



Gethsemane Lutheran Church
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*Our Shared Mission: We are saved by grace through
 faith to share the good news of the Gospel with all
 people and live God's love by our words and actions.*

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St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
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SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER – MAY 2020

*This Special Edition of our Monthly
 Newsletter covers information for the
 Congregations of both Gethsemane and
 St. Stephen's Lutheran Churches.*

Our Worship spaces will remain **CLOSED**
 for the entire month of **May**, as we navigate
 how and when to safely re-open our doors.

Visit either Facebook Page to watch



Daily Devotionals
and

Sunday Worship Services.

facebook.com/GethsemaneWallaceELCA

facebook.com/StStephensStephensonELCA

Northern Great
 Lakes Synod
www.nglsynod.org



ELCA
www.elca.org

TOGETHER

We PRAY

We SERVE

We LOVE

Jerry Rasner
Keith Thoun
Tracy Klatt Dean Gerue
Shirley Wangerin
Wayne Sundstrom
Stephanie Walren
Tammy Parrett
Emily Christenson
Evelyn Gewerth
Christine Havelka
Karen Raether
Lewis Nicholson
Robert & Macy Berzsenyi
Cheryl Bogdan Lorrie Stone
Denise Marineau
Dave Koski Lois Azelton
Caitlin Christophersen
David Kohrt
Luann Q. Kiefer
Michelle Bouchard
Darcy Fournier
Bob Slight Larry Pepin
Julee Nordin
Charlotte Brochhausen
Tammy Veraghen
Brian Raether
Sheila Konkel
Tom Wenger Mike Lubore
Coralee Mack
Kevin Havelka
Deloris Erickson
Crystal Salo
Tony Gill Becca Merk
Al Macco
Norman Putchak
Wayne Mulzer
Karen Grundstrom
Tim Christenson

THANK YOU FOR
HOLDING THE FRIENDS
AND FAMILY OF OUR
CONGREGANTS IN
YOUR DAILY PRAYERS.

~ * ~ * ~ * ~ *

PLEASE KEEP THE
OFFICE INFORMED AS
TO THE STATUS OF
PEOPLE ON THIS LIST,
AND WHEN TO REMOVE
THEIR NAME.

PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY And Their Families

Jared Jurmu
Brent Jurmu
James Dutkavich
Jay Chapple
Thomas Dutkavich
Julie Tanguay
Trish Dams

Birthday Blessing

2 Nancy Freis
3 Wally Majkrzak, Ian Bork
5 Al Raether
6 Nancy Diehm
7 Kathy Lesjack, Keith Thoun
11 Kami Salo, Paul Sederquist
12 David Bayerl, Shirley Olson
14 Stephen Kohrt
15 Karen Raether, Logan Parrett
17 Nancy Machalk
19 Carol Lindner, Katie Starzynski
20 Ryan Baumler
21 Lyle Revall
22 Joan Burie, Doreen Grinsteiner
23 Karron Wittgren
24 Katherine Majkrzak
26 Judy Anderson, Samuel Salo
27 Caitlin Christopherson
28 Julie Tanguay
29 Dorothy Peretto, Janet Voss

Happy Anniversary!

16 Jim & Karen Parrish
19 Keith & Ruth Thoun
20 Roger & Doreen Grinsteiner
22 Wally & Wendy Majkrzak

Corrections? Additions? Please contact the Church Office! Thanks!

Adding Someone to our Prayer Lists

*Typically, notifications of bereavement,
severe or sudden illness or tragedy, etc.
would be given to Pr Brenda / Office.*



May 2020: However, seeing as how we are NOT in a "normal" time of our lives, **simply call or e-mail Pr. Brenda**, and she'll include the news in our weekly prayers, and, if necessary, launch the Phone Tree Prayers for both Congregations.



FORTUNE LAKE LUTHERAN CAMP
A place of grace...
fortunelake.org

138 Fortune Lake Camp Rd.
Crystal Falls, MI
www.fortunelake.org
(906) 214-2267

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 1 John 4:7-8 (NRSV)

Many of you have memorized this verse around the campfire at Fortune Lake, accompanied by a chorus of guitars. The song uses the old language of the King James translation—“*everyone who loveth is born of God and knoweth God...*”—but the message is the same. Love is at the heart of the gospel message. It is essential to the work we do at Fortune Lake and the mission we share.

It is out of this deep abiding love for one another that we come to you with this message.

- Love for our campers, who return summer after summer to make lifelong memories with us.
- Love for our partner congregations who graciously support and pray for us, investing in our ministry on all levels.
- Love for our donors who give generously to see that this work continues.
- Love for our summer staff—young adults who were planning to join us from Mexico, Colombia, England, Hawaii, Alaska, Florida, WI, and MI.
- Love for this Place of Grace in its 90th year of ministry.
- Love for our local community of Crystal Falls.
- Love for the communities from which our campers all come.
- Love for our world in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.



It is out of this love that we share this message.

The FLLC Board of Directors came together on April 18 and unanimously voted **to cancel all Summer 2020 on site and Day Camp programs and postpone the 90th anniversary celebration** which was planned for August.

This difficult decision was made with heavy hearts. Like many of you, our summer doesn't feel complete without camp! We never envisioned this scenario. Still, we know that God is love. We trust that when we **take action out of love for others, Christ's love flows through us.**

As soon as we can safely do so, Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp will reopen. The board's decision leaves room for creative onsite options later in the summer, options that more easily support social distancing.

- We will continue to seek ways to support you and offer experiences to grow in faith.
- We hope to proceed with our busy fall calendar, which is full of retreats and rental groups.
- We will continue to stay up-to-date on regional, state, and national recommendations; we will update our site and programs within those guidelines.
- In the immediate future, we will show the love of God to frontline workers by making Fortune Lake available as a quarantine space for local health care workers, should the need arise.
-

It's okay to grieve the loss of Summer 2020 at Fortune Lake as we've known it. We grieve with you. But, as Easter people, we look to the resurrected Christ. With that same hope, we live in a present ripe with new opportunities, and await a future that is brighter and more beautiful than anything we can imagine.

"Beloved, let us love one another." **The world needs us now more than ever.** How glorious that day will be when we can again worship around the fire on the shores of Fortune Lake!

Grace & Peace,
Amanda Rasner, Camp Director
Ingrid Storm, Board President



**Looking for ways to support
Faith Formation at home?**

**Sparkhouse is excited to
announce Family Sunday School,
a free 8-week lesson series for families!**

Each week, Sunday school curriculum developer (and former summer camp Arts and Crafts director) Dr. Dawn Rundman and her family will host Family Sunday School.

Each episode presents a lesson, Bible story, illustrations, and other content based on Lectionary readings that families can watch together. They'll post a new lesson every Tuesday for the following Sunday.

Visit <https://bit.ly/FamFaithForm> to download all FREE materials today!



Special Online Worship Service: Sunday, May 17



The leadership team of the Northern Great Lakes Synod will be crafting our Worship video on this day, using the worship plans that would have been enjoyed at the 2020 Synod Assembly.

This special Worship Service will take the place of our regular, Sunday worship video. It will be based on the theme "Be Thou My Vision 2020" and will include participants from across the Synod (including Pr. Brenda), celebrating who we are as partners in ministry together. Tune in to our Facebook pages, per usual, to watch!



And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the fowls of the heaven places of rest, but the Son of Man hath not where he may recline the head.' Luke 9:58

Have a gently-used recliner that you're looking to get out of your household? We have a member looking for JUST that!

Help make someone's day
(and clear up some room in your home)!

Call Nick Diehm at 906.753.4651 and he'll assist with transportation to help take this recliner off of your hands. **Thanks!**



STEWARDSHIP & BETHESDA CEMEMTERY UPDATE

During this time of "virtual worship," we will depend even more on the generosity of this community. We pray that you will continue to support Christ's mission through sending in your weekly Offering.

Offering Envelopes



Don't have the fancy envelopes on hand? No problem! A simple envelope from your home will do, as well. The mailing address for each Church is on the first page of this Newsletter, and all you'll need is a stamp to send these gifts by mail.



Remember Your Offerings

The Financial Secretaries of each Church have been checking PO Boxes at the end of each week, gathering, recording, and depositing your offerings to be used for ministry. They have been delighted to find your gifts in the mailboxes!

*All that we are able to give flows directly from God's compassion and God's ever-abundant faithfulness. So, **thank you** in advance for all that you can do during these difficult days - through sharing generously and regularly throughout the crucial weeks to come, and by making a special gift of support if you are able.*

*And may God continue to bless and sustain us as we stand, **boldly and gratefully**, ready to share the good news of the Gospel with all people and live God's love by our words and actions!*



Alvin, level in hand, and shimmying completed on this post.

Bethesda Cemetery Update

- Nick Thoun agreed to mow again this year under 2019 terms. A 2020 work contract is prepared to be signed/filed.
- Sandy Chaney is pursuing the acquisition of a new, cemetery sign that will clearly identify our Cemetery.
- Keith Olson and Alvin Etelamaki worked on repairing the 15 leaning, fence posts on the east side of the property, pulling straight the posts and shimming the cyclone fencing.



Completed fence line. Straight as an arrow!



THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR BRENDA



Grace and Peace to you, dear Church.

My prayers continue for ALL of you during this strange and challenging time.

Between phone calls and texts and e-mails and messages, I **KNOW** there is a great desire on everyone's part to return to something "**normal**" – a routine that feels familiar, a worship schedule that brings us together, a time where we didn't have recall whether or not we had wiped that surface down or if we still needed to grab the sanitizer.

And yet, with each one of those many communications from you, Church, the message was clear: **NOT YET**. Many of you felt it too soon to burst open those doors quite yet, and I have to agree with you. Our state remains under a stay-at-home order, at least for now, and will most likely stay in effect in many places for the foreseeable future.

Our rhythms have been interrupted, our routines suspended as we watch new cases appear all around us. Fire Stations closing, hospitals stressed – this pandemic seems to be closing in all around us. Instead of letting information get the best of you, remember that we have a God who is wrapped around us, too: ***He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. Psalm 91:4***

Do you know what else I see as we wait? I see a community, busy reaching out to one another in ways their crazy and harried lives had not allowed before. I see those who sew making masks to protect others. I see the sharing of crafts and recipes and meals as gestures of love. ***Let all that you do be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:14***

I pray that you continue to adhere to the protocols that not only protect YOU but your most vulnerable neighbors, as well. Don't let fear or hype disrupt the trust we place in a God who walks with us through times like these. ***But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. James 1:6***

If you would have told this former Music Teacher that **SINGING** would actually be one of the things we might need to **AVOID** once coming back together again, well, I certainly wouldn't have believed it. Apparently, communal singing is AS dangerous as coughing when it comes to spreading the virus. Looks like for now, we'll need to throw in a ***Virtual*** Hymn-Sing or two to keep our spirits uplifted!

Folks at the **Synod** have been supportive by holding ZOOM conversations about **HOW** to re-open, **WHEN** to re-open, **WHY** we're being cautious, etc. Questions are asked and answered alongside other faith leaders, giving me a better sense of what to do when. In the meantime, I will continue to prepare **Daily Devotions** and **Sunday Worship** services, available on our Facebook site.

Pray for creativity – pray that technology continues to cooperate – pray for those who are alone – pray for the doctors and nurses and first responders– pray for those with worries unspoken – pray for our leaders – pray with thanksgiving and trust.

And know that I'm praying *for* and *with* you all,

Pastor Brenda



DAILY DEVOTIONS

FROM THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Sun May 3 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 23, 1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10

Prayer of the Day: O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon – May 4	Ezekiel 34:17-23	1 Peter 5:1-5	Psalm 100
Tue – May 5	Ezekiel 34:23-31	Heb. 13:20-21	Psalm 100
Wed – May 6	Jeremiah 23:1-8	Mat. 20:17-28	Psalm 100
Thu – May 7	Genesis 12:1-3	Acts 6:8-15	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Fri – May 8	Exodus 3:1-12	Acts 7:1-16	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Sat – May 9	Jeremiah 26:20-24	John 8:48-59	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16



Sun May 10 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16, 1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen..

Mon – May 11	Exodus 13:17-22	Acts 7:17-40	Psalm 102:1-17
Tue – May 12	Proverbs 3:5-1,2	Acts 7:44-56	Psalm 102:1-17
Wed – May 13	Proverbs 3:13-18	John 8:31-38	Psalm 102:1-17
Thu – May 14	Genesis 6:5-22	Acts 27:1-12	Psalm 66:8-20
Fri – May 15	Genesis 7:1-24	Acts 27:13-38	Psalm 66:8-20
Sat – May 16	Genesis 8:13-19	John 14:27-29	Psalm 66:8-20



Sun May 17 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31, Psalm 66:8-20, 1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21

Prayer of the Day: Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen..

Mon – May 18	Genesis 9:8-17	Acts 27:39-44	Psalm 93
Tue – May 19	Deuteronomy 5:22-33	1 Peter 3:8-12	Psalm 93
Wed – May 20	Deuteronomy 31:1-13	John 16:16-24	Psalm 93
Fri – May 22	2 Kings 2:1-12	Ephesians 2:1-7	Psalm 93
Sat – May 23	2 Kings 2:13-15	John 8:21-30	Psalm 93



Sun May 24 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35, 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11, John 17:1-11

Prayer of the Day: O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen..

Mon – May 25	Leviticus 9:1-11, 22-24	1 Peter 4:1-6	Psalm 99
Tue – May 26	Numbers 16:41-50	1 Peter 4:7-11	Psalm 99
Wed – May 27	1 Kings 8:54-65	John 3:31-36	Psalm 99
Thu – May 28	Exodus 19:1-9a	Acts 2:1-11	Psalm 33:12-22
Fri – May 29	Exodus 19:16-25	Romans 8:14-17	Psalm 33:12-22
Sat – May 30	Exodus 20:1-21	Matthew 5:1-12	Psalm 33:12-22



Sun May 31 – Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 1 Cor. 12:3b-13, John 20:19-23, 7:37-39

Prayer of the Day: O God, on this day you open the hearts of your faithful people by sending into us you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for Holy Spirit. Direct us by the light of that Spirit, that we may have a right judgment in all things and rejoice at all times in your peace, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.



PENTECOST

MAY 3, 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



Followers of Jesus shepherd one another.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 10:1-10	Christ the shepherd
Monday	Acts 2:42-47	Life among believers
Tuesday	1 Peter 2:19-25	Example of Christ's suffering
Wednesday	Galatians 6:1-10	Bear one another's burdens
Thursday	Ezekiel 34:11-31	God, the true shepherd
Friday	Romans 12:9-18	Marks of the true Christian
Saturday	Psalms 23	The Lord is my Shepherd
Sunday	John 14:1-14	Jesus is the way, truth, and life

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. **Acts 2:46-47a (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God our Savior and Good Shepherd, keep us close to your care, and in our times of suffering may we trust in you. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for preparing a table for us that we may be strengthened for our journey as we follow you, the Good Shepherd. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the shepherd and protector of your souls forgive you and give you peace forevermore. (1 Peter 2:24-25)



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MAY 3, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK
*Savior, Like a Shepherd
Lead Us*

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

- Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
- How does a shepherd care for the sheep?
 - In what ways can we care for one another as a shepherd does the sheep?
 - How is Jesus a shepherd to you?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Acts 2:42-47.

Every year the Fourth Sunday of Easter is the "Good Shepherd Sunday." Psalm 23 reminds us that the Lord is our shepherd. 1 Peter 2:25 states that Jesus is "the shepherd and guarantor of your souls." John 10 speaks of the sheep who follow because they know the voice of the shepherd (v. 4). Acts 2 gives a picture of what the community of the Good Shepherd looks like. It is a people who shepherd one another by sharing their possessions (v. 45). Together they study the word of God, have fellowship, break bread and pray. Fellow shepherds of the soul do these things. Daily they worship publicly but also break bread in homes with "glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people" (vv. 46b-47a). The result is a community that by its very way of life and by the power of God adds "to their number those who [are] being saved" (v. 47b). A community of people caring for one another witnesses to God's love and results in more souls in the sheepfold. How is your home a place to shepherd souls?

Pray: Good Shepherd, thank you for calling out to us through a community that cares for one another publicly and also in our daily lives. Amen.

SERVICE



"They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:45). There are many in our communities who are in need of food, clothing, and household goods. Organize or have a yard sale in your neighborhood with the proceeds going to those in need. If possible, place an ad in the local paper.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Draw or find a picture of a sheep. Imagine you are the shepherd for this sheep. Make a list of things you would do to take care of the sheep. Psalm 23 begins with the words, "The Lord is my shepherd." Read Psalm 23 and compare your list with the ways the Lord cares for sheep. Think about someone in your life who needs love and care. How can you be a shepherd for them?



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

MAY 10, 2020
FIFTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



Christian martyrs witness to God's love.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 14:1-14	Jesus is the way, truth, and life
Monday	Acts 7:55-60	The stoning of Stephen
Tuesday	1 Peter 2:2-10	A chosen people
Wednesday	Romans 8:31-39	God's love in Christ Jesus
Thursday	Hebrews 11:29-40	The faith of heroes
Friday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Contentment in suffering
Saturday	Psalms 31:1-5, 15-16	Prayer for deliverance
Sunday	John 14:15-21	The promise of the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." John 14:12 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, you send us out to witness to the work of Jesus; give us confidence and courage to be your faithful witnesses. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, may this food strengthen the body and your word strengthen the soul to be your witnesses in the world. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the face of God shine on you and bless you through the steadfast love of the Lord. (Psalm 31:16)



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MAY 10, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK



*Mothering God, You
Gave Me Birth*

WEEKLY MILESTONES



Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Where do you see God's presence in the world?
- What does the life of Jesus tell you about God?
- John 14:12 is about a relationship with God. How do you help others have this relationship?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Acts 7:55-60.

Martyrdom is too often spoken of today in terms of suicide bombs that kill. That is not a Christian martyr. Stephen presents the model of Christian martyrdom for all time. He innocently suffers and dies at the hands of others; he does not act violently. Stephen imitates Christ's death by blessing one's enemies (v. 60). He also experiences the holy bliss of being filled with the Holy Spirit and seeing the glory of God and Jesus (v. 55). He has a rapturous experience of the true God. Few of us will have that same experience, but we are still all martyrs. The word simply means "witness." We are witnesses to God's living presence when we suffer unfairly for the love of God, when we bless others, and when we experience the peace that passes all human understanding. In the midst of a world of hate, violence, and self-promotion, it is not possible to be a faithful witness on our own. It is the work of God that fills us with the Holy Spirit, witnesses to the love of God, and blesses others. Christian martyrdom is all around us. Who has been a witness to the love of God for you recently? *Pray: O, Holy Jesus, give me faith to witness to your love, to suffer with others for the sake of love, and to bless others with hope in your Easter victory. Amen.*

SERVICE



Psalm 31 is a prayer of deliverance from enemies. Even though there is suffering and pain, the psalmist writes of trust in the Lord and of God's goodness. Watch or read today's news. Who in the world needs prayer for deliverance from enemies? Pray for their deliverance.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Today is Mother's Day in the United States. It is a time to recognize and be thankful for those women in our lives who have cared for us and for others. Be a witness for God's love and reach out to a woman you know who deserves a special thank you with a phone call or a visit. Take time to talk and then say this prayer for her.

Lord God, thank you for (name). May she know how grateful I am to have her in my life. Please bless her this day and every day with your love and care. Amen.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

MAY 17, 2020
SIXTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



Jesus will not abandon us.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 14:15-21	The promise of the Holy Spirit
Monday	Acts 17:22-31	Paul in Athens
Tuesday	1 Peter 3:13-22	Suffering for doing right
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 31:7-8	God will be with you
Thursday	Acts 1:1-11	Jesus is taken up to heaven
Friday	2 Timothy 1:3-7	Thanksgiving and encouragement
Saturday	Psalms 66:8-20	Shout praises to God
Sunday	John 17:1-11	Jesus prays for his disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"I [Jesus] will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you."

John 14:18 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Come, Holy Spirit, give me the faith and strength to love others as Christ has loved me and the world. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

For this food and the people who have brought it from the earth to our tables, we give you thanks. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who made the world and everything in it, bless you with a loving heart. (Acts 17:24)



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MAY 17, 2020
HYMN OF THE WEEK
Holy Spirit, Come to Us



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or tell about a time you have felt alone and afraid.
- What do you do when you feel all alone or abandoned?
- Talk or think about a time you have felt God's presence when no one else seemed to care.

DEVOTIONS



Read: John 14:15-21.

The Gospel of John weaves themes into one another like a beautiful tapestry. That is clearly what is going on here in John 14. At the heart of it is that Jesus will not abandon his followers. He loves them and wants them to love him by keeping his commandments (v. 15), which is to love one another (13:34). Jesus will remain with us, his followers, through the presence of "another Advocate" (v. 16), just as Jesus himself is an advocate (1 John 2:1). The word "advocate" in the original Greek also means counselor, helper, or intercessor. The Advocate is here to help us. Like Jesus, the other advocate is the Holy Spirit, "Spirit of truth," just as Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, we still have Jesus with us through the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes Christ a reality in our lives today in that we may love one another and the world as God does (John 3:16). We are not abandoned after Jesus' ascension; we are empowered to live out the new commandment to love one another and the world. How do you, as a follower of Jesus, live out the new commandment?
Pray: The Lord's Prayer.

SERVICE



Jesus gives us the commandment to love others by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-21). There are times when it is not easy to love because of actions or things said or not said. Think of someone that it is not easy to care for and offer this prayer for them: **Dear Jesus, open my heart to the needs of others. Help me to care for (name) with your love. Amen.**

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



In John 14:15-21, Jesus gives us the promise of the Holy Spirit. One pivotal principle of faith formation is that faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships. Write a list of people who have influenced your life of faith. How did they influence you? Name a person who you have or would like to influence and pray for them this week asking for the power of the Holy Spirit to form a trusted relationship.



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MAY 24, 2020
SEVENTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



Eternal life begins now.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 17:1-11	Jesus prays for his disciples
Monday	Acts 1:6-14	Ascension of Jesus
Tuesday	1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11	Tending the flock of God
Wednesday	1 Thessalonians 5:13-28	Paul's encouraging words
Thursday	Deuteronomy 8:1-10	God's protection
Friday	Ephesians 4:11-16	Unity in the body of Christ
Saturday	Psalms 68:1-10, 32-35	Praise and thanksgiving
Sunday	John 20:19-23	Jesus appears to his disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **John 17:3 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Eternal God, give us the Spirit of Christ that we may know you and live with you today and with one another in love. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord of orphans and protector of widows, as we enjoy this meal, we pray for food for all people. Amen. (Psalm 68:5)

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ support and strengthen you. (1 Peter 5:10)



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MAY 24, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Change My Heart,
O God*

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Describe what a best day in your life would look like.
- What role do friends and family have in your life when you describe your best day?
- What do you think God would want as part of your best day?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 17:1-11.

Being with God in eternity seems to be something we anticipate after we die, but not in the Gospel of John. Eternity is understood as a life that begins now and is experienced through faith in "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (v. 3). Jesus speaks of his glory (vv. 1, 4, 5, 10). The hour of his glory is his suffering, death, and resurrection. We participate in Jesus' glory as those who remain in the world now protected by God (v. 11). Eternal life is experienced as a life of glory that knows suffering but also knows God in Christ in the world together. Therefore, Jesus prays that all of his followers "may be one, as we are one," that is, as Jesus and the Father are one. Eternal life involves a relationship to God that knows, trusts, and believes in Jesus as the one who is with the Father. One may ask, "How do you think you will experience eternity after you have died?" John's question would be, "How do you experience eternity now, living with God and with one another in a world that God loves?"

Pray: Eternal God, we thank you for the gift of faith that we may experience your presence in our lives through the body of Christ. Amen.

SERVICE

In 1 Peter 5:9, we are reminded to be steadfast in our faith. There are many places in the world today where Christians are suffering and being persecuted. Be aware of this suffering by learning more about it and be in prayer for those who cannot express their faith freely. Pray for missionaries working in those parts of the world that they will remain steadfast in their faith.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The disciples watched Jesus ascend to heaven as a cloud took him out of sight. Jesus told the disciples they would be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). Make a dessert in a glass alternating blue gelatin with whipped cream to symbolize the sky, clouds, and Jesus' ascension. Talk about ways you have been or can be a witness for Jesus. After you finish, say the Lord's Prayer.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

MAY 31, 2020
PENTECOST SUNDAY

taking+ faith home

Jesus sends out his disciples with the Holy Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 20:19-23	Jesus appears to his disciples
Monday	Acts 2:1-21	The coming of the Holy Spirit
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 12:3b-13	Spiritual gifts
Wednesday	Titus 3:1-8	Doing helpful deeds
Thursday	Genesis 2:4b-9	God creates a living being
Friday	1 John 4:7-21	God is love
Saturday	Psalms 104:24-34, 35b	God the creator
Sunday	Matthew 28:16-20	Sending of the disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." **John 20:21-22 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Creator God, through the Holy Spirit you create a new people chosen to speak, forgive, and give peace in the name of Jesus. Come, Holy Spirit, help us to bless the world with your love. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Gracious God, thank you for giving food to all you have created; open your hand and fill us with good things. Amen. (Psalm 104:27-28)

A Blessing to Give:

May God bless you with gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of all. (1 Corinthians 12:7)



MILESTONES
MINISTRY

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MAY 31, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK
*Like the Murmur of the
Dove's Song*

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

- Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
- What is something that worries you and gets in the way of enjoying life?
 - What would help you get over your worries?
 - How does the Holy Spirit strengthen you to overcome your fears and doubts so you can be a servant of God's love to others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 20:19-23.

The disciples were fearful and huddled in a locked room. We all have our reasons to be fearful and want to hide away. Jesus knows this. He is about to send his followers out to change the world with the power to forgive sins so that people will believe in Jesus and "have life in his name" (20:31). It will take a God moment for this to happen by Jesus giving them peace and breathing on them so that his disciples will receive the Holy Spirit (v. 22). This moment is reminiscent of the creation story in Genesis 2 when God breathed into the dust to create a human being. Jesus breathing on his disciples is an act of God to create not just a new human being but a new people, those who will believe in Jesus and have life in his name. Life can be scary. We can be afraid to act. On the Day of Pentecost we remember the giving of the Holy Spirit and are reminded that we have been created into a new people who can act with mercy, peace, love, and faith. How has the Holy Spirit moved you to act?

Pray: **Dear Jesus, breathe on us your holy breath that we may go forth into the world to share your peace and the power of forgiveness. Amen.**

SERVICE

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:4-5). God blesses us with the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, and healing through the Spirit. Through our God-given gifts, we are called to serve others. What are your gifts? How do you use them to serve others?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

When we recite the Apostle's Creed, we say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church...". With the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the holy catholic church with a small "c"—meaning the whole Christian church on earth—we are reminded of the gifts of faith we are given through the Spirit. We celebrate this day as the day the church received the Holy Spirit. Read or recite the Apostle's Creed and talk about what it means to you.



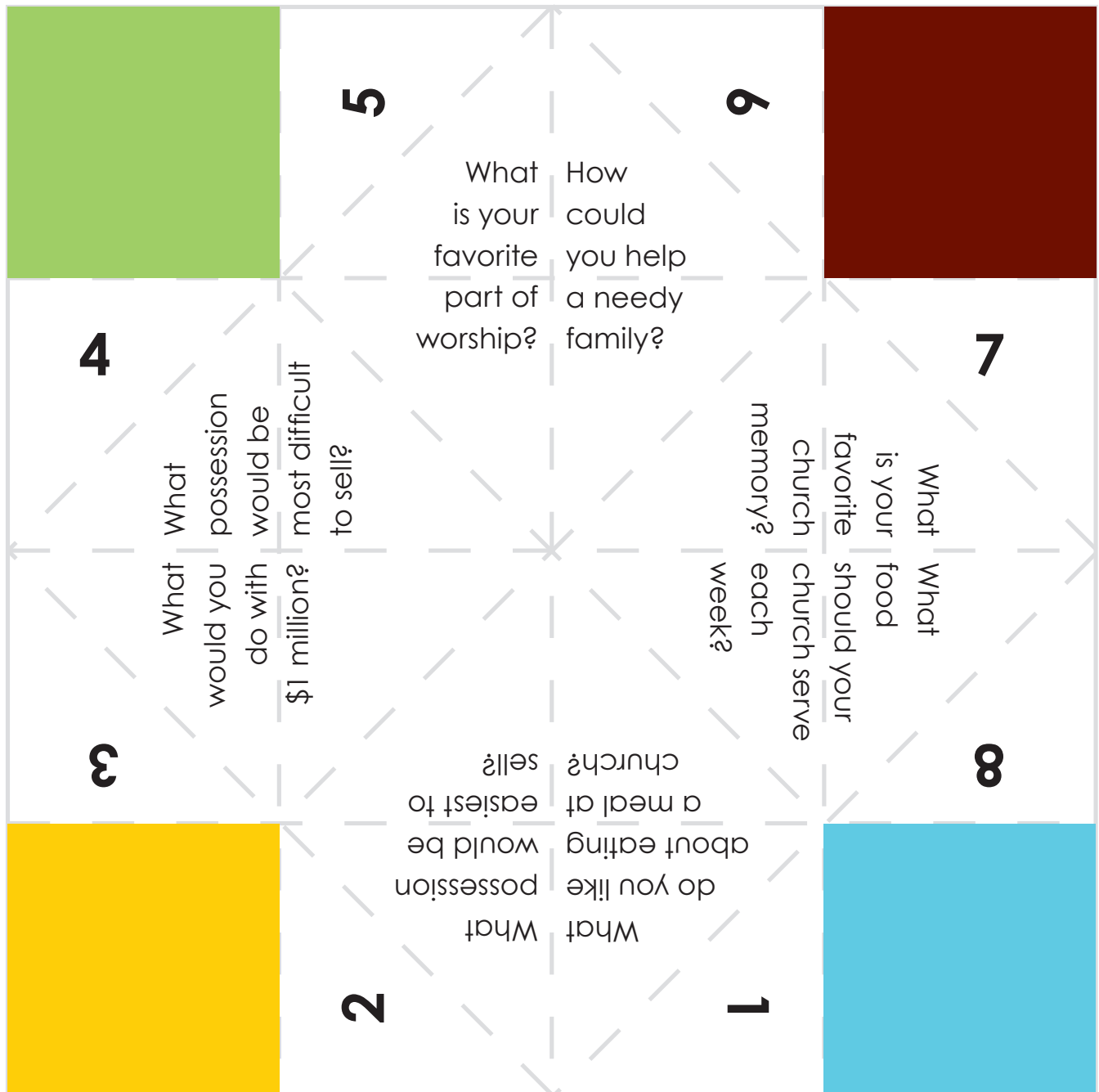
MILESTONES
MINISTRY

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Download even more free materials at:
<https://bit.ly/FamFaithForm>
 More info on Page 4 in this Newsletter.



Cut out and fold the Chatterbox. Ask a family member to choose one of the colors. Spell aloud, moving the Chatterbox in and out for each letter. Choose one of the numbers. Count up to that number, moving the Chatterbox in and out for each count. Pick a flap to lift. Read the statement aloud. Answer the question or follow the instructions.





SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER MAY 2020

This Special Edition of our Monthly Newsletter covers information for the Congregations of both Gethsemane + St. Stephen's Lutheran Churches.



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