



# Blessings and Musings

## The Lutheran Church of Our Blessed Savior

### FEBRUARY, 2021

#### From the Pastor:

**Pastor:**  
Kal Rissman  
765-754-7381

**Church Council  
President:**  
George Bennett

**Vice President:**  
David Shears

**Secretary:**  
Carol Shears

**Treasurer:**  
Nancy Sowers

**Other Members:**  
Andrea Barnett  
Becca Key-Kerr  
Kathie Loser  
Marilyn Pierce  
Eddie Slaven  
Dick Zarse

**Organist:**  
Marilyn Pierce

**Church Secretary:**  
Marilyn Pierce  
765-215-6088  
9 AM - Noon  
Mon. Wed. Thurs.  
and Fri.  
Tues. 1:00 pm

**Office Phone:**  
765-724-3671

**Email Address:**  
pastorkal 2015  
@gmail.com

**Sunday School:**  
9:30 A.M.

**Worship:**  
10:30 A.M.

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The Zarse Family

The Corona Virus pandemic has caused all of us to make some very difficult decisions. For example, in our family we decided to not gather together for the big Thanksgiving dinner and we did not get together with family for Christmas either. We still have the grandson's presents at our house, in fact. Businesses have had to decide whether to open or not or whether to work from home instead. Schools have had to decide whether to do virtual learning or regular learning or some combination of both. We make these decisions based on the best medical evidence that we have that tells us that gathering together spreads the virus and puts people's lives in danger.

We have had to make difficult decisions in the church as well. As much as we all would like to worship together, we know that contact tracing has shown that churches are real hotspots for transmitting the virus. We are aware of the Lutheran church in New York that lost 44 members due to the virus. We are also aware that about 85% of the members in these two parishes are in the danger zone of being either over 65 or health impaired or both. When we have had in-person worship, we have tried to do it about as safely as we can with physical distancing, masks, no singing and individual communion and yet there is still more danger gathering together than not gathering, so worship was suspended as the infected numbers kept going up.

The hope is that the vaccines will become available to all persons sooner rather than later and that this will stem the tide of this pandemic, but in the meantime there are still questions for some folks as to whether we are operating out of faith or out of fear in the present. The reasoning here is that if we are faithful God will protect us and if we end up dying, maybe that was just the way it was meant to be.

Being Lutherans, we might want to see if Martin Luther had anything to say about a situation like ours and I was able to locate some very specific thoughts by brother Martin on the subject of pandemics. Luther wrote a letter to his good friend, Johann Hess in 1527 concerning the pandemic that was raging at his time, which was the Bubonic Plague or Black Death, as it was also known. The height of the Bubonic Plague was in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but outbreaks kept springing up in various places well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There was a huge outbreak in Wittenberg, where Luther resided in 1527 in fact.

The Bubonic Plague was actually spread by tiny insects that lived on rats and ships with rats onboard soon carried the plague to all parts of the known world at that time. Eventually, the plague wiped out a full one-third of the population of

Europe. Pastors were having mass funerals and carts were sent out into the streets every day of highly infected cities to collect the dead. The cry of "Bring out your dead" was heard regularly.

When the plague hit Germany in 1527, Luther's friend, Pastor Hess wanted to know if it was appropriate for a pastor and others to flee from the plague or if they should stay and take their chances. Luther has a twofold response. He says that we should not abandon helping others who are sick, but on the other hand, we should not tempt God by flaunting good medicine and good health practices. The following are some comments by Luther in his response.

"Others sin on the right hand. They are much too rash and reckless, tempting God and disregarding everything which might counteract death and the plague. They disdain the use of medicines; they do not avoid places and persons infected by the plague, but lightheartedly make sport of it and wish to prove how independent they are. They say that it is God's punishment; if he wants to protect them he can do so without medicines or our carefulness. This is not trusting God but tempting him. God has created medicines and provided us with intelligence to guard and take good care of the body so that we can live in good health." Later in the letter Luther states, "Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence."

In summary, Luther admonishes his friend and fellow pastor to be faithful, but be smart. Help others in need when you can, but don't associate with others when you can avoid it, because you might make yourself sick or even worse, make others sick by your independence and negligence.

Just like at Martin Luther's time things are not always cut and dried. We do have difficult decisions to make and not everybody will agree with some specific decisions. We live by faith, but we also appreciate the intelligence that God gave us to make good decisions that protect people. At least we have an advantage that Luther didn't have at his time and that is the ability to have virtual services online. We can still worship together in different places. We anxiously await the time when we can be together and maybe even give each other a hug again.



## DEATHS

### WILLIAM (BILL) FELDHEISER

Died: December 16, 2020

Funeral: December 20, 2020

### JOY MAXINE ZARSE

Died: January 1, 2021

Funeral: January 6, 2021

### BOB STEVENS

Died: January 22, 2021

Funeral: January 27, 2021



The church has been a busy place this January. We five little Lutheran Church mice have watched different things happening here every day. We have watched Pastor Kal work on his sermons for each Sunday, sermons for funerals, recording sermons for each Sunday morning, and doing his office work. We have watched Linda Holford clean the church each week. Just because we are closed carpets need to

be swept, furniture gets dusty, bathrooms need to be cleaned. This keeps Linda a busy person. Then we have watched Marilyn in the office: closing out records for 2020, making out the report for Synod, getting member's statements ready and mailed to them and making out new reports for 2021. We have watched her record the organ music for January with Carol and David Shears. We have watched David and Carol record Pastor Kal's sermons for January. The pantry volunteers have all been busy getting ready for each Thursday tailgates. They are here on Monday unloading the truck and putting items away and here on Wednesday to get 100 orders of food ready for Thursday's tailgate. So if we are opened or closed God's church work goes on. God bless you all and take care.

## FROM SQUEEKY, THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MOUSE

•If a man will begin in certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.

—Francis Bacon

•Do not feel totally, personally, irrevocably responsible for everything. That's my job. God.

—Context

•Liberty is dearly bought, continually paid for and difficult to keep.

•The important thing is not to think much but to love much.

—St. Teresa of Avila

•Happiness is not perfected until it is shared.

•God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

•Now we all know what kind of a car the apostles drove. It was a Honda, for "They were all in one Accord."

## Thrivent Choice Dollars

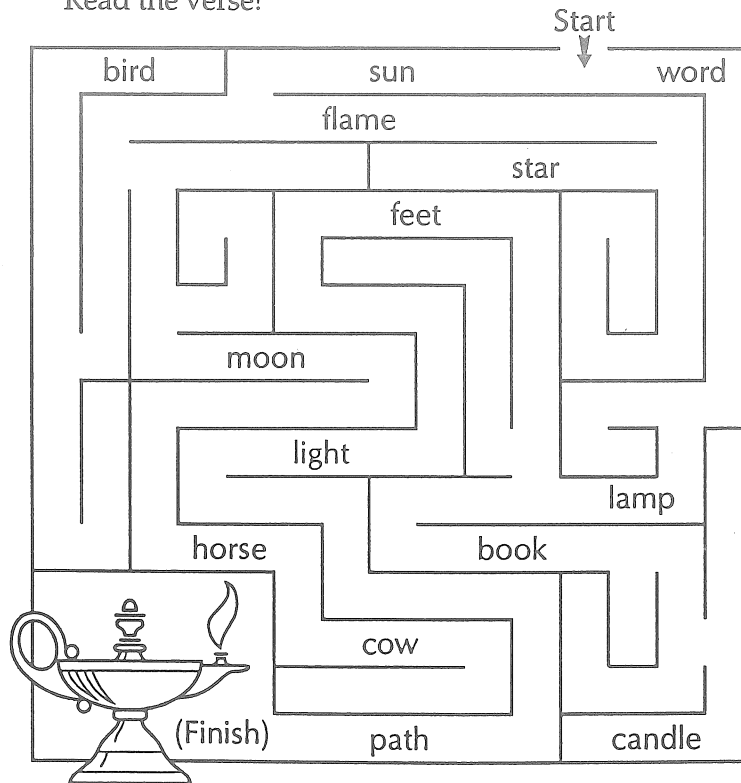
It is time again to designate our Thrivent Choice Dollars. Every member of the congregation who has a Thrivent account of some kind has the opportunity to choose some charity that Thrivent will give money to. This is free money that we either designate or we lose out on it. Deborah and I always designate our Choice Dollars to the congregation, but you can choose another charity if you wish. It is a simple procedure that can be done online by going to the [thrivent.com](http://thrivent.com) website or can be done over the phone by dialing 1-800-847-4836. If you have any questions you may also call Michelle Walker's office at 765-212-2307. Please take advantage of this opportunity, because our charities need everything they can get right now. The deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Just for Kids

Do you ever feel all alone? Do you ever feel as if you need a map to get through the day?

Find your way through the maze below. Write the words from the *correct* path, in order, on the lines below.

Read the verse!



Your \_\_\_\_\_ is a \_\_\_\_\_ to my \_\_\_\_\_

and a \_\_\_\_\_ to my \_\_\_\_\_.

—Psalm 119:105

## CONGREGATIONAL REPORT 2020

MEMBERSHIP 2020	BAPTIZED	CONFIRMED
2020 Year Starting Numbers	291	160
By Confirmation		0
By Confirmation Youth		0
By Affirmation of Faith		0
By Transfer		0
By Baptism		
By Statistical Adjustment	1	1
<b>MEMBERSHIP TOTAL</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>161</b>
MEMBERS REMOVED IN 2020		
1. By Death	5	4
2. By Transfer		0
3. By Statistical Adjustment		0
<b>MEMBERSHIP TOTAL</b>		
<b>AS OF 12-31-20</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>157</b>

FUNERALS: Non Member	1
WEDDINGS: Non Member	0

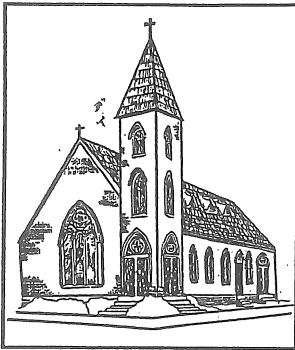
ATTENDANCE STATISTICS		
TOTAL:	SUNDAY SERVICES:	1054
	SPECIAL SERVICES:	35
AVERAGE:	SUNDAY SERVICES:	39

COMMUNING MEMBERS:	
A. CONFIRMED WHO COMMUNED:	77

ATTENDANCE:	
ASH WEDNESDAY:	35
MAUNDY THURSDAY:	0
CHRISTMAS EVE:	0

# FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 9:00 am Office	2 9:00am Office	3 9:00am Office	4 9:00am Office 9:30-11:30am Tailgate in parking lot	5 9:00am Office	6
7 9:30am S.S. & B.C. 10:30am Worship	8 9:00am Office	9 9:00am Office	10 9:00am Office	11 9:00am Office 9:30-11:30am Tailgate in parking lot	12 9:00am Office	13
14 9:30am S.S. & B.C. 10:30am Worship	15 9:00am Office	16 9:00am Office	17 9:00am Office 6:00pm Ash Wednesday Church Council	18 9:00am Office 9:30-11:30am Tailgate in parking lot	19 9:00am Office	20
21 9:30am S.S. & B.C. 10:30am Worship	22 9 am Office	23 9:00am Office	24 9:00am Office	25 9:00am Office 9:30-11:30am Tailgate in parking lot	26 9:00am Office	27
28 9:30am S.S. & B.C. 10:30am Worship						



**Lutheran Church  
of Our Blessed Savior**  
309 West Washington  
PO Box 206  
Alexandria, IN 46001

**Church Office**  
765-724-3671  
**Pastor Kal Rissman**  
Home: 765-754-7381



## February Participants



### ORGANIST

7 Marilyn Pierce  
14 Marilyn Pierce  
17 Marilyn Pierce  
21 Marilyn Pierce  
28 Marilyn Pierce

### LECTORS

Becca Key-Kerr  
Ron Haas  
Dick Zarse  
Donna Key-Kerr  
Linda Howerton

### ALTAR GUILD

No Altar Guild this month

### SOUND EQUIPMENT

David Shears