



"The Good Newsletter" of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church



A Message from Pastor Karsten:

Taking heart by helping others, by helping ourselves, by distancing

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) has changed everything in the world right now. All of us are cautious. Most of us have some increased fear. Some are out of work, others have suddenly become teachers in their own homes, and everyone is finding ways to keep our distance while still trying to keep connected. This is not easy, but we all seek to do our best in this difficult situation.

Church Life—We are trying to keep you informed and inspired during these changes to our new normal right now. I wanted to share some thoughts and plans with you that we are taking at Our Redeemer. I trust by now you know the offices are closed through April 10 (likely to be extended through April 30), we have a 10:00 a.m. weekly Sunday worship on *YouTube*, there is a 9:30 a.m. Wednesday Bible Study via *Zoom*, and that we are still serving our Wednesday *Loaves and Fishes* meals as a boxed take-out dinner. But there is more for you.

Worship in the weeks ahead—While we are still restricted from gathering for worship we invite you to join us for a weekly live stream at 10:00 a.m. The Church Board has decided, following the expectations of the experts and our government officials, we will continue to only have this online worship option until restrictions are lifted. When those are lifted we will join together joyously back in our space together.

Planning during times of uncertainty—The recent analytics project that the COVID-19 peak will happen here in Minnesota on April 21. Our continued work of "sheltering in" is important to help allow health care professionals to meet real needs coming. With the spread intensifying in these next weeks ahead, some of us will find ourselves needing various levels of care. While we are hoping for the best, it's also prudent to make plans for how you might need care, how you might have to provide care to others, and, in the worst case, what to do if you or the ones you love get very sick. It's good to prepare well. We are doing the same in our family.

Some have wondered what might happen if someone passes away from this awful disease—what would funeral planning look like? Rest assured that we will walk with families in and through the grief and planning—we will meet, and plan and pray with you. Because of the unique situation we find ourselves in, I've taken guidance from the Bishop and fellow pastors to determine the best way to help families grieve and say goodbye, while still observing safety and healthy precautions. In the short term if a funeral is needed, gatherings will be limited to immediate family (with a live streaming option) and not more than ten people in keeping with the directives from health and government authorities. Most families would also choose to have a larger family/friends gathering to celebrate and remember their loved one at a later date. These steps help limit a context where others might gather and become infected—the worst outcome from any funeral. This also helps us as staff to ensure we are safe and can continue to provide guiding ministry for the wider church. I don't wish to dwell on this, but simply want our church family to be prepared with difficult adjustments we would need to make.

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■ A Message from Pastor Karsten (Continued from front page)

Communion—One other significant change during this time when we are not able to gather in community, is our celebration of Holy Communion. This means of grace, and a significant part of our worship life, has been unavailable these weeks. And for some of us, this has stirred the question of when and how can we commune again. What I will tell you is that the Bishops in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are allowing congregations to find their own path forward. Some have chosen to have Communion by inviting people viewing the live stream to find elements in their house that could be taken to celebrate Holy Communion.

I find myself leaning toward the practice that our own St. Paul Area Synod Bishop (Patricia Lull) and others are taking and that is to allow this to be a time to abstain from Holy Communion until the time comes when we are physically together again to receive this meal in community. I eagerly anticipate when we can again gather for meaningful worship where the word, the music, the people and the meal can feed our lives.

Church is really different right now and most of us are longing for a return to our old normal. Let's keep working to find ways to be the church through prayer, care for others, quiet time with God, and worship. Lean on Jesus. He and we are here for you as we seek to be the grounded, grateful, graceful, generous people of faith God calls us to be.

■ A Message from Deacon Jennifer Schneider : Breaking with the Status Quo



In January, when there was still snow on the ground, I gathered with other Eastside clergy to plan Summer Stretch and the Confirmation Service Learning Trip to Memphis, both scheduled to begin in June. The focus of these programs in 2020 is racism and social justice. Summer is not far off but we just don't know what travel restrictions and social distancing will be required in a few months. So we will wait and see what happens with these two programs. In the meantime, we don't have to set aside the topic because it is an important one. And quite frankly, it is good to remember that there are other issues that continue to percolate in our community besides COVID-19.

The focus on racism (and other isms for that matter) is complex and contentious. Many of us are afraid to even broach the subject. It often feels easier and safer to avoid the topic altogether. But silence and inaction reinforce the status quo. And avoidance speaks volumes—it communicates to our neighbors and community members of color that racism, for example, doesn't matter enough to warrant attention and, by omission, invalidates their experiences, perspectives, identities and lives. It is a pressing issue that we as Eastside clergy have heard is important to our young people. They live it everyday at school and hear about it in the media.

As a faith community, we have a great commission to love all people as God first loved us. This summer, through the Deep Dive Confirmation trip to Memphis, TN, and the Summer Stretch program, we hope to create “teachable moments,” or opportunities to constructively and productively address race and other disparities. Through Bible study, justice work, and volunteering, we will help students engage in understanding issues and steps to work for justice and healing. We know that to advance real solutions, we need to address real problems.

There are some great podcasts and books that will give you a sneak peak into what we will dig into this summer. Here are a few things you can preview during this time of Shelter in Place:

The Limits Of Empathy: <https://bit.ly/limitsempathy>

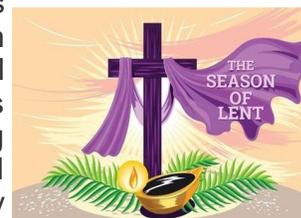
The Psychology Of False Beliefs: <https://bit.ly/factsbeliefs>

And Who Is My Neighbor (Study Guide): <https://bit.ly/andwhoismyneighbor>

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo

■ Update on our Lenten, Holy Week, Easter

What to do when we can't get together for Holy Week? The events of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection continue to be the very center of God's work in Christ, even if we can't get together to remember and celebrate them. Holy Week will be different as we go through those days far more as individuals than as community. Lean into a different way to rest in the story and work of Jesus during these days. Palm Sunday will be available on YouTube at 10:00 a.m., (no usual Youth-provided breakfast—bummer!) and we will still have a Maundy Thursday evening worship – join us on *YouTube* at 7:00 p.m. Last week, the East Side pastors also recorded a Good Friday service that can be watched any time after 12:00 noon on April 10. Easter Sunday will also be on YouTube at 10:00 a.m. And know that when we are gathered together again, it will be a beautiful Easter Sunday—whatever that date may be! Until then, let's keep living as Easter people marked by the grace and love of God that we know from the cross and from the grace.



Reconciling in Christ: Building an Inclusive Church

Here at Our Redeemer, we strive to be a welcoming community. However research shows that many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, etcetera people don't feel welcomed in a faith-based community, regardless of a generalized welcome statement. Therefore, we have put together a committee to recognize what more we can do.



ReconcilingWorks is a local nonprofit organization recommended by the ELCA. Since 1983, *ReconcilingWorks* has dedicated their work to providing people of the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) community a welcoming Lutheran environment. They have created a comprehensive program called, *Building an Inclusive Church*, which our group has started to work through.

You will start to see some changes in how we address gender roles and sexual orientation within our services, communications, and other interactions. If you would like to join or have any questions or concerns, contact one of our current committee members: Jennifer Schneider, Michelle Rebholz, Hilary Hinrichs, Cherie Kilbride, and Caleigh Kilbride.

Long Range Planning Team

This group got started meeting back in February and have been looking deeper into the life and ministry of Our Redeemer. We are in the midst of undertaking a big SWOT analysis of the church by looking into our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (Trends too) in order to better discern some directions and life and goals ahead. During this challenging time when so much of our attention is centered on these more immediate days and weeks, it is helpful to have a group that is also centered on the ministry ahead that is possible and necessary and important for Our Redeemer. Keep this group in your prayers. They will have much more to share at our semi-annual meeting at the end of June.

Census

In trying to be helpful and good about encouraging important participation in our life together as a country, we want to encourage all of you to complete your 2020 Census information. You should have received some directions recently in the mail. If you lost those, or forgot to complete it, you can go to <https://my2020census.gov/> or call 1-844-330-2020.

Your Giving Matters

During this time when we are not gathering regularly, one of the impacts felt is that we are not receiving anticipated offerings to help cover our expenses. Hopefully your giving to Our Redeemer can continue in order to support our life together and work. We do realize that for many of you, there are new economic challenges that could affect your giving. We will be sending out something later in April to help us get a read on what people anticipate being able to give through 2020. As we have a better idea about our giving, we will be able to make more decisions around our spending or need for some reductions. In the meantime we encourage you to give in one of these ways:

- 1) Mail your offering/envelope to the office*: ORLC, 1390 Larpenteur Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55109
- 2) Drop off your offering/envelope in the locked mailbox* located in our front U-shaped driveway.
- 3) Make an online gift through an automatic withdrawal from your bank or financial institution, or by using a credit card and set up either for a one-time or recurring contribution at www.orlcmn.org/donate. (There is a minimal charge to use a credit card.)

**The staff picks up the mail regularly.*

A note of "Thanks" to ORLC—from Amy Lindquist

Dear Our Redeemer... Thank you for the opportunity to lead worship in your contemporary service. What began as a few weeks of filling in has lead to more than a year of leading at OR. I appreciate meeting you, your singing, and getting to know another community within the body of Christ. I will be letting go of this role in order to spend Sundays with my husband and children. Easter Sunday will be my last Sunday in this role. Blessings to you all as you and I continue to follow Jesus... Amy Lindquist (Additional Note: Amy has offered to continue helping out as we would reach out to her for special fill-in dates to cover in the future.)

Important links for these days ahead

Sunday & Holy Week Youtube worship services at 10:00 a.m. <http://bit.ly/ORLCMNyoutube>

Wednesday 9:30 a.m. Bible Study on Zoom - <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/851377018>

Online offering - www.orlcmn.org/donate

Send us your photos - office@orlcmn.org

Staff Contact Information—We are here for YOU!

Pastor Karsten – karstenn@comcast.net, 651-271-5134

Deacon Jennifer – jennifer@orlcmn.org, 651-494-7943

Sally, Office Administrator – office@orlcmn.org, Church Office 651-772-2445

Lisa, Finance Administrator – lisa@orlcmn.org, Church Office 651-772-2445

ORLC Serving at Dorothy Day

On **Monday, April 27**, Our Redeemer will prepare and serve at the new St. Paul Opportunity Center and Dorothy Day Residence. We couldn't do this ministry without the great volunteers and to *Thrivent Financial* for making grants possible to help offset the costs. If you are able to volunteer, please contact Claire Sexton at clas1249@gmail.com, or contact the office at 651-772-2445, office@orlcmn.org. Let us know if you wish to prepare the meals or serve, and if you would like to carpool from the church.

Loaves & Fishes—Wednesday FREE Take-Out Meals

Our Loaves & Fishes FREE meals are still happening only in “to go” containers. Stop into the church on **Wednesdays, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.** Invite your family, friends, neighbors—ALL are WELCOME! (We just ask that as you come to pick up your take-out meal and leave, you keep the required 6 feet distance from the others so that we can stay healthy and safe!)



Send us a photo of your PEEP creation (diorama) by Easter Sunday!



Address Service Requested

DATED MATERIAL
DO NOT DELAY

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
1390 East Larpenteur Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55109

