



**Bethel  
Lutheran  
Church**

*Making Disciples!*

March 19—April 2,

# E-Memo



# To the Saints

## Words from Martin Luther

When Martin Luther was dealing with The Black Death Plague, he wrote these wise words.

“Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely, as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”

Luther's Works Volume 43 pg 132 the letter “Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague” written to Rev. Dr. John Hess

Read the whole letter here

<https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogLW.pdf>

## Words from Pastor Bard on March 18, 2020

As I am sure you are aware both Bryan and College Station have enacted a “**Declaration of Local State of Disaster**.” Part of this declaration was a strong recommendation that gatherings, public or private, be limited to ten folks.

While the City of Bryan's statement wording is that this is a “recommendation,” I have come to believe that we should follow it **by suspending worship, Bible class, and meetings for this first seven day period** [the initial period of the “State of Disaster”], if not longer.

### Why do I believe this?

- **Harm.** It goes without saying that if one of our people worships, and contracts the virus from being with us, this would be counterproductive to our desire to love one another.
- **Effectiveness.** I do not believe holding worship services, etc. would be effective during this “State of Disaster,” as I believe most Bethel folks will stay away even if our doors are open. Even if half of what is



reported is true, you have a sensible reason to avoid all public places, even congregational worship.

- **Reputation.** Right now Bethel Lutheran Church has an excellent reputation in the BCS community. Our preschool is the envy of everyone in town. Our building continues to generate gracious and complimentary remarks. Our Live Nativity is now “a thing” for dozens of families. And so on. If there is a

large scale outbreak in BCS, and if that were to be connected in any way to Bethel, I believe that it would damage our congregation's reputation, hurt our Preschool's image, and harm our ability to share Christ.

- **Options.** We do have options, ones which even five years ago would have not been available to us. Right now our Called staff is working on a “**full Bethel experience on line**” for as early as this Sunday morning.

- o Pastor Eden and I would lead a worship service with children's time and a full sermon,
- o Our DCE and Children's Ministry Coordinator would offer both a children's Sunday School class and a youth Sunday School class,
- o And one of our pastors would offer an adult Bible class.
- o All of this would be live streamed on Sunday morning.
- o As well, I am prepared to live stream our Lenten Wednesday noon service, so that folks can watch it anytime on Wednesday.

I believe I was wrong to speak so strongly about our church doors remaining open. Our Martin Luther and his pastors continued to minister during the Bubonic Plague, believing that they were under God's grace. I too firmly believe this, but perhaps there is much to be lost and only a little to be gained by pressing on and pretending that anxiety does not rule the day.

Remember our Lord's words, “*Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me!*” Our Lord Jesus is our leader, and He will not abandon us, but will remain with us throughout whatever is yet to come.

Jesus' joy!  
Pr. Bard

---

From our LCMS Texas District President, Michael Newmann

## **Dear fellow workers and congregations of the Texas District,**

Lenten blessings to you!

I've received a few inquiries about what the church might be saying regarding the coronavirus. I encourage individuals and congregations to monitor authoritative statements from qualified health organizations and to follow sound health practices recommended by medical professionals.

The coronavirus leads us, as God's people, to be vigilant in prayer, to be ready to show compassion and to remember the peace and strength we have in our risen Savior Jesus. He is our hope. As you encounter people who may feel panicked, remember that you have the gift of the Gospel to share.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27). This is the unique and singular confidence in which you can seek refuge. It is also the blessed hope you can share with others. We know that there is no need to panic-even if "the earth gives way and the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea" (Psalm 46:2). God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1)! May that strength fill you, guide you and shine brightly through you as a worried world stands in need of certain solace and strength.

Thankful to serve you,  
Rev. Michael W. Newman, President  
Texas District, LCMS

## **Practical Wisdom from Bethel's own Dr. Heather Clark**

On a personal level, much of what you can do is similar to what we would do (and have done) during the cold and flu season – wash your hands, cover your cough or sneeze, stay home if you are ill, and take care of yourself! For our congregation, here is a summary of what you can do and actions we are taking to help reduce the risk to our church family.

**GET GOOD INFORMATION** – I am encouraging us to rely on reputable sources for information such as:

Brazos County Health Department (<http://www.brazoshealth.org>)

Texas Department of State Health Services (<https://dshs.texas.gov/>)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>)

Texas A&M University's response to COVID-19 (<https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/index.html>).

Also, we should be aware that there are malicious groups who are taking advantage of the fear related to COVID-19 by sending computer viruses and malware claiming to be important information related to the disease. Be vigilant. Don't trust emails from strangers.

**BASIC PREVENTION SAVES LIVES** – It sounds overly simple but, hand washing is one of the most effective things we can do to protect ourselves and one another from illness. However, hand washing is often skipped or done too quickly. Proper handwashing should last for 20 seconds; wash with soap and water (hot, warm, or cold) will do the job. How long is 20 seconds? Tip: Sing Happy Birthday twice! If you cannot wash your hands, use a hand sanitizer. Since we were little, we have been told to cover our mouths when we cough or sneeze. But, many of us learned to do that with our hands. The best way to prevent the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze is to do it into the crook of your elbow.

**SHAKING HANDS** – We recommend that we suspend hand shaking for a while. Please use a forearm bump instead. Surprisingly, hugging can be quite safe as long as the huggers turn their faces away from one another. So, if you are a hugger, that's good news for you! But remember, not everyone may be as comfortable with hugging during this time.

**IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME** – If you are sick, your church family still loves you, but we don't want you here! Rest. Drink lots of fluids. Take care of yourself. As Pastor Bard reminded us, our worship services are available online at <https://www.blcbcs.org/>. [Simply scroll down the page and click on the 'Live Streaming' button.] Remember, the best way to contain and slow the spread of illnesses like COVID-19 is to put space between people. In a time of infectious outbreak, social distancing, people keeping about six feet between them, is a common practice. And again, if you are ill, stay home. Please tell us if you are sick so we can pray for you and help you if you need help.

## **FOR THOSE WHO TRAVELLED RECENTLY OR THINK THEY MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED** –

This week was Spring Break for both Texas A&M and many area schools and often results in a lot of travel. So, be aware of the virus situation in areas where you or family members have traveled. If there is a chance you may be at risk for infection, **self-monitor** for possible infection watching for signs and symptoms. If you traveled to one of the high-risk areas or Level 1, 2, or 3 countries, you should **self-isolate** for 14 days. In either instance, it is important for you to contact your healthcare professional and relay this information.



From the LCMS President, Rev. Matthew Harrison

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/resource-helps-congregations-plan-for-widespread-illnesses/>

## No Internet?

For those of us who do not have Internet, email, cell phones, etc., there are a few ways to get a Lutheran Service at home.

The Lutheran Hour comes on every Sunday here in the Brazos Valley at 12:30pm on AM radio KAGC 1510.

The LCMS Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN has a worship program that comes on DirecTV channel 377 every Sunday. It is called Worship Anew.

Also, we still have the Lutheran Hour Ministries Lenten Devotional booklets in the Narthex.

And the new April—June Portals of Prayer devotional booklets are now in the Narthex.

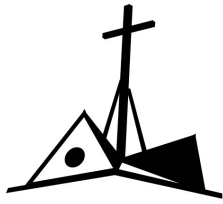
If you are coming by the church to pick these up, call first to make sure someone is there. 979-822-2742

## ONCE AGAIN the List of all our Cancellations

- Friday Men's Morning Group will not meet this week.
  - All Worship Services this Weekend.
  - Life With God Class
  - No LWML Mite Gathering on March 28/29.
  - LWML Bible Study on April 6 is canceled.
  - Private Event on Sunday moved from our facilities.
  - Sunday School – Cancelled and will be monitored by Elders when we will begin again. (10 days is the first point of review)
  - Devo and Games Night- Cancelled. Next Games Night will be May 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Breakfast Tacos – Cancelled. Next possibility for Breakfast Tacos will be April 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - Lenten Meals – Cancelled. We will have no more Lenten meals in this Lenten season.
  - Ladies Bible Study – Cancelled.
  - Banners – Cancelled (Will re-evaluate meeting again after Easter.)
  - Fit for Christ is canceled through next week.
  - Bd of Trustees meeting was canceled.
  - Bd of Early Childhood meeting canceled.
  - Also, the private event that was on March 28<sup>th</sup> is cancelled.
  - Men's Monday Night Bible Study Group will not meet through March.
  - Hand-bells and Choir have been canceled for this week and next week.
  - Youth Confirmation was canceled for this week.
- The Worship Observation Form is attached to the email sending this E-Memo.***
- The OWLS have canceled their luncheon in March.
  - The Big Event Work Day has been cancelled.
  - Church Council March meeting is cancelled.

Check your email for updates or go online to [www.blcbcs.org](http://www.blcbcs.org) or Bethel's Facebook page.





# Bethel Lutheran Church

4221 Boonville Rd, Bryan, Texas 77802  
Phone: (979) 822-2742 | FAX: (979) 822-4082  
[www.BLCbcs.org](http://www.BLCbcs.org) | [office@BLCbcs.org](mailto:office@BLCbcs.org)  
Preschool phone: 485-9835 or cell: 446-1578

**Staff:**

**Rev. Randall Bard**, Senior Pastor, (979) 422-0046

**Rev. Tim Eden**, Associate Pastor

**Mr. Jeff Bellach**, Director of Christian Education

**Mrs. Debbie Sadler**, Dir., Bethel Lutheran Preschool

**Mrs. Kathy Herwald**, Director of Operations

**Rev. K. Lynn Stroud**, Pastor Emeritus

**Mr. Randall Moerbe**, DCE Emeritus

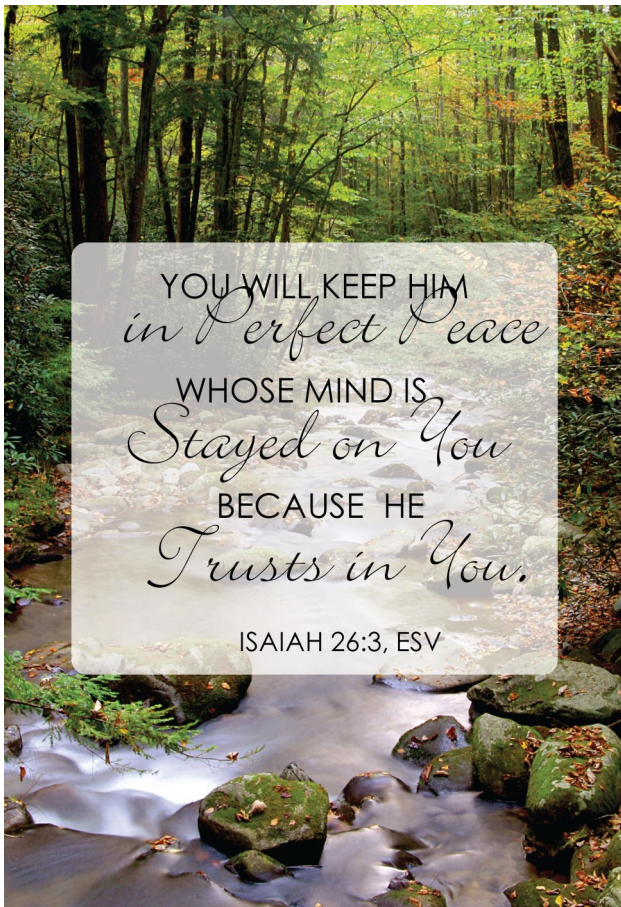
**Mrs. Ruthann Stroud**, Church Secretary

**Mrs. Connie Bard**, Children's Ministry Coordinator

**Mr. Nic Duncan**, Facilities Manager

**Mrs. Katie Bentley**, Office Assistant

**Mr. Jeremy Shilling**, *His Praise* Band Leader



YOU WILL KEEP HIM  
*in Perfect Peace*  
WHOSE MIND IS  
*Stayed on You*  
BECAUSE HE  
*Trusts in You.*

ISAIAH 26:3, ESV

## March 19—April 2, 2020

Join Us Online at

[www.blcbcs.org](http://www.blcbcs.org)

We are Live Streaming our  
Wednesday Lenten Devotions

Sunday Morning Worship

Sunday Adult Bible Class

Children's Sunday School