



St. Paul Lutheran Church

June 2020

# The Epistle

## New “Normals”

BY LESLIE WILLET

*Thessalonians 5:11: Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, as you are doing.*



June conjures up many images of life's milestones, celebrations, anticipations of momentous personal changes and singular historical events. I think of beautiful brides, students of various ages graduating or finding first

jobs, maybe away from home, Father's Day, Flag Day, first day of summer. I remember significant moments in history like the assassination of Robert Kennedy, Watergate or D-Day 1944, a day of special observance to me. I've always found June to be a bittersweet month. As a teacher, I experienced pride and satisfaction that my students culminated eight years of studies, but also sadness knowing I would probably not see many of them again very frequently. There was a mixture of letdown that school was ending and the excitement of vacation.

This year we face yet another June; however, things seem unfamiliar, uncertain. While it is true that “life goes on”, it is a very different one. We must find new ways of relating, new

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## VALLEY INTER-FAITH FACILITY TEMPORARILY CLOSED

Valley Interfaith Community Resource Center, where we normally donate our “items of the month,” has temporarily closed their building because of the

## New “Normals”

*(Continued from page 1)*

avenues to help our fellowmen, new methods of doing everyday, ordinary activities, new “normals”. There are actually positives resulting from these changes as families spend more time together, reevaluate how they live, and focus more on what’s really important. We are confronted with an unimaginable crisis, a deadly global viral pandemic which is causing us to redefine ourselves.

This is not about just us anymore. We are our brother’s keeper. Success in conquering COVID-19 depends on how we

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*Success in conquering COVID-19 depends on how we each respond.*

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COVID-19 crisis. However, their website states that they are still allowing drop-offs of nonperishable foods and cleaning products, on Tuesdays only, from 9 to 11 am. They are also still providing help for those in need—if you or someone you know needs food or household supplies, call 513-821-3233 to leave a message for the staff.

each respond. Do we defy the recommendations of medical experts under the guise of standing up for our individual rights; do we cower under the covers waiting for a miraculous panacea to end the threat; or do we commit ourselves to reasonable, responsible action? The critical factor here is that we must do what is necessary to protect and take care of one another. And we must adjust to the current circumstances of our lives, supporting each other and trusting in God.

Our lives may forever be changed, but our values and beliefs and faith should prevail. In his Inaugural Address, John Kennedy summed up his rally to enlist us to rise to the challenges of the time, “...with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth...asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.” It is up to all of us, bolstered by God’s love and support and our unified efforts.

God Bless,  
Leslie Willet

## A Word from the Pastor

These anxious times are new territory for all of us. Surely this was a Memorial Day Weekend unlike any other—no gatherings to honor those who have fallen while protecting our lives and freedom, no parades, and no neighborhood picnics to serve as a kickoff for a summer that will also be changed. One of the pandemic casualties of this summer is your annual church picnic, and we all certainly miss being together.

When your Council last met, the bulk of the meeting was devoted to a discussion about when and how and if in person worship could resume. I can assure you that we all feel it is a heavy burden to make a decision that could endanger precious lives.

There has been a tremendous longing to return to worship as we know it, but even if we resume, the experience of worship will be greatly changed from what it was. I would like to share with you some of the reasons that we decided to delay and reevaluate the situation at our next meeting in June, as well as some of the changes.

First, ELCA and Southern Ohio Synod church leaders and their medical advisors have determined that there is simply no safe way to share Holy Communion together. We can certainly try to minimize the risk, but it still comes down to a human being setting up and distributing the bread and wine, and right now, there is no way to guarantee that person is not carrying the virus, even with no symptoms. Also, it would involve all of us removing our facial coverings, which would of course create possible spread.

Additionally, there is overwhelming agreement that singing and even unison speaking should be eliminated because of the forceful nature of both activities. Singing with masks increases the safe social distance from six to eighteen feet! Also, the church building would have to be deeply and completely cleaned before and after each service. While there is some evidence that the virus cannot survive for more than a matter of hours on hard surfaces, the Southern Ohio Synod's medical advisor did not feel that could be counted on to keep us safe. There is much we do not know about this novel corona virus.

I was able to ask a question at the most recent Southern Ohio Synod Webinar about outdoor worship. Having each person bring their own lawn chair from home would save a lot of time cleaning, and being outdoors solves the question of adequate air handling which is of great concern for worship in the sanctuary. That is certainly something we can consider attempting in a few weeks. We have a large open area on the property that could be used in this way.

Recently there has been a lot about resuming church services in the news. Our President has declared that churches are essential, and those of us in faith communities certainly understand that. However, we should be careful not to confuse the Church with our building. The Church is the Body of Christ in the world loving God and neighbor, and the building is just a special place where we meet. Right now, that special place isn't safe.

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## ONLINE GIVING

From the Financial Secretary:

Are you using our new online giving service through Vanco? If you choose to donate from your checking account versus from a credit card, it saves St. Paul about 2.6% or so per donation. However, we are happy to get anything. Any way people would like to give is fine and is much appreciated. Thank you to everyone who has been able to continue their giving during this emergency.

Interested in learning more about how to give online to St. Paul? See our website at [stpaulreading.org/online-giving/](http://stpaulreading.org/online-giving/). Carroll Mayhugh has kindly made a how-to video for those who are new to the Vanco giving site.

Thanks,  
Dennis King

## A Word from the Pastor

*(Continued from page 3)*

In Ohio, churches have never been prevented from holding in-person worship, and there have been some that have done so against the advice of public health officials that there should be no meetings of more than ten people. That guideline was another reason we decided to delay opening.

The reason that nearly all local churches have suspended worship is grounded in our love for each other and our commitment to follow Christ's lead to protect those who are most vulnerable. At this time, anyone with a compromised immune system or older than 65 or with underlying conditions is strongly advised to remain at home and minimize time in public places. While I don't know St. Paul very well yet, I suspect that advice applies to a great many of its members, as it certainly does to your interim pastor. Yet some might be tempted to attend anyway if we were to resume.

Therefore, out of our love and care for each other, we continue to fast from in person worship. Thankfully we have a virtual way of worshipping using technology even as we lament the fact that not all members have access. As you watch our pre-recorded services you can still sing, pray aloud, and enjoy special music that might not be possible in person. I know of one Lutheran church that is holding worship on Zoom with the pastor consecrating the elements in real time as each household provides its own bread and wine. This is another thing we might consider.

In the meantime, we rest confidently in our knowledge that we are still receiving God's forgiveness, grace and mercy through our belief in Christ's saving power and by the strength of God's Word that we continue to read and hear. We need the peace that only Christ can bring us now more than ever, and it is still surrounding us daily.

The Council has formed a committee to determine what exactly must be done when we come to a consensus that it is safe to meet. We want to plan carefully. Please pray for church leaders, especially those at St. Paul, as they grapple with the weighty decisions concerning in-person worship.

Serving our Lord with You,  
Pastor Joan

## Celebrations in June



6 Jeff Baumiller,  
Doug Lohmeier

7 Dottie Deloatch

8 Michael & Kim Coulehan

9 Kay Fox

10 Loretta Forst

13 Jack Wagner

16 Ian Cathcart

17 Daryl & Cindy Flege

18 Nelson Langefeld

19 John & Jeni Cathcart

21 Allan Harbaugh

24 Gary Gries

26 Jim Sturgill

28 Jim & Bess Sturgill

28 Katy Thompson Waddell

30 David & Emily Nutt

## Music Director Search Update



The candidate interviews will begin in June. The Search Committee is excited to announce that we have many well qualified musicians to interview.

As COVID-19 has postponed our beginning this vital position, the

Search Committee is ramping up. Whether it means interviewing in person, (following all health guidelines), or using other video methods, the Committee hopefully will be selecting our new music director and or organist/choir director, by July 1st.

Please pray for the Search Committee on their daunting task of selecting the candidate(s) that will enhance our music department. Look for further updates as we progress.

Cindy Mayhugh, Chair  
Music Director Search Committee

## VBS BY VIDEO

Once again this year, St. Paul was preparing to host the Reading Church Council's annual Vacation Bible School in July. Since we won't be able to do VBS in person this summer, the Christian Education Committee is exploring ways to host a video VBS online! If you have ideas or suggestions for the videos, or would be interested in leading a daily message or craft project, please contact Addy Kruse or Joyce McDowell.



## St. Paul Family Photos



*Lohmeiers at home*



*Taz in Paul's chair*



*Paul on the deck*



*Mark & Connie visited Key West in Feb.*



*Kitties on guard at Kathy and Paul's*



*Huey in Paul's chair*



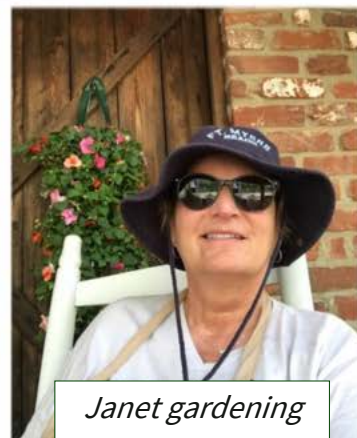
*Karen and family strawberry picking*



*Baby robins at Carole's*



*Spelmans' grandson Colsten's 8th grade graduation!*



*Janet gardening*



*Baby robins at Carole's*



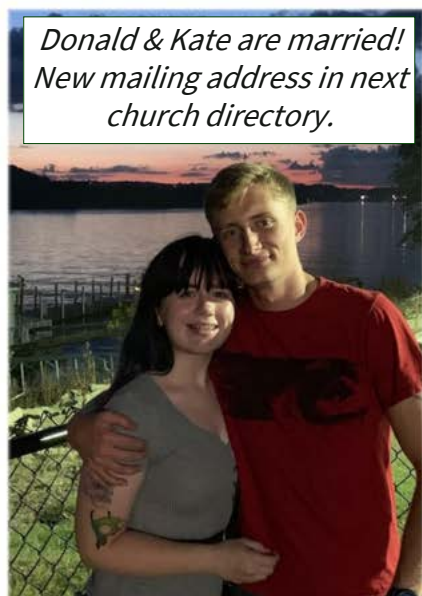
*Carolyn & daughters*



*Maryhelen at daughter Jennifer's*



## St. Paul Family Photos—Wedding Edition!



## New Carpeting Installed in Sanctuary



## From the Presiding Bishop: “United in Baptism”

*This article by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton was originally published in the May issue of Living Lutheran.*

There is an Irish saying: “It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.”

I am writing this at the end of March. I don’t know what the world will look like when you read this at the beginning of May. COVID-19 has the world sheltering-in-place. We’ve learned new concepts such as “social distancing” and “flatten the curve.” We have stopped physical contact—no handshakes, hugs or high fives. We even wear gloves. It is a strange new world we live in.

There is fear in this new world. Over a million people have been infected and thousands have died. We can’t see the virus. We don’t know where or when it will strike next. Our lives have been disrupted—restricted travel and closed churches, schools, businesses, parks and stores. Health care workers, those dedicated to healing, find themselves as soldiers on the front line. Pray and give thanks for them.

In this highly anxious time, some—individuals, communities and countries—are seeking safety and certainty by stockpiling as many provisions as they can and walling off others. Barricaded behind rolls of toilet paper and Clorox wipes, fortified with generators and Spam, some will try to wait this out by themselves. There has been a spike in sales of firearms and alcohol. Not a good combination. Taking precautions is wise. Believing that it is possible to isolate and cut off from neighbors and nations so that one will never be touched either by the virus or the fallout of this pandemic is unreasonable.

For me, one of the cruelest effects of this pandemic is that we cannot gather. Our natural inclination in a time of crisis is to draw together, hold on to each other, support each other. Life passages, births, birthdays, weddings, baptisms, funerals, holy days, holidays, will be remembered as times of isolation and absence.

In Christ, we are knit into one body. And just as surely as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one—this wildly mysterious community of the Trinity—so are we one.

And yet, in the deepest, truest sense, we are connected to one another. In baptism we are united with Christ and are members one of another. Baptism makes a difference and makes us different. We are no longer lone travelers making our way through this life. We don’t have to go it alone. In fact, we cannot, because, in Christ, we are knit into one body. And just as surely as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one—this wildly mysterious community of the Trinity—so are we one.

Jesus clearly stated this and daily fulfills this promise: “My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one” (*John 10:27-30*).

Baptism makes us different. The immutable gracious truth that we are God’s makes it possible for us to feel the connection with each other, even, and especially, when we are separated. This is a great paradox—the more we are separated from each other, the deeper our connection to each other becomes. I find myself thinking about family and friends more often now that we can’t be physically together.

And here is another paradox—when we are alone, when “the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, page 325), then, in the stillness and solitude, we feel the presence of God.

When life gets back to “normal,” I pray that I do not slip back into casual encounters with people and God. We can’t think of ourselves as islands. Because we belong to God, we belong to each other.

The author of Hebrews puts it this way: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us” (*Hebrews 12:1*).



## Our Life Together

For emergency pastoral care, please call the after-hours line at 513-760-5884.

If you have requests for the Prayer Chain, call Penny Huber, 513-931-6420. To remove people from the list, contact the office.

We pray for **Mary and her granddaughter Kyra** (friend of Paul Pieper); **Berkeley** (Carol Curless's great-grandson); **Pr. Lisa Bernheisel**; **Louise Barry**; **Teresa Bell** (former member); **Stephen Black** (Kim Coulehan's nephew); **Bobby** (Christian Lohmeier's friend); **Brett** (Kings' step-nephew); **Jodie Calhoun**; **Christian**; **Kathy Curless**; **George Demetriades** (Portmanns' friend); **Katie Demopoulos** (Diana Hawkins's niece); **Hazel Deuble** (Carolyn Koehl's aunt); **Dick** (Linda Miller's brother); **Jeremy Doan** (Jean Winkle's grandson); **Jerry Doan** (Jean Winkle's son-in-law); **Norb Eble** (Portmanns' friend); **Eckerle and Wuestefeld families**; **Tom Eckerle** (Les Eckerle's cousin); **Lee Erbeck**; **Larry Faulkner** (Freda's son); **Justin Feldman** (Bess Sturgill's father); **Ben Ferguson** (Les Eckerle's cousin); **Micki Ford** (Fords' niece); **Jeanne Fuller**; **Clara Garcia** (Cindy Mayhugh's sister); **Nathaniel Gibson** (Les Eckerle's step-nephew); **Hannah**; **Matthew Harrison** (Seals' neighbor); **Sandy Hatcher** (Linda Holt's sister); **Elain Heskamp**; **Richard Hoffman** (Cindy Mayhugh's brother); **Andrew Horton**; **Ellen Hunter** (Jeni Cathcart's grandmother); **Jo and her daughter** (Jeanne Fuller's friends); **Joan** (Penny Huber's friend); **Kate** (granddaughter of Dennis King's friend); **Dennis King**; **Jay King** (son of Jamie King); **Loretta Kombrink** (Marilyn Portmann's aunt); **Lewis Laine** (Chet Laine's brother); **Richard Lane** (Elinor Schieman's nephew); **Regina Laursen** (Portmanns' friend); **Carroll Mayhugh Sr.** (Carroll Mayhugh's father); **Samantha Mersch** (Mayhughs' daughter, Sarah Papin's sister); **Jessica Mink** (Donald Harris's cousin); **Doris Minton**; **Barbara and Jack Moorhouse**; **Jean Nolte**; **Ervin Oerther** (Portmanns' brother-in-law); **Ann Ohr** (Barbara Moorhouse's cousin); **Richard Osborn** (Betty Pack's broth-

er); **Rosie Osborn** (Betty Pack's sister); **Eric Papin**; **Richard Peterson** (Shirley Harbaugh's brother); **Don Pflieger** (Kings' brother-in-law); **Ginny Pape**; **Linda Perin** (Moorhouses' cousin); **Paul Pieper**; **Faith Pirrmann**; **Pat Poplewell** (Dennis King's friend); **James Savoy** (Jean Winkle's great-grandson); **Shawn Schnetzer** (Sturgills' cousin); **Sheila Schultz** (Betty Pack's friend); **Brenda Schumacher** (Marilyn Portmann's friend); **Shannon and Dane** (friends of Riddle family); **Keith Shupe** (father of Kelly Shupe); **Jason Simpson** (Freda Faulkner's grand-nephew); **Elizabeth Smith** (Elain Heskamp's sister); **Scott Songer**; **Judy Songer** (friends of Jean Winkle); **Crosley Spelman** (Spelmans' grandson); **Jack Spelman**; **Britney Jean Teems** (Jean Winkle's granddaughter); **Teresa** (friend of Marty Lohmeier); **Randy Thaman** (friend of Marie Calhoun); **Geri Toland** (Carole Replogle's neighbor); **Treasure** (Les Eckerle's cousin); **Ralph Turner** (friend of Dennis King); **Jack Wagner**; **Daryl Wesselman** (Betty Pack's granddaughter); **Jean Winkle**; **Susan Winkle** (Jean Winkle's daughter-in-law).

We pray for those with ongoing health concerns who are unable to come to church every week: **Louise Barry**, **Jack and Barbara Moorhouse**, **Jean Nolte**, **Heather Segar**.

We pray for our armed forces members: **Graham Barton** (Fords' neighbor); **Paul Cordes** (Elinor Schieman's grandson); **Victoria Derry** (Elinor Schieman's great-granddaughter); **Jared Forst** (Jim and Loretta's grandson); **Beau Glenn** (Karen Koehl's son-in-law); **Kylie Hahn** (Gretta Hahn's granddaughter); **Donald Hosea** (Karen Koehl's son); **Samuel McLoughlin** (friend of Cindy Sieckman); **Scott Minton** (Doris Minton's son); **Jobeth Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Joshua Rodriguez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Trent Schwegman** (cousin to the Erbecks and Fords); **Dustin Silvey**; **Mack Thompson** (Freda Faulkner's grandson); **Alex Wisecup** (son of Nadine and Barry Wisecup).

St. Paul  
Lutheran Church

*As a community of  
Christian believers,  
we are called by  
God to use the  
many gifts He has  
given us, within the  
church and the  
community, so  
others may come  
to know Him.*

## Online Worship Continues in June

Here are the latest updates from Council about upcoming activities:

- The church picnic is cancelled for this year (Evendale cancelled gatherings at Baxter Park for the month of June).
- In-person worship and all other group activities are still suspended.
- Council is forming a “reopening committee” to plan for what worship will look like when we do reopen. Donald Harris is the chair. (If you are interested in joining this committee, please let Donald know.)

Council will meet on June 17 to reevaluate current information related to COVID-19 and safety to begin worship at the church.

St. Paul  
Lutheran Church  
106 Maple St.  
Reading, OH 45215

*Phone:*

513-821-0987

*E-mail:*

mail@stpaulreading.org

*Web:*

stpaulreading.org

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

