient way to pray, going back to about the third century, using scripture as a way to come closer to Christ. The method is to simply take one passage from scripture, and read it four times very slowly. Then there is a pause; I hit a singing bowl with a wooden instrument, and as the metallic reverberations slowly fade away, we meditate on the words of scripture, and go a little deeper each time. Each pause lasts a couple of minutes in which we allow the words to slowly filter into our souls. Lectio is simply a form of meditation, which may lead to contemplation, a deeper union with God.

During this time of silence, some words or phrases from the passage may come to mind. Or words may spring from our hearts which we will wish to speak. You are invited to speak them. However, here is the difference between Lectio and Bible study. We don't discuss whatever a participant has just said; we don't comment, we don't approve or disapprove, we simply allow the speaker's words to filter into our hearts. Later on, perhaps after the four movements of Lectio are finished, we may want to say to the person, "Yes, I really liked what you said." However, while we are doing the meditation, we just don't. God is speaking to our hearts, and we want to give everyone's words room, and a chance to take root within us.

Many people find Lectio Divina peaceful and restful. There is no pressure or competition to be wise. It is a way to share scripture and our hearts with each other. The silences are often as important as what is said, because God speaks to us in the silence of our hearts. We come away refreshed and renewed. Lectio is a way to calm our restlessness and find rest in God. "Be still and know that I am Lord." Psalm 46: 10

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
— Psalm 46:1

May Birthdays

Happy birthday to:

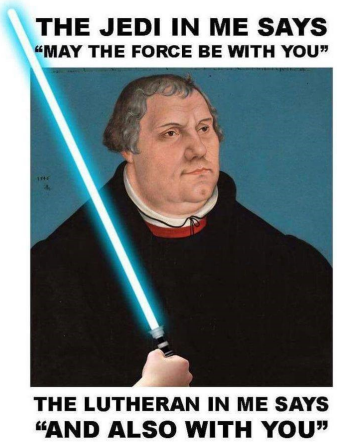
1 Jennifer Bergman
2 Gloria Chapman
2 Kevin Ziminski
4 Hudson DiTuri
8 Jennifer Pagano
12 Patrick Bracken
12 Marie Orlich
12 Corey Bogen
16 Ed Balaza
17 John Adel
19 Linda Smith
22 Nicole Pagano
25 Thomas Waldron
25 John Robinson, Jr.

If you are celebrating in May and your name has been inadvertently left off the list, please contact the church office.

News, Notes & Greetings

Thank you to everyone at Saint John for keeping Michael, and all healthcare workers in your prayers during this very difficult time. Coming home from the hospital to this show of appreciation really helped to lift him up. I am proud to be a part of such a thoughtful congregation. ~ Jeana Dwyer

A Little Levity



May 4 is Star Wars Day and the traditional way to celebrate (besides wearing your best Star Wars attire) is to say "May the Fourth Be With You." The Lutheran in us almost always makes us want to say "And also with you." It's also Mother's Day on May 10, typically we celebrate all women on this day at Saint John.

According to Janet Pescatore, who diligently researched all of this for us, May 14 is Dress Like a Chicken Day. I don't know what you guys have at home, but if you go for it, please send us pictures. May 28 is National Hamburger Day, which is probably more of a celebration you can get behind.

Whatever you celebrate, try to take a few moments every day for some fun and laughter—it's one of the best remedies for stress!

Christian Education

The Sunday School teachers have sent some lesson materials for the kids to do from home since we can't gather safely right now. Children thrive on routine and find safety in the familiar during difficult times, so we thought providing parents with some resources for Sunday school at home would help. You can also check out the synod's free children's app for Android and Apple by going to https://www.mnys.org/childrens-app/. The confirmation class was also able to meet via Zoom with Pastor and Tom.

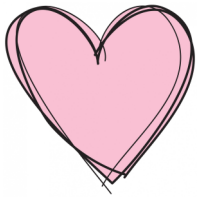
We hope you enjoyed making resurrection cookies and maybe a craft or two on Good Friday. Ethan Kugler ended up with a perfect tomb cookie!

Council Notes

As we continue in this Easter season and spring time, both of which represent new birth and new beginnings, I continue to ask people, "how are you doing?" The best response I've seen is from Bishop Egensteiner, who likes to answer that question by saying, "I think I'm OK."

I THINK I'M OK. It has a nice ring to it, and I hope it is an answer that each of you can relate to on a personal level. It seems that each day we get "teased" with comments about things opening up, and my concern is that we proceed cautiously and, if we are going to err, to err on the side of safety. There is, however, one thing that I have not been able to put that *"I think I'm OK"* saying to, and that is the financial health of our congregation. Year-to-date, with church being closed for the last six (almost seven) weeks, our expenses are only $1300 less. This is proof that most of the line items in our budget are things that cannot be cut: salary, benefits, taxes, insurance, and utilities to name a few. **Most significant** is that year-to-date, we have a **$13,000** deficit. **Let me write that again: after three-and-a-half months, income is $13,000 below what we expect.**

If you are one of the people who have asked, "what should I do about my offering?" then I would encourage you to mail it in to the church office. Karen and Tom Brucia have agreed to head over to church regularly to be counters, so your check will not be sitting and doing nothing for very long. I recognize that, for some, these are tough times. But if you are able to catch up on your giving, that would be a blessing for the church community that we all love.



For reasons that I cannot specifically put my finger on, many people – myself included – have found this past week to be particularly tough. In light of that, my hope is that each of you can take some time and reach out to another member of church, to see how they are and if they have any needs. It is also a great way to remember how much we all mean to each other as part of the Saint John community. *And, if you need a great idea that will have a double benefit, try buying a meal for someone who could use some TLC one night from our own AJ Orlich at Guy Anthony's. Call him at 516-221-5555 and you will be amazed how easy it is to set this up.* And until we are able to safely meet together: stay safe, be well, and go wash your hands.

Tom Sargent, president

A Note of Gratitude

Thank you to…

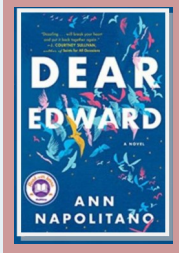
* Karen and Tom Brucia for counting the offering and depositing it at the bank each week.
* Tom Selvaggio for leading the team working on the application for our PPP loan.
* Quinn Anderson for playing music for our 9:30 a.m. Zoom services.
* Pastor Nancy for putting our worship online and providing other resources.

Please hold our members and friends in your prayers who are infected or healing from the coronavirus, those who were already battling health issues and are more vulnerable and those who work in the health care field including Sofia & Kevin Brevogel, Michael Dwyer, Michael Giordano, Pam Drewes, Brian Pellegrino, Kim Smith and Eric Thilesen.

Businesses who closed to protect public health, putting social responsibility over the bottom line, will suffer. Local stores that are able to stay open are still struggling. Let's try to be kind and support one another in any way we can.

BOOK CLUB

The next selection for Book Club is "Dear Edward" by Ann Napolitano, the story of a 12-year-old boy who is the sole survivor of a plane crash.



You now have more time to read it, most libraries are offering digital downloads.

Worship Opportunities

Here is the weekly schedule for online worship:
Sunday mornings—8:30 am Facebook live, 9:30 am Zoom

Tuesdays—Lectio Divina 7:00 pm on Zoom

Wednesdays—Vespers 7:00 pm on Facebook Live

Fridays—Bible study 12 pm on Zoom

Pastor sends the Zoom links out ahead of time. You can watch live on Facebook or catch up at anytime, it's recorded and accessible on our Facebook page.

Pastor's message, cont.

a virus it is. You have seen friends get sick. Your colleagues, your family and friends are your lifeline, but if you go home in the evening, you are worried sick you may pass it on to your loved ones.

"These are the times that try [our] souls." – Thomas Paine
I am praying for all of you; each of you has an individual story, a unique struggle. Whether you are in a houseful of restless children who are supposed to be doing school work, or living alone with long hours, I want to reassure you that GOD LOVES YOU. You may be feeling that this is a time when God appears to be silent. Yet, I want to say again that Christ is close to you. He is your Good Shepherd, and he holds you tenderly; you are his lamb. I encourage you to connect as much as possible, via the internet, phone, or letter writing. If you can, get outside (you needn't go far) to look at nature. Be kind to others and yourself. Pray. Pray for healing; pray for each other; pray for yourself; pray for the country and our leaders. "By the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Luke 1:78-79

Pastor Nancy Rakoczy

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Deadline for the next issue of The Eagle is May 17, 2020. Please email articles to jcsargent@optonline.net.

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