

# CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession

450 W. Ohio • Marquette, Michigan

[calvary.clclutheran.org](http://calvary.clclutheran.org)



**Divine Worship. . . . . 9:30am**  
**Sunday School/Bible Study . . . . 10:45/10:50am**

Andrew A. Schaller, Pastor  
 Church: (906) 226-9372  
 Parsonage: (906) 228-3566

## CHRIST THE KING

November 22, 2020

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP:

**Psalm:** Hymn Insert

**Prayers:** Hymn Insert

**Organist:** Mr. Walter Priebe

**HYMNS: 341 179 219 361**

### PRAYER

**OPENING HYMN: 341 - "Crown Him with Many Crowns"**

**SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT** (Worship Supplement Pg. 12)

The Invocation... The Confession of Sins... Absolution. The Kyrie (Pg. 13)  
 ... Gloria in Excelsis (Pg. 13) Prayer.

### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:

**DANIEL 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. <sup>14</sup> Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.\*

**CALVARY CHURCH CHOIR:**

**ALL GOOD GIFTS**

### CLC CALL NEWS

*Redeemer in Cheyenne, WY has called Pastor Michael Gurath, who currently serves Holy Cross in Phoenix, AZ. • Living Savior in Eden Prairie, MN has called Pastor Samuel Rodebaugh, who currently serves Immanuel in Winter Haven, FL. • Teacher Matt Thurow of Berea Lutheran School in Inver Grove Heights MN has been called to teach grades 4-8 and serve as principal for Holy Trinity Lutheran School in West Columbia, SC.*

### RELATED TO CLC CALL NEWS – FROM CLC PRESIDENT EICHSTADT

*On Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> the CLC Board of Doctrine met via Zoom with Terry Stringer for the first stage of our colloquy procedure. The interview went very well and upon the board's recommendation, I'm declaring him eligible for a call to serve as a vacancy pastor with the understanding that during this time he would be under the mentorship of a nearby pastor. The board has also recommended that he pursue some additional education at ILC or in another program developed by the CLC, if agreeable to the congregation. Another interview for the second stage of the colloquy process will be scheduled in the future.*

### **Missions/Cooperative Budget Plan Pledge 2020**

*The Cooperative Budget Plan (CBP) is a pledge established by the Voters of Calvary to participate in the work of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The amount given to 'Missions' on your church envelope goes to this pledge. In the event that our offerings fall short of our pledge, the difference will be taken from the Calvary General Fund. The Fiscal year of the CLC runs from December 1- November 30 each year. In the event that our offerings exceed our pledge, additional funds will be placed in the General Fund.\*\**

<b>Amount Pledged 2020</b>	<b>Received as of 11/15/20</b>	<b>Amount Remaining</b>
\$7000.00	\$5080.00	\$1920.00

### **CLCI SEMINARY STUDENT SPONSORSHIP - \$40/MO**

<b><u>DECEMBER 2021 GOAL</u></b>	<b><u>RECEIVED 11/15</u></b>	<b><u>FEBRUARY 2022 GOAL</u></b>
\$5.00	\$50.00	\$35.00

### **The Offerings of Thankful Hearts – Calvary Offerings 11/15/20**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Loose</b>	<b>Missions (CBP)</b>	<b>CLCI Sem Student</b>
\$435.00	\$39.00	\$220.00	\$50.00
<b>Total: \$744.00</b>			

\* Scripture quotations (unless otherwise noted) are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version, © 1982 by Thomas Nelson Publishers. All rights reserved.

## **BIBLE READINGS FOR DEVOTIONS NOVEMBER 23-28, 2020**

**Monday - Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23-24** Since the clergy had cheated on the LORD God and His people, God disowned them. Did that leave them shepherd-less? Not at all, for God pledged to *search, seek, deliver, bring, gather, feed, bring back, bind up, and strengthen His needy, hungry, injured, battered, and bleeding sheep* and establish Jesus (pictured as David) as Prince over the flock. Clergy defections sully all chapters of history; our chapter is still being written.

**Tuesday - Matthew 27:27-31** Hardly anybody understood that the King of kings was deliberately lowering Himself as Substitute for sinners—which led to this black parody of a royal coronation. He endured the torture and scorned the pain by focusing on sinners like you and me; for our sakes He stayed on course, steadfast and resolute. We thank You, dear Lord Jesus.

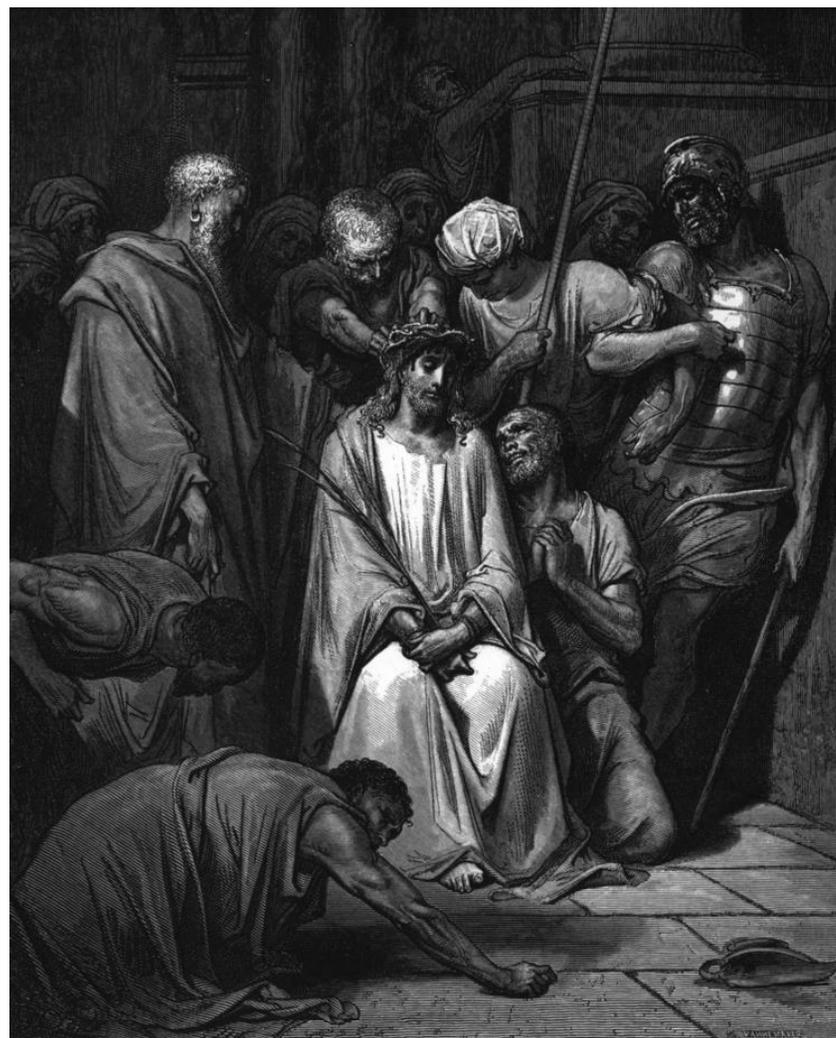
**Wednesday - 1 Corinthians 15:20-28** Topping our list of Thanksgiving blessings are these: Jesus not only corrected Adam's default (21-22), He also lined us up for Judgment Day (23), trumped Death (26), and stands astride the Universe as co-regent with God the Father Almighty. We thank You, holy Trinity.

**Thanksgiving Day: Deuteronomy 8:10-18** When you push away from the table with a full stomach, you *should bless the Lord, your God for the good land He has given you, your beautiful home, and your affluence* (10-13). Now, don't forget the Lord who rescued you from your sins and turned your disasters into blessings (14-16). God (not you) deserves the credit for your successes (17), and don't you forget it! Have mercy on us, Lord Jesus!

**Friday - Luke 17:11-19** Jesus had mercy on those suffering humans and sent them (with renovated bodies) to the public health offers to be inspected and to receive certification that they had been cleansed (11-14). Question: Since God has cleansed our souls, where do we fit into the parable? Do we return to thank Jesus—or just head out in another direction?

**Saturday - Philippians 4:10-20** Even though Jesus had toughened Paul to endure a lot in life (11-13), Paul wanted his friends to know that Jesus was using them to help him survive another hour of need. They deserved to know that he appreciated their thoughtfulness, their tender hearts, and their generous gift—which arrived at just the right time (14-18). Thanks! *May God supply all that you may need, gifts that Jesus withdraws from His account and parcels out from His personal storeroom* (19).

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**



THE CROWN OF THORNS

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. . . . (John 19: 2)

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Christ the King.....November 22, 2020

## **MICHIGAN HEATH AND HUMAN SERVICES EMERGENCY ORDER**

*This past week the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issued an Emergency Order (MCL 333.2253) concerning Gatherings and Face Masks. Some general limitations have been placed on both Indoor and outdoor gatherings statewide.*

**No doubt, some of you have been wondering if this order applies to our gatherings for worship.** (If you wish to read the 8-page order, speak with Pastor Schaller and a copy will be provided to you.)

**1) Worship Gatherings** - Since May of 2020, gatherings for the purpose of worship are not restricted by these orders, but are specifically exempted (Section 10:D).

**If you are sick or coughing or have tested positive for COVID or have come into contact with someone with the virus, please stay home.** Please be responsible and observe quarantine. If you have attended services after unknowingly had contact with someone with the virus, please let us know. **It is our current plan to continue worship until or unless we have a case among us.** Those who attend worship are asked again to please be diligent to observe social distancing.

**2) Mask Mandate** - While those attending worship services are encouraged to wear masks, they are also specifically exempted (Section 8:K) from the requirement in worship. The Calvary Council and Voters of Calvary have already decided to leave the matter up to the individual.

**If you have concerns about this you are welcome to speak to Pastor Schaller or another Council Member or Voter of Calvary.**

## **CANDIDATES FOR IMMANUEL PROFESSOR CALL:**

*The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary invites “all pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of member congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession” (CLC Constitution) to nominate an individual or individuals to fill the vacancy which will be created by the retirement of Professor John Reim at the end of the 2020-21 academic year. The position would require someone seminary trained with the ability to teach primarily music, college Greek, and other potential disciplines commencing with the 2021-22 academic year. Nominations are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight November 20, 2020 (letters postmarked November 10, 2020) to: Mr. James Burkhardt; 217 Windy Lane; Rockwall, TX 75087; email: [jeb6217@yahoo.com](mailto:jeb6217@yahoo.com).*

## **EPISTLE LESSON:**

**REVELATION 1:4-8**

<sup>4</sup> John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, <sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, <sup>6</sup>and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>7</sup> Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

<sup>8</sup> **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*”** says the Lord, **“who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”** \*

## **GOSPEL LESSON:**

**JOHN 18:33-37**

<sup>33</sup> Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered him, **“Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”**

<sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

<sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, **“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”**

<sup>37</sup> Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, **“You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”** \*

**ALLELUIA** (WS Pg. 14)

**CONFESSION OF FAITH: THE APOSTLES CREED** (WS Pg. 15)

**HYMN: 179** – “On My Heart Imprint Thine Image”

## **SERMON:**

## **JOHN 18:33-38**

<sup>33</sup> Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup> Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.



## **CHRIST THE KING**

**OFFERTORY:** (WS Pg. 16)

### **THE OFFERINGS**

In order to minimize contact with the ushers, you are asked to please leave your offerings in the basket on the table in the fellowship hall either before or after worship.

### **THE OFFERING HYMN:**

(TLH 441:1-2,6)

We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive  
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our first-fruits give!

And we believe Thy Word, Though dim our faith may be:  
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord, We do it unto Thee.

### **PRAYER(S)...THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**HYMN:** 219 - "The Head that Once was Crowned with Thorns"

**THE BENEDICTION:** Pastor

**CONGREGATION:** (Spoken) "Amen."

**CLOSING HYMN:** 361 - "O Jesus, King Most Wonderful"

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

November 22, 2020

### **THIS MORNING**

10:45am - Sunday School (NT#44 – The Ascension of Jesus)

10:50am – Bible Study (Types of Buddhism)

### **THIS WEEK**

**Wednesday:** *Thanksgiving Eve Worship 7pm*

**Sunday:** *Worship - 9:30am; Sunday School 10:45; Bible Study 10:50am*

### **THANKSGIVING WORSHIP**

*Our Thanksgiving Eve Worship is scheduled to take place this Wednesday November 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.*

### **MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP**

*Midweek Advent Services are scheduled to take place Wednesday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Wednesday Night Bible Study will conclude for the fall on Wednesday November 18<sup>th</sup>.*

### **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

*While it is unlikely that we will be having a Calvary Christmas Dinner/Party this December due to concerns over the COVID-19 Pandemic, the church sanctuary will be decorated on the Saturday following Thanksgiving (November 28<sup>th</sup>) with the understanding that social distancing will be observed and those who are concerned and can tolerate a mask wear one. If you have a cough or are not feeling well, please use common sense and stay home (both from decoration and other church functions). The decorating will be done by those present.*

### **KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**

*Arleen Herlich who is lonely but doing well at Mill Creek Assisted Living. Barb Koval who is recovering in Mount Pleasant. Bob Vidlund who is in the memory care unit at Mill Creek. Debra Vidlund who has moved into Tourville Apartments after her surgery.*

### **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR TAXES**

*If you wish to receive a report of your envelope giving (for the purpose of taxes) at the close of the year, sign up or speak with John Gummerus today. If you do not do so by December 1, you will not receive an end of year report for taxes.*

## THE OFFERING HYMN:

(TLH 441:1-2,6)

We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive  
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our first-fruits give!

And we believe Thy Word, Though dim our faith may be:  
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord, We do it unto Thee

## HYMN      THE HEAD ONCE CROWNED WITH THORNS

1. The Head that once was crowned with thorns Is crowned with glory now; A royal diadem adorns The mighty Victor's brow.
2. The highest place that heaven affords Is His, is His by right, The King of kings and Lord of lords, And heaven's eternal Light;
3. The Joy of all who dwell above, The Joy of all below To whom He manifests His love And grants His name to know.
4. To them the cross, with all its shame, With all its grace, is given; Their name an everlasting name, Their joy the joy of heaven.
5. They suffer with their Lord below, They reign with Him above, Their profit and their joy to know The mystery of His love.
6. The cross He bore is life and health, Though shame and death to Him: His people's hope, His people's wealth, Their everlasting theme. Amen.

## HYMN      O JESUS, KING MOST WONDERFUL

1. O Jesus, King most wonderful, Thou Conqueror renowned, Thou Sweetness most ineffable, In whom all joys are found!
2. When once Thou visitest the heart, The truth begins to shine, Then earthly vanities depart, Then kindles love divine.
3. O Jesus, Light of all below, Thou Fount of life and fire, Surpassing all the joys we know, All that we can desire--
4. May every heart confess Thy name And ever Thee adore And, seeking Thee, itself inflame To seek Thee more and more!
5. Thee may our tongues forever bless, Thee may we love alone, And ever in our lives express The image of Thine own! Amen.

## HYMN SHEET

(An effort to reduce the points of contact for the time being.)

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

### PSALM 24

<sup>1</sup> The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. <sup>2</sup> For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters.

<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. <sup>5</sup> He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. <sup>6</sup> This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face. Selah

<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. <sup>8</sup> Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. <sup>10</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He *is* the King of glory. Selah

### PRAYERS BEFORE WORSHIP

#### FOR A RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

O almighty God, who to know by faith is everlasting life, grant us to perfectly know Your Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that, following His steps, we may walk in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

#### FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE AND HELP

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with Your most gracious favor and further us with You continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in You we may glorify Your holy name and finally by Your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son our Lord. Amen.

### HYMN

### CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

1. Crown Him with many crowns The Lamb upon His throne; Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns All music but its own. Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee And hail Him as thy matchless King Through all eternity.
2. Crown Him the Virgin's Son, The God incarnate born, Whose arm those crimson trophies won Which now His brow adorn; Fruit of the mystic rose, As of that rose the stem; The root whence mercy ever flows, The Babe of Bethlehem.

3. Crown Him the Lord of Love. Behold His hands and side, Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified. No angel in the sky Can fully bear that sight, But downward bends his wondering eye At mysteries so bright!

4. Crown Him the Lord of Life Who triumphed o'er the grave And rose victorious in the strife For those He came to save. His glories now we sing Who died and rose on high, Who died eternal life to bring And lives that death may die.

5. Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, Enthroned in worlds above, Crown Him the King to whom is given The wondrous name of Love. Crown Him with many crowns As thrones before Him fall; Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns For He is King of all. Amen.

## LITURGY

## SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

### INVOCATION

Pastor: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation (Spoken): "Amen."

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve Him as His dear children. But we have disobeyed Him and deserve only His wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to Him and plead for His mercy.

Congregation (Spoken): "Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against You and do not deserve to be called Your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to Your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

Pastor: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. But the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has removed your guilt forever, You are His own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to His will.

Congregation (Spoken): "Amen."

LORD, HAVE MERCY (Sung): "Lord, have mercy on us. Christ have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us."

### GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Congregation (Sung):

"Glory to God, we give you thanks and praise; Of heav'nly joy and peace on earth we sing. We worship You, to You our hearts we raise, Lord God, almighty Father, heav'nly King.

"Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son., You bore for us the load of this world's sin. O Lamb of God, Your glorious vict'ry won, Receive our prayer, grant us Your peace within.

"Alone, O Christ, You only are the Lord, At God's right hand in majesty most high: Who, with the Spirit worshiped and adored, With all the heav'nly host we glorify.

### ALLELUIA

Pastor: "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it."

Congregation (Sung): "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

### APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### HYMN

### ON MY HEART IMPRINT THINE IMAGE

1. On my heart imprint Thine image, Blessed Jesus, King of Grace, That life's riches, cares, and pleasures Have no power Thee to efface. This the superscription be: Jesus, crucified for me, Is my life, my hope's Foundation, And my Glory and Salvation.

### THE OFFERTORY

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence. Take not Your holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Uphold with Your Spirit free."

“Whoever” in penitent sorrow over sin and in faith believes and “calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

**7. Post signs and instructions to: stay home if you are sick or at high risk...**The Lord tells us to **post the message** – Law and Gospel – into the world.

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19).

“The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore,

“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:16).

However long the COVID-19 quarantine lasts, we **know** the God of grace and mercy has the welfare and future of His children in His heart. “No temptation (adversity) has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (tested) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Pray for an end to the COVID-19 so we soon can attend worship, hear the Word and attend the Sacrament together. Pray for the good and gracious will of God to be done. In Jesus we are victors over sin, death, the devil, the world, and sickness.

Meanwhile the LORD SPEAKS TO YOU IN YOUR BIBLE. READ IT and BEAT THE QUARANTINE being assured nothing “ shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39).

**Pastor Emeritus Daniel Fleischer**

## BEAT THE QUARANTINE

The government in Washington D. C. as well as state governments have in the age of Covid-19 issued guidelines on how citizens should behave. Frequently the guidelines change, as might be expected, dealing as we are with a virus that is relatively new. At the same time, some changes may be driven perhaps by politics and personal agendas. While the latter assertion is arguable, in light of political corruption and personal agendas, the assertion is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Though one may feel the present government restrictions on our personal and religious freedom are overreach, unless we can clearly identify them beyond personal opinion as illegal, Christ-believer will accede to them. That we do not like something is not reason of itself to cast aside what others feel serves the common good. If so minded, we can join in efforts to overturn restrictions through the legal process, even as Paul turned to Caesar (Acts 25:10).

It is undeniable that the COVID-19 virus should be taken seriously and should not cavalierly be dismissed as of no consequence. Bible-believers are neither less nor more concerned than the heathen neighbor about the virus threat. Guidelines or no, everyone who has a concern for one’s own health should as well have concern for that of his neighbor, and therefore do what can be done to help rein in the virus. However, beyond the common desire to stymie the virus spread, Bible-believers recognize that Scripture enjoins love for the neighbor as we love ourselves. Such love is energized by the Gospel. There is no restriction on Jesus’ word, “...Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “I say to you, ‘love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully persecute’” (Matthew 5:44). That we fail so often in this regard does not change the fact that it is the will of God.

The state of Minnesota has issued **Guidance for gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies**. It addresses mask-wearing, social (physical) distancing, service attendance, etc. Some guidelines are burdensome, some may border on trampling on our legal right to worship as our Lord instructs and invites us.

What is the Christian response? We cannot look into the hearts of those who impose restrictions on us. Is there more to their restrictions than legitimate health concerns? To put it another way, under the “let no crisis go to waste” mentality espoused by some, is the virus concern we all have being used as a veiled attack on religious practice in general, and Christian worship in particular? We do not know. We do know the Lord God is the ultimate Judge.

In the meantime, unless we can *clearly* demonstrate what we fear may be the case, Christ-believers will in love and concern for the common welfare accede to the guidelines, and as much as one may detest and question the worth of masks, wear them. Christian love chooses not to make a point, however valid it may be, and thereby offend someone who is convinced of the worth of masks or physical distancing. While the issue is not of the same magnitude as that addressed by the apostle Paul, he set forth a Christian principle, “If food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble” (1 Corinthians 8: 13). Faith, conscience, and salvation are not at stake in the present circumstance, but the principle applies. In the exercise of a right we want to be careful so as not to offend a brother. Beware. *Do not let Satan succeed in his effort to divide brethren.*

**COVID-19 guidelines deal only with this life. Look at the guidelines from a different perspective, applying them to our daily Christian life as well as our worship life as the latter relate to our spiritual life and our eternal welfare,** (State COVID-19 guidelines or excerpts thereof in *italics*).

**1. *The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.*** There is a more serious virus than COVID-19. It is called sin. Sin is in our own flesh inherited from Adam and Eve. Avoid exposure to temptation. Scripture says:

“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent” (Proverbs 1:10).

“Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

**2. *Social Distancing: Occupancy must be reduced to allow for the required social distancing of at least 6 feet between people who do not live in the same household at all times. Concerning spiritual distancing*** Scripture says:

“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’”  
(1 Corinthians 15:33)

“He who walks with wise men will be wise,  
but the companion of fools suffers harm” (Proverbs 13:20).

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Proverbs 12:26).

“Blessed is the man, who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners...” (Psalm 1: 1).

**3. *Preparedness Plan- Mask and face covering: Scripture tells us to take off the mask and face covering of hypocrisy.***

“Lay(ing) aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking...(1 Peter 2:1).

“When you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do...” (Matthew 6:2).

“These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matthew 15:8).

**4. *Stay home if you or anyone in your household is sick or has symptoms... Stay home if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.*** Every human being is a carrier of the sin virus. Since we are in daily contact with sinners (if only ourselves) we need contact with our Lord in regular worship and personal study to identify the symptoms, address the sin problem, find the strength to fight sin, as well as to find the spiritual vaccine for healing.

To the building of hope in eternal life, God “has in due time manifested His Word through preaching... (Titus 1:2-3).

“Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name” (Luke 24:47).

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...” ( 1 Timothy 1:15).

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

“Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is” (Hebrews 10:25).

**5. *Practice good hygiene...has a spiritual application:***

“... Cleanse your hands, you sinners” (James 4:8).

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

“Be baptized and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16).

“...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7)

“But you were washed, you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

**6. *COVID-19 can lead to serious medical conditions and even death for people of all ages. We cannot predict who will become severely ill, although we know that older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk. We do not yet know what the long-term effects of infection from***

*COVID-19 are; even people with mild cases may experience long-term complications.* Unlike the Covid and projections of it which change, our Father’s analyses, His warnings, and His promises do not change. We know who is severely ill. Everyone! No one, regardless of age, is at higher risk than another. The risk is Death! We know the long-term effects if the sin virus is not treated and removed. Eternal death! We know the solution to the long-term risk. **Christ Jesus, Who bore the sins of the world.**

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

“He who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 10:16).