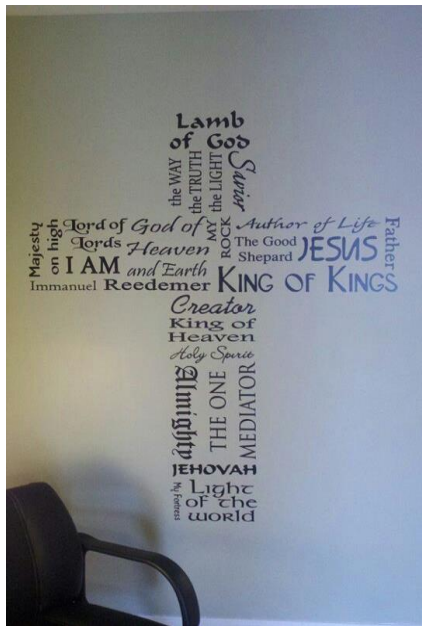


Covenant News



September 2020

Pastor's Spin



Sisters and brothers in Christ of Covenant,

On September 14, we celebrate Holy Cross Day. For a little bit of background, from our *Sundays & Seasons* (Augsburg Fortress) resource that we use to plan our worship:

In the fourth century, Queen Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, oversaw some archaeological digs in Jerusalem, during which was excavated what she and others believed to be the true cross of Jesus. A long delightful medieval legend narrates this tale, in which the wood cross that Helen found had originally been the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. The excavated "true cross" was displayed in Jerusalem for the people's reverence on Good Friday, and splinters of it were sent throughout the Christian world as relics that meant to connect people with the mercy of God. At one of the excavations in Jerusalem, Constantine ordered the construction of a church, and on September 14, 335, the Church of the Resurrection was dedicated. Subsequently this

date became more attached to Helena's finding of the "true cross." Since then some Christians have kept this date in honor of the cross, on which Christ brought about the life of the world. The Orthodox call the festival the Elevation of the Cross.

Now, whether or not you believe Queen Helena and the excavators found the actual cross on which Jesus was crucified: you are entitled to that opinion and it will not make or break your faith, your relationship with God. Come to think of it, I still remember my seminary preaching professor telling us that he hoped archaeologists and scholars would never be able to definitively confirm any actual sites or objects from Jesus' life, because he never wanted people to come close to worshiping the site/object as opposed to the actual Savior. Fair enough: after all, it was Jesus who did the eternal saving, not the cross itself.

Nevertheless, we humans cling to the tangible, including for our faith development, in a sense. Plenty of crosses have come and gone along the way when it comes to the sanctuaries we frequent or the places we call(ed) home or gifts from families and friends. We don't necessarily intend to glorify the wooden cross-formation hanging on the wall, but it has a way of spiritually guiding us to realize the utter depth of God's love for us, that not even a most heinous form of capital punishment could stop our Lord from taking on the victory march for us all. Some crosses are more meaningful than others, not just because of the artistic rendering, but of what happens around it, including all the memories of people we cherish that add on another layer of emotional meaning to that cross, as if that cross was meant for them, too.

One such cross of meaning for me is a gift I received from my ordination. It has more of a rustic look, but what jumps out isn't the style, necessarily, but the names imprinted on and around the cross (so, not pictured above, but the same idea): Lamb of God, Holy Redeemer, Emmanuel, Lord of Lords, Deliverer, Messiah, Rock, Jesus, Our Savior. In a way, it provides reassuring comfort, in a way, that Jesus can be all the above for us; as if, we don't have to resort to a specific title with Jesus in order to have a strong personal connection with him. Better yet, just as with the many crosses that have come and gone throughout our life, some "classifications" of Jesus are going to be more meaningful than others based on whatever we are going through that particular portion of our walk with Christ, and that's okay.

Of course, this particular cross brings me back to that night when more people showed up for an ordination service than I anticipated. I think about how many lives have changed since that worship. I think about how much we did not realize what was going to happen to the world, to the church come 2020. And yet, through it all, crosses are still hanging with just as much Good News to proclaim; maybe not the actual cross on which Jesus was crucified, but crosses that draw us back to the center of our life, the center of our...well, everything. And whether you cling to Messiah, Deliverer, Lamb of God, Emmanuel, Savior, etc., Jesus is more than capable of being the All in All for you and for the whole world, no matter what. Thanks be to God, indeed!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

This year marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's treatise *The Freedom of a Christian*. To observe this milestone, Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, invited the church to read, study and reflect on this Lutheran witness of the Christian faith.

The ELCA has developed a study guide and other resources to deepen readers' engagement with the text. As a partner in this project, Fortress Press has made available a complimentary download of the treatise, available through 2020.

"*The Freedom of a Christian* is such a beautiful, deep and simple exposition of the Christian faith that it is no surprise that, 500 years after Martin Luther first wrote it, we are still learning from it," said Carmelo Santos, director for ELCA theological diversity and engagement. Santos led the development of the ELCA's initiative. "I pray that this study guide and case studies representing a wide diversity of perspectives will help many to rediscover the awesome freedom that we have in Christ and the joy of using that freedom to serve our neighbors. We also hope that people will feel inspired to contribute their own reflections inspired by *The Freedom of a Christian*."

The *Freedom of a Christian* treatise, study guide, case studies and information about submitting contributions are available at elca500.org.

Happy Birthday

September Birthdays

9/2 William Mendat
9/10 Phyllis Treichel
9/11 Doris Akerley
9/16 Barb Gaglione
9/16 Jason Lanese

9/22 Madeline Ptak
9/26 Allan Treichel
9/28 Nancy Werner
9/28 Ethan Lockmiller
9/29 Evan Bernardo



9/8 Carolyn & Ken Frajter
Happy 64th Anniversary!

9/21 Gwen & Tom Susaneck
Happy 23rd Anniversary!

9/29 Bishop Abraham Allende & Linda Godhardt Allende
Happy 15th Anniversary!



Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

SITUATION REPORT

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES



AUGUST 25, 2020



CALIFORNIA

SITUATION

Fueled by dry vegetation and lightning strikes, California has seen 367 wildfires over the past week, with two of them becoming some of the largest fires in state history. Hundreds of thousands of people are under evacuation orders and seven people have lost their lives. In total, over one million acres have burned and over 1,000 homes have been destroyed, with another 103,000 homes threatened.



RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response is actively engaged with Lutheran Social Services of Southern California and three California synods (Pacifica, Sierra Pacific, and Southwest California) to assess the situation and anticipated needs in the affected communities. We expect immediate needs to be food and other supplies, as well as emotional and spiritual care for those impacted by the wildfires.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Pray

Let us pray for the people who have been affected by the wildfires in California. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need.

Give

Contribute to Lutheran Disaster Response (U.S. Wildfires).

Connect

Share our posts on your social media sites and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Follow us and stay updated on the latest with Lutheran Disaster Response

WORSHIP SERVICE UPDATES

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

After hearing overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding our worship together in our parking lot, our church council has decided to continue holding worship outside until the weather no longer allows us to do so. We are still aware of the need to maintain the recommended precautions to ensure the health and safety of our members, as well as family and friends whom we would interact with during the week.

Nevertheless, we know that we will return inside the sanctuary at some point in the not so distant future (as long as the coronavirus cases and death tolls do not significantly increase), and when we do, we must prepare ourselves for it to be rather different: we will need to wear masks when we enter the building, we will need to sit so many feet apart from those not in the same household/family setting (spots are already marked as such in the sanctuary), and we will, also, not be singing as a group together.

With that in mind, we are hoping to come up with individuals who would be interested in singing hymns to serve as the voice when the hymn is being played on Sunday morning. Arrangements can be made with our organist, Robin Crawford, who would work with you ahead of time. It could be recorded in advance, or you could sing during the worship (in which, you might have to do so behind plexiglass, as an extra precaution). We hope this may provide some semblance of the nourishing worship we continue to enjoy as we sing together outdoors.

As always, we will continue to do the best we can as a congregation to provide meaningful opportunities to worship God, while, also, ensuring the health and safety of all involved. We continue to appreciate your patience and understanding. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact anyone on our church council.

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

September 2020

Server Schedule	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Worship & Music Meeting after funeral	2	3	4	5
AG: Werner, Copeland, Hohenstein	6 9:00 Eucharist in Parking Lot	7 Office Closed for Labor Day	8 7:00 Council Meeting	9	10	11	12
AG: Lanese, Cibella	13 9:00 Eucharist in Parking Lot	14	15	16	17	18	19
AG: Lanese, Cibella	20 9:00 Eucharist in Parking Lot	21	22	23	24	25	26
AG: Senderak, Rusher, Susaneck	27 9:00 Eucharist in Parking Lot	28	29	30	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3

Covenant News

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

The last time we couldn't worship in our sanctuary. June 1982

