



Faith Lessons from the Pandemic

Events such as the current pandemic remind us of several truths about the world in which we live. First, as we are shown the ever-present illustration of the virus, a microscopic organism magnified thousands of times, and hear detailed discussions about how it functions, and is transmitted, and the various mechanisms by which a therapeutic treatment or vaccine could stop it, we are reminded of the inconceivable complexity of our bodies and the entire natural world. As Psalm 139:14-15 declares, *"I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, that my soul knows very well. . . I was intricately woven together."*

During the Industrial Revolution, before the discovery of molecules, DNA, germs, bacteria, viruses, and all the rest of the infinite array of microscopic and sub-microscopic components that make up our bodies, the human body was looked upon in a simplistic way as just another machine, with muscles like levers, and the heart like a Victorian pumping station. We now know that beneath the surface, our bodies are more like a miniature universe, with a staggering conglomeration of billions of

individual parts, all working together in the extraordinarily complex process that gives us life. And at the apex of it all is the world's most powerful, complicated, compact super-computer: our brains, which we with all our modern science and medical knowledge haven't even begun to understand.

It is frustrating that it's taking so long for medical science to find a cure or preventative treatment for this virus. It should be humbling for us to realize that, even now with all our advanced knowledge and technology, exactly how many aspects of our world such as this virus function remains a mystery to us. As Psalm 139:6 admits, *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain."*

There is a lot of controversy about where this virus came from, but no matter what the immediate source, ultimately it has its origins in "a garden in the east, in Eden."

The current pandemic also reminds us that there is a much greater, overall "virus" infecting our natural world, a spiritually based virus that "put a monkey wrench" into the intricate system God created, and has thrown our world all out-of-whack.

The Lord warned Adam, *"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die"* (Genesis 2:17). God obviously didn't mean that Adam and Eve would die *immediately*, like one would from eating an apple laced with cyanide or some other poison. For, the Bible goes on to record that after their Fall into sin Adam lived to 930 years, and all humanity, including us, are the

descendants of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:20, 5:5). As Acts 17:26 says, *"From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth."*

Rather than bringing immediate death for Adam and Eve, the Lord's warning *"when you eat of it you will surely die"* meant that this act of sinful rebellion against His will and commandment would introduce the *phenomenon* of death into our world, not just for Adam and Eve but for all of humanity. Obituaries in the newspaper list many different causes of death. However, Paul explains in Romans 6:23 that every death actually has the same underlying cause: *"For the wages of sin is death."*

You could translate that familiar verse, *"Death is the consequence of sin."* Not necessarily the immediate consequence of a particular sinful act, but generally, for all of humanity, the phenomenon of death is the consequence of the sinful Fall of Adam. As Paul also explains in Romans 5:12: *"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men."*

This "monkey wrench" that was thrown into God's perfect creation by the Fall into sin affects not only us humans, but also leads to decay, destruction, and death throughout the natural world. As Paul says in Romans 8:20-21, *"For the creation was subjected to frailty . . . the bondage of decay."* This corruption of the natural world is vividly described by God to Adam after the Fall: *"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you"* (Genesis 3:17-18).

This corruption extends to the microscopic and sub-microscopic level, of molecules, DNA, germs, bacteria, and viruses—including the current virus afflicting our world. There is a lot of controversy about where this virus came

from, who is responsible, how did it spread. While those are important political questions, *spiritually* we already know the ultimate answer.

For, no matter what the immediate source, ultimately this virus did not come from any lab, but has its origins in “a garden in the east, in Eden” (Genesis 2:8). And while politically some nation may be responsible for its release and spread, *spiritually* we are all guilty: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the moment my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5); “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Why doesn't God *do* something about it? Why doesn't He *fix* our fallen world? That is the Good News of the Christian Gospel, God has indeed already done something absolutely magnificent to fix our fallen world: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Paul explains in Romans 5:17-19 how the “monkey wrench” thrown into God's creation by Adam has been eternally fixed for all who trust in Jesus, by His atoning sacrifice on the cross: “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the

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gift of righteousness reign in life through the one Man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For, just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one Man the many will be made righteous.” Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a Man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”

We should certainly do everything possible to counteract this virus and use the scientific knowledge and medical treatments God has granted us to combat it. Indeed, contrary to some who erroneously think true believers should eschew doctors and their treatments, Jesus sets forth the principle that the sick “need a doctor” when He proclaims, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick” (Matthew 9:12).

However, *spiritually* we know that the ultimate cure for this virus, and all the other manifestations in our world of humanity's Fall into sin, has already been found. As Jesus declares: “For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. . . I am the Resurrection and the Life; whoever believes in Me, even though he dies, yet shall he live” (John 6:40, 11:25).

Because of this assurance of the ultimate cure for what ails you, even in this midst of this or other great crises you can like Paul proclaim with confidence: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Please help spread the word about these decisions made at the Church Council meeting last month. Please understand that in the spirit of James 4:13-17 all of these plans are made “Lord willing” and circumstances could require our plans to change.

- We are resuming worship in our Sanctuary with a “Grand Reopening” service on Sunday, June 7, but with some important changes.
- Many have said they like the 9:00am worship time, so at least for June and July we will have our service in the Sanctuary at 9:00am (NO service at 10:00am).
- Between the main Sanctuary, Gathering Room, and balcony we believe that we can accommodate about our regular number of worshippers with adequate space to maintain “social distancing.”
- Because we realize there are many who do not yet feel comfortable returning to in-person worship, we are also going to continue broadcasting into the parking lot the audio only of the service while it is being held inside the Sanctuary, for as long as there is a demand, so that you may continue worshipping in your vehicle (or lawn chair).
- We are also going to continue livestreaming all our services on Facebook — “forever and ever Amen!”
- According to our regular summer schedule of Communion on the first Sunday of the month, our first service of Holy Communion will be Sunday, June 7. Because of the closeness of the altar area, to allow for “social distancing” Communion will temporarily be distributed in a continuous line, as is common in many churches, rather than kneeling at the altar.

- For the time being we will offer Communion by individual cup only, and both the bread and wine will be administered in a “contactless” manner.
- Those worshipping in the parking lot who desire Communion are asked to remain in their parked vehicles at the end of the service and after the closing hymn the pastor and elders will come out to serve you in your vehicle.
- June 7 is a fitting day for our “grand reopening” because there is an old tradition of churches having special celebrations, such as carnivals and homecoming services, on their “saint’s day,” the day in the church year commemorating the saint or other feature of the faith after which they are named, which in our case would be Trinity Sunday, which falls this year on June 7.
- We are suspending Coffee Hour, Sunday School, and Adult Bible Class until August.
- Plan now to attend our traditional Service in the Shelter House to commemorate Independence Day on Sunday, July 5, at 9:00am. We will also broadcast this service to the area surrounding the Shelter House, so that those who prefer may remain in their vehicles or bring a lawn chair. This service will include our usual first Sunday of the month Communion, served in the Shelter House in a continuous manner. There will not be an Independence Day potluck picnic this year.

Thank you to everyone for your patience and understanding during this difficult time when so many abrupt changes were necessary. If you have any questions or comments about our “Grand Reopening” and resumption of worship in the Sanctuary and Holy Communion, please share them with an elder, Kyle Minden, Ken Debrick, or Kevin Prothe, chairman Greg Windler, or Pastor Vogts.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

(Romans 15:13)

Sermons for June



Sermons by Pastor Vogts are available in both printed and audio form on our website at www.trinitylcms.org/sermons; as podcasts in the iTunes store by searching for “Rev. Kevin Vogts”; and printed copies of that day’s sermon and several of the most recent sermons are available in the Gathering Room.

June 7 – Trinity Sunday
“What’s So Special About Jesus?”
 John 5:19-29

June 14
“The Twelve Apostles”
 Matthew 10:2-4

June 21 – Father’s Day
“Adam and Christ: Mirror Image”
 Romans 5:12, 15-19

June 28
“A Picture of Heaven”
 Isaiah 25:6-9



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

June 7
 Rev. James & Angela Sharp
 Uruguay

June 14
 Dr. Martin & Marie Dicke
 Papua New Guinea

June 21
 Deaconess Caitlin & Seminarian
 Jeancarlos Ramirez
 Dominican Republic

June 28
 Rev. Steven & Cynthia
 Schumacher
 Ghana

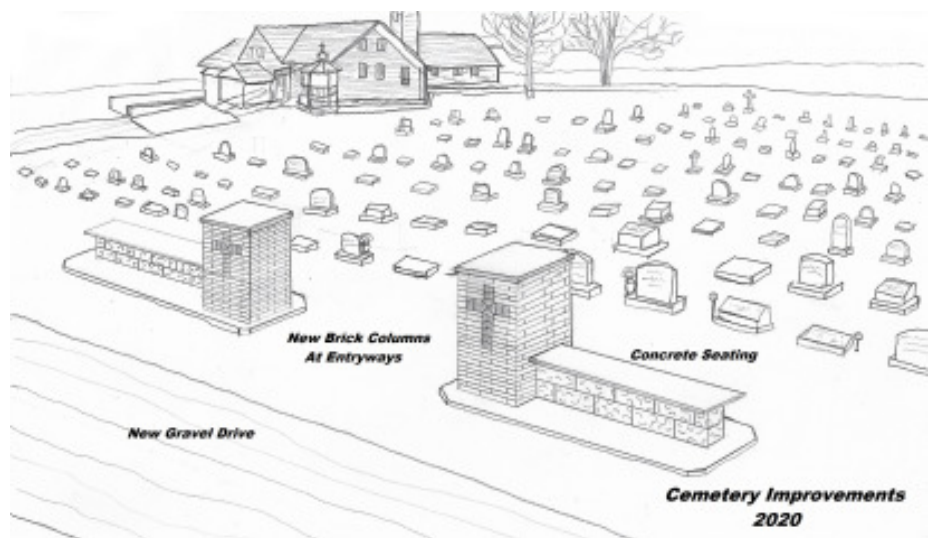
“Brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it is among you.”
 (2 Thessalonians 3:1)



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

- June 1 Kelsey Davis
- June 1 Sara Slack
- June 1 Michele Prothe
- June 1 Minna Meyer
- June 2 David Koelsch
- June 4 Arlin Prothe
- June 4 Jamey Kaiser
- June 5 Samantha Ferrell
- June 5 Linda Prothe
- June 5 Lance Stewart
- June 6 Rhonda Kerr
- June 7 Kendra Fuller
- June 9 Kendra Woodrow
- June 10 Madison Wood
- June 13 Ed Reyelts
- June 13 Augustus Prothe
- June 14 Chris Carstens
- June 14 Ethan Debrick
- June 14 Leland Prothe
- June 15 Kathy Hall
- June 15 Kevin Prothe
- June 16 Michelle Jones
- June 17 Bailey Kaiser
- June 18 Theresa Kettler
- June 19 Richard Honn
- June 20 Paul Brack
- June 20 Judy Minden

- June 21 Kim House
- June 21 Jon Wendte
- June 22 Greg Brandt
- June 22 Beth Curry
- June 22 Vernon Prothe
- June 22 Jacob Vogts
- June 24 Tina Edwards
- June 25 Beth Herrs
- June 25 Rich Wood
- June 26 Kyia Fuller
- June 26 Donna Prothe
- June 26 Allison Wood
- June 27 George Holtz
- June 29 Devin Bruce
- June 29 Betty Cline
- June 30 Garry Block
- June 3 Emerson & Wilda Bunch (64)
- June 4 James & Rhonda Prothe (15)
- June 8 Jeff & Jamie Ennett (18)
- June 9 Dave & Phyllis Trickett (53)
- June 10 Chris & Lana Kettler (42)
- June 10 Roll & Betty Prothe (48)
- June 11 ... Bruce & Gale Nowasell (32)
- June 13 Rick & Connie Holte (22)
- June 14 Jim & Sharon Prothe (40)
- June 16 Mike & Susan Schmitt (3)
- June 16 ... Michael & Cindy Puckett (1)
- June 18 . David & Lorranda Baldrige (15)
- June 19 Brian & Erin Meyer (16)
- June 22 Clint & Michelle Haley (18)
- June 25 George & Nancy Honn (32)
- June 28 ... Loren & Barbara Herrs (51)



Our thanks to Paul Haley for spearheading improvements to Trinity Lutheran Cemetery. The new gravel drive is in place and already greatly appreciated. It makes it much easier, especially for elderly persons, to visit the graves of loved ones. It also provide a helpful secondary exit from our parking lot. The bases have been poured for the benches and decorative columns marking the cemetery entrances and they are currently under construction. The main block used for these features is the same as the Shelter House, and the brick accents are the same as the new north wing and repaired south wall of the Church, so it compliments both of these structures and ties them together. In addition to completing the current row one more row of graves can be added east of the new north-south drive, after which the cemetery will expand west of the drive. This project is being funded by proceeds from the Blocktoberfest Committee and memorials. A portion remains unfunded so if you would have any memorial funds you would like dedicated to these improvements please contact Paul Haley or chairman Greg Windler.



Outdoor Worship July 5

We will celebrate Independence Day with an outdoor service in the Shelter House on Sunday, July 5, at 9:00am. The special order of worship will include favorite patriotic songs and Holy Communion, distributed in a continuous manner.

We will broadcast this service to the area surrounding the Shelter House for those who prefer to remain in their vehicles or bring a lawn chair. There will not be an Independence Day potluck picnic this year.

Statement by LCMS President Matthew Harrison

Discriminatory treatment of human beings on the basis of race is irrational evil and results in evil. It is folly, which can produce only anger and hatred. God's Word rejects racism. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). *"No one is righteous, no, not one"* (Romans 3:10). *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). All are equally created by God. All are equally accountable to God. The sins of all are equally atoned for by Christ. All are equally precious to God. Racial animosity is the result of sin and is sin in itself. Jesus Himself bids us love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and did so precisely while rejecting racial preference (Luke 10:25-37).

We deplore injustice. We deplore destruction, robbery, and doing physical harm to others. That, too, is injustice. We plead to citizens and governments of this nation for communities beset by poverty, crime, and injustice. We plead for rational and unifying policies that will end injustices and address social breakdown, lack of economic access, and other factors that fuel anger, hatred, and dissension.

We shall pray, and we shall proclaim Christ, *"in season and out of season"* (2 Timothy 4:2). *"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony"* (Colossians 3:12-14).