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The Reporter

March 2020

The Reporter

Volume 18, Issue 03

“Taking Precautions”

by Pastor Proeber

If you’ve recently read the newspaper, listened to the news, or talked with people, you know what is on everyone’s mind. It is the “coronavirus.” Over the last few months it has spread and infected many countries and people. It has also claimed a fairly large number of lives. While the rest of the world has borne the brunt of the disease, the United States has been relatively immune. Certainly there are pockets of higher occurrences. Washington, California and New York seem to have the highest number of incidents. There are also states where there are no recorded outbreaks.

While the spread of the virus is a concern, there are steps we can take to possibly prevent becoming another statistic. Some of the preventative measures are actually quite simple. First and foremost is washing one’s hands regularly with soap and water. Another helpful measure is not touching one’s mouth, nose or eyes with dirty hands. Covering one’s face when sneezing or coughing is also helpful. A third, more drastic measure is limiting contact with people, along with avoiding confined spaces. A final, practical precaution is not allowing ourselves to be overly influenced by hysteria or hyperbole. If we take these preventative measures, we should be able to limit our exposure to the virus.

Most of what is recommended is common sense. Yet we recognize common sense is often an uncommon virtue. Consequently simple problems can escalate with unfortunate results. The same can be said for our spiritual life.

From the Scriptures, we know we need to be aware of sin in the world, and especially in our own life. Sin is much more virulent than any strain of a virus. It also has more dire consequences. Worse yet, cures are extraordinarily rare.

One might wonder if sin is so deadly and so contagious, why isn’t there a hashtag or a website? Why doesn’t the Center for Disease Control or the World Health Organization have a permanent committee to deal with this pandemic?

The reality is, there is nothing science or the field of medicine can do to rid the world of sin. It is always present. It is always infecting and spreading. It is always claiming lives and souls. So, what can be done?

There is only one remedy for the growing infection of sin, and that is Jesus. He alone offers a clear diagnosis, an effective treatment, and a complete cure.

Consider the prayer from the 1942 Synodical Conference Hymnal which alludes to this horrible condition with which we must contend. It goes like this: “O Thou Great Physician who heals sick-souls, heal our souls for we have sinned against thee.”

This prayer makes you stop and think for a moment. There is the acknowledgement of a dire reality. There is the confession of complete guilt. There is also complete confidence a cure has been provided. It is a prayer which we need to pray daily,

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because it offers help and healing. Equally important, it also provides preventative measures.

Now we will never avoid sin in our lives. It is the very fabric of who we are from birth. We will struggle with sin along with its consequences until the time we join the Lord in eternity. Yet, in spite of the struggle, there is help. Knowing Jesus is our Great Physician who can heal our sin-sick souls, we look to him for the complete cure. What Jesus provides is not manufactured by a pharmaceutical company, nor is it a homeopathic remedy. The only thing which can make us whole is Jesus' shed blood together with his innocent sufferings and death. We must recall the words spoken by the Apostle John—"The blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from all our sin." In Jesus we have the perfect, healing cure. He removes the wickedness of sin. He takes away any lasting side effects. He makes it possible to be more resistant to it in the future.

This is the power of our Savior and his shed blood. It is the one sure preventative measure upon which we can depend. Through Jesus the devil's deceptive ways are revealed. Through Jesus the world's destructive devices are uncovered. Through Jesus the weakness of our sin-corrupted flesh is identified. Because Jesus reveals the disease with which we must deal, we can take the necessary steps to remain whole. We can rely on the Word which gives strength and provides knowledge to identify where sin is prevalent. We can rely on the Sacraments which provide relief when we see the onset of the disease. We can rely on Jesus who will help and heal us from every disabling and deadly virus. He alone can take away the deadly effects of sin in our life, because he took them upon himself.

Taking proper precautions and using preventative measures may help us avoid the coronavirus, or some other strain of flu. Proper preventative measures can also help us address and avoid the pandemic of sin in our lives. Rely on the precautions offered by the Lord—be in the Word. Rely on the preventative measures he has provided—use the power and blessing of the Sacraments. Rely on the purifying blood of our Savior—he will heal our sin-sick souls.

"Who do you say I am?" This was the question Jesus asked his disciples. It is the same one he asks each of us. Who do we believe Jesus Christ to be? The simple answer is contained in the words of the Apostles Creed. Still, there is so much more to our confession. Come and join us for the remaining mid-week Lenten worship services. Each begins at 7:00 pm. Each will give us a greater appreciation of those precious words: "I Believe in Jesus Christ"

Mid-week Three - March 11th
"He was Conceived by the Holy Spirit"

Mid-week Four - March 18th
"He was Born of the virgin Mary"

Mid-week Five - March 25th
"He Suffered under Pontius Pilate"

Mid-week Six - April 1st
"He was Crucified"

Maundy Thursday - April 9th
"He Died"

Good Friday - April 10th
"He was Buried"

MID- WEEK LENT



“Pizza & a Movie”

by Al Todd



On Sunday night, February 23rd, Our Redeemer hosted a “pizza and a movie” event at the church in honor of the President’s Day holiday. The Fellowship Hall was set up with tables and chairs, along with separate tables for serving the pizza, salad, adult beverages, soft drinks, water, and coffee. The event got started about 5:30 P.M. with Pastor Proeber leading us all in giving thanks to God for the blessings we enjoy as Christians and as American citizens. The meal was a banquet of three types of Pizza’s plus a self-serve buffet of various salads and side dishes.

Following the meal, we all adjourned to the sanctuary around 6:30 P.M. to view the movie “Hamilton – Building America”. This was an 80 minute movie that focused on Hamilton’s role in the founding of America and his vision of establishing a strong financial and commercial Federal government as opposed to a weak central government that would not be able to compete with other great international powers. Although a compromise was reached with those who feared that the rights of the states would be severely curtailed, many continued to believe that Hamilton secretly wished to replace the Imperial British Monarchical government with an Imperial Federal government inevitably leading to the loss of the freedom and liberty they so recently fought and died to secure.

The tension between those who fear a strong central government—one so strong that, in the wrong hands, it could take away our constitutional liberties and the freedoms we all enjoy, and those who fear that without a strong central government to protect our rights and to defend America from external aggression, we wouldn’t be able to sustain a viable American nation is still being fought out today. That said, it is fair to say that Hamilton’s vision is largely being implemented today albeit with most of our constitutional rights still protected thanks to the genius of our nation’s founders in constructing a separation of powers, as well as checks and balances to keep any one person from establishing a tyranny.

After the movie, we returned to the Fellowship Hall to sample a variety of desserts and enjoy some lively discussion.

These events are good opportunities to invite your friends and family to meet church members, have a free meal, and watch an interesting movie. Please plan to attend in the future!





Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee continues to sponsor monthly events to provide opportunities for members to invite friends and relatives to Our Redeemer. Some events are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these events will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of Grace we proclaim. Please plan to participate, and to serve!

Holy Week and Easter Celebration

April 5th	Palm Sunday Worship at 9:30 am
April 9th	Maundy Thursday Worship at 7:00 pm
April 10th	Good Friday Worship at 7:00 pm
April 12th	Easter Festival Worship at 9:30 am with a brunch following the service for friends and members.
April 14th	Seminary Touring Chorus Concert at 7:00 pm. Snacks and fellowship will follow.

Future Activities

June TBD	Family Game Night and Ice Cream Social
July 4th	Movie, Barbeque, Fireworks and Desserts
July TBD	Vacation Bible School
August 23rd	Beach, Bike and Barbeque at Goleta Beach

Sharing the Good News

Prior to our Easter worship service, we will utilize "internet / social media" advertising which will funnel people to our website. In addition, we will put out door hangers, print personal invitations, and place banners on Cathedral Oaks. All will offer us the opportunity to share the good news of a crucified and Risen Savior with a friend or a neighbor. The door hangers and personal invitations will be available around the 22nd of March. If you have an hour or two, pick up some bags and drop them off around the neighborhood.

March Birthdays

We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

5th - Logan Y.
 9th - Frank F.
 16th - Kallie H.
 28th - Chris M.

In April the 2020 Church Directory should be ready. When draft is placed outside, please make any needed corrections.

Thank You.



Notes & News

Handbell Choir

Practices for the Spring—Holy Week, Easter, Trinity and Pentecost—will continue every Monday evening at 7:00 pm. We are thankful for those who generously give of their time and efforts to make practices and ring for our worship services.

There is also an invitation—if you are curious, or if you would like to try ringing—to speak with Debbie.

New ringers are always welcome, and can be worked into the future playing schedule.

Choir

The choir continues to practice for the upcoming festival portion of the church year. Some of the songs will be familiar, some will be new to our congregation. All will lead us to rejoice and sing praises to the Lord.

As practice continues into the spring, why not think about joining the choir. The practices are Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm for approximately an hour.

If you have any questions regarding the schedule, please speak with Pastor Proeber for more information.

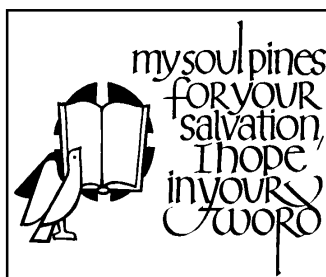
Wednesday Evening Bible Class

The Wednesday evening class will be “on hold” through the six Wednesdays of Lent, it will restart April 22nd at 7:00 pm.

During the Spring and early summer, the class will continue with the study of 2nd Kings.

Prior to Lent, 1st Kings was completed with the work of Elijah and the death of Ahab, the King of Israel. The second book of Kings focuses on the life and ministry of Elisha the prophet, the invasion of the Assyrians, God’s mercy to Hezekiah, good king Josiah, and the start of the Babylonian Captivity.

Throughout the history of the divided kingdom, one lesson stands clear—God’s faithfulness to his promise to send the Savior. It was that promise which offered hope along with forgiveness. It is a lesson which we certainly appreciate today.



Sunday Morning Bible Class

As always there is a regularly scheduled class after the worship service. Recently a new study was started. Its title offers us a special insight into our Triune God. It is called “God the Ultimate Humanitarian,” or the story of how God keeps on giving.

The main focus is on God’s undeserved love displayed in the Old Testament and proclaimed in the New Testament through Jesus Christ.

The class was written by Pastor Mark Cares of Idaho. It was written as a tool by which we can share our faith with those who do not know the truth about God. Plan on coming to learn more!

Sunday School

We continue to offer Christian Education for young children. Sunday School is held on the first and third Sundays of the month, and during the worship service.

If you have any questions, regarding the program or possibly helping, please speak to John Favuzzi, Sonja Todd, or Sue Proeber.

The goal of our Sunday School is to help parents train their children in the Way of the Lord.

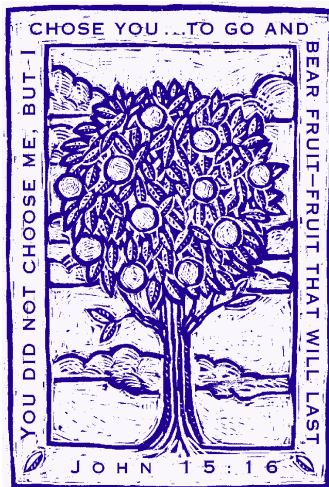
Opportunities

We are always looking for new opportunities for service, outreach, study and encouragement. Please share your ideas with a Board member or with Pastor Proeber.



“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”

Romans 1:16,17



Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?
Event report? Potluck-gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to two pages
Reviewed for scriptural consistency
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy or email to Pastor Proeber
(pastor@orlcsb.net or james.proeber@gmail.com)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

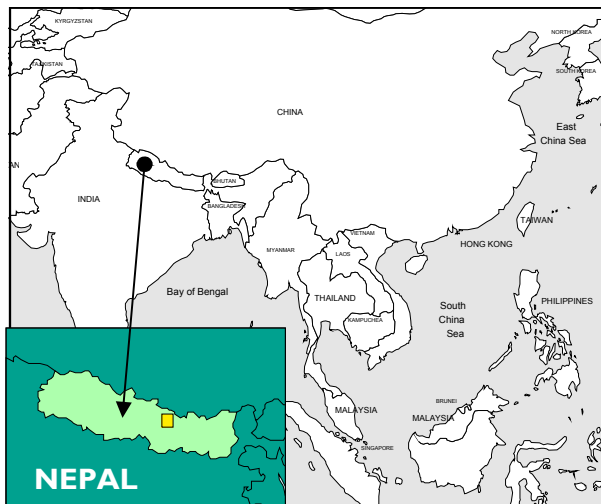
Thanks to Al Todd for his article and to Sonja Todd for her pictures. There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2020. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber for advice. Thanks!

Meetings for March

Church Council	March 3rd at 7:00 pm
Committees	March 3rd at 8:00 pm
Property Work Day	<u>April 4th at 9:00 am</u>

The Spring Congregational Meeting will be April 19th following the worship service. Plan to be a part of our congregation's ministry, and support it with your presence and your prayers.

LWMS Spring Rally



The 2020 Spring Rally of the Lutheran Women's Mission Society will be Saturday, March 14th. The host congregation is Grace, Yorba Linda.

The guest speaker will be Ruth Schmitzer who will speak about outreach opportunities and work being done in Nepal.

Registration starts at 8:15 am, and the rally will begin at 9:00 am. The

closing devotion will conclude around 2:15 pm.

Plan to learn more about how God's grace through Jesus is spreading throughout Asia and is producing a rich harvest of souls for the Lord. If you need a ride, please speak with Sonja Todd for car-pooling information. Travel time is about 2.5 hours from Santa Barbara to Yorba Linda.