

# The Reporter

## November 2020

The Reporter

Volume 18, Issue 9

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### “Moving Indoors”

by Pastor Proeber

On November 1st, Reformation Sunday, we will transition back to indoor worship. While we have enjoyed excellent weather and beautiful surroundings, there is a change in the air. Cooler and damper conditions are going to become more common. Perchance, we might even have rain. I am grateful for all who made the outdoor experience so positive. I have even heard several comments proposing we do this regularly every summer. I, for one, wouldn't oppose it.

I know some may welcome the move indoors, and it does offer some advantages. Still, it is not going to be without some precautions and compromise. The precautions were shared at the last congregational meeting (cf. page 4). Most are common sense and fall within established guidelines for safe gatherings. Granted, there is a continuing debate over the efficacy regarding some of the precautions, particularly masks. We could question the purpose and wisdom of them. However, is this the most productive use of our time and energy - debating the use of masks? Somehow, engaging in a debate about this one facet could sidetrack us from what is really important. It could also become a tool in the hand of the devil to divide us. This is the last thing we need at such a tenuous time. What do we gain if we start demanding one way is better and refusing to listen to another person's concern? Wouldn't we become like many in the world with mouths open and ears shut? Personally, I am not a big fan of wearing a mask. Yet, out of concern for those around me I will wear one once we move inside. If it allays fears and builds up a spirit of unity and selfless love, why not!

There are other precautions we will enlist such as disinfecting "touchable" surfaces, cleaning more thoroughly, improving air circulation, having hand wipes and sanitizer available, and so on. Ultimately, there is no harm in doing any of this.

I suppose the question could be raised, "don't you trust God to keep you healthy?" This question parallels the one posed to Jesus regarding the "greatest" commandment (Matthew 22:34-40). Most people in the congregation would readily say, "we trust the Lord." At the same time we do not go out of our way to tempt the Lord. I don't ride my bicycle down the middle of the street, or cross an intersection with my eyes closed trusting God will keep me safe from my negligence. God doesn't promise to keep us safe when we put him to the test (Matthew 4:5-7). So, if wearing a mask and using other precautions can offer some help, why disregard them? We do have some people in our congregation with compromised immune systems and preexisting conditions. Should we tell them, don't come because I don't want to wear a mask? Should we maintain our freedom and possibly cause them to get something even as simple as the flu? Should we assume they are the ones with the problem? Stop for a moment and consider, is this what our Savior's selfless love looks like? I can demand my rights,

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or I can even say I won't come if I have to wear a mask, but how does this reflect the love of Christ which unselfishly rescued an undeserving wretch like me?

This is what is actually at stake. Yes, we can talk about the orders from the County Health Department and others in authority. We can even look at the recently enacted fines which could be levied against groups that are too large. This is not why we do what we do. As Paul reminds us, we are constrained by the love of Christ. This means if someone we call sister or brother is struggling or apprehensive about being infected by COVID, we don't blow them off or insist on our rights to do what we want. God help us if this is what we have allowed ourselves to become. The world and Satan have claimed us and the victory.

We know we live in a sinful world. We know there will be challenges, threats and obstacles. We always need to keep in mind the words of our Savior, "We are in the world, but we are not of the world." Jesus was very explicit in what he meant. As his disciples, we are in this world for better or for worse. What happens around us does have an effect on us. We struggle with unjust laws and mandates. We grow weary with questionable decisions. We see our hopes crushed under burdensome restrictions. We are in the world, and the Prince of this World is going to make life as miserable as possible. At the same time, we are not to be controlled or overcome by the world. Nor should we ever permit the deceptive marks of the world define us.



Now some may interpret this as a reason to throw away every mask one owns, because we are not going to be of the world. This is foolishness. We maintain a delicate balance between being good citizens of the earthly kingdom and good citizens of our Savior's heavenly kingdom. One doesn't release us from the other, nor does one preclude the other. Remember our lives are about bringing glory to God in everything we do. As disciples and witnesses of our Savior, "we give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." As I said, it is a delicate balance. When we begin scoffing at the authority God has placed over us and deciding what we will obey and when, we can also show our disdain for the Lord. We dare never forget, the "authorities that do exist have been established by God" (Romans 13:1-2). What completes and balances this understanding is what Peter and John said when they were told by the authorities to stop proclaiming the Gospel: "We must obey God rather than men." They declared this knowing full well it could have meant their lives. The question we have to ask is wearing a mask equivalent with the explicit order not to proclaim the Gospel?

The times in which we find ourselves call for balance and the art of compromise. No, we will never compromise our teaching of God's Word, or the faith in Jesus which saves us. To do so is to go against conscience and God's will. Nor will we ever compromise the Gospel ministry of our congregation. It will always be a hospital where sin-sick souls can receive the precious healing of forgiveness and peace for their weary souls. After this, there is a great deal of wiggle room. This can include extra spacing between people, extra cleaning, and anything else we can do to keep the doors open - which can also include wearing a mask. Please understand, if our willingness to wear a mask for an hour or so allows us to keep our doors open, isn't it worth the minor inconvenience? It should be seen as an investment which will pay dividends in working back to a complete ministry. I know this is what I long for, am willing to work for, and yes, even sacrifice for.

There is so much more at stake than a mask or no mask. If we allow our discourse to be only about our freedom, or the lack thereof, we are deceiving ourselves. There are precious, blood bought souls involved. In this time when there is so much uncertainty and division, we need to do everything we can to

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increase unity through the bond of peace. If this means a little inconvenience, so be it. It is not like we haven't been forewarned about it in this life. Recall 1 Peter 1:3-9:

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. <sup>5</sup>Through faith you are being protected by God's power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

<sup>6</sup>Because of this you rejoice very much, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various kinds of trials <sup>7</sup>so that the proven character of your faith—which is more valuable than gold, which passes away even though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

<sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, yet by believing in him, you are filled with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup>because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Apostles' words are noteworthy. A little inconvenience now will eventually lead to a greater joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. When you consider everything from that perspective, isn't this what we want to practice and pursue? I believe this is the very reason why our Lord has put us here, and keeps us here, especially during this pandemic.



## Absolute Loyalty to the Word

It is the duty both of preachers and of hearers first of all and above all things to see to it that they have clear and sure evidence that their doctrine is really the true Word of God, revealed from heaven to the holy, original fathers, the prophets and apostles, and confirmed and commanded to be taught by Christ Himself. For we should by no means ever let doctrine be manhandled according to the pleasure and fancy of the individual who adapts it to human reason and understanding. Nor should we let men toy with Scripture, juggle the Word of God, and make it submit to being explained, twisted, stretched, and revised to suit people or to achieve peace and union; for then there could be no secure or stable foundation on which consciences might rely.

*“What Luther Says,” paragraph 4770, page 1475)*

## “An Ounce of Prevention”

by Pastor Proeber

At the last congregation meeting, Pastor Proeber outlined the necessary precautions which were going to be enacted as we move indoors on November 1st. All of these are common sense, and will help us get back to a more normal ministry in the future. They will also help unify us. Of all the things we can do, this is by far the most important. We want nothing to come in between us as we worship our Lord, and we want nothing to divide us as we serve the Lord and one another in love. Certainly everyone may have a personal opinion, and that is fine. We will, as a congregation, observe those preventative measures which will keep our doors open.

May God the Father continue to protect us and give us good health. May he also provide additional opportunities where we can share the good news of Jesus Christ.

### In Christian love, the following was approved at the Congregational Meeting—

- Masks will be worn indoors during the worship service which will allow for singing and speaking
- Hand wipes will be available at the door
- The “touchable” surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected every Saturday
- The fans will be reversed so air moves, but it goes up to the ceiling instead of straight down
- The windows will be kept open for added air circulation
- A fan will be placed in the fire exit (front of church) to exhaust air
- The pastor will wear gloves and a mask for the distribution of the Lord’s Supper
- There will be no refreshments for the foreseeable future
- Masks will be worn during fellowship time on the church patio
- The fellowship hall will be available for parents with small children; audio and video will be streamed from the sanctuary
- The live streaming via YouTube will continue every Sunday

One final note, if you are feeling ill, or if you have any COVID symptoms, please do not come to worship on that day.

Love in Christ is strong and living, binding faithful hearts in one;  
Love is Christ is true and giving —may his will in us be done!

Love is patient and forbearing, clothed in Christ’s humility,  
Gentle, selfless, kind and caring, reaching out in charity.

*Christian Worship 490 st 1 & 2*



## November 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.

1st	Sonja T.
7th	Erle W. P.
10th	Carl S.
16th	Emmalee S.
22nd	Jacob M.
24th	Darby J.
30th	Chad W.

## “Thank You”

The last two months have seen a number of memorable events in my life, as well as in my family’s life. At the beginning of September, the 20th Anniversary of my installation as Pastor of Our Redeemer was celebrated. I thank the Lord for all the prayers, the encouragement, and the gift which came from your generosity. It is humbling to see how the Lord uses people to accomplish his will and proclaim his selfless love. It is especially humbling to see how he does this year after year, and decade after decade. Thank you for your love in Christ, your service, and your generosity.

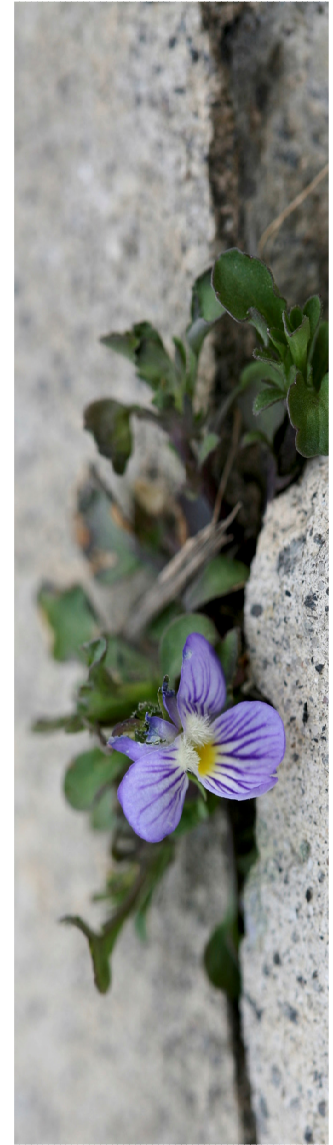
Last month there was another significant event. In mid-September, I received a phone call that my mother went into the hospital with what seemed to be a heart attack. That was not the case. Instead a CT scan uncovered a mass in her colon. Initially the doctor believed he could remove it, and after a couple of months of rehab she would be well enough to go home. That was not the Lord’s plan for her. Once the surgery began, the mass not only blocked her colon, it encompassed much of her abdomen. There was nothing which could be done. Her life was now in the Lord’s hands.

The following two weeks were busy with finding hospice care and a place for both my mother and my father. The Lord made everything possible and both prayers were answered. The Lord also answered another prayer, my mother was called to Jesus’ side on October 5th. She was alert and able to carry on a conversation in the morning. That afternoon, she went to sleep only to wake up in her Savior’s arms. She received the crown of life.

Again, I thank everyone for their prayers and especially their encouragement during this time. It was a blessing to be reminded time and time again of the Lord’s great mercy, and his promise of the resurrection. Both of these have been a great comfort.

I am truly humbled at the love shared by so many. Certainly the last two months have been eventful, but they have been filled with peace. I rejoice that I have the privilege to serve you in this peace, and with this peace. May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you in his love, and may he continue to work through all of us to accomplish his good and gracious will.

In Christ, Pastor



## October Birthdays

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Greg G.
4 <sup>th</sup>	Kyle K.
6 <sup>th</sup>	Deborah P.
8 <sup>th</sup>	Erle P.
13 <sup>th</sup>	David G.
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Jim B.
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Darby J., Jr.
25 <sup>th</sup>	Michelle J.



GO OUT  
TO THE WHOLE  
WORLD,  
PROCLAIM  
THE GOOD NEWS  
TO ALL  
CREATION

## Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee has not met for several months because of the COVID pandemic. Precautions have caused the committee to cancel several events through the summer and early fall. What does the future have in store? It is hard to say, but there are several events and activities we normally have, but each has to be reconsidered in the light of current precautions. Worship services will continue, as will our live stream on Sunday mornings. Beyond that, the members of the committee will evaluate everything we do and plan accordingly. We want to be safe, and yet we want to proclaim the good news of our Savior. While they may seem mutually exclusive, there are actually closely related. Watch for more information, and more ideas on what we can do looking forward.

### Tree Decorating, Chili and Caroling

On December 20th we will meet in the sanctuary at 2:00 pm to put up the tree and decorations which invite us to worship our new-born Savior, Jesus Christ. It is also when we will have our chili supper to warm us up on a cool December evening. The schedule will be different this year because our caroling will be restricted. Some alternatives are being considered, and will be shared in the future. Watch for more information and how you can help.

### Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner at ORLC

Currently it is not planned prior to our Thanksgiving Worship service. Please watch the service folder, as well as your email for up to date information regarding this fine evening repast.

### Thanksgiving Worship

There are times when it is difficult to say, "thank you," to the Lord. This year might be one of those years where we might wonder, for what does the Lord deserve my thanks? The blessings remain countless even though we may not see them readily. On Thursday, November 26th we will have the opportunity to thank the Lord in a 9:30 am worship service. In view of everything that has happened in 2020, this will certainly be a service of rich thanks and praise to the Lord.

### Advent Services begin in December

Sunday, November 29th marks the beginning of our Advent season of preparation. Even though we may struggle with many issues personally and in our community, we should never overlook the opportunity to prepare ourselves for our Savior's coming and birth. These lift our heads and tell us Jesus comes to save us.

### Mid-Week Advent Worship

On Wednesday, December 9th and December 16th we will have two 7:00 pm services to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Savior at his birth.

### Christmas Worship

Christmas is always a special time at Our Redeemer with special services on Christmas Eve, December 24th at 7:00 pm, and Christmas Day, December 25th at 9:30 am. This year, because of our Lord's undeserved love, it may be even more special than in previous years.

As we approach the birth of our Savior, we know we will have to make some changes and modifications. It may even include an extra service on Christmas Eve. Watch for more information as it is developed and shared by the Elders. Also, seize every opportunity to proclaim the good news that

## Notes & News

### Handbell Choir

Practice for the end of one church year and the beginning of another continues. The ringers are preparing for the festival services which will include Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. 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.

### Choir

Currently the mixed voice choir is not meeting. There are some alternatives being considered, but for now we want to err on the side of caution. Possibly in the New Year we will be able to restart.

### Wednesday Evening Bible Class

The Wednesday class continues to meet at 7:00 pm. Recently we just completed the study of the Books of First and Second Kings. Both were reminders of God's undeserved love even in the face of rebellion and disobedience. It is a reminder to which we cling by faith.

A new study is starting on October 28th. It

will consider the “end times.” These are the days which precede the coming our Savior in glory. It is an appropriate study during this time of the Church Year.

We will utilize the book written by Prof. Thomas Nass of Martin Luther College—End Times. If you would like a copy of the book for your personal study, or for study in class, please let Pastor know as soon as possible.

Some topics we will cover are —

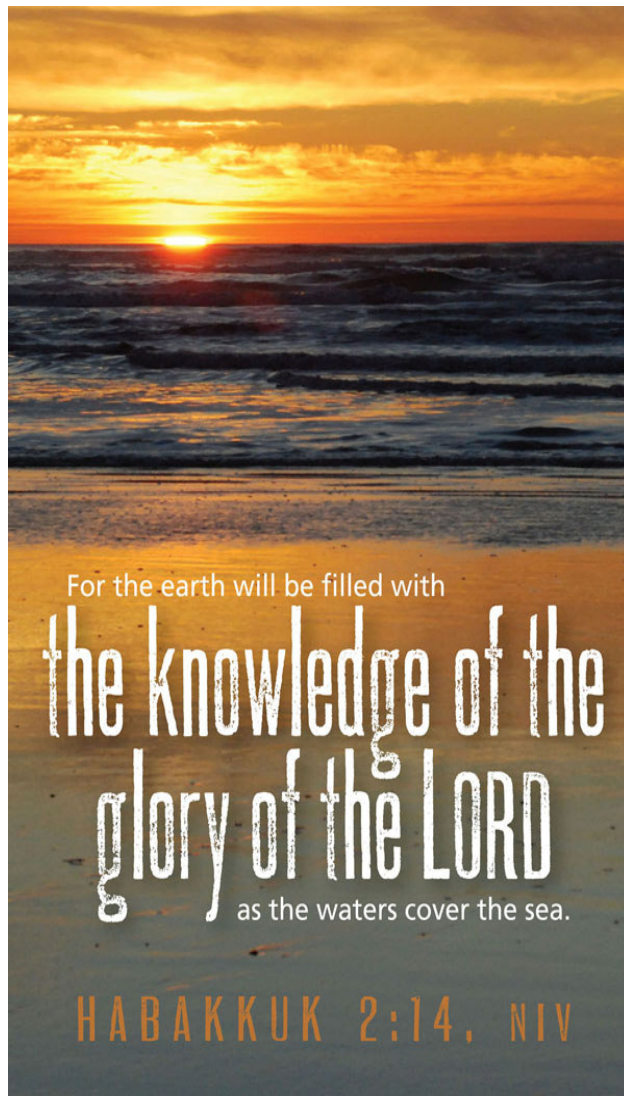
- The Future
- Jesus is Coming Back
- The Antichrist
- Judgment Day
- Resurrection of the Dead
- Hell
- Heaven
- False teachings about the End Times

### Sunday Morning Bible Class

During the last several months, while we have worshiped outside, there has been no Sunday morning Bible Study. With the return of indoor worship, we will look to get it started again. When we ended this past spring, we were studying the book, “God the Ultimate Humanitarian.” We look forward to that study and the precious lessons it imparts regarding our God.

### Sunday School

The education of our children in the Word of the Lord is important. Keeping them safe and healthy is also a primary concern. For that reason we are utilizing a “virtual” Sunday School. Lessons are sent to all the students, and a link to North-western Publishing is provided. Through the virtual class, lessons are taught to each specific grade group. While we would prefer to have in person classes, these hopefully will return in the not too distant future. If you have any questions, regarding the program or possibly helping, please speak to John Favuzzi, or one of the teachers—Sonja Todd, or Sue Proeber.



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## Serve the Lord with Gladness

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### 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

Hard-copy or email to Pastor Proeber — [pastor.orlcsb@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.orlcsb@gmail.com)

***A simple and rewarding way to serve!***

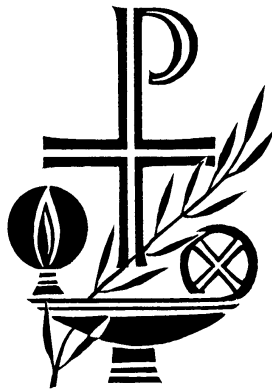
There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2020. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please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

### Meetings for November

Church Council      November 3rd at 7:00 pm  
*Specific Boards will meet following the Council Meeting*

Outreach Committee    To be determined

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



### Reformation Service at St. Paul's First North Hollywood

Usually at the end of October or the first Sunday in November, our Los Angeles Circuit would hold a combined Reformation Service. The service would include a mass choir from all the congregations in the Circuit, a grade school choir, as well as handbells, and other instrumentalists. This year will be different. Because North Hollywood is under more stringent restrictions to address the

outbreak of COVID, large groups of people worshipping indoors is not permitted at this time.

Consequently, we will have our regular Sunday morning service and emphasize the Reformation in our own special way. This will include congregational singing, a special order of worship with the Lord's Supper, and our handbell choir.

While our participation in a large service is

not possible at this time, it should never hinder us from remembering the incredible grace God offered through the dedicated and self-sacrificing work of Martin Luther. While we do not celebrate the man, we do celebrate his heritage. That is the foundation of our church today —

**By Grace Alone  
By Faith Alone  
By Scripture Alone  
By Christ Alone**