



**SELC DISTRICT**  
Lutheran Church  
Missouri Synod

# The Lutheran Beacon

Let your light shine . . .



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May 2020

## Words of Gospel Comfort for the 50 Days of Easter-Tide

(submitted by Pastor Ken Ballas, EM)

Shared gleanings (some old-some new) from this year's Holy Week/Easter seasonal greetings included a note of thanksgiving to God from a consecrated SELC District Central Circuit layman for our church hymns (words & music) which prove a real blessing also when prayerfully read in our own homes. Please consider with me also:

I asked **Jesus**,  
"How much do  
You love Me?"  
**"This much,"**  
He answered.  
Then He stretched  
out His arms  
and **died.**

(INCLUDED WITH SLOVAK EASTER GREETINGS FROM TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA)

**"the forsaking tree [of the cross]  
seeks us as an empty trunk  
a treasure"**

(VERSE BY A SLOVAK LUTHERAN POET/PASTOR IN HUNTERSVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA)

"There is only one man, the Author of life, who overcame death and the grave

There is only one Lamb who is holy enough, whose blood has the power to save.  
There is only one Shepherd with love so great He'd choose to die for our gain.  
There is only one Lord, one matchless King, who is worthy forever to reign."

(SHARED BY LONGSTANDING LWML FRIENDS LIVING IN SUGAR LAND, TEXAS)

**"OH, how I Love You ALL!  
Listen to Me!" ... GOD**

(FROM ANOTHER DEAR CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN BROADVIEW HEIGHTS, OH)

**"Had Christ not risen from the dead, nothing else matters  
because Christ is risen, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS!"**

(SAINTED LC-MS PASTOR ARNIE KUNZ)

While all of us fervently pray none of us becomes a victim or "*carrier*" of the dreaded **coronavirus**, we "Easter Christians" are most well-positioned to take advantage of every *reasonable opportunity* of becoming "**carriers of compassion, healing and reconciliation**" to those around us.

(WISELY SUGGESTED BY A HISPANIC CHRISTIAN COUPLE IN OREGON)

"The God of Peace, who has brought again from the dead, **OUR LORD JESUS**, the supremely great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good to do His will, creatively working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs glory forever!  
**Amen!**"

(HEBREWS 13:20-21)

**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED ! ALLELUIA!**

# Handling a Pandemic

by Rev. Thomas Soltis

## Pandemics

Some worldwide pandemics were devastating. The Black Death, also known as the Great Bubonic Plague, spread throughout the near East and Europe from 1346 to 1353. It is estimated up to 200 million died. The virus traveled from China to Europe via the Silk Road and merchant ships in the Mediterranean. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Smallpox infected nearly everyone exposed to it and killed about 30% of its victims - about half a billion. Today the COVID-19 Coronavirus is on its worldwide move. Fortunately, we have better medical information and communication systems to stem the tide of infection.

## The Worry Reaction

Daily news reports about the spreading coronavirus stir feelings of worry and fear. COVID-19 is not selective regarding one's wealth or poverty, race or gender, moral or immoral lifestyle, social status, the famous or infamous, the young, middle aged or old. The reality of Genesis 3:19, "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return", becomes a more relevant reality to the psyche of society. A common reaction is worry. Lewis Thomas, physician, philosopher and dean of medical schools, writes, "Worrying is the most natural and spontaneous of all human functions." In his book, "The Body: A Guide for Occupants", he offers encouragement to those who worry about their health. He underscores the resilience of the human body to survive. For example, he writes, "Every day between one and five of your cells turns cancerous and your immune system kills them." Such reassurances are comforting, but the tendency to worry nevertheless remains, especially among those with a tendency to worry.

## Biblical Antidotes for Worry

Jesus advises, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own. (Matt. 6:34) Why worry about tomorrow? Jesus could come in the clouds of heaven at any moment today and put an end to all viruses and evil altogether. If His final day came, you would have worried for nothing. Besides, there's enough trouble in each day. Why pile up a multiple load of worries today regarding imagined future troubles. The extra load will weigh you down to make you sick without a virus.

## Pray! God Cares

God takes care of the flowers of the field (Matt. 6:26-30) and the birds of the air. (Matt. 10:27-31) He also cares about you. Embrace the words of 1 Peter 5:7: "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." Prayer is a powerful antidote for fear and worry. It utilizes the power of God to help, heal and deliver. God commands: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor me." (Psalm 50:15) Repentant Christians, believing they are fully forgiven through the redemption of Christ, pray with confidence knowing God fully loves them. He absolutely hears their prayers and wisely answers with a yes, no or wait. Trust Him and worry will vanish like darkness flees before the light of the sun ... Son.

## Stay Busy

"An idle mind is the devil's workshop" wrote Benjamin Franklin. It's also a workshop for worry. Keep your mind fully occupied during the isolation of pandemic social distancing. You'll have less time for boredom and worry. Keep busy. Take time to read more of Scripture, meditate and pray. Engage in family fun games; the bonding is terrific. Explore doing new things. Exercise; the body was created to move. Watch happy TV. Laugh; it's good medicine. Keep in touch; text, phone, mail and email to uplift others. If possible, grocery shop for the aged, disabled and infirm. Ohio Lt. Gov. John Husted suggested: "Now more than ever we need to help other people - lean on others when we need support." Even kids can be proactive, Deena Abdallah and Evie Pifer, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in Cleveland, Ohio, constructed a heart message of love using stones on the sidewalk of an elderly housebound couple they previously regularly visited. Crisis is a time to let love do its work.



## RELATED RESOURCES

[www.selc.lcms.org/stewardship](http://www.selc.lcms.org/stewardship)

"Health Stewardship" "Happiness"

**Prayerfully**  
**Weathering the Coronavirus**  
**Storm like Godly Sailors**  
**the Storms at Sea**  
**“When Ships and Sailors Begin to Fail”**

by Rev. Thomas Soltis

To be at sea  
Demands a sense of acceptability  
Of things one cannot change  
But by a prayerful interchange.

Sailors,  
Thick skinned and disciplined,  
Accept the whims of waves and wind.  
But when nature gets out of hand,  
Those wise steer clear of land  
And pray for deliverance  
From the death dance of demise.

Curse not nor howl  
When weather's foul.  
When wind-blown and battered,  
With sails tattered,  
Nerves shattered,  
Straightaway!  
Pray away!

With waves white with rage and soaring  
Before wild winds roaring-pouring  
Liquid arrows with piercing might  
From black clouds flashing deadly light -  
Straightaway!

Pray away  
Before water gets its way  
to seal your esophagus  
in a sea sarcophagus,  
The liquid grave grip of your sunken ship.

Pray the Lord of buoyancy  
To syncopate again a symphony  
With ship, sail, wind and sea  
in rhythmic, seaphonic harmony.

Then, when journey's done,  
Safely anchored before a setting sun,  
Enjoying the calm of a tranquil sea,  
Glorify God for His mercy.



“Lord save us!”

**Jesus Calms the Storm**

Without warning a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord save us! We’re going to drown!” He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

(Matthew 8:24-26)

Fear! It overwhelmed the disciple seafarers. In desperation they prayed: “Lord save us!” He answered their cry, stilled the storm and calmed their frightened hearts. He reminded them that a lack of faith produces fear. The coronavirus causes worry, fear and concern. The antidote? Faith and prayer.

**A Coronavirus Prayer**

Lord God, heavenly Father, may the coronavirus pandemic turn hearts to repentance, the saving Gospel faith, righteous living and prayerful hearts trusting in You for deliverance. May its spread be controlled and halted. Grant healing and comfort to the afflicted. Move all people to be compassionate and caring, reaching out in love to one another while wisely following hygienic health preservation procedures. Be merciful and fulfill our petitions in the name of Christ, divine helper, healer and comforter in time of affliction. Amen

(The poem verses are excerpts from a lengthier poem published July, 2001, in “Mid America Boating”, a publication of ILYA & OBCA, Cleveland, Ohio. The poem is based on Psalm 107:23-32)

## Bits & Pieces

### LWML Members Please Note!

by Milly Kwiatkowski, Interim LWML President, SELC District



The SELC-LWML Convention scheduled to be held May 1-3 has been canceled. We will set a new date at a later time, probably closer to the fall. LWML will not allow their Reps to travel till after May 3rd. Our main concern is to make sure that our women will be able to travel and gather safely. We ask for your prayers that the LORD will guide us in our Path to accomplish this task.

### O Christ of the Cross

BY REV. JOHN TELLONI

**On page 5** is a Hymn, "O Christ of the Cross," which is appropriate for the Easter season. It is a hymn of praise to the Christ of the CROSS, the TOMB, the CHURCH, the THRONE, and MY LIFE!

The five verses proclaim the Gospel of Jesus who has saved and sanctified His flock through the Cross and Empty Tomb in His Church from His Throne where He reigns over all, especially His Church, His beloved community, and how He blesses and sanctifies My Life through His means of grace.

It should be sung at a reasonable but firm tempo which befits a hymn for the Easter season of victory and joy and hope. I also have developed a five-Sunday series of illustrative sermons based on the verses of the hymn. Pastors and Musicians, please feel free to sing this hymn during your worship and to print out the words and notes in your worship folders. If you would like the sermon series, please contact me at [jlt3750@aol.com](mailto:jlt3750@aol.com). A Blessed Easter in our crucified and risen Savior Jesus!



**Our SELC District mourns the loss of Reverend Doctor David Paul Daniel**, noted scholar of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Eastern European History. He died peacefully at his home in Martin, Slovakia on March 12, 2020 at age 79. He is survived by wife, Slavka, a native of Slovakia, and three children.

An interesting coincidence, the Rev. Gary Arp and Rev. David Daniel were classmates at CTS (Springfield, IL) in 1966. They both participated in the "Biblelands Semester" organized and led by J.A.O. Preus with grants from Lutheran Brotherhood, parents and others. They were both called to glory on the same day!

### The Lutheran Beacon

This is your newsletter . . . Articles & Photos are welcome!

Send to: [gailpete37@yahoo.com](mailto:gailpete37@yahoo.com)

**DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE/JULY ISSUE IS MAY 12<sup>TH</sup>**

# O Christ of the Cross

Text/Tune: John L. Telloni  
 Arr. Lewis P. Porter, 2011

1. O Christ of the Cross, You have died in our place; Your love burst and de-  
 2. O Christ of the Tomb, You have ri - sen from death. You burst through the  
 3. O Christ of the Church, You are Shep - herd and King, You bless Your whole  
 4. O Christ of the Throne At Your Fa - ther's right hand; You prom - ise to  
 5. O Christ of my life, You be - stow truth and grace Through Gos - pel so

vo - tion are signs of Your grace. You love us, You save us Des - pite our great  
 grave with Your Fa - ther's own breath. You bat - tled, You con - quered The de - vil and  
 flock And re - move death's hard sting. You feed them, You lead them With Word, Bath, and  
 come back And take Your last stand. Your glo - ry, Your sto - ry Will then be ful -  
 clear I see e - ven Your face. You wake me, You take me to Your path of

sins! Our on - ly res - ponse is our praise now be - gins.  
 sin, And death is now past, Your new life placed with - in!  
 Meal. They fol - low Your voice With de - vo - tion and zeal!  
 filled As You take all saints to the King - dom You built!  
 love; For - giv - en, em - pow - ered, I seek things a - bove!

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## Fun for the Kids at Family of Christ (Tampa FL) "Touch a Truck"

On February 15 Family of Christ in Tampa held a Touch a Truck Event. We had 23 big trucks that kids could tour, climb in, and see various types of demonstrations. There were, off road dump trucks and bulldozers, 3 fire trucks, 2 Swat vehicles, 3 monster trucks, a helicopter, a moving van, rescue squads, the County bomb team and robot, various other trucks and the Family of Christ School bus.

The fire and rescue squads showed how they use the jaws of life to open a car that was then destroyed. The helicopter landing and take off was also a huge hit. The event drew about 1500 people and was the largest ever event on the Family of Christ campus. The youth raised money with drink sales and sponsors for about \$9000 for their year long project to raise money for wells in Africa.

The event is planned again for next year with an even greater array of trucks and rescue vehicles. The event was free and brought many people onto the campus that had never been there before.



## Mike's Message

by Dr. Mike Rodewald, Executive Director

### Lutheran Bible Translators

## Whose Place Is It?

One of our Bible translation consultants was working within a language community in a remote part of Africa. The process of Bible translation includes checking texts with local translators and influential members of the language community. This helps minimize mistakes and distortions and creates ownership of the final text.

A group was checking the Old Testament book of Job, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return (Job 1:21)." There was quite an animated discussion. The consultant asked them what was going on. They were confused. They did not understand 'mother's womb'. The advisor explained the place and function of the place in a mother's body which carries the baby. They replied, "The first house inside the mother is not the mother's place. That place belongs to the child." Within that language community's cultural perspective, the mother provides the 'first house'. She is given life-long honor through the providing, but that 'first house' is the child's as long as the baby needs its home.

When there is not an exact word such as to describe a 'womb', translation principle dictates choosing a solution which creates the least amount of distortion for those to which the Scripture is intended. For example, one might stick close to the original text, "I came naked from my mother's womb ...." and then put a footnote explaining 'my mother's womb' as that of 'first house' for the baby. Or they might make it more naturally understandable to the language community by rendering it, "I was naked when I came from my first house..."

Or the translators might even choose to paraphrase it, "I came on this earth with nothing..." In the end, the language community discusses and decides what form maintains the meaning of the original with the least amount of distortion while still being acceptable to the community.

There is a succinct point illustrated through the perspective of that language community. If we had the same perspective, it would change points of discussion for what is now a national debate in the US. Without the womb/house, the unborn child cannot be sustained. Possession for the one inhabiting the womb/house is arguably as valid and perhaps even more important than that of the one providing it.

In the same way that the mother provides a place for the child, God provides me a place in His Kingdom by faith through Jesus – a place which sustains me. The Bible is God's Word. It is God's communication to me through my own words. In the Bible I see the story of His salvation – Jesus coming to me right where I am. I am undeserving. I am helpless in my human nature. But salvation through Jesus is given to me anyway. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people... (Titus 2:11)." "Through faith, salvation is ours (Rom 5:1, Gal 2:16).

**We honor and serve not because God owns salvation or needs honor but because He has given us everything we need. You and I have salvation, not because of something we have done, but because God provides it for us. That is a good place to be!**



The Lutheran Heritage Foundation (an LCMS recognized service organization) provides free resources to you and your church for sharing the Gospel with neighbors and friends who don't speak English as a first language. Books like Luther's Small Catechism, devotions and children's Bible storybooks are available in more than 100 languages – and also make excellent gifts when on short-term mission trips! To search LHF's Publications Database, go to: [www.LHGmissions.org/Publications](http://www.LHGmissions.org/Publications).

## **The Sanctity of Life in the Shadow of Coronavirus**

by Pastor Michael Salemink, Executive Director of Mission and Ministry, Lutherans For Life

submitted by Ziggy Rein

What has the sanctity of life to do with pandemics and cancellations? Believe it or not, it's more relevant than ever. The Gospel of Jesus Christ belongs to just such a time as this. It prepares us for precisely these kinds of moments. Here's how we can keep speaking truth, showing love, and sharing life in the face of the coronavirus and cultural distress.

**Let's not abort the unborn.** Some will use this virus as the latest excuse to experiment with embryos for developing another vaccine or a stem-cell therapy. Do we have to let the emergency turn our little ones into nothing more than spare parts? One abortionist already advocated removing restrictions on RU486 because increased time at home equals more surprise pregnancies. Widespread dread provides the least rational and most hazardous justification for medically cannibalizing our young.

**Let's not abandon the elderly.** We can allocate healthcare resources, even in crisis, according to urgency of needs and not duration of years. Quality of life is in the eye of the beholder, which makes a poor basis for assessing survival. This outbreak already especially endangers the aged. Sacrificing them to it will embolden, not appease it.

**Reconsider the role of our bodies.** Disease transmission reminds us of some wonderful realities. A person's value means more than how attractive or productive we find her. Comfort, luxury, and indulgence do not trump everything else. There's no such thing as a personal choice or a private decision. We affect others wherever we go and whatever we do — for worse and for better. These bodies are gifts, not rights or burdens.

**Behold how defenseless and dependent we are.** But for the grace of God, we cannot sustain ourselves against the tiniest menaces. Humankind's selfishness long ago upset the harmony our Almighty Maker wove into the universe, and we have competed with creation ever since. Microscopic organisms have turned against us too ("cursed is the ground because of you"). Sin has rendered us little and feeble like an embryo, impaired and compromised as much as any hospital patient. Yet our heart beats and eyes blink—how relentlessly does the Heavenly Father preserve us!

**Take comfort that no one suffers alone.** Our Lord Jesus Christ has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows. He knows weeping and bleeding. The Son of God humbled Himself under hurt and obedient to death to walk its valley alongside us. His crucified forgiveness has emptied suffering of any punishment and filled it with purposes. In His hand even our pain accomplishes outcomes that far surpass its costs.

**Let's celebrate community.** What an unprecedented opportunity we have in school closings, travel restrictions, and working from home (or furloughs). Families, locales, and countries could unite in ways our fast-paced culture doesn't usually facilitate. Lean in to the household. Play board games. Read stories aloud. Reach out to aging relatives. Catch up with old friends. Check in on isolated neighbors. Use phone, email, letters, and cards when visits become inadvisable. Engage in real conversation with your husband or wife. How can we serve those whom the quarantining affects most adversely?

**Let's do more patting on the back than finger-pointing.** Contagions can make us suspicious of each other. Distances and differences can further impede goodwill. Practice patience rather than complaining, even with government officials, and commending instead of condemning, even with overseas populations. We're going to need one another in order to overcome both this peril and its opportunistic secondary infection: disrupted relationships.

**Resist the temptation to fill the extra time with screens.** No media delivers just the facts (or distractions). They sell products and philosophies, and scares and stories sell even more than sex. Seek truth rather than news ("infotainment" which often consists mostly of rumors and exaggerations). Rather than resorting to technology and toys, dive headlong into what your mind and heart really crave—connecting with fellow human beings.

**Remember the hope of a new creation.** Whatever this world robs from us, the resurrection of the body will restore. Pray not just to be spared from sickness but to be liberated from sin. Pray not only for ourselves but for our every neighbor. Pray, watch, and await with eager anticipation the day when God shall wipe away every tear from your eyes and there will be no more disease.

**Let's demonstrate the best of humanity and make the coronavirus pandemic of 2020  
the most life-affirming, Gospel-motivated event of our age!**

## **Urgent Information Regarding Financial Assistance amid Covid-19**

Dear beloved LCMS congregations, schools, RSOs and co-workers:

The peace of the Lord be with you! The matter that follows is urgent and deserves your immediate consideration.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the United States Congress has passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (the "CARES Act"), which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act is intended to provide economic relief to certain individuals, nonprofit organizations and businesses impacted by this outbreak.

One program under the CARES Act receiving quite a bit of attention is the Paycheck Protection Program (the "PPP"). Under the PPP, certain businesses, including nonprofit organizations, may be eligible to receive a potentially forgivable loan through the Small Business Administration. PPP loans may be helpful to nonprofit organizations (including LCMS congregations, schools, and RSOs) by providing money to those organizations to pay for certain qualifying expenses, such as payroll costs (including compensation), mortgage and rent payments, and utility costs.

SBA lenders will begin accepting PPP loan applications this Friday, April 3, 2020. It is expected that demand for these loans will be high and that organizations interested in obtaining PPP loans should be prepared to act quickly before the funds allocated to PPP loans under the CARES Act run out.

Given the speed with which the CARES Act was adopted, additional guidance may be forthcoming regarding PPP eligibility requirements and terms. Nevertheless, any organization interested in learning more about the PPP or applying for a PPP loan is encouraged to speak with an SBA lender to obtain additional information and begin the application process. A list of SBA lenders is available at [sba.gov](http://sba.gov).

Additional detail and information regarding the CARES Act and the PPP, including summary materials, FAQs and other resources prepared by Concordia Plan Services (CPS), may be found at CPS' website: [concordiaplans.org](http://concordiaplans.org).

In Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President  
Rev. Kevin D. Robson, Chief Mission Officer  
Frank Simek, Chief Administrative Officer

Useful links to additional information:

- [CPS Insider — Special Edition](#)
- [CARES Act Information](#)
- [PPP Summary](#)
- [U.S. Department of the Treasury — Assistance for Small Businesses](#)

*Please share this message with appropriate others.*

THIS NOTICE REGARDING THE CARES ACT AND THE PPP IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. THIS NOTICE IS NOT A DETAILED OR COMPLETE SUMMARY OR ANALYSIS OF THE CARES ACT OR THE PPP AND MAY NOT BE RELIED ON AS LEGAL ADVICE. THIS NOTICE REFLECTS THE CARES ACT PROVISIONS WITHOUT GOVERNMENTAL GUIDANCE ON MARCH 31, 2020. THE CARES ACT AND PPP ARE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AND INTERPRETATIONS WHICH MAY BE ISSUED BY ONE OR MORE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES.

## **Congregation Statistics Reporting Extended During Covid-19 Stay-at-home Orders**

Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services is extending the deadline for submitting 2019 year-end congregation statistics to April 30th. If you have already submitted your statistics, thank you!

Additionally, we have prepared guidelines regarding how to track worship attendance for 2020 year-end reporting since many or most congregations are not presently meeting in person.

While we understand that most congregations are, and should be, focused on meeting the spiritual and other needs of their members and communities, it will be critical once the current circumstances are over to understand the impact it has had on our congregations and the body as a whole. The comparison of statistics from 2019 to 2020, along with some additional research our department is developing, will be vital to that understanding. We are therefore asking that you make every reasonable effort to submit your information by logging in to <https://lc.lcms.org>.

If you have forgotten or misplaced your login information, please contact us at [rosters.stats@lcms.org](mailto:rosters.stats@lcms.org) or by calling the LCMS Church Information Center at 888-8435267.

From all of us in Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services, thank you for your ministry and service to our Lord. Blessings!

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**Concordia Publishing House** - Concordia Publishing House has an array of free resources online that you can access immediately: orders of prayer for use throughout the day, hymns, a special edition of Portals of Prayer with sixty daily devotions for times of distress, free access to our FaithCourses, Questions/Answers for your use while you read through the Bible (all four Gospels are provided, along with many other books of the Bible, and more.

Please feel free to visit <https://www.CPH.ORG> and you will see what we have available, just click on the three boxes and explore. We hope this is of help and comfort to you, to your congregations and to all concerned.

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CPH is also posing free licenses trials on their website for this express purpose. They are directly advocating it in response to COVID-19.