

Faith Matters - May 2021

150

THE LIFE OF FAITH

Past Present Future

1870-2020

Pastors' Page



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“Jesus said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?’” That question is recorded in Luke 24:38, part of the Gospel text we read in church a few weeks ago. It is one in a long line of similar greetings that run all through the Bible. Whenever God or an angel or the risen Jesus appeared to people, those they visited were struck with terror. The presence of a divine being posed an overwhelming threat to sinners. Yet, while that is an appropriate response, the divine messengers began by calming those fears. The first words they spoke were nearly always some variation of “do not be afraid.”

God’s persistent desire to calm the fears of His people is a vitally important word for us today. To me, the fear in our community and country right now is palpable. I have never seen people as afraid of any other disease as many are of the Covid-19 virus. Protests and riots convulsing Minneapolis and other cities raise fear of anarchy that endangers even innocent bystanders. A horrific rash of shootings across the country evokes fear that our society is completely breaking down. Add in seemingly irreconcilable political polarization, the apparent decline of the Church, drug overdoses and suicides plaguing the poorest and richest strata of society and any number of other problems, and it is fair to ask how we could *not* be afraid these days.

But into this range of fearsome realities, God now declares to you and me, “Do not be afraid.” Those words, however, are not a command, because God knows we cannot banish our own fear by force of will. Neither are they merely like soothing a child who is afraid of the dark, for God knows better than we do how real these problems are and how badly sin has fractured His good creation.

Rather, “do not be afraid” is a promise, a possibility, a new reality that is ours in Christ Jesus. Because we belong to Christ, it is possible for us to “be not afraid,” because His life, death and resurrection have overcome the power of death, broken Satan’s power and ushered in the forgiveness of sin. As members of the Body of Christ, nothing can ultimately threaten us, not even death itself. As St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 15, “‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’... Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Having received such comfort and assurance from God, we, in turn, can witness and be beacons of hope to those around us who are also afraid. We can sympathize with their fear, but also proclaim that ringing word of God to them, “Do not be afraid. Christ is risen from the dead! Satan is on the run.

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SUNDAYS 8 A.M.
KDUZ 1260 AM

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CABLE CH. 10
SUNDAYS 10 A.M.
AND 5 P.M.
TUESDAYS 5 P.M.

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There is now nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Lean back into His nail-scarred hands and trust His gracious promise to forgive and redeem you.”

A few months ago, our church association, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), sent out rubber wristbands to its pastors. (Mine is currently strapped on my coffee cup.) One side says “Isaiah 43:1,” which reads, “But now thus says the LORD, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name; you are mine.” The other side of the band simply says, “God’s got this!” And indeed He does. That great and gracious promise comforts us and frees us to live boldly and confidently, not denying the serious problems that surround us, but looking them square in the face and declaring, “God’s got this! Do not be afraid.”

Grace and peace,
Pastor Scott Grorud



Q: Why did Jesus include in the Lord’s Prayer the petition, “Lead us not into temptation”? Would God ever do that to us?

A: That petition has perplexed believers and confounded theologians ever since Jesus said it. James 1:13 states flatly, “No one, when tempted, should say, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one.” Martin Luther affirmed that in the meaning to this petition in the *Small Catechism*. “God indeed tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and protect us...”

The problem is that the petition itself suggests otherwise. God is the subject of the prayer and “lead” is in the active voice, not the passive. It does not say, “Do not let us be led into temptation,” but “Lead us not into temptation.” Why would Jesus have instructed us to pray those words in just that way?

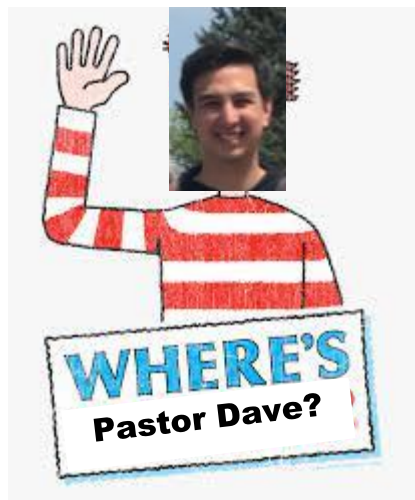
Any number of answers have been proposed. Some suggest that “temptation” is more like “trial,” a test of our faith. Others think that “lead us not” actually means “save us” or “spare us” from temptation. Those ideas are possible, but I am not sure that they fully explain the plain meaning of Jesus’ words.

Another possibility begins with the reality of God’s wrath against sinners. Divine wrath is not a popular topic in the Church today, but it is undeniably a Biblical truth. Psalm 90, for example, declares, “You (God) turn us back to dust and say, ‘Turn back, you mortals’... For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.”

The amazing promise of the Gospel, of course, is that God delivers us from that exact anger by forgiving our sin for Jesus’ sake. Yet, sufferings, trials and losses in this life can sap our trust in that promise and, at their worst, drive us to despair. Despair means to have no hope, not even in God, and that—even though we fall into despair rather than choose it—is blasphemy against God, for with Him there is always hope. That is why Luther’s meaning to this petition continues “...that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not...lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins.” At its worst, temptation lures us not merely to sinful acts, but to lose faith in God.

In this view, the petition, “Lead us not into temptation,” is not a threat that God might turn on us, but a plea for mercy. It turns on the paradox that the same God who hates sin, loves sinners. It acknowledges that God’s wrath at our sin is justified and that the consequences of sin in this life can be fearsome. Yet, that self-same God is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”

For those reasons, we pray, “Lord, lead us not into temptation. Spare us from your wrath against us so we are not tempted into blasphemy, unbelief or despair. Fix our eyes on the cross and preserve us in abiding faith, so that the troubles of this world may never blind us to Jesus Christ and the salvation he has won for us.” And what a vitally important prayer that is!



Where in the World is Pastor Dave!?

Hey Faith Family! After a year in which most major events and initiatives were postponed or majorly altered, it looks like things are finally opening up again. With that, I find that my schedule is filling up! Here are three things I've found myself involved in that will take me out of town for a bit:

- **Doctor of Ministry Cohort** - Up until this point, I have steadfastly resisted any proposals that I pursue a D. Min. degree. That all changed, however, when my good friend and colleague from college proposed we apply for the new program from Western Seminary called "Holy Presence: Eugene Peterson and the Pastoral Imagination." The opportunity combined multiple areas of interest for me: the chance to study alongside my friend and mentor, the chance to immerse myself more in the writings of Eugene Peterson, and the cultivating of a pastoral imagination. By the grace of God, we both were among the twelve applicants selected! This is a 3-year program that will involve me going to Western Seminary for a week in May and in

January. It should be noted that a Doctor of Ministry degree is a degree for practitioners, a practical degree. Whereas a Ph.D. degree is a stepping stone into academia, the D. Min. serves to further enhance congregational ministry. I sincerely hope this will be a blessing for both me and Faith!

- **LCMC LeaderCare Initiative**- The new Service Coordinator for LCMC, Mike Bradley, invited me to be a part of a pilot program called the LeaderCare Initiative. This strategic initiative is designed to position leaders to experience God's work of formation in six essential areas of their lives: emotional, relational, physical, mental, spiritual, and missional. This, too, is a 3-year program that will find me gone for about a week in July and a week in November. I'm thankful for the opportunity and for both Faith Lutheran and the Augustana District for supporting it.
- **Mount Carmel Bible Camp**- Once again, I am honored to be asked to spend a week at Mt. Carmel this summer. This year I will be in the teaching, rather than preaching, role. I'll be up there the week after the 4th of July. In addition, I have been asked to teach on the Gospels for a week in September for a new gap-year program called "The Awaken Project," which is also based at Mt Carmel. It's important to support initiatives like this that are creating new avenues to support college-age young adults and further ground them in the faith.

It's going to be a busy and exciting year! Thank you for the time to do these things! Fortunately, only a couple of these commitments will take me away from Faith on a Sunday. I look forward to sharing with the congregation some of the things I am learning. So, unless it's one of those weeks, I'll see you in church!

Pastor Dave Wollan

Upon This Rock *Plus*

Faith Lutheran's church council and ministry teams gathered for a retreat in April. One topic they discussed was if, how and when to pursue Phase 2 of Faith's long-term building project. The building we just finished paying for comprised only half the project. The other half includes a sanctuary, full-sized fellowship hall and a few other spaces. One consistent thought they had was the importance of building up seed money before the church takes any definite steps toward building Phase 2.



That's where Upon This Rock *Plus* comes in. The original purpose of this extended capital campaign was to gather enough gifts to pay off the mortgage the church already had. That has now been satisfied, so the campaign can now serve instead to gather funds that will allow the church to pursue Phase 2. Faith's members have shown astonishing support of its building needs through the years. As the Lord blesses you, please continue to give to Upon This Rock *Plus*, so that record might continue and the dream for our church facility might be realized.



SENIORS' SCENE

Pastor Paulus Pilgrim



Have you heard? Big things are happening at our local airport. We're talking about developments impacting not only Hutchinson, and Minnesota, but our nation. The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is instituting a program that requires a home base (Hutchinson) and some new construction at the airport to house people and program necessities. I don't understand it all, but I will have a better grasp of it when I attend the next **Seniors' Potluck** meeting in our Faith Center.

We are fortunate to have a senior member of our congregation who is deeply involved in the CAP organization, and has been for many years. Some years ago, Dave Skaar gave us a report on Civil Air Patrol and all it does. Now, however, he has something entirely new to report to us. He says he has pictures and designs to show us in his presentation. Should be exciting!

SO...don't miss our next **SENIORS' POTLUCK** meeting, on **Thursday, May 27, at 12:00 noon.** That's not a misprint. Come for dinner at 12:00 noon this time. Only DON'T bring potluck items. Your meal will be prepared and served to you. (Sorry, no herring just yet.) We hope that's a step closer to our usual potluck dinner. It would be nice if we could begin that again this fall. Maybe! Stay tuned.

Got it on your calendar? Do it now. **Thursday, May 27, 12:00 noon. See you at potluck!!**

Happy May from the Music Department!

As the program year comes to a close and we move into our summer worship schedule, I want to give an update on everything we have accomplished and everything to look forward to.



October 2020 - Ringers of Faith (RoF) starting playing again after a multiple year break. If you are interested in joining, let me know! Rehearsals will resume in September 2021.

November - December 2020 - RoF and Middle School Bells (MSB) played through Thanksgiving and the Advent/Christmas season. We introduced a new Evening Prayer Service. We enjoyed special music from harp, bells, flute, clarinet, and more!

January 2021 - RoF and MSB continued rehearsals.

February 2021 - Faith Lutheran Singers (FLS) resumed rehearsal after a year-long break.

March – April 2021 - RoF, MSB, and FLS played and sang through Lent and Easter. We enjoyed worship elements of re-enactment, Tenebrae, and brass ensemble.

Looking ahead! - Summer will bring music and worship in the park. Anniversary festivities. Fall brings in the Faith Lutheran Concert Series.

We have much to be thankful for and I am excited for what is yet to come.

Onward!
Austin




A Mission Witness Question:
Can Christ-Centered Community Be Virtual Long Term?
Reflections from Pastor Paul

In the past year, the Community Meal our congregation provides to the community has necessarily been done via take out meals. It was not prudent or allowed to serve these meals in person in our Faith Center.

In April, it was decided that we would invite people back to in person eating of the meal. Reports came back, however, that most of those who attended wanted the meals to go. This raises a larger question of what it means to be in community. Can human caring, human community be fostered indefinitely through virtual or dispersed experiences? This is a question facing our congregation.

With all of our important and valuable offerings of worship via radio, local access cable, and on-line offerings, could this end up costing us the value of in-person fellowship and caring? Will people value privacy, security, and convenience, but miss opportunities for supporting one another and caring for those needing a hug or a listening ear?

In a world where social media supposedly creates human community, is this really the case? As a congregation, we will do well to think long and hard about these matters for our witness going forward.




Host Homes Needed!
*Sunday, August 8 -
Thursday, August 12*

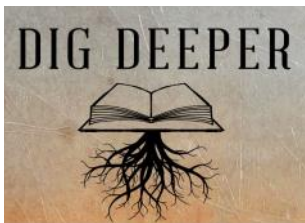
This summer, FLC will have 4-6 counselors from Green Lake Bible Camp come to Hutchinson to lead our kids in a day camp at home.

If you are able to host a counselor or two by providing housing for the week, as well as evening dinners each day (or host a dinner one night), please contact Laura for more information.

Outdoor Worship Returns

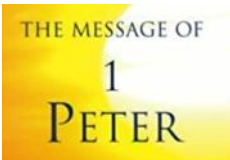
Faith Lutheran Church will again worship outside at Library Square this summer. Dust off your lawn chair, shake out a blanket, bring the family and join worship at Library Square beginning Sunday, May 30, at 10:10 a.m. Worship will continue outside through September 12. In case of bad weather please listen to KDUZ at 8 a.m. and watch the FLC Facebook page for information regarding moving inside to the sanctuary if necessary.





“Faith Seeks Understanding”
Continuing Learning Opportunities for Adults

**Continuing on Sunday mornings
at 9:15 a.m. through May 16**



**The Implications of Easter:
The Message of I Peter**

I Peter begins by declaring, “By (God’s) great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...” The rest of the letter spells out the implications of that new birth—making it a fitting topic for the season of Easter. Meeting in the Faith Center.

**Preteens, Teens, and Screams!
Help for parents of older children**

Remember when the biggest issues with your kids were teaching them to share and pick up their toys? As they get older, the issues become more complex. Join Pastor Dave as we discuss a myriad of issues we face with our youth, including screen time, anxiety, busyness, getting them to go to church, and talking about difficult issues. Meeting in the third floor conference room.



Are You Smarter Than A Heretic?

This Facebook Bible Study will sharpen your understanding of the true Christian faith by examining the false teachings of famous heresies throughout church history. See if you can ace the interactive quiz each Thursday night and avoid the same mistakes made by heretics in the past! Join Pastor Dave Thursdays at 9 p.m. on Facebook Live.

Faith Groups Study Continues

This spring Faith Groups small-group study, *God’s Service: the What, Why and Wonder of Christian Worship*, is delving into the central activity in our Christian lives, the worship service. What do the various parts of the service mean? Why do we do them? How do they work? What is the significance of this weekly gathering of God’s people around Word and sacrament?

It is a study to enhance your understanding and appreciation of worship. We hope the small-group experience strengthens connections within the family of Faith. If you are not currently a part of a Faith Group you can join anytime. If you are in a Faith Group and miss a week you can catch up with the video links on our website at FaithLC.com. If you really enjoy your discussion and want to share it with a family member or friend, you can direct them to our website also.



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Please Remember in Prayer



Please remember all those who are serving our country through active duty:

- Braiden Bjorge (Marines, Jacksonville, NC - grandson of Sandy Curtiss)
- Mike Bjorge (Air Force - son-in-law of Sandy Curtis)
- Petty Officer 3rd Class Mason Rutledge (Navy, New Orleans, LA - son of Lenny Rutledge & Patti Rutledge)
- LT Brett Stadskev (Navy, Corpus Christi, TX - son-in-law of Judy & Tom Felber)
- SPC Ryan Wersal (Army, Fort Meade, MD - son of Roger & Laurie Wersal)

Remember our Faith members in nursing homes & health care centers:

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Bryant Homes - Maple Plain

Ardell Novotny

Cedar Crest – Silver Lake

Patricia Lambert
Bernice Vorbeck
Lucille Wehking

Cokato Nursing Home

Clara Becker

Harmony River

Margaret Alrick
Willie Johnson (rehab)
Ruth Larson
Judy Lund (rehab)
Karol Nolte
Jean Pittman
Harriet Thor

Oaks

Marcella Brede
Beverly Kirchner

Prairie Senior Cottages

Pat Fimon
Harold (Swede) Sandgren

Woodstone

Dodie Fenske
Betty Garberich
Gerry Grams

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BUILDING FAITH
*“EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY,
FOR BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST”*
EPHESIANS 4:12
TO LIVE OUT THAT MISSION, GOD CALLS US TO:
FOLLOW JESUS
ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL
INVITE ALL PEOPLE
TEACH CHRISTIAN TRUTH
HELP ALL WHO ARE IN NEED

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