

# St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield



## May 2020

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Pastor  
Rev. Dr. Ronald Bogs



Associate Pastor  
Rev. Arturo Mendez

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

April seemed to be a rather long month with the events of the world challenging the very nature of our being. The Lenten Season ending with our Easter morning celebration seemed less dramatic with people having to stay at home and distance themselves from others. While there are those who continue to spread news of gloom and doom, there are also those who desire to think in positive terms and realize how the past has shown that this too shall pass.

When times of trial come upon us, we can either blame God and turn away from Him or we can cling to Him knowing that He is our only true hope. As I tell people all the time, "What is the worst thing that can happen to you?" And the answer is, "A person can die." So, what happens to us Christians when we die?" Answer, "We go to heaven." So, what is bad about going to heaven?" Indeed, our lives in this world are short and sweet (especially compared to an unending eternity in heaven) and our present troubles are nothing compared to the glory that will be ours in heaven. As we were reminded during the last Sundays of the Church Year and during the season of Advent, the most important thing in life is not our lives in this world but being prepared for our life in the world to come.

Some positives from this past month and what is happening in the world are that we are reminded that this world is not an end in itself. Rather, we are strangers here and heaven is our home. While we may not see it, God is still in control and just as the plagues of Egypt were at His command, so are the plagues of the world today. As a congregation, while we have been talking about and working on "live streaming" our Divine Service for the past few months, we were "forced" into doing something not ideal. (And while we might admit it is not the best at this time, we are working on making it better.) Just as our world has dealt with difficult times in the past and hopefully learned from those difficult times, the world continued on. So too, this will pass, and we will return to normal and perhaps a bit wiser.

On a personal note, my prayer life has included more intense prayers for God to bring to an end this pandemic so that our lives might return to normal sooner than later. I pray even more fervently for our older members as they are the most vulnerable. The adage is that, while it takes three weeks to begin a new good habit, it only take three days to end the habit, and so I pray that we are not getting into the habit of missing Divine Service but will be eagerly anticipating our physical return where we will again meet together to be reminded of our Baptism, to confess our sins and hear those most beautiful words of absolution, hear God's Word read and proclaimed, partake of our Lord's Body and Blood in His Holy Supper, and encourage each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Sunday after Easter while on vacation or “stay-cation,” my family and I joined in the Divine Service via the live streaming service. I had no qualms about actually being in attendance since I have been there every Sunday, but we stayed home as a way of experiencing what everyone else is experiencing. While not being physically present, I will say my family and I joined in the singing as well as the responses and, to a great degree, felt as if we were at the church worshipping with others. We heard the trains in the background. We heard the thunder at church as we did at home. And unfortunately, we did have some technical difficulties as the live streaming with the computer caused some bit of consternation from time to time. I was encouraged to see there were so many people who had tuned in, as at one point there were over 32 viewers meaning there could have been between 32 to 90 viewing (my house had four viewers which would be counted as one online). Yet, except for being able to participate in the Lord’s Supper and have contact with others for the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints, it was a good experience. We will work on making this experience better as we go forward, and even after we are able to meet together we will continue our efforts so that others who are not able to attend might attend in such a way. **But please know that in no way is this intended to give anyone any excuse for not actually being in attendance!**

As a reminder, the monthly Newsletter as well as the weekly bulletin and Divine Service folders are posted on our church website: [stmatthewlcms.com](http://stmatthewlcms.com). Thank you to those who continue to send your tithes and offerings during this time. As the governor has classified the church as an essential service, we continue to provide as best we can while attempting to do so under the guidelines provided. It is our prayer that in May we will begin resuming many, if not most, normal activities including having more and more people return to Divine Service, but again we are neither encouraging nor discouraging your attendance and want you to make a decision which is best for you.

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>.




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## ***Happy Birthday to You!***

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5-06 Naatah Mollel  
5-08 Jan Stayton  
5-09 Caleb Bogs  
5-13 Karen French  
5-16 Melissa Sindlinger  
5-20 Isdell Birnbaum  
5-22 Pastor Mendez  
5-25 Sonny French  
5-26 Eugene Meyer  
5-28 Kelly Gentes  
5-29 Shawn Goss  
5-30 Larry Harvey, Amina Lesso, & Paul Nitz  
5-31 Nicole Poppenhusen

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## ***Baptismal Birthdays***

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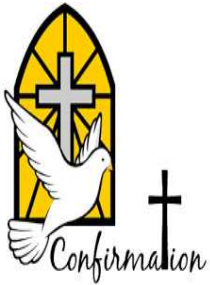
5-03 Gary McCorquodale II  
 5-04 Marie Fischer  
 5-14 Caleb Bogs, Yair Mendez, & Barbara Newbould  
 5-15 Don Cornman  
 5-19 Mark LaShomb  
 5-21 Justin Msampha  
 5-24 Barbara Ellis & Dwayne Lilley  
 5-25 Scott Gentes  
 5-28 Isdell Birnbaum  
 5-29 Mary Garrett  
 5-30 Melissa Sindlinger  
 5-31 Karen French




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## ***Confirmation Anniversaries***

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5-01 Sharol Aikman, Tess Clark, Trent Clark, Dale Haude, Mark LaShomb, & Troy Lilley	5-15 Marie Fischer & Luke Tusing, Jr.
5-02 Chad Lilley, Lester Sentesi, & Holly Williamson	5-16 John Stayton
5-04 Amanda Goss & Cindy Sentesi	5-17 Virginia Lawrence
5-05 Marica Carr	5-18 Jennifer Cornman
5-06 Clay Lilley	5-21 Kristyn Christie, Brent Harvey, John Lisius, & Eugene Meyer
5-07 Scott Gentes	5-22 Rose Goebel
5-09 Mikaela Odom	5-24 Gloria Meyer
5-14 Melissa Sindlinger & John Tautenhahn	5-25 Carolyn McCorquodale
	5-28 Sharon Gace
	5-29 Carol Gentes, George Gentes, & Ernie Pali
	5-30 Frances-Gale Bell

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## ***Wedding Anniversaries***

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5-09 Shawn & Amanda Goss	(6 years)
5-11 David & Kathy Honerkamp	(28 year)
5-15 Mario & Becky Reyes	(10 years)
5-27 Pastor & Gayle Bogs	(31 years)



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## ***Holy Days and Holidays in May***

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**May 1<sup>st</sup>** ~ St. Philip and St. James, Apostles  
**May 7<sup>th</sup>** ~ National Day of Prayer  
**May 10<sup>th</sup>** ~ Mother's Day  
**May 16<sup>th</sup>** ~ Armed Forces Day  
**May 21<sup>st</sup>** ~ The Ascension of Our Lord  
**May 25<sup>th</sup>** ~ Memorial Day  
**May 31<sup>st</sup>** ~ Day of Pentecost / The Visitation

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### ***Open Letter to the Church from Mr. Mark D. Hoffman, CFRE, MBA– Executive Director, LCMS Mission Advancement regarding COVID-19 and donations:***

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The arrival of the COVID-19 virus has organizations scrambling. Confident in the Lord's faithfulness, congregations are shifting strategies to deliver the hope of Christ and His grace to a shaken world. The government is seeking to preserve physical and economic life. With regard to the latter, Congress recently passed the CARES Act, which has two important benefits for people who may still be in a position to give charitable gifts this year.

Regardless of whether you wish to give in support of your own congregation, a Lutheran elementary or secondary school (including preschools), any of the Concordia universities and seminaries, missions, human care (mercy work), etc., the following benefits are immediately available:

**1. A partial above-the-line deduction for up to \$300 in charitable contributions:**

This provision encourages individuals to contribute to religious, charitable and educational organizations by creating a new "above the line" deduction for all taxpayers. This deduction will permit them to deduct up to \$300 of annual cash contributions regardless of whether the taxpayer itemizes contributions or takes the new, higher standard deduction. This is applicable for tax years beginning after 2019 and does not sunset after 2020 like the increased limits described below. Again, this new opportunity is available to all taxpayers.

**2. Modification of certain limitations on charitable contributions during 2020:**

This provision increases the limitations on for charitable contributions made in cash by individuals who itemize, as well as corporations. Such cash contributions must be made during 2020, and this provision does not extend the due date of the 2020 tax return. In addition, the increased charitable limitations for both individuals and corporations are not automatic but must be elected.

For individuals, the 60 percent of adjusted gross income limitation is suspended (removed) for cash contributions made in 2020. *Consult with an attorney, financial advisor or qualified accountant before acting on this provision to ensure you are safely maximizing your charitable gifts.*

For corporations, the 10 percent limitation is increased to 25 percent of taxable income for cash contributions made in 2020. This provision also increases the limitation on deductions from 15 percent to 25 percent of net income for corporate food donations made during 2020. The 30 percent limitation on non-cash gifts against adjusted gross income remains the same. *Again, we recommend strongly that corporations consult with their attorney, financial advisor or qualified accountant before acting on this provision to ensure they are safely maximizing your charitable gifts.*

Another provision of the CARES Act places a moratorium on the need for seniors to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from a Traditional IRA in 2020. Those with IRAs can still support ministry by having a LCMS Mission Advancement 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122 | 888-930-4438 | [mission.advancement@lcms.org](mailto:mission.advancement@lcms.org) Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) made from their IRA to a charity without having to claim the distribution as taxable income. A QCD, however, is not deductible from income taxes owed on other income. *Once again, consult with an attorney, financial advisor or qualified accountant before acting on this provision to ensure you are safely maximizing your charitable gifts and protecting retirement assets.*

We recognize that, for most Christians, giving to the Lord's work is not motivated primarily by personal gains or tax breaks. "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Still, we are obligated under our Code of Ethics and the Donor Bill of Rights to inform you of decisions made by duly elected officials serving in the "kingdom of the left" that can exert some influence over the timing and level of your giving during these challenging times.

I also want to share a couple additional recommendations for prayerful consideration during this period, culled from several sources:

- Consider giving less-, least- or even un-restricted donations, even temporarily. Loosening up the conditions under which a gift can be used — or choosing less restricted gift options — boosts the ability of congregations, schools and church-related nonprofits to quickly adapt and shift funding to where the dollars can do the greatest good. This shift also lowers their cost to administer gifts.
- If you've recently (already) provided a donation that was restricted for something very specific, consider giving the recipient organization (like your congregation, a university or seminary, or RSO) permission to use the gift wherever they feel it will do the most good. Paying salaries and health-care benefits may not be a glamorous kind of donation, but a gift to purchase a specific piece of equipment (as an example) won't happen if a school or congregation doesn't have the personnel to use it. As another example, a men's group that had been giving to support a specific missionary is praying about loosening that restriction, allowing it to help ANY missionary who has an equal or greater need for support.

Again, these are only recommendations to think about, discuss and pray over. They are comparatively small adjustments that can have a multiplying effect.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Concordia Plan Services, LCMS Foundation and the constellation of LCMS 501(c)(3) organizations are collecting, collating and pushing out information as quickly as possible to help all those whom God is calling to give witness to HIM as the only source of hope and salvation for a fallen, broken world. Thank you for all you are doing to keep the Gospel light burning. More important, thanks be to God for creating you and renewing you in baptism to be who you already are — His messengers of hope, light and love.

In service to our Lord Jesus, and to you,

Mark D. Hofman, CFRE, MBA

Executive Director, LCMS Mission Advancement

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

*Note: This communication is for informational purposes only; individuals should seek legal counsel or advice for their own unique situation.*

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## ***Stewardship Under the Cross: Do I Have to Tithe?***

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That is an interesting question: do we have to tithe under the New Testament? After all, tithing, that is, giving 10% of our income to God's work in the Church, is a regulation of the Old Testament. We live under Christ in the New Testament so does this apply to us today?

We might approach our answer to this question by asking whether or not we have to keep the Third Commandment — which reads in full from **Exodus 20:8-11**

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD

made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

So do we have to keep this commandment? Should we cease from all labor on Saturday as the people of the Old Testament did? Of course not! That was one of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ – and since Christ has fulfilled the Sabbath rest by resting in the tomb on Holy Saturday, we are free from the Old Testament Sabbath regulations. Thus St. Paul writes, “Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ” (**Col. 2:16-17**).

And yet, there the Third Commandment stands in our Small Catechism: Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy! What’s going on here? Well, look at Luther’s explanation of the third commandment: “What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but gladly hear and learn it.” So the form of the commandment, the letter of the law, has passed away as a shadow: but the spirit still remains. We are to honor God by our worship, by gladly receiving His Word and Sacraments in His Church.

So it is with tithing. The New Testament nowhere lists the precise regulations about giving this tithe and that tithe to the Levites and the Temple and so on. Those precise regulations were to point us to Christ: who represents the fullness of humanity though He is one Man, just as the tithe represented the fullness of the income of the people of Israel though it was only 10% thereof. We are in no way bound to these precise legal regulations of Old Testament Israel.

And yet, just as the fulfilling of the Sabbath Day doesn’t mean that going to the Lord’s House for worship once a week is obsolete – so also the New Testament does not make faithful financial stewardship obsolete. Rather, the New Testament is full of admonitions on this point: “On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as each one of you may prosper.” (1 Cor. 16:2); “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.” (2 Cor. 8:7); “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 and may provide in abundance for every good work” (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

So just as the Old Testament’s once a week worship became the benchmark for New Testament worship, so also the Old Testament’s tithe becomes the benchmark for New Testament stewardship. Not in the way of inflexible, minute regulations – but in the way of pattern and fulfillment. If in the New Testament we are called to give proportionally (“as each one may prosper”), weekly (“on the first day”), and “generously” - then surely the Old Testament tithe is the floor level of Christian giving, not the ceiling. As our worship in the New Testament is a greater fulfillment of the Old Testament Sabbath, so also our New Testament stewardship is called to be an even greater sacrificial fulfillment of the Old Testament tithing regulations.

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**May 2020**

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Church Office Closed	2
3 10am - Divine Service	4	5	6	7 10am - Bulletin Cutoff	8 Church Office Closed	9
10 Mother's Day 10am - Divine Service	11	12	13	14 10am - Bulletin Cutoff	15 Church Office Closed	16
17 10am - Divine Service	18	19	20	21 10am - Bulletin Cutoff	22 Church Office Closed	23
24 10am - Divine Service	25 Memorial Day Church Office Closed	26	27	28 10am - Bulletin Cutoff	29 Church Office Closed	30
31 10am - Divine Service (Matins)						