



April 2020

Good News

Mt Zion – St Luke Lutheran

APRIL 2020

We are sending this newsletter with the hopes that we may get the “all clear” to resume April activities, but check our church webpage often for updates and corrections to the calendar.

www.mzsl.org

All activities are *TBA*

- 4-1 No Soup Kitchen
Bible Study *TBA*
- 4-5 *Palm Sunday TBA*
- 4-7 no Centering Prayer
- 4-9 Maundy Thursday *TBA*
- 4-10 Good Friday *TBA*
- 4-12 *Easter Sunday TBA*
- 4-14 Centering Prayer *TBA*
- 4-15 Oaks Nursing Home
TBA
- 4-19 Sunday School *TBA*
Worship Service *TBA*
Family Day Meal *TBA*
Mutual Ministry *TBA*
Newsletter Deadline still on!
- 4-21 Centering Prayer *TBA*
- 4-22 Bible Study *TBA*
- 4-26 Sunday School *TBA*
Worship Service *TBA*
- 4-28 Centering Prayer *TBA*
- 4-29 Bible Study *TBA*



A Message from Pastor Barb

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Greetings, in the name of Jesus, our rock, our refuge, our redeemer! I have missed all of you, and remind you that if you are in need of anything at all, or just want to talk or pray with me over the phone, call me at 912-677-7011 or call the Church Office and leave a message, and I will get back with you.

Bishop Strickland of our synod has strongly urged us to be prepared to remain closed through April 26, with the hope that we can open sooner (please read his full letter next page). With that in mind, we will begin to offer abbreviated worship services online on our Face Book page: Mt. Zion – St. Luke Lutheran Friends. If you are not already a member of that group, do a search and join, or call me and I will invite you so you can link up with us. The first of our online services will be at 11:00 on Sunday, March 29th. We will sing praises to God, read Scripture, have a brief message from me and, most importantly, we will pray together as a virtual community of faith until we can physically be together again. The readings for the day are:

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11 and John 11:1-45
We will offer an online Palm Sunday service as well at 11:00 April 5th on our Face Book page. I will send out an invitation closer to the day. I refer you to our synod website at elca-ses.org to join with others across our synod for Holy Week services. You will find online Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil services as well as sermons from synod staff and other important information.

It is our hope and prayer that we will resume worship services in time for Easter. But, should we not get the “all clear” by then, we will wait. We are Easter people, and every Sunday is considered a “little” Easter, so we will celebrate Easter in full fashion when we are able to return to our building. In the meantime, know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. God *has* been, *is* and will *always* be *with us!* That is a promise we can depend on in changing times.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor + and give you peace. Amen! Pastor Barb <><

A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Strickland

Dear church, These words of St. Paul have been flowing through my ears and a needed meditation for my heart in these days we find ourselves in. I pray they will be a sense of comfort for you too. *“What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:31,34-35,37-39)



What then are we to say about these things? These things concerning COVID-19, a global pandemic. What then are we to say: to anxious and fearful ones among us, the parents learning how to homeschool and the child who struggles with those realities, the graduate who will not have a ceremony, the elder who can't receive visitors, the now unemployed, the congregation who lives in a new reality of what it means to be church, to you and whatever your questions are?

We proclaim what we know and who we know best. We proclaim the inseparable love of Jesus Christ, and we proclaim that nothing in all of creation, nothing, not even a COVID-19 virus separates us from that love.

What then are we to say about these things, these things of worship? In these days of a global pandemic that seems to be growing ever more wildly daily, we know that there is more about this than what we know. We have been urged by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to continue practicing physical distancing to flatten the curve.

I, along with the Synod Council of this synod, strongly implore and encourage you not to physically gather in worship through Holy Week and Easter and up to April 26, a date that may very well need to be extended into May. As you make this decision, please also continue to consult what the CDC, local and state governments are suggesting; if you choose not to follow that advice. We all grieve this decision, but the health and welfare of all of our members are of the utmost importance.

On the synod website (www.elca-ses.org), we have a host of resources available concerning public health information, worship resources with sermons from staff, lists of food and medical assistance, faith formation resources, and pastoral letters from the bishop.

What then are we to say about these things, these things of gathering for a synod assembly? Many synods have and are in the process of making these same decisions across our church. Yesterday, our synod council voted to cancel the June 5-7, 2020 Southeastern Synod Assembly.

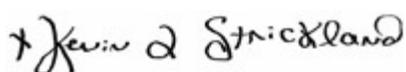
This decision was not made lightly but was made prayerfully and in mutual conversation with our synod attorney, the ELCA Office of the Secretary, the Presiding Bishop, and others. We considered the restrictions placed by civil authorities; the uncertainty of our times; our deep and abiding care for you and the neighbor; the uncertain and growing health risks that this virus is posing; the most vulnerable of our population that would be the majority of our audience; and a need for making this decision in a timely fashion.

Where we will not meet in assembly, we will be hosting a fall synod day (to be scheduled at a later time). It is my hope we can offer on the same day event places in all four of our states that can be live-streamed together for bible study, worship, keynote, workshops, and more. By doing this, it also allows more people from across our synod to gather in ways that we otherwise would not have been able to do in assembly.

Following the ELCA and synod constitutions, we will hold what business has to wait until the following year's assembly, and all other matters that can be voted on according to our constitution will be done so by the synod council. The synod staff will cancel all assembly registrations and issue refunds to those who have paid. *Please remember to cancel your hotel reservation.*

What then are we to say about these things? I want to say thank you! Thank you to each of you who I have seen step up and show the world what it means to love and serve your neighbor during these days of even being physically distant. Thank you for all the ways you continue to be generous in your time, talents, and treasures, even in the midst of these days. Thank you for your work of the kingdom in providing care, nurture, and formation for people in ways you may never imagined you would have to do.

What then are we to say about these things of these days in which we live? We say that nothing in all creation will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing! This is an Easter message that we will need to hear, proclaim, and be reminded of more and more in these days. May it be so. Amen.



Bishop Kevin L. Strickland
ELCA Southeastern Synod

Consider the Lilies...

I held the lily bulb in my hand. There was nothing beautiful about it. Brown and dry and odorless as it was, there was nothing that hinted at what it would become. But, when buried deep in the dark, dank earth, a miracle begins! The silent forces of life gather for a glorious resurrection. A shaft of green bursts from the heart of the bulb, reaching relentlessly for the light.

Is there any surer sign of the hope of eternal life than the first, tiny shoots of green from the lily that rise up out of the soil? What looked for all the world like *death*, held *life*, safe and hidden in its core, ready to burst its bonds and live. No wonder the lily is one of our favorite symbols of Easter! June Masters Bacher said it so well in her poem:

**On Easter Day the lilies bloom,
Triumphant, risen from their tomb;
Their bulbs have undergone rebirth,
Born from the silence of the earth
Symbolically, to tell all men
That Christ, the Savior, lives again.
The angels, pure and white as they,
Have come and rolled the stone away
And with the lifting of the stone,
The shadow of the cross is gone!**



I think of our dear Lord Jesus, stepping from the tomb that first Easter morning, breathing in the clean, fresh morning air, rejoicing in the light. Oh, what joy must have filled his heart when he took the first steps of his earthly life *free* from the shadow of the cross that had followed him since birth!

What joy fills my own heart when I consider the lilies and know that not everything is as it seems. What is brown and dry and looks like death in my own life holds the promise of new life within, and even in the midst of the suffering and trials we are currently faced with, I find hope. Thank you, Jesus! Amen!

May Easter joy fill your heart with laughter and love, no matter what! Pastor Barb <><

Consider the lilies, they neither toil nor spin, but even Solomon in all of his glory is not clothed like these. Matthew 6:28-29

Just a reminder from the Stewardship Committee.

We still have bills and staff to pay. If your budget will allow it, consider mailing your tithes to the church at P.O. Box 187, Oglethorpe, GA 31068. Another idea would be to have an envelope at home and every week put your normal offering in it. Then save it for the Great Celebration when we can gather again as a church family! Pray for each other.

Thank you. *Julia Snipes*

Our Congregation Vitality Process Continues by Email, Text and/or Phone Calls!

So, be sure and keep praying your 40 Days of Prayer through 4-9. Your Small Group Leaders will be in touch with you to hear your prayer insights and share those of others in your group until we can gather as a congregation and arrive at 3-5 common themes that the Lord has put on our hearts through our Listening to him and to each other.

All Activites TBA - Serving Our Lord in April – All Activites TBA

Communion Assistant	David Haigler
Ushers	Arthur Jackson and Billy Martin
Altar Guild	Mary Haigler and Max Wood
Lectors	Duck Koch and Tracy Choppla
Kyrie	Wendi Martin
Acolytes:	Ava Felker

Family Day, TBA April 19th, Dale Godfrey, David & Mary Haigler, Jamey & Angela Cannon, April Martin

Coffee Hour: TBA

4-5 Wendi Martin

4-19 TBA

4-12 **EASTER No Coffee Hour**

4-26 Karen Hatten

Flowers: *If services are held*

4-5 Palm Sunday — Palms

4-12 Easter Sunday — Dale Godfrey in loving memory of Roy M and Doris Coogle and in honor of Kyrie and Alita.

4-19 First Easter Sunday - Lilies.

4-26 Lilies or Mary Hammoch

No Soup Kitchen: Gail Coogle

Sunday School TBA: Teachers:

K-5th Grade – Angela Cannon

6th – 12th Grade – Katie Felker

Adult Class Lingle Room — David Haigler/Jon Coogle

Adult Class Conference Room – Wendi Martin

April Birthdays and Anniversaries

4-2 A J Collier

4-2 Tommy & Wendi Martin

4-10 Will Haigler

4-14 Winn Martin

4-16 Maggie Rodgers Allotton

4-19 Renee Maddox Collier

4-21 Jon & Karen Coogle

4-21 Mary Hammock

4-23 Ava Felker

4-28 Katie Gentile

4-29 Sara Morgan Martin

Mt. Zion – St. Luke Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 187

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Oglethorpe, Georgia 31068

Please Pray for Members: Jim Arnold, Angela Clark and her wife Nicole and father RB Wilkerson; Al Coogle, Brenden Fitzgerald, Jr, Mary Hammock, Emily Harvill, Joe McNutt; Zack Martin, Tricia Trask, Tony Webb, for our college students, for all the ministries of our church, and for our Military.

Pray Especially for our nation and the world as we weather this pandemic, that it will be contained soon and we can help each other recover from this epic tragedy.

For Friends and Family: Betty Langdon Harp, Janice Haugabook, Ricky Haugabook, Larry Hobbes, Elizabeth Homer, Curtis Johnson, Corby McClure, Bob Melvin, Crystal Miller, Buddy Murph, Charlene Oliver, Leigh Powel, Douglas Smith, Celeste Trilla, and Joanne Waymon.

Serving Our Nation: John Edwards