

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

January 2021 Newsletter

Romans 5:3-5

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

With everything that has happened this year 2020 has become shorthand for unimaginably nonsensical, awful, uncontrollable things. Whenever weird, bad things happen, I have heard people say, well, 2020. Many of us have been impacted by COVID fatigue and weariness from all the other drama and stress that has visited us this year. The effects of all this might have been magnified by our isolation.

We have been living in a time when Paul's words ring all the more true; suffering leads us to endurance which leads us to character which leads to hope. This is not merely our hope or hoping the vaccine will come soon and eradicate the pandemic. It is God's hope that always sees a bigger picture; not just next week or next year, not just our current concern or dream, but all of life, all of time.

We can't control things around us but we CAN control how we live in the midst of it all. People are always shaped by crises. We have faced a few. However we have a lot more control over how we will be shaped than we might know as we emerge from this thing. If we do not make intentional choices and decisions to live in God's image then it is easy for our base, selfish nature to become dominant. We may not be proud of it but we all carry that part in us. But that is not all of who we are. In our tradition we hark back to Martin Luther who says we are simultaneously saints and sinners; both at the same time, both living in us. The Cherokee tell a wisdom tale about two wolves that live in us; one is evil, one is good, one will destroy you, one will protect you. Which one wins? The answer is, the one you feed. Which one are you going to feed?

We get to choose. And the good news is we're not on our own. God walks with us in this journey. God does not cause or stop bad things from happening any more than parents can

protect their children from every skinned knee or accident. But like good parents God stays with us and holds us in the hard times just as parents comfort their children when they hurt – even when they are grown.

In a time that has felt like we are powerless over so many things, there are some things we have power over. We get to choose which wolf to feed, how we will live. If 2020 was a year of frustration, loss and fear, what will 2021 be like? This leads me to wonder whether 2021 might be a year for healing and reconciliation.

We are God's children. We are Christians, a name that delightfully means "little Christ's". God comforts us in our sorrows and hardship, and we get to comfort others in theirs. But that doesn't always just happen. It is a choice. We get to choose to bring healing or to languish in pain.

May 2021 be a year of healing, proclaiming and embodying hope and mercy, proclaiming and bringing peace. May we carry the light of Christ into this world as it waits for hope.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tom

Greetings Folks!

Welcome to 2021! As Christians, we ought always have an eye to what new thing God is doing in our midst. The expansive sweep of God's grace continues to bring forth new life, transformation, and reconciliation to our lives and our communities. One opportunity I hope that your family is taking advantage of is the upcoming **Something To Say** digital event hosted by Race and Faith and Holy Cross Lutheran.

The goal for the event is to equip, encourage, and engage families in speaking up against racism. The event will take place on online over MLK weekend, January 17-18 2021, and is available to families from Christ Our Savior at a registration rate of \$25 for a household. The content is intergenerational and faith-based, seeking to draw from the wisdom present in the stories of our own families.

Over the past year, I have spent a great deal of time thinking about how much our scriptures speak of the righteousness of God and our role to seek after God's righteousness. To draw on a saying of Prof. Cornell West's, we could easily say that God's righteousness is what love looks like in public. While conversations around racism can be grounded in shame, I urge you to consider how God's love for neighbors is drawing us into the work of anti-racism. Shame and anxiety will not sustain us in the work of justice that God calls us to as Christians. I believe love needs to be the fuel supply that is propelling us forward into this vital work, and there is love in abundance to be found on the Way of Christ. Let us go together, friends!

Blessings,
Pastor Joe

Congregational Meeting Announcement

Sunday, January 10th

Our meeting will be held on Facebook Live during each service (8:00 and 10:00 .am.) on January 10th

Please join us live on this day. Your vote needs to be live for it to count.

Congregation votes in the chat
Each individual family member name (first and last), yes or no vote

2 Budget Review Informational Meetings with Council Members

Please join council members, Maria (president), Jason (vice-president) and Mike M. (treasurer), on one of the following Zoom calls if you have any questions about the 2021 Christ Our Savior budget. Use one of the following links to join on the date and time that is most convenient for you. The calls will be open for 30 minutes each.

Sunday, December 27th at 11:00 a.m.
<https://zoom.us/j/97131626895>

Tuesday, January 5th at 4:00 p.m.
<https://zoom.us/j/95137101480>

Your Memories Are Needed!

As part of our history gathering, we need you and your memories (happy, sad, informative, anything works) from the past 30 years. If you would like to submit a memory or story about COS, please include at least the approximate year of your recollection. If you would like to be anonymous, please let us know.

Submit memories in the church office, by mail, or by email at office@coslc.com.

Thank you,
Maria, and the Church Council

Congregational Meeting



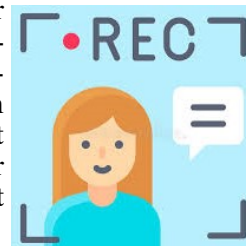
Winter/Spring Virtual Lector Sign-Up- Now Available!

If you haven't signed up yet, please do so. Winter/Spring sign up is now available on SignUpGenius for Jan-May 2021. Please sign up 1x/month to fill the open spots. Sign up under volunteers on our website. Questions?? Contact Maria Liedtke at maria@liedtkebrewing.com.



Join Our Virtual Lector Team!

Would you like to be a virtual reader during our online worship services? We provide you with the scripture verse and recording instructions in advance. You make the recording at home when it is convenient for you. For more information, contact Amy at amy@coslc.com.



Bread of Healing Take-Out Chili Meals

Wednesday, January 13th

Let's do it again! Our chili take-out bags were a hit at Cross, so we're going to make more this month. On Wednesday, January 13th, we'll be delivering chili take-out bags to Cross Lutheran Church. Each bag will include chili, toppings, and cornbread. We are looking for two volunteers to fill toppings (Tuesday evening), two volunteers to assemble bags (Wednesday morning), and 1 volunteer to deliver bags to Cross (Wednesday before 10:00 a.m.). If interested in helping, please reach out to Chuck Liedtke at chuck.liedtke@sodexo.com.



Serenity Inns

Tuesday, January 19th

On Tuesday, January 19th, Hank will be delivering our meal to Serenity Inns. If you have not yet helped with preparing a meal or donating food items, please consider doing so this month. Our friends at Serenity Inns need our support and are so grateful! Items can be dropped off at church inside the east doors (under the canopy) by 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday. If you would like to help with this ministry, contact Hank Wallenkamp at 262-525-1211.



Sunday School News

Zoom Sunday School will resume Sunday, January 10th at 10:45 A.M. you will find the link in the weekly Sunday School Newsletter. This month we are asking the kids to make pictures and notes of encouragement to be placed into snack bags that will be handed out at the Milwaukee Guest House homeless shelter. Supplies will be in the Sunday School Craft bags located in the bin outside the east entrance. For questions contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com.



5th Grade First Communion Classes

First communion class will begin Wednesday, February 24-March 24 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Registration is now open [Registration](#). More information will be sent out to all families in January. For questions contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com



7th and 8th Grade Confirmation

Zoom Confirmation will resume on Sunday, January 10th at 6:30 PM. We will be making 60 snack bags for the Milwaukee Guest House every Sunday in January and February! Small groups will be assigned a Sunday where they will be asked to pack 60 lunch bags with a dessert, Slims, water, chips and other snacks. Fruit will also be provided for them as well on the side. Please watch for more information.



Mac-n-More

This January, we'll be building another pallet of nutritious foods along with our traditional gift of mac-n-cheese to share with our brothers and sisters at Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. We can share God's love by ensuring their nutritional needs are met while we help to make their tummies full. Below is the list of items we will be collecting during our January drive.



- Fruit - Canned in 100% juice or dried (e.g. raisins)
- Canned beans, tuna, and chicken
- Vegetables - canned, low sodium
- Shelf stable dairy - such as boxed milk
- Whole grain, low sugar grain products like brown rice or non-sugary whole grain cereal
- Mac-n-cheese

Drop off your donations in the east entryway.

TACOS

Happy New Year Everyone! We are so happy at TACOS to be turning the corner into 2021, and we can't wait to see what this year holds!



Much has changed in the landscape of TACOS and our Virtual Mode will still exist as our primary program until it is determined to safely gather again in-person. You can still find all that you need to know at our website, tacosoutreach.com, or by following us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. We will work on switching up our weekly activities, so make sure you check in to see what is new and fresh!

On one final note of 2020, I would like to report on how our final service project went. I'm so grateful to share that we made 131 ornaments that were donated to the ERAS Senior Network and distributed in the Harambee Neighborhood in Milwaukee! Thank you so much to all who helped in making ornaments to spread holiday cheer at the end of the year!

For any and all upcoming TACOS activities, make sure to stay up to date with us on our website and Facebook!

Zoom Conversation

Continuing the conversation around racial justice in the US, Pastor Joe will be hosting an 8-week Sunday morning conversation group from January 10th – February 28th. The group will meet by Zoom from 8:45-9:30 a.m., and will focus conversation around the podcast "By Every Measure" produced by 88Nine Radio Milwaukee. (radiomilwaukee.org/measure/).



For more information, email Pastor Joe at pastorjoe@coslc.com.

Something to Say

In collaboration with Holy Cross and the organization, Race and Faith, we have the opportunity to cultivate our ability to speak up on behalf of vulnerable folks and oppose racism.

"Something to Say" is an intergenerational, faith-based, anti-racism effort. The goal is to equip, encourage, and engage families in speaking up about racism. When racism appears in our world, everyone has "something to say." "Something to Say" will be an online event on MLK weekend, January 17-18, 2021.

Registration for the event is open and costs \$25 per household. For more information, email Pastor Joe at pastorjoe@coslc.com.



Status of Church During COVID

Thanks be to God, there are effective vaccines becoming available for the dreaded COVID-19 virus that has so severely impacted our nation. The caution from epidemiologists is this does not mean the crisis is over. We are also being warned about a “dark winter” with anticipated spikes in the infection and death rates from COVID-19. Their guidance is for us to continue to take precautions of wearing masks, isolating, avoiding any indoor public gatherings and of course, to get the vaccine when it is available to you. Current estimates indicate the vaccine will be available to most people by mid-year 2021. There is a light. We can see it, but it is still far off even though it is getting closer.



For now, we wait, but we wait also knowing an end is in sight. What a relief! But we are not there yet. We are hopeful that we will be able to re-open for public worship sooner than later. When that time comes, it will most likely be in small increments. As epidemiologists put it, its more like using a dimmer switch than flipping a light switch.

While we wait, we continue our mission and purpose; caring for the least, the lost, and the last, providing alternate opportunities for worship and learning online, and living into different expressions of what it means to live our faith.

As we look to the future, we hope to perpetuate what has worked best from the past AND continue what we have learned works well in this time of separation. Our church council and church staff are focused on being prepared for the day when we will be able to gather again. In the meantime, pray for our nation, pray for your neighbors, and pray for your church.

Giving Tree Thank You

This year we had to adapt our Giving Tree in many ways, but one thing that didn't change was your love and support for the people experiencing hardship in our community at Christmas. We adopted three families from the Christmas Clearing Council, which included 12 children and 5 adults. We were blessed to be able to deliver over 50 gifts to these three adopted families. We also distributed over 80 gift cards to our ministry partners including Serenity Inns, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Cross Lutheran Church, Eras Senior Network, and Sussex Outreach Services. Thank you for all the gifts and gift cards you donated this Christmas. Your generosity blessed so many people!!



Streaming Worship Online

Every Sunday at 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

We worship each week online, Sundays at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. You can now access worship services right on our website or you can go to our Facebook page. It's the same worship service, just more options to view it.



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