



# May

**take up the shield of faith** Ephesians 6:16

**May 2020 Newsletter**

## **From Pastor Nate . . . .**

### **The Long Silence**

At the end of time, billions of people were seated on a great plain before God's throne. Most shrank back from the brilliant light before them. But some groups near the front talked heatedly, not cringing with cringing shame - but with belligerence. "Can God judge us? How can He know about suffering?" snapped a young brunette. She ripped open a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. "We endured terror ... beatings ... torture ... death!"

In another group a Black boy lowered his collar. "What about this?" he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. "Lynched, for no crime but being black!"

In another crowd there was a pregnant schoolgirl with sullen eyes: "Why should I suffer?" she murmured. "It wasn't my fault." Far out across the plain were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering He had permitted in His world.

How lucky God was to live in Heaven, where all was sweetness and light. Where there was no weeping or fear, no hunger or hatred. What did God know of all that man had been forced to endure in this world? For God leads a pretty sheltered life, they said.

So each of these groups sent forth their leader, chosen because he had suffered the most. A Jew, a black, a person from Hiroshima, a horribly deformed arthritic, a thalidomide child. In the centre of the vast plain, they consulted with each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was rather clever.

Before God could be qualified to be their judge, He must endure what they had endured. Their decision was that God should be sentenced to live on earth as a man. Let him be born a Jew. Let the legitimacy of his birth be doubted. Give him a work so difficult that even his family will think him out of his mind.

Let him be betrayed by his closest friends. Let him face false charges, be tried by a prejudiced jury and convicted by a cowardly judge. Let him be tortured.

At the last, let him see what it means to be terribly alone. Then let him die so there can be no doubt he died. Let there be a great host of witnesses to verify it.

As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the throng of people assembled. When the last had finished pronouncing sentence, there was a long silence. No one uttered a word. No one moved.

For suddenly, all knew that God had already served His sentence.

*The Long Silence* was written by an anonymous author. While we don't clearly understand the "why" of human suffering, we know that there was One who suffered for us and promises to be with us in our suffering.

Together in Christ,  
Pastor Nate Bjorge

**Faith's Core  
Values:**  
*Discipleship,  
Hospitality,  
Prayer,  
Service,  
Stewardship,  
Worship,  
and Unity*

## President's Message



Dear Faith Family,

Adverse circumstances can sometimes produce exceptional outcomes. Take the Oyster for example. When a grain of sand gets into its shell, it secretes a shell-like substance (nacre) to coat the infiltrator. Over time, this process results in the formation of a Pearl, one of the World's most cherished jewels. Something far tinier than a grain of sand has intruded into our world, irritating, robbing, isolating, changing, generating fear.....Tiny Covid-19 slithered into our families, our schools, our churches like a grain of sand slipping in between the two shells of an oyster.

Covid-19 is a terribly invasive irritant. We need to wrap ourselves around it, doing what we can to contain it and turn it into something positive. And our dear members of Faith are doing that. We are creating a gigantic pearl! The financial support has been phenomenal! You all are beyond belief! You, our beloved congregation, are beyond generous, giving, praying, reaching. Nate's fantastic team sharing God's good news on the Web singing and sending good news surrounding the bad news and creating God's pearl reaching further than we ever dreamed. You are calling, helping, singing, praising, sewing, cooking, encircling the evil irritant and containing, creating, protecting God's kingdom, His pearl.

Thank you for all you do everyone,

George Sandy,

Council President

## Our Church Our City

With the **Day of Caring** being cancelled this year, local churches have been brainstorming ways to still serve the people of our churches and community. Introducing...

### Our Church Our City

Weeks of May 4-15

We want to serve those in our churches and community who may need some yard work done during this time of year. We will do our best to serve you and help where we are able with light yard work and clean up while still using safe social distancing and hygiene practices.

If you interested in receiving help OR volunteering please contact our church office (secretaryfaithlutheran@gmail.com or 320.414.0533 ) and we will coordinate times from there.

## Mission Statement

As Children of God, we are called to love, glorify and submit to the Living Christ, ministering to others by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.



Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand** your ground, and after you have done everything, **to stand**. **Stand** firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

**Ephesians 6:16**

**Faith Lutheran Church**

303 18th St. SE

Little Falls, MN 56345

## Congregational Life

Recently two “older men” from Faith congregation were out picking up trash in the brush and woods surrounding our church property. One said “I realize I am walking like an old man”. The other said “I agree, you do walk like an old man” Then, the first guy says, “I’ve watched you walk, and you aren’t doing so well yourself”.

When I heard this little story, I thought at least they are together, so if one falls, the other is there to pick him up!

I believe that, at some point in our life we all have “fallen”. It could be physically, emotionally, depressed, lonely, or lost. But through prayer God can send someone to “pick us up”.

Let us all look for someone who has “fallen” and be “God’s picker uppers”.

In this time of Covid-19, we cannot actually visit someone, but we can help in other ways. Send a note, send a flower, make a phone call, pick up someone’s RX and groceries, put a meal on their doorstep, and pray with and for them.

We will get through this unsettling time, but we need to take care of each other!

Stay safe and healthy and keep praying!

God bless us all!

Bev Larsen, for the team

## Youth & Family Team

Recently God has been reminding me and teaching me more about the nine fruits of the Spirit--love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Each aspect of this fruit gives us a different glimpse of God himself. As I have been learning about them, I have been praying them over our congregation and families. As humans our natural tendencies produce the fruit of the flesh--impurity, division, envy, anger (to name a few). Only by the work of the Spirit can we as humans produce “good” fruit. And so I pray...

*God as we spend more time with our families, I ask that you flood our homes with your Spirit and produce in us your fruit. Connect us to you, the Vine, and send our roots deeper so that we can remain nourished and strong in every season. Father you know well that as we spend more time with the same people in the same house our patience runs low. Lord, thank you for the patience you have with us. Help us reflect that to those around us and give us patience to wait on your perfect and good timing. In the unknowns and uncertainty, I ask that you give us peace. Peace that only comes from knowing who you are and your faithfulness. I also ask that you help us find our joy in you. Even in the tough times help us to rejoice in your goodness and your plan for our life and fuel our joy by reminding us of your eternal promises. And lastly, Lord may we rest securely in your love that you extravagantly poured out on us. May your love compel us to actively love those around us as we think of others’ needs before our own. Open our eyes to the needs of our family, but also our neighbors and through your Spirit allow us to have kindness toward them. Amen*

While youth ministry certainly looks different then “normal” we have still been connecting with each other and God through Bible App/Instagram devotionals, encouraging snail mail, check-in phone calls, and youth group over Zoom. On Wednesdays we have been hosting a middle school youth group at 4pm over Zoom and a high school youth group at 8pm. We have also had a couple of opportunities to continue to serve our community at the Morrison County Food Shelf (see picture below).



With the unknowns regarding the predicted timing of the “peak” of the Coronavirus, a variety of summer youth ministry scenarios are currently being considered. You can be assured we will use the wisdom and guidelines set forth by national, state, and church leadership and will continue to prioritize the safety and spiritual growth of our students. I plan to continue to keep youth and families updated via Remind text messages and emails. If you are not currently getting my emails or Remind messages, please email me at [youthministryfaithlutheran@gmail.com](mailto:youthministryfaithlutheran@gmail.com).

Trusting in the God who keeps His promises,  
Sara Stanton