

Through Zion's Window

OCTOBER 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Last month I shared the difficulties I've had maintaining an enthusiasm for my faith and, since then, I've heard a number of you share similar challenges. I lifted out some options for sharing ways that we could encourage each other during these difficult times. One practice I omitted however is a central practice of our faith – Prayer.

In a time when we are physically distant from one another in worship, when our communion practice seems more individualistic than corporate and when fellowship time has been placed on hold the spiritual discipline of prayer becomes all the more vital for remaining connected to the source of our faith and to one another through the Body of Christ.

Prayer is important not just for these times, but as an on-going part of our faith journey together. If Zion and Cross are not places where prayer is central, it does not matter what financial resources we have, how robust our vision for outreach and evangelization, or how many gather for worship. Without prayer we may be a church that can “do,” but we will know nothing about how to “be.” To be together. To be generous and patient with one another. To be hospitable. To be in God's presence. Less preoccupied with what we “used to have,” than “being” content with what God has given us. “For godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tim. 6: 6-7).

Without prayer it is easy to lose perspective on our lives—individually and corporately. I know that I wouldn't be able to keep showing up to council meetings, team and cluster meetings were it not for prayer that centers me, prayer that recalls me to my purpose as a follower of Jesus Christ. This is especially important these days, because the transition to a different style of pastoral ministry has been draining and overwhelming; especially when every difficult decision about how to be church becomes a controversial one in our current climate. In conversation with pastoral colleagues, I am hearing many express frustration and exhaustion in their calls. Something of this sobering perspective is captured in an opinion piece by Jakob Topper in the Baptist News Global where he describes the challenges facing pastors and church councils as they lead “anxious congregations amidst a pandemic, a hyper-partisan culture, a civil rights movement, and an upcoming election [...]”

The purpose of naming these challenges is not to echo the headlines of a relentless news cycle but to frame the question: In light of all the hardships in our individual and corporate life, what are we doing to cultivate the spiritual disciplines that will enable us to live out our vocations? This has always been hard.

But with families cloistered at home with young children or aging parents, school-age children transitioning to virtual learning, folks out of work, individuals and couples dealing with ongoing health issues, this may be the hardest time to seriously cultivate, re-start, or even take up for the first time those practices that have sustained the church for two millennia.

I believe that prayer is the most fundamental element of Christian discipleship, and I am convinced that too few Lutherans pray daily beyond a blessing over food. We know we ought to pray—sometimes we just don't know how. Or we don't realize there are many different ways that Christians pray. We often simply understand prayer as thanks for what we have or asking God to intervene on behalf of ourselves or others with health challenges. But prayer can be so much more:

- We can pray in lamentation. Openly and honestly expressing the difficulty, disappointment, and disaffection we feel. Lament is a type of prayer we find throughout the Psalms.
- We can pray silently. Not coming to God with our words, but opening ourselves up to listening to God. Fr. Martin Laird, A 4th Century. Christian ascetic, says that inner silence (wordless prayer, contemplation) is a forgotten practice among most Christians today that has a decluttering effect on the soul. Fr. Martin describes this intimacy with God as: "Becoming so still before God that the 'before' drops away." In an age where screens and machines fill our lives with an endless stream of sounds and images that too often divert our lives from their true purpose, we would do well to take a spiritual inventory and ask ourselves: When was the last time I spent time in silence before the Lord? Not bringing any request but just quieting your thoughts in God's presence?
- Prayer can be imaginative. There has long been a debate within the church over the suitability of employing the imagination in prayer. Are mental pictures of our invisible God helpful or distracting? Are we liable to worship an image rather than God himself if we over-identify the pictures in our mind with the ineffable Spirit? Western Christians (Catholics, Lutherans, etc.) have tended to approve of mental images in prayer, going so far as to encourage prayerful "entering" into biblical scenes through an imagined "composition of place" in Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina involves prayerful reading through Bible stories where we try to imagine ourselves in the scene. What are we feeling as Jesus heals the blind man? What is it like TO BE the blind man receiving sight for the first time?

Too often we imagine that prayer is about piling up enough, of the right words, persuading God to "change His mind." But prayer is never about wearing God down until he sees things from our perspective; rather, our prayer is the means God uses to wear US down until we see things from HIS.

Keep at it. Begin again. Or start for the first time. But make prayer a priority. As we leave summer behind and step into the fall, may we confidently accept that while we cannot always see a clear way forward, we can trust that God has gone ahead of us to prepare the way.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Doug



Friday Coffee with Pastor Doug is back!

Each Friday from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, (*weather permitting) Pastor Doug will be on the boardwalk, behind Roots Coffeebar & Cafe, in Oconomowoc. Don't forget if there are more than 2 or 3 gathered masks will be expected (as well as Jesus' presence 😊).

* Weather permitting means no rain at the moment and temperatures 55 degrees or higher.

Please see our Facebook page for any last-minute changes:
Cross-Zion Parish

OCT BER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

02 – Scott Gramling
 04 – Pastor Doug Andersen
 05 – Allison Jones
 05 – Steve Louden
 14 – Annette Christopherson
 20 – Debbie Guenther
 21 – Aubrey Altreuter
 27 – Elda Wangelin

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

13 – Shane & Allison Jones
 15 – Phillip & Doreen Schultz
 17 – Jim & Vickie Schlieve
 22 – Todd & Annette Christopherson

PROJECTION OPERATOR

04 – Jeanine Heinrich
 11 – Jerry Liesener
 18 – Annette Christopherson
 25 – Carly Christopherson

ASSISTING MINISTER

04 – Carrie Wendorf
 11 – John Siedschlag
 18 – Jerry Liesener
 25 – Anna Gramling

USHERS

***Barth Liesener Team**
 Shorty Schuett
 Ruth Peirick
 Millie Moldenhauer

ALTAR GUILD

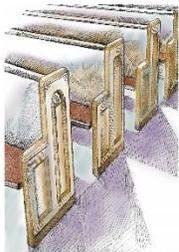
Millie Moldenhauer
 Heidi Tunak

LAY READER

Anna Gramling

SPECIAL DATES IN OCTOBER

*Pastor Appreciation Month
 04 – World Communion Sunday
 25 – Reformation Sunday
 31 – Reformation Day



View from the Pews

Sunday, August 30	23
Sunday, September 6	23
Sunday, September 13	26
Sunday, September 20	32



Sanitizing Supplies

With in-person worship resuming we go through a lot of sanitizing supplies! If you are in a store and happen to find sanitizing wipes or spray in stock, could you please pick it up for us? We would greatly appreciate it!



Saints in Light

All Saints Day will be celebrated Sunday, November 1, with a special tree lighting. Use the request form in this newsletter to honor special people in your life by lighting our tree. Red lights honor living friends and relatives; white lights honor the deceased. Requests will be accepted through October 25. Please place request forms/donations in the Evangelism mailbox.

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Please keep these people and families in your thoughts & prayers...

Art Hall
 Lois Wittnebel
 Ellen Braunschweig
 Shirley Chatfield
 Carly Ostrom
 Gordon Petersen
 Peyton Wolter
 Tom & Donna Meotke
 Steve Fuerstenau
 Wilber Pieper
 Ross & Jacob Kopfer
 John Siedschlag
 Palmer Wittnebel



Loss: On Saturday, August 29, 2020 we lost Pauline Hall at the age of 83. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family and friends during this difficult time, she will be deeply missed.

The Hall family would like to thank everyone for the cards, calls, meals, and prayers during Pauline's passing. They greatly appreciate everything that everyone did and is doing for them.



PLEASE COMPLETE A SECTION FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL (ONE PERSON'S NAME PER SECTION)

DONATION OF \$5 PER NAME GREATLY APPRECIATED. PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR EACH HONOREE; YOUR NAME ON THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE

Zion Lutheran Church, ELCA

Remember or honor a loved one or special friend this holiday season with this heartfelt gift.

"SAINTS IN LIGHT" TREE

Your donation will light the evergreen tree in front of Zion throughout the holiday season.

Red lights honor the living.
White lights honor the memory of those departed.

A BEAUTIFUL "SAINTS IN LIGHT" CARD WITH THE DONOR'S NAME WILL BE MAILED TO ALL THOSE HONORED AND REMEMBERED.

Please light a bulb on our *Saints in Light* Tree (one individual per light)

For: _____

From: _____

Please check one:

Red Light-in honor of friend or relative (living)

White Light-in honor of friend or relative (deceased)

Send *Saints in Light* Acknowledgement card to:

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

Please light a bulb on our *Saints in Light* Tree (one individual per light)

For: _____

From: _____

Please check one:

Red Light-in honor of friend or relative (living)

White Light-in honor of friend or relative (deceased)

Send *Saints in Light* Acknowledgement card to:

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

PLEASE PRINT

MY DONATION OF \$ _____ FOR THE *SAINTS IN LIGHT* TREE IS ENCLOSED.

YOUR NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

All names of those honored and remembered will be displayed in our church narthex.

Requests will be accepted through October 25. The Tree Lighting program will be on November 1, 2020.