



# THE FIRST FRUITS

ist by proclaiming Christ crucified in the  
esota North District of the LCMS



First Evangelical Lutheran Church; Grand Rapids, MN  
A member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

May 2020



## Pastor's Corner

### Inside this Issue

How are you doing? None of us have lived through such times as these before. Many of you can recall dire circumstances during World War II with gas rationing along with other restrictions, but when did a health threat shut down churches and businesses? During gas rationing you could not travel far because gas was so scarce for the war effort. Now gas is the cheapest we have seen it in decades, and we cannot go far because of travel bans and quarantines. Strange times.

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There have been times when diseases and viruses have taken high numbers of lives, but this current malady appears to be more highly contagious than ever before. There have been times when the fear was that food items were not on the shelves of stores, but were we ever so fearful of even going into the store? The times are alarming.

What a good time to remember that God never changes – nor does His word. In these past weeks I have had many ask if I think God is punishing us. I may not have said this in response, but I have wondered, “Haven’t you ever read the Old Testament?” It is the recurring story of God afflicting His people who grew complacent and rebellious. In that cycle God is always looking for people to repent and turn back to Him. With this cycle in mind, of course it is reasonable to think that God’s hand is chastening us as a world population. I said in my Good Friday message that God is sending us to our rooms under we learn our lesson and want to come out and be part of the family again. That is what a loving parent would do (that was before “the room” was filled with every toy and electronic gadget imaginable).

Since this pandemic has come upon us, I have shared various times the words of 2 Chronicles 7:14. Let me share them again: God says, “If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” We, the people, should take a primary role in turning to God to ask for and seek His healing presence for our land. I firmly believe that, as Christians, we should pray for and encourage our national, state, and local leaders to demonstrate a public example of humility before God. It always worked in biblical times. Why would it not bring benefit to us today?

In the meantime, while this runs its course, let us personally take strides forward to draw closer to God. This, too, is a pattern we see in the Bible. When we draw near to God, or return to Him, He closes the gap and draws us close to Himself. There is no better place to be than in the heart of God.

While we must remain physically distant from one another, we will continue to provide ways and means of bringing God’s word into our homes and hearts. We have recently added a weekly Bible study online you can follow along with, studying Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. You can turn to them whenever you wish. Go to our church website at [www.flcgr.org](http://www.flcgr.org) and click on to get each session by chapter.

Be informed and be inspired as we move through this challenging time. May your

faith grow stronger and stronger and your reasons to fear shrink away, knowing that God is in control.

In Jesus’ name,  
**PASTOR ZEIGE**



**JUNE**  
**“FIRST FRUITS”**  
**ARTICLES**

**June “First Fruits” items are**  
**Due by MAY 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**\*\*\*Submit\*\*\***  
**Articles To**  
**Church Office**

*Starting June 1,*  
*please send all*  
*Newsletter Articles to*  
*Shirley.*



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Our prayers is always for our children, families and staff. May we continue to share the lover of Jesus with them always. May we never again take our Christian Education for granted. It is a blessing.

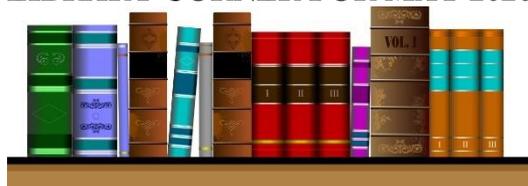
*In Christ,  
Mary Buech  
Sunday School Superintendent*

## **Shoes for the Mission**

This is a great program that allows you to support Lutheran Island Camp by donating your used shoes. The need to be bound together with rubber bands. Please drop them off at camp when you join us this summer.



## **LIBRARY CORNER FOR MAY 2020**



### **MOUNTAIN TOP DRIVE** by James R.

Coggins found at 813.6 is Book 3 a John Smyth Mystery. None of our First readers had read it since we received it in 2018, so I took it home to see if we should look into getting Books 1 & 2.

Online reviews were: "An intriguing and highly readable mystery with plot turns and enough suspects to keep the reader guessing until the end." "A slick, crisp read. It has just about everything.

Mystery, suspense, action, twists in plot and a lot of extras you will not find in too many mysteries these days – morality, spirituality, and theology.

Mountaintop Drive is a page turner, but it is far more than a weekend's entertainment. It will take you places you never expected to go. A good ride."

I enjoyed this book and can recommend it. However, I went onto GoodReads to get plot lines and reviews of the first two books in the series and nothing about either of them grabbed my attention. So for now we are holding off on ordering them until someone lets us know otherwise! – Janie Carlson

### **HEALING THE HEARTBREAK OF**

**GRIEF** by Peter James Flammings found at 242.4 Fla. Flammings speaks of the positive wisdom of grief that seeks to

take the pain of our loss, and in time, recycle it for our good. This I can do today – remember that God works in all things, past, present, and future. Each chapter closes with “This I can do today” and “This I can remember today” bit of advice. It is written in the language of a layperson.

**THINGS LEFT UNSPOKEN** by Eva Marie Everson found at 813.6 is described in the National Church Library Association Newsletter as follows: “Jo-Lynn is going through a mid-life crisis. Her marriage is faltering, and she is lost her identity as a woman of value. When her uncle dies, great-aunt Stella asks her to come back to restore the old family homestead in Georgia. As she peels back the old layers of the home, Jo-Lynn discovers family secrets hidden for decades. When she starts asking questions, she is threatened. Along the way, she rediscovers the value of family and belonging to a community. The author clearly has a personal understanding of the culture and history of the south and has developed a story with an interesting plot, captivating mystery and the discovery of God’s purpose for the main character.”

**THE OFFERING** by Angela Hunt found at 813.54 Hunt. This novel is an eye-opener and a tearjerker. Readers will find themselves feeling the pain of the characters and getting caught up in their lives. Amanda Lisandra is the wife of a soldier. She and her family are

struggling to make ends meet, so she decides to become a gestational surrogate for a family in need. The battles will test her faith in God, her femininity, ethnicity, and citizenship. Hunt gives her readers a glimpse inside the life of a Cuban American family dealing with financial struggles and grief, while facing decisions about how to survive while also being faithful to God. Reviewed by Darlene Baltus

**A CLAIM OF HER OWN** by Stephanie Grace Whitson found at Whi. Look in the very last book shelf by the book return bin! This book has been around since 2010 but not many readers have checked it out. Determined to put the unspeakable circumstances of her past behind her, 20-year-old Mattie O’Keefe travels to Deadwood, South Dakota in search of her brother, whose letters boast of making a fortune in the gold fields.

**BLOWING ON DANDELIONS** by Miralee Ferrell found at 813.54 is Book 1 of the Love Blossoms in Oregon series. “Do dandelion wishes actually come true? Katherine Galloway knows the moment of calm she is feeling will not last, blown away like the dandelion seeds she scattered as a girl. It is 1880, three years after her husband’s death, and she is struggling to run an Oregon boardinghouse and raise two girls alone. Things do not get easier when her critical, domineering mother moves in. Katherine must make the situation work,

but standing up for herself and her family while honoring her mother is not easy. And with a daughter soon to turn fourteen, the pressure on Katherine becomes close to overwhelming. Then she crosses paths with Micah Jacobs, a widower who could reignite her heart, but she fears a relationship with him might send things over the edge. She must find the strength, wisdom, hope, and faith to remake her life, because everything is about the change.”

**RHINESTONE JESUS** by Kristen Welch found at 248.8 Wel. What held my interest was the easy, informative writing style that Kristen displayed. Two people meeting at Bible college preparing for full time ministry, one as pastor and the other as youth director; yet God has a different road for them in a series of circumstances that take a 180 from their plans. It involves a trip to Kenya, Africa. Read it to be inspired...and have tissues handy.

Reviewed by Darlene Baltus

*“Nothing can do what a book can do. Lifts you out of your life...to a whole new world, whole new perspective. A book is like a dream you are borrowing from a friend.” – Dave Kellet*



**5/7/2020**  
**GOD'S**  
**KIND**  
**CARE**

God hath not promised  
    Skies always blue,  
Flower-strewn pathways,  
    All our lives thro';  
God hath not promised  
    Sun without rain,  
Joy without sorrow,  
    Peace without pain.  
God hath not promised  
    We shall not know  
Toil and temptation,  
    Trouble and woe;  
He hath not told us  
    We shall not bear  
Many a burden,  
    Many a care.  
God hath not promised  
    Smooth roads and wide,  
Swift, easy travel,  
    Needing no guide;  
Never a mountain,  
    Rocky and steep,  
Never a river  
    Turbid and deep.  
But God hath promised  
    Strength for the day,  
Rest for the labor,  
    Light for the way,  
Grace for the trials,  
    Help from above,  
Unfailing sympathy,  
    Undying love.

-- *Annie Johnson Flint*

**The LWML District Board met and has agreed to cancel the LWML Convention to be held in Grand Rapids this June. It is not being postponed. It is being cancelled.**

**I would truly like to thank all of you for your willingness to help with this convention.**

**In addition, the LWML Spring Rally is cancelled and the Summer Concert Series is cancelled for all churches this summer.**

**Praying you are all keeping safe and healthy.  
God's Blessings,  
Carla**





## **ARE WE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT?**

I heard a saying the other day: “We are all in the same storm but are in different boats.” Isn’t that the truth? This pandemic hit us hard, but each one of us is experiencing something different. Perhaps you were laid off from your job and can’t collect unemployment, maybe you are self-employed and can’t collect unemployment, maybe you were laid off and are collecting unemployment, maybe you got your stimulus check, maybe you haven’t gotten your stimulus check or are not getting one, perhaps you haven’t seen much of a change other than not being able to go anywhere, maybe you are immunocompromised, maybe you have underlying health conditions, maybe you are healthy and concerned about contracting the virus, perhaps you have to help your children with distance learning, perhaps your children are still able to go to daycare, perhaps your kids aren’t grasping what is going on and have meltdowns daily, perhaps your kids love

being at home, perhaps you are having emotional days, perhaps you are getting things done that you never thought of. The list could go on and on.

Some of us can understand why the government shut everything down and some of us cannot understand why they would do this. There is so much information out there, what is real or fiction? Sometimes it is hard to tell. All I can tell you is do your research and do what is best for you and your family. What you are experiencing is not the same as someone else. Let us be kind to one another and lift each other up. We all need human interaction and a phone call can be just that. Be sure to call your friends and family and check in on them. It seems that at the beginning things were changing by the hour and then we got into sort of rhythm. Now we are nearing the end of the stay at home order, well hopefully, and we are again going back to things are changing rapidly. I can’t say for certain when we will be able to get back to worshipping again in the sanctuary, but I am sure that when that time comes there will be certain precautions that will be put in place before we do. Be sure to call the church, check the website, Facebook and emails for updates. If you are not getting the emails, contact Shirley or myself and we will be sure to get your email address on the list. You can also sign up for it on our website.

Just remember that we are all in different boats and experiencing this pandemic

differently. So be kind and be gentle to one another. This also goes to not judging each other on our actions. The same goes when things are “back to normal” and people may miss church for other things. The thing is we don’t know why they miss church; we don’t know what their home life is like. Maybe they watch online service, maybe they hold Bible study, or maybe they are slipping away and need our help. So the next time you notice someone not coming to church, reach out to them and ask them if they need help with anything.

On April 26<sup>th</sup> we held a virtual Sunday School and the theme that day was on HOPE as well as Pastor’s sermon. Hope is mentioned in the Bible over 160 times! Hope is something that we look forward to in anticipation. I do not know about you, but I sure say hope a lot. I do hope that we can worship together soon. I also hope that you have faith over fear right now.

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* Hebrews 10:23

**Jessica Pellinen**  
**Family Ministry Program Director**

## **VIRTUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP**

We have started to have virtual Sunday school and youth group Sunday mornings at 9:00 and 10:00. I sent out the link to the families. If you did not get it, please let me know. Sunday school is for toddlers to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. We sing songs, play a game, show off our craft from the week before and have Bible talk. It only lasts for about 40 minutes, but it so fun for the kids to be able to see each other and talk to each other.

Youth group is at 10:00 on Sunday mornings. If you have not received the link, please be sure to reach out to me to get it.

Please check back to the website, Facebook group and emails for updates.

Parents: if you need any lessons or activities for your kids, there are plenty of resources at the church. I would be happy to put together more family packs for you.

**Jessica Pellinen, FMPD**



**THANK YOU  
BRAD BENSON  
AND  
DAVID STORRS**

I would like to extend a thank you to Brad Benson, for all the work and time that he has spent on the hand rails on the stairways. He has spent a lot of time cleaning and scraping old paint from the stair rails and repainting them. He stripped, cleaned and waxed the floor in the fellowship hall, and shampooed all the carpet. He has done all this extra work during the Covid 19 lockdown along with all his other duties. Thanks, Brad, for all your hard work! The church looks great.

Also a sincere thank you to David Storrs, (our 7<sup>th</sup> Board Member, who never attends meetings, but you will always be a Trustee,) for coming in and putting up the mailboxes in the front of the church. The mailbox is a locked box, which makes it very convenient for church member to stop by and drop their offering envelopes off each week at your convenience. He also put shelving in the garage.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

*Gary Rosin*

**ORGAN**

Granell-Engen will be here May 7-8 to tear the organ down. Completion is tentatively planned for late July or August

**CLEAN-UP DAY** is scheduled for May 2, starting at 9:00 until we are finished. Please bring your own rake.

At 10:00, there will be a short Trustee meeting.

