

The Reporter

May 2020

The Reporter

Volume 18, Issue 05

“What Do You Think?”

by Pastor Proeber

Over the past several weeks, I have been asked this question repeatedly: “What do you think?” It is usually followed by a perception or an opinion. It is interesting to see how much people are thinking about this virus. It is even more interesting to hear what they think.

Some people maintain this could be a judgment from God. They support their opinion by explaining how everything has changed so dramatically. How God is literally intervening in the lives of people by taking away their livelihoods, their health, and in some cases, even their life. They further add all the practices which have recently taken hold—people spending more time as families, people not rushing from one thing to another, people taking a little more time to appreciate what they have.

While many of the observations are accurate, I would hesitate to automatically call this pandemic an act of God’s judgment. In coming to this conclusion one key fact is ignored. We deserve much worse from God if he would deal with us according to our greed, our selfishness, and our lack of love. We also need to recognize God is completely clear when he is going to unleash his justice. We can think of the Flood. We can think of Sodom and Gomorrah. We can even add the final Day of Judgment. Each is proclaimed, and in each God does allow a time of grace up to the point of judgment. So, is this pandemic God’s justice on a sinful world? Possibly, but not probably. Before we come to any conclusion we need to consider what Paul wrote by divine inspiration: “This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Of this one great and gracious truth we can always be confident, God does not deal with us as our sins deserve.

Another opinion I have heard is that this is a test from God. People support this claim by highlighting all of the restrictions placed on religion. They continue to explain how Constitutional rights have been violated in an egregious manner. Their conclusion is that God is testing his Church to see if it will persevere through tyranny and persecution. A further observation is the concern about the peril of social distancing and staying at home to worship. The fear is that this action allows people to give in to their sinful nature, and not be as concerned about worshipping together in person. In the end, the assumption is the Lord might be testing his people by making them ask the question, “How much do you love me?”

Unlike the question is this a judgment from God, we can address this opinion with a little more certainty. Could the past six weeks have been a test? Could the Lord be arranging the events of history to see what we really value? Could the Lord use these uncertain times to make us ask ourselves a First Commandment question?

There is a great probability in this. Recall the words of the First Commandment, as

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well as Luther's explanation. "You shall have no other gods, and we should fear, love and trust in God above all things." As we know from Scripture, God is always testing us, refining us to purify our faith. He is taking gold and making it even more pure and precious. So, could this pandemic be a test? Consider what we are doing, and what we could be doing. We worship following a live stream once a week. What happens after that? We might read our Meditations. We might read our Bibles. We might pray more than in the past. Still, we may have extra time to fill during the day. Here is where we might become frustrated. We can't do too much more because of all the restrictions. We know the drill—social distancing, shelter at home, wash hands, wear masks and gloves, and only so many people in a store at a time. It's clear there are limitations. Yet, stop and think for a moment. We might be limited in face to face contact, but should this stop us from maintaining contact with others? This may be the very test God is offering each of us. We have phones. We have pens and paper. We have all sorts of resources to communicate with people, but have we used them? We have members in their homes, some even confined to their rooms. Have we taken the time to call, write, or remind them of our prayers and concern? I can only speak for myself, and while I try to make these contacts regularly, time seems to slip away. For this I must confess and seek forgiveness, because I am not passing this particular test. This is something we should seriously consider.

There could be others tests the Lord is setting before us—those of trusting him, serving him, and living in the Christian freedom he has secured for us. So, could this be a time of testing? Quite likely it is. You and I need to ask our Lord for strength to serve, joy to persevere, and courage not to let our fears paralyze us. We need to remember our Savior's words, "Stop giving into your fears!"

The last opinion shared might be obvious. There are many who believe this is a sign from God. Their support is derived from Matthew 24 where the signs of the end times are listed. One of those is pestilence or plague. Of all the opinions expressed by people, this one we can accept without debate.

As Jesus prepared his disciples for the time they would continue his Gospel ministry without him, he warned them about the end times. While he didn't say when that day would come, he did provide signs they could watch all along the way. These are like signs along the road which announce our final destination is getting closer. Matthew 24 is familiar, but Luke 21:11 is particularly relevant: "There will be great earthquakes, famines and plagues in various places. There will be horrifying sights and great signs from heaven."

Plague or pestilence is what we see today. With it has come apprehension, uncertainty, and fear. For many this verse allows for only two questions—why and when. Why did it happen, and when will it be over? This is a prevailing attitude among so many people, and even among believers. Still, as believers in Jesus Christ and those who hold firmly to his Word, neither of these questions are our chief concern. Our greatest concern is to see it as a road sign which tells us Christian be ready; the end is near!

The Lord's purpose is not to terrify us, but to give us a special settled peace. It is exactly as Paul wrote, "And do this since you understand the present time. It is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11). Our life in Christ is a journey, but it is a journey as described by the hymnist: "Haste, my soul, from grace to glory, armed by faith and winged by prayer. All but heaven is transitory; God's own hand shall guide you there. Soon shall end this earthly story; swift shall pass the pilgrim days, hope soon change to heavenly glory, faith to sight and prayer to praise" (Christian Worship 465 st. 4).

In love our Savior gives us these signs to show the way. When we see them and take them to heart we can be completely confident. We know our Savior has alerted us. We know he has also prepared us to stand firm through the instruction and encouragement of the Word. This gives us confidence to say, "Yes, I know" to everything we face. Yes, I know there will be trouble. Yes, I know I will be tested. Yes, I know I

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can stand unmoved. This is what separates us from everyone else in the world. While many may be overwhelmed by panic, depression, anxiety, and uncertainty, we know the Lord is with us. As our faithful and loving Good Shepherd he will never leave us or forsake us. He will always lead us—even through the valley of the shadow of death. So, we do not have to be afraid whether this is a judgment, a test, or a sign. God is our Refuge and our Strength. He is our ever-present and never-failing Help.

✠ Easter Sunday

For all of us, the celebration of the resurrection was not what we had hoped for, or expected. Yet, it did not diminish the message we were privileged to hear, and now have the responsibility to share. The resurrection of Jesus was not only the culmination of six weeks of humble repentance, it was the proclamation of Jesus' incomparable victory. Death and the grave are powerless. The devil is defeated. We are more than conquerors through faith.

This is the truth upon which we must build our lives, as well as our hope for eternal life. Luther writes that the resurrection is "Fundamental for Christianity" —

"So you see that everything depends on our retaining a firm hold on this article in particular; for if this one totters and no longer counts, all the others will lose their value and validity. For everything has been done: Christ has come and has established His kingdom in the world for the sake of the resurrection and the life to come. If, then, the article that is the foundation, cause, and end of all articles of faith is over thrown and taken away, all the rest must fall and go down with it. Therefore it is certainly necessary diligently to stress and confirm this article."

What Luther Says, page 1215, paragraph 3874



The resurrection is our source of courage and the foundation for our conviction. Jesus lives doesn't only mean we will be in heaven, it means we can live each day without fear—nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. It also means no enemy will ever confuse or confound us—in all these things we are more than conquerors. Let the resurrection fill you with all hope, every courage, and unlimited boldness.

Jesus lives! The victory's won! Death no longer can appall me.
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done! From the grave Christ will recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! I know full well nothing me from him shall sever,
Life nor death nor powers of hell part me now from Christ forever.
God will be a sure defense; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! And now is death but the gate to life immortal;
This shall calm my trembling breath when I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry as fails each sense: "Jesus is my confidence!"

Christian Worship 145 st. 1, 4 & 5

Notes & News

† Music Update

Both the handbell and mixed voice choirs have stopped practicing and participating in worship for the remainder of the spring and summer. God-willing, rehearsals will begin in September. If you are interested in either the handbell choir, or the mixed voice choir, please speak to Debbie or Pastor Proeber. It is a rewarding way to serve the Lord and our fellow members in love.

† Bible Class

The Sunday morning and Wednesday evening classes will restart this coming week. The Sunday Class, May 10th, will return to the study of “God—The Ultimate Humanitarian.” The study just began, so if you did not get in on it at the beginning, it is not too late. We will meet after the Sunday morning streaming.

The Wednesday evening class will resume on May 13th. Prior to Lent we completed the study of 1 Kings. This evening we will begin the book of 2 Kings. Like its prequel, it is a poignant display of God’s faithfulness in spite of the unfaithfulness of his people and their rulers. Like so many truths contained in the Scriptures, they continue to apply even today. The class begins at 7:00 pm.

† Sunday School

Sunday School is over for the summer, however, in fall it will restart. Parents, keep watch for more information regarding this valuable tool to assist you in training your children in the knowledge of the Lord.

† Reception of the Lord’s Supper

Because of the pandemic the Lord’s Supper was not offered Maundy Thursday, or the first Sunday in May. This is one of the unfortunate realities of the mandates put in place by the government. There may also be personal concerns about being infected, or infecting someone else. Beginning this week, the Lord’s Supper will be offered privately to those who want to receive it. Please call Pastor Proeber to arrange a time when you can come to church. He will commune you privately observing all necessary precautions.

† Meditations

The latest copy of the devotional booklet, “Meditations,” is available. You may pick up a copy by the church office door. There is a box with sufficient copies for everyone. There are also extra copies if you would like to share one with a friend or neighbor.

† Worship Information

Currently we are streaming our worship services on Sunday mornings. While it serves a need for the moment, it can not replace actual “in person” worship. Missing is the personal encouragement. Missing is the face to face contact. Missing is the interaction between people. Our prayer is that we can return as soon as possible to our regular worship format. In the meantime, we will continue to stream as we watch all developments unfold.

It should be noted, one of the items on the Church Council Agenda for this Tuesday evening is to develop a plan to be ready to restart our worship services. This will be done carefully and in view of necessary precautions. In addition, the plan must address the reality that the state and county could “slow walk” reopening churches. It is a complicated process, but in complete deference to the Lord, a plan needs to be developed which will bring glory to his name.

Outreach Opportunities



The Outreach Committee will meet May 19th at 7:00 pm to begin planning for future opportunities. While there is some uncertainty, events and activities will be scheduled, and God-willing held. We hope and pray we can implement the complete schedule which gives us an opportunity to invite friends, family members, and neighbors to come to know us, and finally to come to know our Savior, Jesus Christ.

A proposed list for the rest of 2020 is provided below. Specific details will be coming in subsequent newsletters, as well as email updates. Added suggestions are always graciously accepted.

Prayerfully consider how you can promote these activities with people you know, encourage those who organize them, and most important, participate in them.

2020 Events include:

- Ice Cream Social and Game night will be announced at a later date.
- July 4th offers a patriotic movie, a tri-tip barbeque, fireworks and desserts.
- August 23rd is the Beach, Bike & Barbeque at Goleta Beach.
- October 25th we will commemorate the Reformation with a pot-luck dinner and movie.
- November 1st is the Los Angeles Circuit Reformation Service at St. Paul's, North Hollywood.
- November 22nd is the pre-Thanksgiving pot-luck and fellowship evening.
- November 26th is the Thanksgiving Day worship service.
- December 13th is scheduled for church decorating, the chili dinner and caroling.
- December 24th is Christmas Eve worship and fellowship beginning at 7:00 pm.
- December 25th is Christmas Day worship and fellowship beginning at 9:30 am.

Although we are dealing with some uncertainty, we will implement these plans as restrictions and mandates subside. Also, never forget, the work we do—sharing the good news about Jesus—can be done anytime, anywhere, and at any given opportunity.

May Birthdays

May Birthdays

21st - Kelsey G.
 23rd - Wilma H.
 27th - Wyatt D.
 Joshua S.
 29th - Dale K.



We rejoice in the many blessings our gracious God has given the members of our family of faith through another year. May the Lord continue to bless them richly and daily providing them with every needed grace.

Church Directory

Although the directory is still in "draft" form, its printing is getting closer. Hopefully by the end of the month, it will be ready to be mailed. If you thought of a correction, please get it to the church office in the next two weeks. I believe all the email addresses are correct, so thank you for your help in making sure all the information is up to date.



Reporters Wanted

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

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

Email to Pastor Proeber—pastor.orlcsb@gmail.com

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Josh Schueler, John Favuzzi, Jim Brown, and Al Todd for their reports in this month's *Reporter*.

There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles and contributions submitted by members have made every issue more interesting—now in its 19th year! 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 May

Church Council	Tuesday, May 12 th at 7:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday, May 19 th at 7:00 pm

If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to provide information.

Committee Chairmen are —

Greg Grunewald	Elders / Worship
John Favuzzi	Elders / Education
Josh Schueler	Elders / Outreach & streaming
Jim Brown	Church Property
Al Todd & Jim Everson	Church Finances

In our Prayers

As we continue through these unusual times, we need to pray more, and for more people. Ask the Lord to provide help and healing. Ask the Lord to give patience and understanding. Ask the Lord to keep all in his gracious care.

- We pray for Bill W. who is confined to his room in Mariposa;
- We pray for Sally and Dale K. who are at home in Solvang;
- We pray for all in our congregation who have health related issues and are more susceptible to the virus;
- We pray for Marrissa S. and Emmalee S. during their pregnancies; and
- We pray for the people at Wood Glen Hall whom Pastor Proeber serves.



Outreach Elder Report

By Josh Schueler

The Elder of Outreach position on the council is new. Early into the role, I started working towards various advertising models, analytics, social media platforms, and video streaming. In that order... until COVID-19. Priorities got shifted around. Advertising for community members to come join church service needed to be adjusted. While analytics / social media are still very useful, the real priority that came to be was.. *you*. The "Streaming Project" was brought to the forefront. While I had hoped to start video streaming at some point later this year to simply enhance our outreach toolset. The project took on some special priority. To prove out a broadcast, we started with a simple two laptop setup (webcam), OBS (Open Broadcaster Software), and TeamViewer. YouTube seemed the logical medium since it allows subscriptions, comments, and rankings. The first test ran during Lent service on a Wednesday evening. Shortly thereafter, the council approved a number of new tools to help enhance the project. We ordered a HD Camera with 20x zoom & 360° pivot, audio converters, and a new laptop. During shipment of the tools, we continued with the webcam solution. Internet availability was also considered. The church now has a mobile hotspot with a very fast data plan. With all of the equipment since received, all of our Sunday morning services have been broadcast at near realtime. We can all worship together.. apart! This real-time worship is very important as it helps bring us together until we can worship in person again. With YouTube as the medium, the video is stored and easily viewed at a later time. In the months ahead, years ahead, and beyond COVID-19. We will operate the worship service by broadcast for all people near, and far. I hope this can be used as a handy tool to perform more outreach, and additional advertising of what ORLC has to offer. The knowledge that Christ is our Savior!



Some outreach ideas moving forward that could utilize the toolset. An additional camera could be used for operating worship services outside of the sanctuary. The setup can easily be tweaked from streaming in real time to recording for editing, and special effects. Devotion, and real time bible study with Pastor Proeber. Building up the Our Redeemer Lutheran Church channel with more content, how to's, and learning opportunities. Anything, that can bring eyes to the website, or YouTube channel is a win for outreach. What a blessing it is that these tools are now available and can be utilized to praise our God!

This role on the council cannot be successful without continued support from all members of the congregation.

Ways to help:

1. Suggestions! The broadcast is easily tweak-able. If fonts are too small, audio not loud enough or too loud. Please send ideas. Feel free to share other broadcasts that you have enjoyed.
2. Learn to use the broadcasting system. I will be happy to show anyone how to operate the table, and run the broadcast for Sunday services. It is an easy way to enjoy the service from a unique perspective, and serve the LORD.
3. Share the broadcast link on Sunday, or really any day of the week for friends/family to help get the word out.
4. Consider a special thank offering towards the "Streaming Project".

I would love to hear more ideas from the congregation. Please feel free to email me at josh.schueler@gmail.com, or ourredeemerlutheranstreaming@gmail.com.

Thank you to everyone for the support, and feedback thus far. To God be the Glory!

Spiritual Growth Report

By John Favuzzi

Sunday School

- Sunday School is regularly offered on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month from September through May.
- Text message reminders are sent to parents on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.
- Sunday School schedule through May with the lesson for each class was provided to each parent.
- Attendance of the older children has been low; the younger children's attendance has been good.

COVID-19

- On March 19th John Favuzzi recommended to Pastor that Sunday School follow the Santa Barbara County Education Office's actions and cancel Sunday School through the Summer.
- Pastor notified the congregation about the cancellation of Sunday School through the remainder of Spring with an article published in the April 2020 Newsletter.
- Resumption of Sunday School will follow input from the Church Council and the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department.

Respectfully submitted, John Favuzzi

Property Committee Report

By Jim Brown

1. Accomplishments through March and April

Mowed Property
 Ditch trimmed and weeds sprayed
 West planting beds weeded
 Patio sprayed for weeds and cleaned
 Tractor Maintenance (2)
 Checked and changed oil
 Checked and replaced air filter
 Changed /Sharpen / ordered replacement blades
 Repair Parking Brake linkage
 Repair Cruise Control
 Greased Bearings
 Installed 3 new Exit signs/lights in fellowship hall
 Repainted 2 walls in fellowship hall
 Hung fire extinguishers in storage building per fire marshal orders
 Completed Fire marshal inspection/walk through.
 Church work Day April 4 (Thank you Pastor, Al, Sonya, Jim E., and Jim B.)
 Secured sacristy door with dead bolt and angle iron

2. Planned but not completed

None

3. Planned to be started / completed on / before next Meeting –

Review Future task list
 More Mowing

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Property, from page 7

4. Ongoing work/activities

Weed control: As needed

Critter control: As needed

5. Future Tasks

Restroom upgrade

Extend waterline to storage building

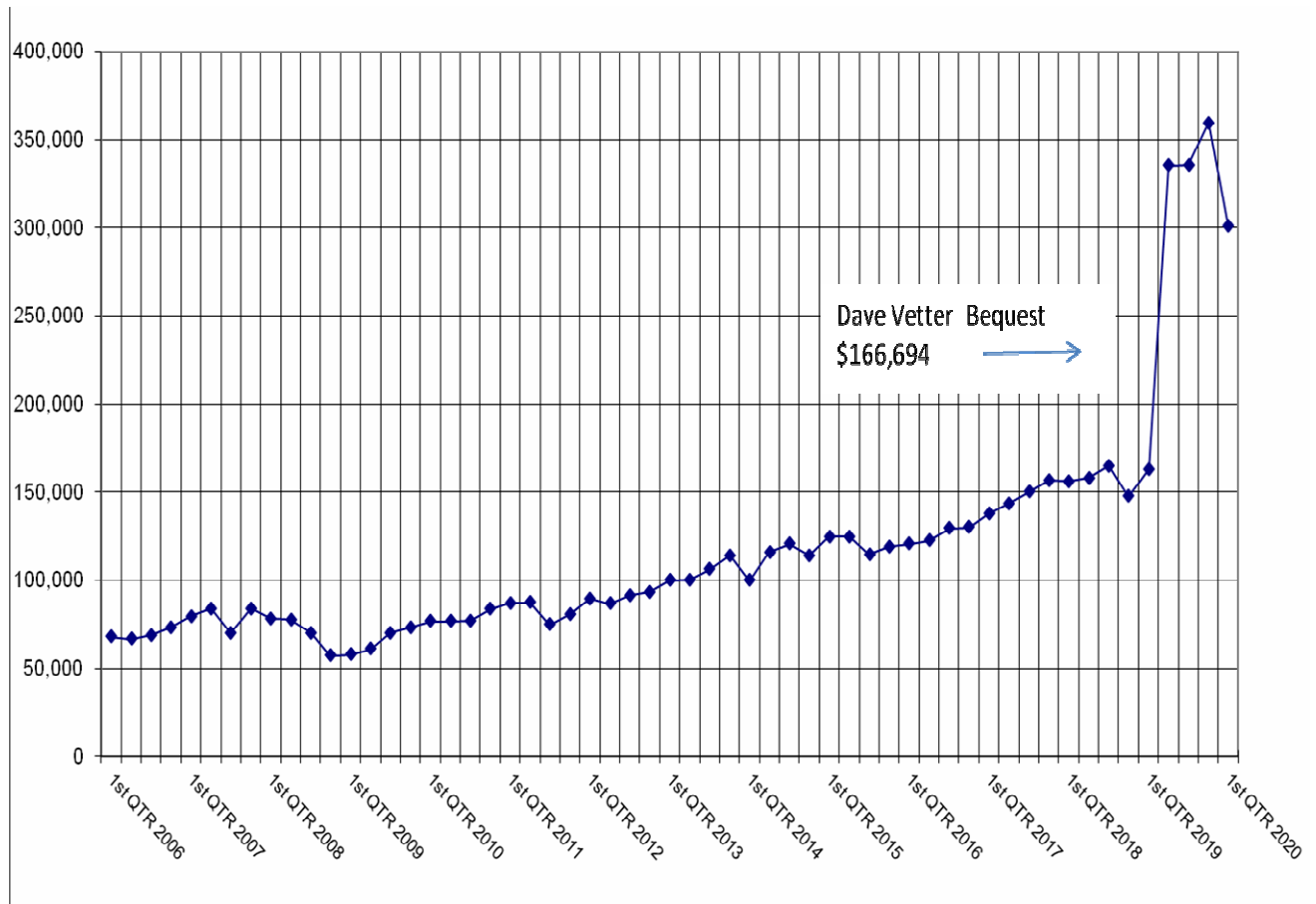
Evaluate Cox internet connection for parsonage and church

Begin landscaping at parsonage

WELS Investment Fund

By Alan Todd

WELS Investment Fund 4309338—Ist Quarter Report



ORLC Endowment Fund—First Quarter 2020

Beginning Balance	01.01.2020	\$359,479	
Change in Value		(58,211)	-16.2%
Fund Market Value	03.31.2020	\$301,268	

Financial Report

By Alan Todd

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church Financial Overview FIRST QUARTER 2020

General Fund Status

BEGINNING BALANCE January 1, 2020	\$36,784
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INCOME

Offerings	\$33,535
Less Bank Service Charge	\$0
Plus Interest	\$0
Net Income	\$33,535

EXPENSE	\$34,667
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ENDING BALANCE March 31, 2020	\$35,652
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Financial Secretary Reconciliation with Treasurer Report

Financial Secretary Total Income =	\$35,305
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Treasurer Income:

On-Budget Offerings	\$33,535
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Off-Budget Offerings	\$1,770
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Interest	\$0
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Total Offerings	\$35,305
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Difference	\$0
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****** (Note: Financial Secretary does not receive notification of interest income - only the Treasurer)