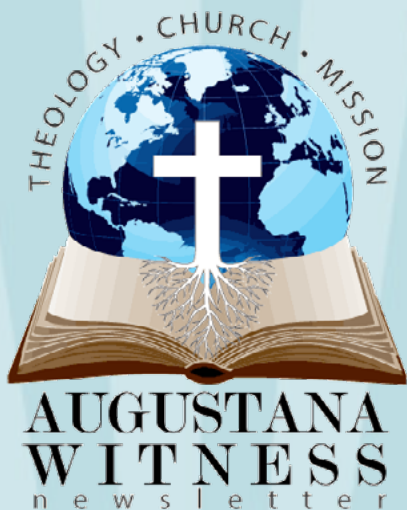


devotional

[Jesus said] "Where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." -Matthew 18:20



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What to do about church?

Worship is vital to any community of faith, and even more especially these days. It is my place to be at my post, but feel free to steer clear of public exposure if you wish. Remember, you are where God wants you to be, with all you need to do worship anywhere.

Acts 2:42 has a listing of all the elements necessary for worship at any time, in any setting.

1. Read the word (the apostles' teachings), aloud, from the BIBLE.
2. Pray the prayers that you know, and make up the ones you need, such as for deliverance.
3. Breaking the bread is serving communion to one another.
 - a. You can do that, serve communion, because you are a member of the royal priesthood.
 - b. The words of institution are in that BIBLE I spoke of earlier, from I Corinthians 11:23-26.
 - c. Break the bread, say the words and celebrate the fact that Jesus works all the time.
4. Don't neglect the fellowship.
 - a. Maybe you have wanted a chance to binge watch Miss Marple, but had no time. Now you have lots of time. *But fellowship means you share your time with those cloistered with you. Put down the phone, turn off the screens and listen to each other.*

All this speculation and alarming talk is very tiresome, and really does little to uplift anyone. Drop a line, really, like a letter to someone dear, since there is NOTHING ELSE to do. Whatever you are doing, live in confidence none of this is new to God. God is not puzzled.

If you decide to stay home and avoid the threat of public exposure to the virus, good choice. Have church right there at home. Remember to tell one another, right out loud, "Your sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake." It's what everyone needs to hear, and you'll find it thrilling to hear it at home. From that seed of forgiveness,

who knows what God holds for us? It's the best of beginnings, and has a lasting flavor of genuine love, reminding us of Jesus. Sow the seed, rest easy, and fear nothing. God has you, and this storm is subject to His command. (See Luke 8:22-25 in your BIBLE!)

The peace of Christ be with you, right where you are, now and always.

Pastor Nathan Hanson

NOTE: This was written before MN Governor Walz ordered MN residents to "Shelter at Home."



Prayer of the Month

Holy Lord, God of Power and Might, you alone are worthy to be praised. We honor your name and lift up our hearts to you. Thank you for the gift of life and thank you for the gift of eternal salvation. Turn our hearts away from ourselves and toward you alone. Heal our nation, heal this world and grant us the peace that surpasses all understanding. We belong to you. You are our God and we are your children. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Save The Dates 2021

- ✝ Convocation of the Cross,
February 8-9, 2021 in Bloomington,
MN!
- ✝ Confirmation Retreat 2021
March 5-7, 2021



Mission Minute

REPORT ON RIOTS IN INDIA

All of the information written below are not shown in media but through other people, believers and observation we have come to know about the situation and how everything was planned. A few months ago, the Prime Minister and the Home minister of India introduced two acts which are not in action yet, but they are planning to introduce nationwide. The two bills are CAA-Citizenship Amendment Act and NRC- National Register of Citizens. These acts focus on strategically taking out majority of Muslims from the country or putting them into detention camps. This has already started in the state of Assam. Because of this, Muslims, students and other people began the riots. There are also many supporters who are Hindu minded and want these acts to be passed. During the riots, both the sides began to fight each other which we think was sparked by some people working for the government and want destruction of Islam. Many of them were also paid to burn, kill, hit and even rape women of both sides so that their anger may grow even more. Because of this the people of both sides began to justify their religion and began fighting. All these actions are the reason of nation-wide riot in which Hindus and Muslims were fighting.



Because of this, the fights between Muslims and Hindus started and our peaceful believers were punished. The people were randomly fighting and burning properties just to show their anger and justify their belief.



Our believers in Delhi and other states are now hiding. They are together in their communities. Men are almost always outside their houses day and night with sticks on their hand to guard their children and women. As former Muslims, they are staying with other Muslims in an area where only Muslims are allowed. Maybe with the help of our believers, we may be able to approach these areas to share the word of God. They are in a lot of stress because even if all these things stop, they will have a very difficult time in starting their business back again and even if they do start it, the people will not have enough money to pay them. The economy was already very low and now we fear that because of these riots it will go down even further making it very difficult for our believers to earn decent amount of money.

PRESENT SITUATION IN DELHI

Everything is in control now as the military has walked in and they are keeping everything under situation. The army and police are everywhere in Delhi. They are surveying the areas day and night. But some people are still trying to create havoc as they are giving false alarms that the riots have begun. Because of this, people feel unsafe and this is how they create disturbances

in peaceful areas. A few days ago, the same thing happened in our area which is Patel Nagar and it is in West Delhi. Right now, people are only trying to create disturbances, but everything is in control of the army.

Even though everything is in control, people are still in fear that Hindus may do anything anytime.

After we start our community work and earn the

trust of the community, we will start sharing the gospel with them. We have also short listed some Bible verses which will help us in healing from traumatic events. They are as follows - Psalm 91:4-6, Proverbs 1:33, Isaiah 41:10, Lamentations 3:21-23, 1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 37:5, 40:17, 55:22, Proverbs 16:3, Matthew 6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34.

LIST OF BELIEVERS AFFECTED IN RIOTS:



Delhi - 154 believers' family and 167 seekers family

List of places and number of families -

Bhajanpura- 42, Alvi Nagar- 53, Seelampur and Jafrabad-85, Bijwasan and Maujpur- 93, Shaheen Bagh- 48


West Bengal - 113 believers' family and 142 seekers family. The families comprise of people from Birbhum, Murshidabad, Muraroi.

COVID-19 Pastoral Resources Doc
Now available for download at augustanadistrict.org
This document will change as needed.

If you have a resource or information you think would be beneficial to others, please send to office@augustanadistrict.org or director@augustanadistrict.org

Thank you.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- 
- ✝ Please pray for peace in India and God's gracious will to prevail.
 - ✝ Pray for safety for Christians in both India and Ethiopia, and for those whom God will soon be claiming as his own children (people who not yet Christians).
 - ✝ Pray for people overwhelmed with fear of COVID-19. Pray that Christ's peace and wisdom overcomes panic and fear. Ask God for his protection and healing for those infected, especially the elderly and those at high risk for complications.
 - ✝ Pray that God continue to use this district to be in his service and bring honor to His name.
 - ✝ Pray for congregations that are suffering conflict that God bring his abundant peace and grace into the hearts of his people.

Augustana District Treasurer's Report

On behalf of Augustana District we would like to thank you for your generous support. The Augustana District fiscal year ends in a few days on March 31, 2020. We are blessed to have raised over \$121,000 of our \$130,000 budgeted goal. If you haven't had a chance to contribute this year we would encourage you to take this opportunity to do so. We understand that these are difficult times and so our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those adversely affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic!

Eric Knutson, AD Treasurer





2020 Confirmation Retreat Highlights

Approximately 105 confirmation students and their chaperons from 19 congregations gathered at Luther Crest Bible Camp to learn about (of all things) the BONDAGE OF THE WILL! That may sound like a strange topic, but it is at the core of our faith. Pastor Randy Freund led two sessions on our "Bondage to Sin" and Pastor Julie Smith followed

with two sessions on the "Freedom in Christ." With plenty of large and small group activities, free time and late nights (including a time change), participants once again found this to be a great experience. The weekend wrapped up with closing worship led by Pastor Todd Mathison. Make plans now to join us next year March 5-7, 2021!!



Pause



Refresh



Play



A Word from Pastors Randy Freund and Becky Hand

FAITH, FEAR AND A VIRUS

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..." (Psalm 46)

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The last thing I wish to do with a pastoral letter is to do anything that might increase the panic, concern and fear regarding the Coronavirus. The hope is to do exactly the opposite. We are people who believe and confess that the Word of God is the final authority in all matters of life and faith. That would certainly include something called Covid-19.

There is no question that there is reason for concern and vigilance whenever we face a phenomenon like this. It has come on fast. There are many unknowns. It has caused death and its accompanying grief.

As people of faith we always ask: "What might God be speaking to us through and in this unnerving time?" I can think of 5 possibilities.

I'll respond with God's words, and few comments about His words.

A. One of the first things we can learn from a microscopic bug is that LIFE IS FRAGILE. While it is true that we are "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), Covid-19 reminds us that life is still fragile. This is a good thing to know and confess because it draws us to the Maker and Sustainer of Life and the Power over Death, our Almighty God.

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows."
Luke 12:6-7

Sometimes it feels, perhaps, that God has taken a nap and is letting the evil one get away with too much. But we know that God neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4). He is still God and still more than able to deal with all that goes on around the world and beyond. And you are of great value to him.

B. Though the degree may vary with each of us, we all WANT TO CONTROL OUR LIVES. Therefore, when we cannot control our lives or when the comfortable flow of life is disrupted, it is troubling. This too is good to know and confess because it draws us to our God who has complete control. This means that God has our life and this world firmly and completely in His hands —always. God is the unchangeable rock!

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, My God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, so I shall be saved from my enemies." Psalm 18:2-3

C. Many things in this life can bring us comfort or peace or relief. But when our peace and our comfort get rattled, it forces a question: What or who do we truly count on for true peace and our comfort. This too draws us to the deeper truth of THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE PEACE AND COMFORT. The God of peace brought from the dead our Lord. There is nothing more troubling than death. God's peace comes amidst the storms of life, not apart from them.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27

I think Jesus reminds us to "not let" our hearts be troubled because he knows this is our nature. Our heads need to remind our hearts that God alone is our source of peace. We can let him flood into our fears and concerns and overwhelm our heart with his presence and peace. Thanks be to God!!!

D. We speak of a God who reigns over all things, all times and all circumstances. Yet, how quickly that gets set aside when a pandemic like this comes. God still reigns over this. We are caused to ask ourselves: How do I surrender all to the GOD WHO IS SOVEREIGN?

Jesus tells his disciples that they will scatter and abandon him. He reminds them that the Father is with Jesus. He says this, "So that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" John 15:33

God Almighty is STILL King of the Jungle. Where we have uncertainty, he has full knowledge of what will occur, and he is at work. His will will be done.

E. Scriptures proclaim that "Perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18) What is "perfect love?" Perfect love is the Lord Jesus. His Word and His promises create life and faith. Fear is a real and human emotion. The signs of this fear are all around us.

Jesus casts out such fear and replaces it with this great gift called FAITH. And what is faith? FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR AND THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN. (Hebrews 11:1).

God has given each of us a measure of Faith (from Romans 12:3). And He has given us each the Faith we need in this time and place.

It is finally faith that is the power and the peace that attacks our fears...and a nasty, pesky, microscopic bug called Covid-19.

Faith and peace are gifts from the Almighty and they are sheer blessing. Let us pray for the people who do not know God and his presence, for the people who have no antidote for their fear. This is certainly an opportunity to express the Gospel of Christ by exhibiting the peace in your heart.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Randy

I leave you with St. Paul's prayer: "I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:18-21

Pastor Becky

RESCHEDULED



10th Annual District Convention Anniversary Banquet

Friday, **SEPTEMBER 25**

Christ the King, Hutchinson MN

District Convention

Saturday, **SEPTEMBER 26**

Faith Lutheran, Hutchinson, MN

Featured Guest Speaker
Minnesota Supreme Court Justice

The Honorable
G. Barry Anderson



“What Comes Next?”

Visit augustanadistrict.org/2020-district-convention for more information



MAKING IT REAL AS WE VIRTUALLY WORSHIP

All of us are struggling to provide worship opportunities in a time when we are not able to gather publicly during this pandemic. Technology becomes our friend and ally. For Lutherans who believe and confess that, through Word and Sacraments, the Risen Lord Jesus comes to real sinners in real time to deliver real promises, there is nothing "virtual" about this. We abhor abstraction. Jesus' promises are concrete. This is why we insist on the "for you" and "real presence." When we preach, we "do the text," in Gerhard Forde's famous phrase.

Holy Week, in general, and Maundy Thursday, in particular, present challenges for us. There have been conversations, for instance, about the possibilities for "virtual communion." This is the time to be creative, while maintaining theological integrity and clarity. Pastors have posed many good questions. "Shouldn't we offer communion for a time such as this?" "How could that happen in the home?" "How do we address 'good order'?" And with these questions come others that dive deeper into our theology. What are the assumptions about who says the Words of Institution (and why)? Should pastors offer a time for small groups (10 or less) to come to church at designated times to receive communion?*

For me, this presses other questions and possibilities. We are so early in the game with this crisis. Our congregation offers the Lord's Supper every week. It seems that this is an important time (early in the crisis) to teach the sufficiency of the preached Word. The preached Word carries the promises of Christ Jesus to real people in real time. It does not return empty (Isaiah 55:11).

The challenges of Holy Week, and particularly,

Maundy Thursday, remain. Perhaps a crisis creates a new opportunity. What would it look like to turn our empty parking lots into "journey to the cross and empty tomb" stations? How about a Palm Sunday car procession complete with branches and wave to people we have not seen? What might it look like to start at our empty mangers tucked away and move through Holy Week, with parents provided with words and pictures for each station? (Note: where there are Stay At Home Orders, this would need to be modified in a "virtual only" way.)* What might a livestreamed Maundy Thursday service look like that ended not with Holy Communion, as we normally do, but would end as we normally do not, with a family foot washing, following the example of Jesus who washed his disciples' feet? If you live alone, perhaps you could join a neighbor or a friend? What if the gathering darkness of the "Seven Last Words" on Good Friday included turning off the house lights until there was only a candle burning as Jesus breathes his last? There are powerful possibilities for songs and images to conclude the service.

This is clearly a challenging time to do Word and Sacrament ministry in a church that so depends on corporate worship. But it could also be a great teaching moment. It could be a great opportunity to make it real in a virtual time—wherever and however the people of God gather.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Randy Freund

Augustana District Service Coordinator

*Augustana District is a nongeographic district of LCMC. All congregations are encouraged to follow CDC recommendations (subject to change) and their state's Stay At Home Orders.

Easter Word Search

Angel
Cross
Crown of Thorns
Easter
Empty Tomb

Good Friday
Holy
Hope
Jesus
King

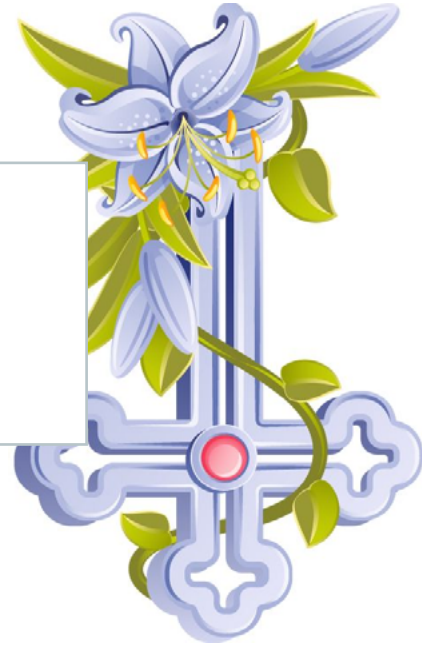
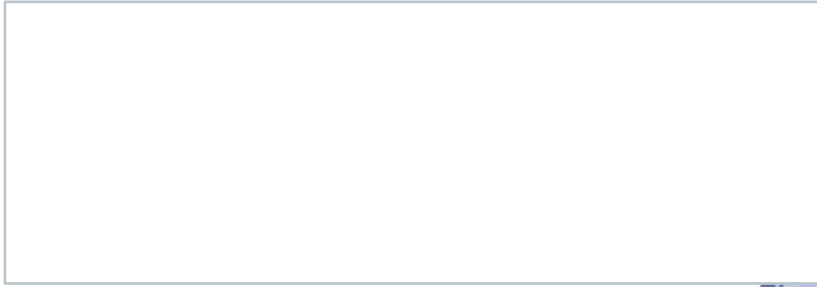
Love
Mary
Messiah
Resurrection
Risen

Sacrifice
Salvation
Sunday
Savior
Third Day



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Address Service Requested
Hutchinson MN 55350
335 Main Street S.
AUGUSTANA DISTRICT



10th Annual District Convention

Anniversary Banquet

Friday, May 14, 2020

Christ the King Lutheran Church

District

Hutchinson, MN

Featured Guest
Minnesota District Justice

Rev. Dr. Dale Anderson

What Comes Next?"

Visit augustanadistrict.org/2020-district-convention for more information

