

Covenant News



April 2021

Pastor's Spin



Siblings in Christ of Covenant,

A few weeks ago, I bought Sarah some lilies from a local store. I should mention that I know next to nothing about gardening, including flowers. But usually when I buy flowers from a store, they come with plant food. And so, I cut those flowers at a diagonal line maybe an inch or two from the bottom of the stem, and put them in a vase with lukewarm water, sprinkling in said plant food. More often than not, they tend to last for a while. However, these lilies...my lack of green-thumb-ness could not be avoided whatsoever.

They were closed-in (I'm sure that's not the right horticultural terminology) on themselves when I purchased them. There was not my coveted go-to plant food inside the wrapping around them; so, I Googled to make sure I could still pull off my naïve "magic" to make them bloom with just good 'ole lukewarm tap water (whatever site just informed me that it might be best to change the water daily). I did the diagonal cuts, trying to make them all presentable in a vase at the center of our dining room table, and slowly, but most surely, they all started to fade looking downward at that table, as if they were expressing their joint-disgust with their elementary floral dis-enthusiast.

Thankfully, many churches around the world have much smarter people than myself in decorating churches with actual beautiful lilies and other plant-life to symbolize the Resurrection majesty, making us fall in love with the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, my rather evident swing-and-a-miss attempt, made me wonder about the age old, "So, what now?" question that we Christians should ask ourselves with every Easter celebration. "Christ is Risen!" Christ is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!" Yes...so, now what? Jesus died and rose again...yes...so, now what?

I suppose (at least, the way I understand our Lutheran theology on things), technically, we don't have to do a thing. Jesus loves us so much that he believed (and believes) we are worth dying for and coming back to life for, to live right within and beside us through all eternity, no matter what. There is nothing we need to do, like trying to perfect a certain regiment to make a flower last for however many days, or trying to figure out the perfect regiment of "loving your neighbor as yourself," to convince God to take the love-encapsulation cross and everlasting life Resurrection away from any one of us. That's the Gospel, no questions asked.

However, the "So, now what?" isn't so much about us personally. The question is what does the Resurrection empower us to do now for others in our home, neighborhoods, nation, the entire world that God still loves (others who may like to see some beauty in floral or whatever other form, too). Christ's triumphant defeat of sin and death doesn't just give us permission, but the Resurrection implores us to not obsess over that sin and death to the point that it can ever hold us back from fulfilling our most beautiful roles as real-life enactors of Resurrection majesty, even more beautiful than any most enchanting lily flower.

Yes, even though we live in an Easter reality, where Christ has died and Christ has most certainly risen, we will still have our downward gloomy days (like the lilies I didn't do so well with, to say the least), and that's okay. Nevertheless, Christ will insist on raising us up with the same power that took on sin and death. And yes, that Easter reality is that the most majestic flower of life-enriching beauty in Christ himself will forever bloom in us not just on a certain Sunday in spring, but all the days of this life and into all eternity. And for that Gospel of the Resurrection meant for the whole world, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

Image: from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (extension.iastate.edu)

FREE *Community* DINNER

In working with other surrounding congregations, we continue to offer a FREE meal for anyone and everyone in the community and beyond on the 4th Thursday of every month. For the near future, the meals will be provided in a drive-thru format, as opposed to being

served in the building. So, simply come in through our parking lot by the back of the church, and you will be provided a FREE meal (or however many you want for your family and friends as well). If you are interested in helping, please contact Mary Kaye Bernardo. Otherwise, come on by for a FREE dinner Thursday, April 22 (4:30-6pm), or help spread the word to others!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

4/2 James Gradert
4/5 Bruce Constant
4/7 Gary Edler
4/10 Jackie Blogna
4/10 Ted Lockmiller
4/20 Tom Susanek
4/22 Annie Copeland
4/23 Dudley Chapman
4/25 Jacqui Knerem
4/27 Charlotte Zaranka



4/9 Deb & Chuck Dickey

Happy 33rd Anniversary!

4/15 Toni & Robert Ridgell

Happy 26th Anniversary!

4/15 Sheila & Harry Werner

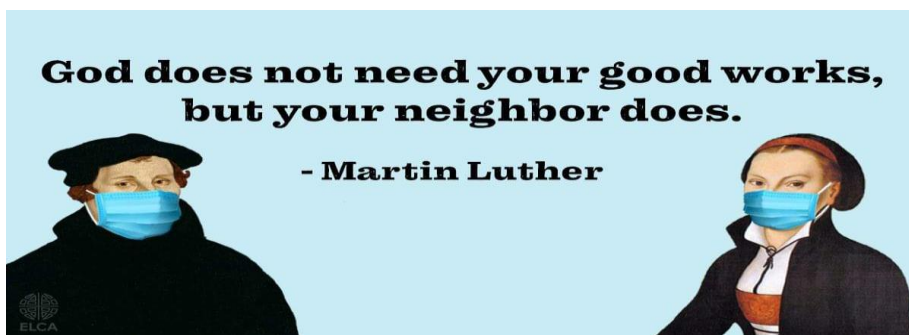
Happy 43rd Anniversary!



Our worships for Saturday's continue on the 1st and 3rd Saturday's of each month going forward. The same protocols will be in place as we have been doing for worships on Sunday.



We continue to hear plenty of positive feedback about our outdoor worship opportunities last year, when we first returned to in-person worship following the initial outbreak of COVID-19, locally. As the vaccines continue to be rolled out across the country and herd immunity develops, and with so much of our Covenant family appreciating how we worshiped last summer, our Covenant council is considering returning to worshipping outdoors starting Sunday, June 6 (still at 9AM) and continuing outdoors through the months of June, July, and August. We would still celebrate Communion every Sunday, as well as sing together! If weather does not cooperate that respective Sunday, we would move into the sanctuary with the same protocols as we have been using so far this year. The plan for our Saturday worships for this time period is still to be determined. We encourage you to take time to let us know what you think about this plan for worships at Covenant during the summer months. Feel free to contact anyone on our Covenant council, as well as Pastor Brad and Jen in the church office.





We will continue to do our part in providing the safest environment possible as the vaccines continue to be rolled out, knowing that risks still remain. We want everyone who worships with us to feel safe, so that they may focus on worshipping God with their whole heart. With that in mind, here is what to still expect (of course, all plans are subject to change, and we will do our best to inform you of any changes as soon as possible, through email, our website, Facebook page, and through our call-in Covenant Groups):

- You will be asked to wear a mask the entire time you are in the church building (unless you have a health condition that prevents you from doing so).
- Worship will be made shorter with the lack of air flow in the sanctuary.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements in plastic cups will be available for you to pick up as you enter the back of the sanctuary.
- An offering basket will also be in the back of the sanctuary for you to drop your offerings into, as there will not be a time during worship for offering plates to be passed around.
- Blue X's have been placed in front of the pews to mark where we encourage you to sit to maintain physical distancing from those who are not of your household/family. Each spot also has hand sanitizer bottles on that respective pew.
- We will *not* be singing together as a congregation, as published scientific studies reveal the harm with the potential spreading of aerosols/droplets.
- Also, for the bold print in the bulletin, we ask you speak in a whisper voice as opposed to speaking loudly as a group for the prayers of intercession responses, the Lord's Prayer, etc.
- There will not be a processional or recessional of the cross, as well as no receiving line after worship with Pastor Brad. He will continue calling to check-in, but if you have anything you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact him.

We understand this may still seem extreme, but we will always err on the side of caution for our Covenant family's health and safety, including your individual family and friends whom you may come in contact with during the week. We greatly appreciate your patience and understanding as we take on this unique journey together with God's help to be sure. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Covenant council members.



Covenant Lutheran Women Annual Plant Sale

Orders must be placed with payment by Monday, April 25, to the church office or Arlene Lasher:
12411 Oak Park Blvd. Garfield Heights, OH 44125

Pick up scheduled for Saturday, May 22
9AM - 1PM

Drive-thru pick up, same as last year, at the ramp door.
Please call when you are on your way to pick up and Arlene will have your order outside to be put into your vehicle.

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

April 2021

Server Schedule	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susanek	4 Easter Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	5 Office Closed	6 Office Closed 6:30 pm Women's AA Meeting in Parish Hall	7 Office Closed	8 Office Closed	9 Office Closed	10
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	11 Second Sunday of Easter 9:00 am Eucharist	12	13 1:00 pm Worship & Music Meeting 7:00 pm Council Meeting 6:30 pm Women's AA Meeting Hall	14	15	16	17 5:00 pm Saturday Service at Covenant
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	18 Third Sunday of Easter 9:00 am Eucharist	19	20 6:30 pm Women's AA Meeting Parish Hall	21	22 5:00 Cov-Hope- Community Meal	23	24
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	25 Fourth Sunday of Easter 9:00 am Eucharist Flower Sale Deadline orders to office or Arlene	26	27 6:30 pm Women's AA Meeting in Parish Hall	28	29	30	May 1 5:00 pm Saturday Service at Covenant

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

