

Whew, Holy Week and Easter has passed! Six services in eight days with each service on a different technological platform than the one before. For a pastor who is not that up to date with technology in the first place, that was quite the ride. I have to say that I really enjoyed collaborating with Deacon Heidi and Pastor Kirsten from Lord of Life, and Pastor Helga from Pasco First for Holy Week, although I would probably recommend not attempting this during a pandemic.

My hope and prayer is that you found a way to make Easter special for you and your family. For the last couple of years my tradition has been to go play a round of golf the day after Easter, but this year I had to settle for turning on my sprinklers and chasing all the problems that the winter caused. I even put a new line in for a part of the yard that previously did not have coverage! I found it very satisfying to be able to accomplish and finish a job with my own hands.

I wonder what is it that you have found to satisfy yourself during this time? Have you read any great books, or how many quilts have you started and finished? Did you tackle that closet that always needs reorganizing, or maybe clearing out the garage? Have you taken a walk, and felt the warm sun on your face? Have you felt the soil of the earth under your fingernails as you readied your garden, or maybe you too have gotten your sprinklers up and running!

No matter what remember to take care of all aspects of yourselves and give yourselves a break when you can't do all things or be all things that are needed when we try to be "normal." The grace that God extends to us, even in times such as these, is sufficient for all! That means that you are a beloved child of God and that resurrection is real for all of us.

Mary Magdalene could not see it as she walked to the tomb, but she gloried in it as she ran to tell the disciples that Jesus is alive! Maybe as we are sheltered in place, we have a tough time seeing it, but there will come a day when we will be able to return to our "regular" lives. Lazarus could not experience it as he lay in the tomb, but when he heard his name, he came out! So, will we, and what a glorious celebration it will be!

Peace be with you this week!

Pastor JJ

Worship Opportunities this week...

April 19th at 9:30 AM via Facebook Live, Holy Communion will be served!

April 22nd at 7:00 PM via Facebook Live, Holden Evening Prayer

April 26th at 9:30 AM via Facebook Live, Service of the Word

Lutherhaven & COVID-19 Update

From all of us at Lutherhaven Ministries—Camp Lutherhaven, Shoshone Mountain Retreat, Shoshone Creek Ranch, Idaho Servant Adventures, and McPherson Meadows—we pray this finds you and your family and friends well, healthy, and hope-filled...in Jesus!

These are without a doubt significant times.

Lutherhaven journeys alongside you in facing significant new challenges.

We are all making significant decisions in response to these challenges.

And through it all, God daily calls each of us to love, support, and encourage one another in significant ways.

In the weeks since March 1, endeavoring to be part of the global solution to the coronavirus pandemic, Lutherhaven's leadership team has devoted daily attention to the news of the world, news around the region, and news especially from the many communities dotting the country that Lutherhaven Ministries serves.

The Lutherhaven staff have worked hard to put together another exciting summer—our 75th—of terrific camp and retreat programs for all ages at all four of our sites. We've been eagerly counting the days to another summer filled with friends, families, evening campfires, mountain peaks, sunsets over the waters, and most of all, the chance to experience God's love for us outdoors in creation, together in community, centered in Jesus Christ.

It's clear, however, that Lutherhaven has an important responsibility to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. We're therefore convinced summer camp 2020 at Lutherhaven Ministries—as at summer camps around the nation—must look very different than summer camp ever has before.

The Board of Directors and leadership staff of Lutherhaven Ministries — attentive to the direction of federal, state, and local health agencies — is putting on hold all gatherings of people at our camps, through the month of June.

We did not make this decision easily, nor do we take it lightly. Some building blocks of that decision:

- Lutherhaven brings in staff and campers from at least 18 states around the nation, in June especially.
- We know restrictions on gathering numbers of staff, campers, and families from across different regions will continue at least into June.
- Summer camp is the opposite of social distancing! Restrictions on large groups of people together in social settings, recreation, worship gatherings, celebrations, dining, and other camp settings will continue for some time.
- We await guidelines for how best to manage campers in overnight sleep-over settings.

At the heart of Lutherhaven Ministries is the well-being and safety of our campers and guests, so we are suspending camp programs through June. This includes postponement of school programs, staff training, weekend retreats, worship services, and summer camp programs.

In mid-May the Board and leadership staff will gather to look at July and August options for camp.

Never before in Lutherhaven's 75 years has there been a decision so difficult to make. The financial ramifications will be great and may yield more difficult decisions. But we are convinced this decision is what is best for all whom we are called to serve during this time.

Over the course of the next weeks, all May and June camp participants and retreat guests will be called by a member of our guest services team with options regarding rescheduling and answers to your questions.

Meanwhile, staff are busy creating contingent youth and family programs and opportunities at our sites for the rest of summer, as we await clearance from regional public health departments to provide safe camp experiences for communities of people. Staff are also taking advantage of this time of Sabbath rest for our facilities to make site improvements.

We are confident, with no doubt, that on the other side of Covid-19, Lutherhaven Ministries will emerge a stronger outdoor ministry organization—all thanks to God! This global crisis we face together has given us significant opportunity to pause, reflect, evaluate, and innovate, so that programs at each of our four uniquely magnificent ministry sites are ready to serve—more and better—children, youth, adults, and families from across the country and around the world.

Thanks for your continued partnership and support of Lutherhaven Ministries. As we continue to pray for you, we ask for your prayers in return, and your continued support and generosity towards this ministry we all love deeply.

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though..." Psalm 43

Your servant in Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Baker" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Baker, Executive Director

Facilities Update

Even though we are not in the building, a lot continues to happen at church. The new HVAC system is in the final stages of installation. The new furnaces are placed, the coolers are up on the roof, ducting continues to go in, and the removal of the old system is almost complete. The basement now looks quite different than it did when we had the church tour in February! It is one big spacious room that somehow seems brighter than it did before! Because of your support this project will be done by the time we return to the sanctuary for worship services and we will be cool in the summer and warm in the winter for years to come.

A new security system has also been installed for the building. A local security firm has updated our old system and will monitor for unlawful entry and fire detection throughout the building. Thank you to Larry Pederson who worked so hard to make this important upgrade happen!

If you have driven by the church, you know that the lawn and grounds continue to be taken care of by many volunteer's from the A-Team. Thank you to everyone who takes such good care of our property!

Prayer Requests, Joys and Concerns for the week...

We pray for...

Karen Recher's aunt Donna who had a stroke and is recovering in Western Washington.

Donna, diagnosed with lung cancer

Jeff and Gary as they continue to recover from Covid-19

All who struggle with loneliness, pain, anxiety, hunger, and sadness

For kids who do not have a stable home life while school buildings are closed

All who battle addiction

Everyone who is isolated and lonely

Ron Rolla's niece, Trudy Rolla in the loss of her husband Eric Polzin

For all of the patients and staff in our emergency room's

Craig who faces open heart surgery, and Karen who faces breast cancer surgery

Janice's daughter-in-law Debbie, in her service as a nurse and her husband Randy

Ways of continuing to give our Offerings...

It is important that we continue our financial support and giving to First Lutheran if you are able. The Deacon's Fund continues to receive requests, the HVAC construction is ongoing, and we have employee's who continue to work in various capacities. Our congregation is very blessed to be a blessing and though it looks very different, we are still doing important ministry every day!

There are a few ways in which this can be done:

1. GivePlus App: To get started, download GivePlus Church for free from the Apple App Store or Google Play. Simply search for "GivePlus Church" to quickly find and download the app. After setting up an account (providing your name, email address and picking a password,) find Kennewick First Lutheran Church, and now you can easily make donations directly from your smartphone using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account. You can even choose which fund you would like to donate to (General, Major repair, Deacon's Fund, Electronic Sign, Lenten Offering or HVAC Fund) and you can set a recurring payment if you like.
2. You can still Mail your checks to the church office: 418 North Yelm Kennewick, WA 99336, our mail is being forwarded to Pastor JJ's home, so it is safe and secure.
3. You can also contact your bank/credit union to see if they offer online or recurring "Bill Pay" options.

Thank you for your continued support through this tumultuous time!