

News from Old Zion/Alt Zion Lutheran Church



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May 2020

*“God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.”*

Psalm 46:1

*“Gott ist unsre Zuversicht und Stärke. Eine
Hilfe in den großen Nöten, die uns getroffen
haben.”*

A WORD FROM PASTOR

In his letter to the Christians in Rome, St. Paul writes, “*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” That is really the promise of our triune God of love—that He will cause everything that happens in us and to us and around us to work, finally, for our eternal welfare. And the seal with which He has stamped this promise is the cross of Christ there on the hill Calvary. “(He) *did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,*” Paul says. That is the ultimate and indisputable proof that our Creator-and-Savior God loves us and cares for us and truly will make everything work for what is good for us. In a time when our lives have been changed so dramatically by the threat of the coronavirus, these words of promise provide us with a rock on which we can stand.

We need to be clear about what Paul means. He does not say that things will always work out for us in this life as we want them to, or that Christians should always expect to be successful and wealthy, or that Christ’s people of faith will not endure hardship and tragedy and sorrow. Those Roman Christians to whom Paul wrote would experience bitter persecution for the sake of their Savior. Paul himself would die as a martyr for Christ. Nor does Paul promise that we will always understand the workings of our Lord as He rules all things for the good of His Church. The Roman Christians would not understand why some of their loved ones—fathers and mothers and children—would be driven from their homes, or be imprisoned, or even face death in the arena. The Lord has told us that His thoughts and His ways are as high above our thinking as the heavens are above the earth. Anyone who claims to understand in detail the providential workings of our Lord is simply a charlatan.

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keep up with changes on our web site especially the new Old Zion History blog, and check out our posts on Facebook!

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(Word from Pastor continued)

Paul also does not tell us that, because we have the promise of Christ to care for us as our Good Shepherd, we do not need to use our commonsense or to take care of ourselves as best we can. The words of Scripture which Jesus quoted to Satan also apply to us, “You shall not tempt the Lord Your God.” Also Christ’s people of faith need to listen to the experts and the authorities on how to take care of themselves and how to avoid needless risk. Also Christ’s people need to follow recommended procedures for safety’s sake.

But what Paul does promise us is that our Lord will make all things—ALL THINGS—work together in the best way for His people. And therefore, we do not need to fear for ourselves. Christ has died for us, and Christ is risen, and His resurrection belongs to us. And, we can with confidence do what we can to serve our loved ones and our neighbors. We will, of course, be as careful as possible to protect ourselves and to keep others safe. Yet we can know with absolute confidence that we are in the hands of our Good Shepherd. Our infinitely wise and all-loving heavenly Father has promised to care for us in the way that best promotes our eternal welfare. And the proof of that promise is the cross of Christ Jesus.

From Luther’s Large Catechism, the 1st Article of the Creed

In his first paragraph of explanation, Luther emphasizes the “fatherly” nature of our Creator-God:

As if you were to ask a little child, “My dear, what sort of a God have you? What do you know of Him?” He would answer, “This is my God: first, the Father, who has created heaven and earth. Besides this only One I regard nothing else as God; for there is no one else who could create heaven and earth.”

Luther describes the providential care of our heavenly Father out of which He provides for our daily needs, and he concludes that it is therefore our duty to thank Him and worship Him in all that we think, do, and say:

Moreover, we also confess that God the Father has not only given us all that we have and see before our eyes, but daily preserves and defends us against all evil and misfortune, averts all sorts of danger and calamity; and that He does all this out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a benevolent Father, who cares for us that no evil befall us....

Now, since all that we possess, and moreover, whatever, in addition, is in heaven and upon the earth, is daily given, preserved, and kept for us by God, it is readily inferred and concluded that it is our duty to love, praise, and thank Him for it without ceasing, and in short, to serve Him with all these things, as He demands and has enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

***Please remember all
Service men and
women on Memorial
Day, Monday May 25.***



May Birthdays

13 - Helen Davis;
28 - Ruth Reiser; and
Demetrius Jackson



Word from Pastor continued

For the time being—“Virtual” Services

As long as the coronavirus prevents us from meeting together for worship in our accustomed way, we will do our best to put “virtual services” on our Facebook site. This newsletter gives your pastor an opportunity to give special thanks to our organist, J.P. Meyer, and our soloist, Jaye Green. J.P. has provided technical expertise, needed equipment, and countless hours of volunteer-work to make it possible for us to post our services at the appointed times. And Jaye has willingly adorned our services—both in English and in German—by using her beautiful voice to lead us in the singing of hymns. To both of these generous servants of Christ, THANKS!



Our Joan Wachlin found the perfect way to decorate our church for Easter!

She also made sure that the flowers on the Altar and the palms for Palm Sunday were looking perfect for our “Virtual Services”. For this and everything else she is doing to help keep things going, your fellow “Old Zionites” thank you.

A very special Thank You to Pastor Metzger for giving inspiring messages in spite of the circumstances, and to Jaye Green (soloist) and JP Meyer (organist) for their musical contributions to these virtual services.

Please remember that right now there are several ways to give your donations, by mail to the church or by using the donation service on our website. A heartfelt Thank You to all those who have faithfully continued their giving!

Please remember

our sick and shut-ins in your prayers!!

A call, a card and a few encouraging words are always appreciated, especially right now, as we all are affected by this coronavirus.

What if...?

What if we actually believed that the war between Good vs. Evil really existed today, and that the Devil/Satan walked among us, instead treating him like some bad character that only lives in the Bible? Would we (the Faithful) have handled the Coronavirus pandemic differently? Would we have insisted that our government leaders include Church as “essential”, like our need for food, prescriptions and handling banking affairs? Would not the same God that protects us during these aforementioned “essential” outings, also have protected us on the way to and from Service in our Churches?

Could virtual Church Services replace the in-person ones, the way that on-line education is beginning to replace attendance in our schools and colleges? Will social distancing be the new “norm”? We already have examples of what could be ahead of us by our diminished social skills due to the constant use of cell phones and computers in our society. Church is one of the last frontiers where like-minded people can gather to worship God and fellowship with each other.

A lot will be determined when the Coronavirus quarantine is lifted. Some of us will return to the Church (building) right away, others may gradually return after they’ve determined for themselves that it is safe. Let’s not forget that some may now find “virtual” Services more convenient for their life style, and may consider attending Church no longer necessary.

This Coronavirus may be one huge battle in the war between Good vs. Evil, where the prize is our faith in God. Will we ring true like the martyrs who died for our freedom to worship God together in Church? YES, we will ring true and succeed as “Warriors of Faith”, when we remember that...

“Great is Thy faithfulness”, O God my Father.
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changeth not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.
“Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!”
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed, Thy hand hast provided.
“Great is Thy faithfulness” Lord, unto me.

Hymn: “Great is Thy Faithfulness” - Verse 1 and Chorus
Words by Thomas Obadiah Chisholm, 1866 - 1960