

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

May 2021 Newsletter

Last Words from Pastor Tom

It feels odd to be writing my last newsletter article after 37 years of ministry, 32 of them with you. I am full of mixed emotions; sad about leaving what I have known for so long. As we sang our first hymn on Easter, tears ran down my face. But I am also excited about the next chapter of my life which will include a lot of time with Ruth, our daughters and grandchildren, boats, dogs, the garden, and all my other favorite places.

Part of me feels like I just moved in and unpacked my books and boxes. When I moved in, I had a manual typewriter, the church had one phone line and a mimeograph machine. The changes since then help me realize it has been a long time. 32 years. Our daughters grew up here, I grew old here, we have shared the better part of our lives with each other.

As you can imagine, it was NOT my dream to retire under the conditions we have endured for over the last year, but I remain grateful for the ways we have been able to connect and be with each other.

I feel blessed and privileged to have shared the journey of over half of my life with you. I remember the day I came to interview with the call committee, and later the congregation, meeting a church that was excited about their future and looking for what God would be doing among them next. I could not wait to get started.

I am proud of you and always proud to let people know I'm a pastor at your church. People frequently tell me, "Oh, I've heard about that church". Over the years together we have shared struggles and joys, growth in mission, learning, worship, and outreach. You show that the church is not a place we just go to. The church is also where we are sent from into our daily lives and into the whole world. If there is any kind of legacy I leave, I hope it is not about me or a building. I hope it is about God; continually asking how to be faithful to God's call to us in our time, how to adapt to the changes that always come, and to explore what God is doing in this place today.

One of the things that happens when pastors leave or retire from a congregation is they need to completely leave, meaning we end all pastoral ties and functions in the congregation. This means I will no longer participate in any pastoral role or have any presence at Christ Our Savior. This can feel difficult for some of you and for me, because for so many of us our connections have been personal and relational. I raise this up here to let you know that ending pastoral relationships with people at Christ Our Savior is NOT a personal slight or intended to be hurtful. Instead, it is to make room for you to grow into relationship with your new pastor.

Right now, I don't know what it will be like to not be with you. That's OK. We'll all figure it out with God's guidance. Retirement will not only be the end of a career or a job; it is the end of relationships, habits and rhythms. As much as I will miss you and all the ways we have shared our lives, I look forward to what the next chapter of life will be. Pray for me. I hold you in my prayers.

Thank you for a rewarding ministry.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom Kent

These Interesting Times

There is a phrase, sometimes seen as a curse, "May you live in interesting times." I feel like 2020 and 2021 gave me the chance to really understand why some folks hear that phrase as a curse. The times we find ourselves in are certainly interesting – historic even. A pandemic that forced global shifts in how we are in community with one another, a continued push to move more of our existence into digital spaces, political forces shaking the foundation of our democracy, an attempted insurrection in January of 2021, questions of racial injustice pulled back into the spotlight of our nation – I find myself praying to God and saying, "You know Lord, we could all do with things being *a little* less interesting around here."

And yet, despite the days where I long for the times to be a little less interesting, a little more uneventful, what an opportunity we have as people of God to put our weight on the scale during this time of upheaval! For many folks, more so now than ever before, there is a need to experience the grace and compassion, justice and solidarity, that marks the kingdom of God. There is a great deal of ambiguity for what the future holds, for how things will settle out; I believe that God is calling us into the uncertainty, to boldly advocate for a new normal that is even more inclusive, welcoming, and attentive to the needs of the most vulnerable.



RETIREMENT IS NOT
THE END OF THE
ROAD. IT IS THE
BEGINNING OF THE
OPEN HIGHWAY.

Though influencing events at a national or global scale may seem beyond what we can achieve from Sussex, WI, the work begins right in our own homes. It starts with being real about our own personal limitations and shortcomings, and embracing the life-giving rhythms of our God who declared the practices of Sabbath-keeping and repentance, rest taking and the giving and receiving of forgiveness, as foundational for the people of God. As we step into the freedom and new life God has for us, God points us outward to the needs around us – for our families, for our neighbors and our nation. Each day, an opportunity to speak and act in ways that reveal to the world a Way of being that is grounded in love of neighbor and care for creation.

These may be interesting times, but we are in this together, folks. And the God who made everything out of nothing, who brings resurrection out of death, who pours out grace for all humankind is with us in the journey. So let us go together, dear people, and see what God is doing.

Blessings,
Pastor Joe



When Will Our Church Re-Open

We are anxious to re-open for limited public worship but the trends of new COVID-19 cases continues to keep our area in the Very High Risk category.

During the pandemic period we have been guided by recommendations from CDC and the Wisconsin Council of Churches. They urge avoiding re-opening for indoor worship until the rate of new COVID-19 cases is at 10/100,000 or lower for Waukesha County. As of this writing, the trends are moving toward the safer area but are not there yet. *We have a team that's tracking these trends on a weekly basis.* You can track it yourself if you like at <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>



We hope we will be able to re-open for limited indoor worship by June if the trends support it. *When that happens* our plan at this point is to hold limited in person Sanctuary Worship at 8:30 and Outdoor worship at 10:00 AM every Sunday until the trend becomes safer to gather in person.

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



Retirement Update from Church Staff and Council

Save the Dates to honor and say good-bye to Pastor Tom:

Wednesday, May 19th: Evening Good-Bye Parade for Pastor Tom at COS

Sunday, May 23rd: Pastor Tom's Final Worship Service and Celebration (Outside)

The church staff and council members have started planning events to take place for the departure of Pastor Tom, who is retiring at the end of May. In addition to the parade and final worship and celebration, we will be collecting donations for him. More details regarding both events have been mailed. So...watch your mailboxes!



Challenge Gift

to Support Ministries at Cross Lutheran and Bread of Healing

A member of our church has generously offered to match dollar for dollar any gifts up to \$15,000 to help support the vital ministry we partner with at Bread of Healing and Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. This is a great opportunity to DOUBLE the impact of your gift. To take advantage of this simply write Cross or Challenge in the memo portion of a check to Christ Our Savior and we will send it to Cross within a week.



Work Ministry With Hephatha Lutheran Church

This year Christ Our Savior youth will partner with Hephatha Lutheran Church as we continue to support them in their ministries. One of the ministries that happens every summer is the summer work program. We will be collecting bags of dirt, pots and watering cans. This is an effort to help them beautify the church yard. It will also help them beautify their own yard possibly even plant some vegetables. If you would like to help support our youth and the youth at Hephatha Lutheran Church, please drop off bags of dirt, watering cans, flowerpots in the bins marked summer work ministry Hephatha Lutheran Church in the east entrance. For more information and questions please contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com.



Partnership with Hephatha

We are blessed to be the Church! Because of your outpouring of generosity, we were able to provide, food, diapers, and formula to 27 families which equals 80 children! Well done Church!!!!

Summer Mission Trips

Summer mission trips have been canceled in Memphis, TN and West Virginia. It is our hope that we will still have our mission trips, however they will be local. We will be working with Hephatha and Galilee in Pewaukee to serve right here in Milwaukee. Serve Boldly has connected us with their mission partners because they will be in need as well as our current partners. We are hopeful that we will still be able to serve and have an amazing experience right here this summer!



***Disclaimer: this all depends on the Governors orders and when things begin to reopen.**

2021 High School Graduates

We would love to honor our 2021 graduates with a graduation blessing and gift on Sunday, June 6 at the 1:00 a.m. outdoor worship service. We would also love it if all seniors could email a senior photo and a small description of your future to Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com no later than May 23rd.



TACOS

Virtual Mode Updates and Beyond

TACOS Virtual Mode is still going strong into the spring months. This includes a new Friday activity called TACOS Teasers! TACOS Teasers are a Friday brain game on virtual mode that will run to the end of the school year. Here's how it works: If you can figure out the brain game and contact Wade with correct answer, your name will be placed into a drawing for a cool TACOS prize at the end of the school year! For every week you guess the correct answer for the brain game, you will receive an additional entry. So, make sure you test your brain and give each week a guess at your chance to enter for the TACOS prize!

TACOS has also resumed some small outdoor events and activities. Last month we successfully held a Campfire Night! Please keep in touch with TACOS for any and all information about potential May events to come!

Children's Ministry

Starting Sunday, May 9 during the 10:00 a.m. outdoor worship service all children will be invited to go with Kim Lewin, Director Of Education and Youth Ministry, over to the grassy area by the fire pit for a Bible story, games, and songs. We will do this every Sunday all summer weather permitting. For more information and questions please contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com



Spring & Summer 2021 Outdoor Worship

Ushers and In-Person Lectors Needed

It is finally here! We're able to gather outdoors for worship! Now you have the opportunity to serve as in-person worship assistants. We are looking for ushers and in-person lectors to help with our Spring and Summer Sunday services at 10:00 a.m. Slots available through August 2021.

New families and individuals are invited to sign up. Ushers will hand out bulletins and Communion kits before worship and collect offering after worship. In-person lectors will read during the worship service and will be emailed the readings in advance. You can sit with your families during the service. You can sign-up on our website under volunteers or [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, or for more information, contact Amy at amy@coslc.com.



Worship Team

Adopt-a-Garden

Are you getting stir crazy at home? Would you like to get outdoors and enjoy the spring weather? We invite you and your family to adopt a garden to help keep our property looking top notch!! We have about 12 garden and flower beds around our church that need occasional weeding and care throughout the summer months and into early fall. Each area is small in size, so commitment is only 1-2 hours per month. Adopt your garden plot on SignUpGenius. If you have questions contact Amy at amy@coslc.com.



Building Hope in Haiti - Kicks for Kids Shoe Drive

Deadline Wednesday, May 12th

Have you done your spring cleaning yet? If you have shoes you just don't seem to wear anymore – but are still in decent shape – here's a GREAT opportunity to put them to good use as well as open some room in your closet. Your gently worn kids AND adult shoes (all kinds of sneakers or dress shoes but no boots) will make a world of difference for people struggling in extreme poverty in Haiti and potentially around the world.

Funds raised with your donated shoes will benefit recipients of Building Hope in Haiti (the host of this drive). Micro-entrepreneurs will then sell the shoes at their local markets and shops, providing a source of income. We are partnering with Our Savior's Lutheran Church in West Bend who is heading up this drive. You can donate your gently used shoes in the bins in our east entryway under the canopy. Please tie or rubber band the pair of shoes together to make sorting easier.

Donation deadline is Wednesday, May 12th. To learn more about [Building Hope in Haiti](#) check out their website. If you have any questions, reach out to Amy at amy@coslc.com.



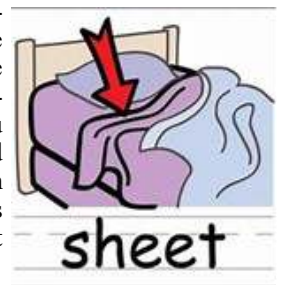
Shoes for kids & adults

Clean & gently-used or new

No boots, please

COS Quilters Need Your Sheets Huge Thank You from Our Quilters

We want to thank all of our generous donors for all the sheets and fabric they have donated to the COS Quilters. Things have been slim since Covid, but things are definitely looking up. Our donors (and you know who you are) have been beyond generous and our mission is back on track. [Thank You](#) for your generosity, it is greatly appreciated, not only by us, but the recipients of our quilts as well.



THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Bread of Healing Meal

Wednesday, May 12th

Our to-go meals have been much enjoyed by those who participate in The Bread of Healing Empowerment Ministry. Our next meal at Cross Lutheran is on Wednesday, May 12th. If you would like to become involved in this meal ministry to feed the hungry, contact Chuck Liedtke at chuck.liedtke@sodexo.com.



Serenity Inns

Tuesday, May 18th

Tuesday, May 19th is our next meal at Serenity Inns. If you would like to help with the meal, contact Hank Wallenkamp at 262-525-1211. Items for Serenity Inns can be dropped off at church inside the east doors (under the canopy) by Noon on Tuesday.



Spring/Summer Collection: As you are cleaning out your closets for spring, consider donating gently used shorts, shirts, hats, sunglasses, and light-weight jackets to Serenity Inns. Donations can be placed in the bin in the east entryway.

Milwaukee Rescue Mission

The Milwaukee Rescue Mission is putting together food baskets to be distributed to their most vulnerable families. They have reached out to us to see if we can help! Their breakfast food items are in short supply. During the month of May, we will be collecting breakfast items such as pancake mix, waffle mix, muffin mix, syrup, cereal, and shelf-stable bacon. These donations will help families who struggle to put food on the table. You can drop off your food donations in the bins labeled MRM in our east entryway. If you have any questions, reach out to Amy at amy@coslc.com.



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