

St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield



April 2020

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Pastor
Rev. Dr. Ronald Bogs



Associate Pastor
Rev. Arturo Mendez

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With God, there is no such thing as a coincidence. For example, a pericopy system, or a Lectionary of readings has been around since Biblical times. A pericopy system, that is a reading around the text or as we call it today, our Lectionary reading system has been around many years and the purpose of such a system is to give the Church a way to hear the whole council of God over the time span of a year or in our case three years. So, readings have been appointed for each Sunday of the Church Year so that over three years we hear very much of the word of God. And these reading systems have been in place for many years. The point is that there is no coincidence that the readings we heard over the last weeks that have to do with bad things happening, such as the COVID 19 virus.

We have asked the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" and we realize that is not the right question to ask. We understand that we are not good people. As a matter of fact, we are sinful people, we are evil people, we are people who constantly do everything we can to sabotage Jesus and His work of saving others. We are sinners. We are conceived and born in sin and we daily sin much, adding to our sin. What each one of us is deserving of is death, even eternal death and hell.

The question we ask is not, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" but, "Why do good things happen to sinful people." And the answer is in God's Word as we heard in the Gospel readings from Mar. 22 and 29, "That the works of God might be displayed" (John 9:3), and "It is for God's glory" (John 11:4). We have a God who loves us so much and who has only in mind the best for us. Certainly we will suffer trials and tribulations in this world, but these things are not from God, but are a result of sin, that is, because we live in a world of sin and a world cursed because of sin. God loves us and He works to bring the best out for us in any given situation. Someone once described life like looking at a piece of cross stitching. When you look at the back of a piece which has been cross stitched, what you see are the knots and a lot of thread dangling. Knots in cross stitching are inevitable. However, when you turn the cross-stitched piece over, what you see is a beautiful picture. Life is very similar, what we see is the bottom. We see the knots. We see the mess. We experience the pains of life. What God sees is the top. He is looking down from top down. And what He sees is the beautiful person He is making us to be. What He sees is the beautiful life He is weaving for us.

Yes, "bad" things happen in our lives, such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, COVID viruses, etc. We can blame others. We can blame the pastor. We can blame our parents. We can blame our government. We can even blame God. There may even be a time when we might, perhaps, blame ourselves. The fact of the matter is that in our own

lives, God is constantly working out the best for us in any given situation. Perhaps you have been reading some of the good things that have been happening because of the virus situation, such as family members spending time together. People getting time to actually rest. People praying more. Indeed, God's desire is that as He works out the best for us, praise and glory are given to His Holy Name.

God's richest blessings.
In His Service,

Pastor Bogs
1 Cor. 15:3-5

Don't forget, if you miss a Sunday, you can read the sermon on my blog: <http://rabswritings.blogspot.com>.

Happy Birthday to You!



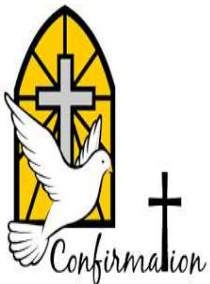
4-03 April Harvey
4-07 Daniel Cross, Scott Gentes, & Dalhardt Goebel
4-10 Barbara Ellis & Mary Garrett
4-16 Jonathan LaShomb
4-17 Conner Lilley
4-19 Mary Davis & Ashley Massuda
4-23 David Christie & Robert Sindlinger
4-27 George Gentes & Dwayne Lilley
4-28 AJ Parsalaw

Baptismal Birthdays

4-03 Carol Clark & Rose Goebel
4-08 Patricia LaShomb
4-09 Marilyn Kron, Aileen Mercer, & Cindy Sentesi
4-14 Kelly Gentes
4-21 Bryce Koslan
4-22 Aurora Franks
4-25 Jennifer Cornman
4-27 Tess Clark & Trent Clark



Confirmation Anniversaries



4-01 Jonathan LaShomb
4-03 Mary Garrett
4-05 Caleb Bogs
4-06 Eda Nitz
4-07 Joyce French & Janis Stayton
4-09 Hannah Bogs, Jordan Christy,
Nathan Cross, William Gentes, Aaron
Lilley, Rebecca Mendez, Naatah
Mollet, & Dillon Mosier

4-11 Larry Harvey
4-14 Barbara Ellis, Barbara Newbould, & Cody
Williamson
4-15 Pastor Bogs & Mary Gibbs
4-16 Gary McCorquodale II
4-18 Dixie Garrett
4-25 Cathy Smith
4-28 Robert Sindlinger
4-30 David Christie

Wedding Anniversaries

4-16	Joe & Shirley Michka	(52 years)
4-14	Luis & Martha Paez	(1 year)
4-23	Robert & Melissa Sindlinger	(14 years)
4-24	Sonny & Joyce French	(66 years)



Holy Days and Holidays in April

April 5th: Palm Sunday
April 9th: Maundy Thursday
April 10th: Good Friday
April 11th: Holy Saturday
April 12th: Easter Sunday
April 25th: St. Mark, Evangelist



Stewardship Under the Cross: God's Word on How We Use His Gifts

What is Stewardship?

Christian stewardship is the faithful management of our financial resources and all we have. It begins with the understanding that all we have is God's (Ps. 24:1 "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it") and that "we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world" (1Tim 6:7). Since all we have is God's, we should use it for His purposes. God's purpose for us in our lives is expressed in the various vocations, or callings, that we have. So, for example, a father and mother use their income to feed, clothe, and protect their children.

Besides the vocations that each of us have in our family life and in society, we are also all Christians and members of this parish. How do we use our income faithfully in regard to this vocation? To learn this we must look to God's Word.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 ¹⁷You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Luke 16:13 Jesus said, "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Malachi 3:8-9 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are under a curse-- the whole nation of you-- because you are robbing me.

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9:6-8 But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us --see that you also excel in this grace of giving. . . . The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything.

What does this mean?

Your heart always goes where you put God's money. Stewardship is not an optional subcategory of the Christian life; it is the living out of a Christian's dependence on God. As such, faith and finances are inseparable. True joy is found not in storing up the things of this world, for the things of this world won't last. True joy is found in clinging to Christ who poured out His life for you on the cross and now gives you His Life in Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. The things of this world are temporarily given to us by God to see and we will be called to account for how we manage the Owner's things (Rom.14:10-12, 2 Cor. 5:10).

Prayerfully Consider Your Giving

Prayerfully consider your giving to God's work in His Church. Are you faithfully giving a first-fruits tithe (10%) of your income to the work of God? Are you, as St. Paul says, "excelling in this grace of giving"? If not, why not? In next month's newsletter we'll consider more of what God says about Stewardship – specifically more about tithing (the Biblical practice of giving a tenth of our income to God's work in the Church) – and provide steps for planning your giving for next year.

Rev. Arturo Mendez – Sermon from March 15th, 2020

And now what are we going to do?

May the Peace and Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And now, what are we going to do? Certainly, hysteria, panic, uncertainty to the unknown overwhelms us. It frightens us because we simply cannot have control over what is manifesting and that hysteria, that terror, that panic leads us to do inappropriate and incoherent things since we lose our focus and, we focus on what didn't matter.

With this problem happening on the World of the coronavirus known as COVID 19, affecting our life, the broadcast the government keeps us informed of this situation and what they have done to the respect, some say one thing some say another, but to whom? We certainly must believe, and whom should we trust?

Hysteria and chaos and panic makes us blind and does not allow us to see beyond what reality is, and we recognize how people leave their homes out of focus. Everyone doing panic shopping running from one place to another to try to protect ourselves and try to save our own lives and the ones we love, we see how this chaos invades us and certainly hurts each one of us who is in this World. We misfocus on what is most important. People wonder and see distressed saying, and now that we are going to do? How can we solve this problem to whom must I turn? To whom must I trust? We are all afraid and terrified about this global pandemic, but above all, many people are frightened of what their final destination in life will be. They might think to themselves, "am I going to survive this? Or will I die? What will happen? Will, I endure this problem?". Many questions that I have heard for the past few days in the face of this world crisis. And I think to myself, "we are not paying attention to the bigger picture. What truly gives us the security and certainty of our life." The problems of our daily life distract us and make us lose track of what's important. Our human tendency is always to forget who's in charge, and who has control in all situations. Because every inclination of our heart is always inclined to do evil in the eyes of God for our sinful nature. We forget that He is the creator of this World, and we focus only on our own problems. We are so distracted and not focused on what really matters. What human can add one more hour to our day? Or another day to our week? We forget who is the one who moves all things in this World. We forget that God is the one who controls everything, and each one of the situations that are about to happen and continue to happen. He is the one who runs the show, and we tend to forget it because of our sinful inclination towards Him. Because of the daily activities and the panic that this brings us. We are so focused on being able to stay alive and try to cope with this crisis that we lose the most important thing, the person who created us. As I was studying the word of the Lord, Psalm 91 came to my mind.

In moments of crisis, despair, and uncertainty, Psalm 91 reminds us of the security that Christ presents us in times of trouble. That is His promise, and that is the certainty of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the people that have believed and trusted in Him. As our Lord and Savior, He has come into the World to perfectly fulfill the law because we as humans simply cannot do it. Our inclination and our tendency are always to do evil in the eyes of God because we are sinners. But He came to conquer death and sin. He came to defeat the enemy, and He came to give us eternal life and life in abundance. That is why He gave his life as a unique and eternal sacrifice on the cross pouring his precious blood. So that everyone who believes in him and confesses with his lips that he is the Lord, we can enjoy eternal life, and be able to participate in his kingdom.

While it is true, the Lord Jesus Christ warned us of the end times, the Lord Jesus Christ told us that pestilence, famine, earthquakes, wars, nation against nation and many other things would come and that would be the beginning of the end time, but it would also be the beginning of the redemption of our hope, the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, which all of us who have believed and trusted in him are waiting, and that should be our joy our peace and our hope that Christ has died and has risen and conquered to death giving us eternal life for us and being able to enjoy with Him in his Kingdom,

Psalm 91 begins like this ¹.- Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the Shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

³ Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
And from the deadly pestilence.

In Psalm 91 we can find and see this big confession of faith and an example of life trusting in the security of God's protection that urges all of us who have believed and seek refuge in the Lord when the days of anguish and adversity come. In verses one and two, we see God as our protector: What does this mean? Indeed, these words written in metaphors by the psalmist David, describe to us that the shelter, the Shadow, the hope, the castle is the defense, and assures that it is found in the

Lord our God YAWHE, that the Shadow is not sinister, but consoling that it brings us peace, confidence and comfort that this rest brings us over the time of grief and storm, and that protects us like the Shadow of the wings of a mother bird, these four names of God correspond to the metaphors and each one of the bases for the reliable confession of faith in the protection of God almighty and soaring describe the incomparable power of God over threat and danger. Psalm 91 in verses three and four tell us:

3.- the Lord will free you from the hunter's traps; will deliver you from the destructive plague.

4.- The Lord will cover you with his feathers and see for sure under his wings.

This Psalm is written some verses in metaphor, but we know and recognize that it refers to the Lord regarding these names. We can understand that this can be read for all believers to give us personal encouragement in the promises that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us, perhaps In verse three when he says "hunter traps" we can understand that a bird hunting trap refers to hidden dangers or sudden lethal attacks, like a destructive plague a general term for disease and in the worst-case scenario the plague it is an epidemic the Hebrew consonants of plague also mean a word which the enemy used to deceive the people of God to deceive also Adam and Eve when they fell into the temptation of sin, just as Satan himself wanted to tempt our Lord Jesus Christ afterwards having been baptized and taken to the desert for 40 days and 40 nights, he tried to use the same word of God to attempt to deceive Jesus, but our Lord Jesus Christ put the word of God ahead to overcome the enemy. The word of God is undoubtedly always sufficient for our response to our hope in what Christ has promised us, in verse four he talks about some These wings may possibly refer to the wings of the cherubim on the ark of the covenant in the temple that symbolize a protective shield or a sacred place or more broadly to any mother bird that protects its chicks perhaps that is why the psalmist David he referred to these metaphorical names which we hear today.

Psalm 91 in verses five and six tell us:

⁵ You will not fear the terror of night,

nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,

nor the plague that destroys at midday.

In these two verses, we can see the security of God that surrounds us whenever the danger approaches night terrors the demonic kingdom could cause this fear, but it includes all invisible danger that lurks darkness the word arrows can be the danger that also comes from War the arrows an immortal silent attack weapon, but we know that the Lord has control over all these situations and that He guards us and protects us from all danger that haunts us,

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,

ten thousand at your right hand,

but it will not come near you.

⁸ You will only observe with your eyes

And see the punishment of the wicked.

In verse seven it tells us 1000, 10,000, in Hebrew poetry, the most significant number follows the smallest as a way to emphasize the amount the psalmist confesses the protection of the Lord no matter how many are affected by the War or the plague,

He also mentions to us in verse 8, wicked. What does the psalmist mean to us with this? Everyone who has rejected God and who have deprived themselves of the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ will receive the wrath and punishment from God The Father. Still, for everyone who turns into the Lord that he had sent His Son Jesus Christ to fulfill what we sinful cannot, the only thing we do is forget about Him and reject Him and not receive the gifts, the Grace and mercy that come through Him, indeed when we were baptized, we are sealed in His Baptism. Our names are written in the book of life and makes us His Own Children of God, and His Righteousness becomes ours that comes from Father in Heaven.

In verse 10, 11, and 12, the Psalmist David reminds us of this:

¹⁰ no harm will overtake you,

no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways;

¹² they will lift you in their hands

So that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

In verse 10, we know that everyone who takes refuge in the Lord, is not exempt from these dangers, that as sinful human beings we care from any calamity AND adversity that may occur to us, death, famine, plague, war, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc. etc. God certainly has control of our lives, and as far as he will allow us to live, the time we will live, he is the only one who gives us life and takes it out from us, but none of this separates us from the love of God for us His children, because It is for this unique

reason that our Father has sent his Son Jesus Christ to give His life for all on any time and any places that we have put our trust in Him as our Lord and Savior, and neither death nor sin will separate us from the glory of God, Thanks to his Son Jesus Christ who gave His life as a ransom for the whole World, for everyone who believes in Him and repents of their sins, and that is Our Trust that is Our Certainty in Jesus Christ, and we do not end up defeated and destroyed by the Eternal death,

Romans 8: 31-39 said: ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake, we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, [k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, those our confidence that all of us should have in times of uncertainty, like that strong castle that is our God, just as Martin Luther wrote this hymn, in times of tragedy it is an excellent reminder like the Psalmist David writes. He lets us know who is in control of everything, and it is He who strengthens us and keeps us united to Him when we participate in the Lord's Supper, he offers us that banquet that he has prepared for us. for the Last Time, let us lift our faces high, give thanks to God, for His Son Jesus who covers us with His Shadow and on His Wings, takes us inside His Castle through Faith,

This Psalm ends with these Verses:

¹³ It will crush lions and vipers; You will set your foot on lions and snakes! ¹⁴ I will save Him because he loves me. I will exalt him because he knows my name. ¹⁵ He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in the middle of the anguish. I will save him and glorify him. ¹⁶ I would grant him many years of life, and I will make known my salvation. These are the promises of God.

God assures us all who trust that he will be an ever-present help fulfilled in Christ Jesus. In the book of John, verse (Jn 10: 28-30) says: ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ The Father and I are one."

How quickly can life go from calm and routine to problems and fear! But how comforting to know of God's protection. Towards us His children, this is our security that comes from the fulfillment of the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has conquered Satan once and forever when he rose gloriously from death. We can trust and walk in His victory even during times of danger because He is with us and He will not allow us to be separated from His love, thank you Lord for your safety and your strength in this World of danger. Almighty Fortress is Our God. This hymn was written by Martin Luther in time of a Plague in Wittenberg Germany what a tremendous and appropriate hymn for us all to comfort our Souls it was taken by the Psalm 46; God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble, Our times are in the hand of God, and our days are numbered only by Him as it is, the hairs of our heads are numbered. Let us Rejoice in the Grace of God that is poured to all of us and trustworthy on the resurrection that He had Promised, and we have that covenant that nothing will separate us from the Hands of the Father.

(Romans 8: 28-30) ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified.

And we will see the glory of God, and He will grant us many years of life and eternal life because He has made known to us His salvation in Christ Jesus.

Amen!

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 12pm -LIVESTREAM Lenten Service	2 10am - Bulletin Cutoff	3 Church Office Closed	4
5 Palm Sunday 8:45am - Sun School & Bible Class 10am - Divine Service	6	7	8 10am -Bible Class	9 Maundy Thursday 10am - Bulletin Cutoff 12pm – Divine Service 7:30pm – Divine Service	10 Good Friday Church Office Closed 7:30pm – Tenebrae Service	11 Holy Saturday 8am – Men’s Breakfast & Bible Study 10am - Elders Meeting
12 Easter Sunday 7am – SONrise Service 8am - Breakfast 8:45am - Sun School & Bible Class 10am - Divine Service	13 7pm – ESL Class	14	15 10am -Bible Class 7pm – Bible Class	16 10am - Bulletin Cutoff 7pm – ESL Class	17 Church Office Closed	18
19 8:45am - Sun School & Bible Class 10am - Divine Service	20 7pm – ESL Class	21	22 10am -Bible Class 7pm – Bible Class	23 10am - Bulletin Cutoff 7pm – ESL Class	24 Church Office Closed	25 9am - PRISM
26 8:45am - Sun School & Bible Class 10am - Divine Service (Matins)	27 7pm – ESL Class	28	29 10am -Bible Class 7pm – Bible Class	30 10am - Bulletin Cutoff 7pm – ESL Class		