

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I reflect on the past month, a song keeps popping in my head. Not the whole song mind you, just the refrain from *Runaway* by Del Shannon (1961):

*And I wonder  
I wah-wah-wah-wah-wonder  
Why*

*Why, why, why, why, why*

Everything that we thought was normal is either limited or no longer exists. This virus knows no bounds and strikes regardless of age, race, economic status, faith, or nationality. Many of us are sheltering-in-place or at the very least practicing social distancing. We are no longer free to go where we choose out of concern for ourselves or for others. Stores and small business have closed their doors, hopefully not for good. We wash our hands hundreds of times a day (slight exaggeration or maybe not), we wear surgical masks and gloves in hopes of not catching this bug. Churches around the world are learning to connect with each other as a congregation via the internet, social media, and digital worship. This COVID-19 pandemic has me wondering and asking why a lot, even in my prayers.

I am sure each of us are wondering when things will get back to normal, in whatever terms that means to you. Wondering when the time will come that we are able to gather in person for worship. Or when we can sit down and enjoy a meal at our favorite restaurant, or when we no longer must wait in line to enter Walmart. And if I had to admit, I wonder when I can mosey through Menards or the Home Depot instead of grabbing what I need and getting out.

This wonderment brings me to the Gospel readings for this month. The journey of Lent is behind us and we entered Holy Week and the season of Easter. We sang out "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord*" (Matt 21:9)! And then we witnessed Jesus perform the duty of a slave, washing the feet of his disciples and urging them to do the same for one other. And on Good Friday, we saw the Lord hanging from a cross, the sun made dark, the temple veil rent; the earth shaken, the rocks shattered because of the Rock; the dead risen to bear witness to the resurrection of the dead. And then the sun rose Easter morn and our sorrow gave way to "*fear and great joy*" (Matt 28:8) when two women are sent by an angel to proclaim the good news: Jesus is risen!

Even with this proclamation, we discover the disciples locked in a room for fear of the Jews. The risen Christ then appears and offers them peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But Thomas is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord. The outcome of this last visit brings a blessing to "*all those who have not seen and yet*

*have come to believe*" (Jn 20:29). The month comes to end with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel. Christ walks with them and it is not until bread is broken that He is revealed to them. I have no doubt the disciples and others were filled with "wonders and whys!" What was normal for them was no more. I mean, how do you even talk about "normal" when someone has been raised from the dead? And when this pandemic is over, what can possibly be the same for you and me?

Therefore, rather than focus on how soon 'till we can get back to normal; perhaps we should focus on what will we be free to do, try, and be in this new normal. I saw on social media last week a prayer titled:

*I Pray We Don't Go Back to Normal  
I pray that the next time a friend grabs me and pulls me in  
for a hug,  
I actually take the time to appreciate the gift of their  
embrace  
I pray that when school resumes and people are dropping  
kids off, they take the  
time to thank the staff for the amazing gift that they give to  
our community.  
I pray that the next time I'm sitting in a crowded restaurant  
I take the time to look around  
at the smiling faces, loud voices and thank God for the gift  
of community.  
I pray the next time I'm standing in church listening to the  
voices of praise and worship  
that I take a moment to thank God for the gift of  
congregations.  
I pray that the next time I see a person or situation that  
needs prayer, I hope I pray as passionately and fervently as  
I have these past few weeks  
Author Unknown*

Each day brings new uncertainties—but one thing that we, as Christ-followers, can always cling to is the certainty of God's character and the unchanging nature of His Word. In these troubling times, let us celebrate Christ Jesus' power over disease, misfortune, trouble, and even death, remembering His comforting reassurance from John 16:33: *I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!*"

May this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen!

Pastor-Intern Dave

Pastor Janet's  
*Joke of the Month*

A woman from Brooklyn decided to prepare her will and make her final requests. She told her pastor she had two final requests. First, she wanted to be cremated, and second, she wanted her ashes scattered over Bloomingdales. "Bloomingdales!" the pastor exclaimed. "Why Bloomingdales?" "Then I'll be sure my daughters visit me twice a week."

A Grandma who had serious hearing problems for a number of years went to the doctor to be fitted for a hearing aid that would return her hearing to 100%. She went back for further tests a month later and the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again." To which she replied, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!"

A reporter was interviewing a 103 year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 103?" the reporter asked. She simply replied, "No peer pressure."

**May Cause of the Month**  
**YWCA Women's Shelter**

The YWCA's mission is a membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people. Our imperative is to thrust our collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary. Support the YWCA Women's Shelter by using your global mission envelope in your offering box.

**April Offering**

04/05	\$6267
04/15	\$9007
04/21	\$3570

Offering has been counted on random days due to no public Sunday Service. Thank you for dropping off or mailing your pledge to Bethany.

Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$1888
Electronic Giving	\$8500
Online Service Giving to 4/22 (bethanylutheran.tv)	\$1845



**Wear Red for Pentecost!**

On Sunday, May 31, we celebrate the Day of Pentecost – the day that Jesus' disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We might or might not be worshipping together that day, but regardless, we invite you to wear something red – a red necktie, a red scarf, a red dress or shirt, how about a red facemask. If we're all still at home, take pictures and send them in to us, and we'll put them on Power-Point. It's a way to remind ourselves of God's wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, given to all of us.

**April Ministerial Acts**

**Funerals:** Douglas Stevick

**New Member:** Norman Paskowsky



**April 2020 Memorials:**

In Memory of **Duane Halvorson:**

Keith & Patty Rademacher, Debra Kunkel, Bryan & Nadine Holmly, David & Carla Reiten, Elaine Nelson, Rick & Jonelle Watson, Scott & Danette Frounfelter, Erna Pederson, Joel & Sonja Hernes, Mona May Dokken.

In Memory of **Wesley Mills:**

Brad Mills, Brenda Cook, Angie Mills Fischer.

In Memory of **Arlin Pederson:**

Gary & Sandy Brown.

In Memory of **Robert & Inez Serr:**

Janelle Serr.

In Memory of **Doug Stevick:**

Claire Larson.

## The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry has a garden. . .

Lord's Garden 2020

We will again be looking forward to heading out to the Lord's Garden on the Duane Brekke farm near Simcoe in the next month.

Depending upon the weather in the next week, preparing and planting our garden will be happening soon. Because of the virus concerns we will be making changes in how we do things but encourage you to consider the therapy of getting outdoors, social distancing and working to provide food for the many needy families of our community.

We again will be using "signup genius" for registration. We will head out to the garden on Tuesday mornings at 8:00 and Thursday evenings at 6:00. We will gather at the Food Pantry parking lot on west Burdick Expressway and drive out together with car pooling only happening for those who have family members or friends that you already have contact with.

We can follow one another out to provide directions for those unsure of where to go. Once at the garden we will EXPECT TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY, keeping a safe distance apart from one another. Please consider making this a weekly event to get out of town to safe place and serving others. For further questions contact the church office.

Online, text/call or QR code:

- <http://tinyurl.com/y4q4j7ky> (copy to your computer)

- Call/Text Carol at 701-721-0839 and leave a message

- Use your phone to read the QR Code.

**Iphone users:** Open your camera and point at the QR code. Click on "open signup genius"

**Android phone:** Download a QR reader app. Open the app and point at the QR code.



## Bethany Birthdays! May:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Kobe Ballantyne, Alexzander Rosencrans
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Maverick Hartleib
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Tim Lindsey, Adeline Mueller, Geraldine Peterson, Jim Sundley
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Randy Froseth, Sierra Willenbring
- 6<sup>th</sup> – Joan Irwin, Joshua Jensen, Anne Smart
- 8<sup>th</sup> – Mike Ennis, Ryan Lester, Darrell Michalenko, Bexley Zietz
- 9<sup>th</sup> – Barbara Aase, Eunice Farstad, Miranda Kasha, Tonya Knutson
- 10<sup>th</sup> – Darin Grondahl
- 11<sup>th</sup> – Shirley Frost, Benjamin Seier, Derek Smith
- 12<sup>th</sup> – Ian Holmly, Cyndi Morlang, Connie Westmeyer
- 13<sup>th</sup> – Stephen Davenport, Megan Sult, Sara Van Dyke
- 14<sup>th</sup> – Sandy Brown, Kaelyn Hirzel, Larae Hirzel
- 15<sup>th</sup> – Joan Hokenson
- 17<sup>th</sup> – Courtney Anderson, Lloyd Dahl, Roger Tollefson
- 18<sup>th</sup> – Axl Dopp, Jaden Grosz, Brian Mathson
- 19<sup>th</sup> – Brian Messmer, Brandon Ofsthun
- 20<sup>th</sup> – Miranda Dyke, Elizabeth Gehring, Jane Lommen
- 21<sup>st</sup> – Marissa Dyke, Julie Hoaglund, Tia Hummel
- 23<sup>rd</sup> – Michael Carson, Shad Froseth, Simon Ryan
- 24<sup>th</sup> – Ariana Diaz
- 25<sup>th</sup> – Dylan Alexander, Allie Wallin
- 26<sup>th</sup> – Tegan Schindler, Jaxon Thompson, Parker Wold
- 27<sup>th</sup> – Cooper Deforest, Travis Heilman, Ralph Kuhnhenh, James Morken, Eunice Rostvedt
- 28<sup>th</sup> – James Coffin, Emily Hedstrom
- 29<sup>th</sup> – Kyle Boster
- 30<sup>th</sup> – Steven Peterson

Also, Happy Birthday to anyone whose name is not on the list. If your name is not on the list then we don't have it, so please call the office with it.

Thank you!

**The Soup Kitchen** is still going strong at the Episcopal Church. Thank you to all who volunteer their time and effort to support it. Currently, all churches are doing brown bag lunches and handing out at the door due to Covid 19.

## An Invitation to Share in Ministry

Heart River Lutheran Church of Mandan is looking for people who would like send notes and cards to the young people who are residents of the ND Youth Correction Center in Mandan. COVID-19 has disrupted their lives and cut off their visits with family and Heart River church members.

Details of their "Project Pen Pal" include:

**What to write:** A short note of encouragement and reassurance. Tell youth you are praying for them. Remind them they are not forgotten, that they are loved, or that you believe in them. Perhaps a favorite verse from Scripture, poems, or song lyrics that are giving you hope right now. Tell a bit about yourself and how you are coping these days.

**What not to write:** Don't offer up too much personal information about yourself. You may share the general region or city where you live, but don't give your home address. Sign notes with first name only, or something generic: "Your sister/brother in Christ." You might share what you do for work or school but do not give specific name and location of your workplace.

**Other Information:** Most youth at NDYCC have experienced significant trauma, and more than anything, they need to hear that they are loved and not forgotten. The purpose is not to convert to any certain religion or way of thinking, but to simply offer encouragement and hope in a difficult time. Notes will be screened and removed from the original envelope before being distributed to students, to protect your identity.

Send notes to Heart River Lutheran Church  
Attn: Project Pen Pal, 701 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW  
Mandan, ND 58554

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## Sharing Holy Communion

At this time, we have no idea when things will be opened up again for worship in person at Bethany. There is a possibility that even when we do come back together, we will need to follow the 6-foot social distancing guidelines and therefore limit attendance at each service. These plans will continue to be discussed and refined as we watch and wait. In the meantime, we have heard nice comments about your experience of Holy Communion in your homes. Given that we are in special circumstances, we will not be celebrating Communion every Sunday during our live-stream worship, but you will always have the option of celebrating in your home, using the Family Table Liturgy that was mailed out to you. However, we will plan that on May 3 and 17 we will offer Holy Communion as part of our live-stream worship

service. This gives you an option to plan and prepare ahead of time should you desire.

We are grateful for your ongoing support and good wishes that come to us by way of phone calls, texts, emails, and Facebook messages. Also, your faithful generosity through online donations and offerings mailed in are truly heart-warming. Thank you for that!

Please feel free to call or check in any time. We hope and pray that you are holding up well with all the stresses associated with this time of physical separation. And continue to look forward to seeing you again in person when we can worship together, and enjoy that cup of coffee sitting around the tables in our Fellowship room.

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**The Bethany LYO** has been practicing social distancing and meeting on Zoom each Wednesday! These Zoom meets have been the highlight of our week. We have loved getting to see our teens who are able to join us and it has been so fun seeing our teens complete LYO challenges at home like get a piece of paper into a bin in the most creative way. Each week we all do a Bible dive and find a Bible verse to share. Last night we played Zoom bingo and had a fantastic time! Fred was our favorite bingo caller :-). We ended the evening sharing the God moments we've seen in the last week. It's been good for all of us to intentionally take the time to find where God is present, and most of the time it's in an unexpected place. As always we close with the Lord's Prayer. If any of you have tried to have ten people talking at once on Zoom you know that it can be tricky. We don't all say it at the same speed and it sounds a bit chaotic but we all know that, like in life, God is there in the chaos. We are praying that you are all staying safe and healthy!

Next week: Zoom Scavenger Hunt & A Social Distancing Pinterest Project with Shelley :-)

And If you have some time look up "You Say" by Lauren Daigle.

Blessings,  
Shelley, Jake, and Donna