

A Message from Pastor Ben

One of the things that I have tried to do, as we have navigated this past year, is to focus attention on how God accomplishes good things THROUGH what are clearly negative experiences. I think it is incredibly important to look for, to expect, God's positive actions. What I have done less of, but would like to do now, is to take a closer look at the negative. I don't like emphasizing it, but I feel like I'm being pushed to do so.

We have been living in an evil time. Yikes. I don't like typing that or even thinking it, but I think it's true for several reasons.

1. The isolating of individuals, especially seniors and kids. One of the strange experiences of this year has been giving communion to our shut ins through closed windows, this being an improvement on not being able to give them communion at all. They have been largely isolated through this time, not only because family hasn't been able to visit, but because they've so often been required to stay in their rooms. In prison camps, solitary confinement is considered punishment. Many of our seniors have been suffering through this. [In saying it, I am NOT blaming nursing homes. In my experience they have been very cooperative in doing what they can do to alleviate this within the rules.]

A less extreme example of this, but nevertheless real and important, is the self-isolation that people have felt that they needed to do, robbed of the many small interactions that we have with each other every week. Sure, there are activities that can be done, television to watch, books to

read. But it is detrimental to the human spirit to be alone.

Kids need the company of each other and the freedom to stretch out, to run, to touch, to be free. In some places more than others, kids have been prevented from going to school, prevented from being together, sometimes even confined to home.

All of this isolation isn't just different. It's actually evil. It is damaging to human beings. Perhaps you have heard the stories of family being prevented from seeing their loved ones at the end of their lives? Some would call it a necessary evil, but it's no less evil for there being an explanation for it.

2. Chaos and violence. This summer there were protests that began after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, many of which then turned into riots. Across the country businesses were burned, police stations were attacked, statues were vandalized and pulled down, law enforcement were attacked with lasers, Molotov cocktails and bricks, etc... Some have excused such violence because of the evil that provoked it or tried to focus the attention back on legitimate, non-violent protests. But the existence of non-violent protest does not excuse the violence. If anything, it underlines the possibility of righteous anger which does not cross the line.

The violence this summer and into the fall was evil. It attacked and intimidated not the guilty, but the innocent. How many lost their businesses? How many sheltered at home in fear that the mob would move in their direction?

The pulling down of statues, not by popular consent, but merely by the exercise of

chaotic power, was evil. It was a few making a bullying decision on behalf of the many. That is not how legitimate decisions are made in our country.

3. Institutions are proving less trustworthy. In order for relationships to function it is absolutely necessary that the two people trust each other. I trust Faith to be honest, and to be working together with me for the good of each other and of our family. If I didn't trust her, or her me, it would cause damage. Instead of being a source of support, we would be a source of potential attack to each other. The fear of such attack (whether physical or verbal) would make every day stressful, whether or not anything bad happened on that day. The lack of trust makes every day bad because you always feel vulnerable to evil erupting out of nowhere. So, it is imperative, for the well-being of our relationship, that we try hard to be trustworthy.

Trustworthiness in our institutions is very much in question. A couple of generations ago, most Americans believed that Walter Cronkite and other journalists were telling them the straight news. Less than half believe that now. Perhaps worse, half of Americans think journalists lie or twist the truth on purpose, not just because they have an unintentional, personal bias. I follow the news on Twitter. When President Trump says something it often carries a disclaimer, "This claim about election fraud is disputed." No such disclaimers accompany the posts of Joe Biden or his surrogates. Rather than building trust, this suggests that the Twitter platform is choosing sides. When news media and social media choose sides, that undermines their trustworthiness.

Who trusts that the elections were conducted fairly and according to the laws and safeguards we have agreed upon? I believe that to be the case in Calhoun and Sac County, but I don't believe that to be true in Philadelphia or Detroit. Could I and millions of other doubters be wrong? Yes, absolutely. But that is why the trustworthiness of institutions is so critical. Following the rules and respecting the safeguards makes the process trustworthy. Transparency makes the process

trustworthy. Large swings in vote counts, late rule changes that seem to benefit one side over the other, lack of robust audits with both sides included, all these things decrease public trust. Many of those in a position to be trustworthy proved to be so. But too many acted in ways that were not. And so now we are left with the evil fruit that comes from the lack of trustworthiness. Will Americans ever trust the results of this election, whichever way it ultimately turns out? I fear that many, perhaps most, will not.

You might not be a person who is losing trust in those institutions. But whether or not you are, the fact that others are losing trust affects you too. When we don't share trust in each other and in common institutions, we experience more stress. Without trust, we fear what the future holds for us. Does that sound familiar?

But is this decreasing trust evil, per se? I think that it would be better to say that a purposeful lack of trustworthiness is evil. The intent to deceive and manipulate people is evil. And as Americans look at what is going on in the country, many, perhaps a majority, believe that institutions are purposefully deceiving them, that these institutions are untrustworthy. 'Untrustworthy institutions' and/or 'the lack of trust in our institutions' has evil effects for us all.

I haven't wanted to call our time evil. I would much prefer to say something like "challenging." But without calling it what it is, I don't think we see the challenge for what it is. Without seeing the darkness of this moment, I don't think we fully appreciate the necessity of our actions on behalf of our neighbors. Without being able to recognize evil when we are living through it, can we recognize the amazing grace of God at work?

Lastly, I am sorry for bringing up partisan issues. I am conscious that it carries the risk of alienating some people and I hate that. I don't want to tell anyone what to think or feel when it comes to political or socially divisive issues. But I felt like I had to say it. Sometimes it's like that and I hope it's okay.

Rev. Ben Worley
Emanuel St. John, Lytton, IA
(712) 541-4785 (cell phone)



**Emanuel-St John Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2020**

President Jo Grodahl called the meeting to order. Present were Pastor Ben, Cindy Souder, Rhonda Johnson, Brian Lantz, Jean Matter, Nicole Meyer, Colleen Arndt, LaVerne Arndt, Ben Albright, Jeff Ellerbrock, Pauline Lange and Kari Lantz. Pastor Ben gave devotions. Motion by Brian Lantz, second by Kari Lantz, to approve the minutes from the November meeting. Motion passed. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by LaVerne Arndt to approve the Treasurers Report with a balance of \$11,413.77. Motion passed

The council discussed the different ways that people could attend or see the Children's Christmas Program and Christmas Eve Worship service. The Council decided to have a sign up for the DVD of program to view, to announce that dress rehearsal would be open for people to come watch on Saturday, Dec 19th from 10 to 11 a.m. and a live stream of the performance will be done on Sunday December 20th. Christmas Eve Services will be at 3:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on December 24th with communion at both services. The 6:30 p.m. service will be live streamed.

There will be internet and technology training the next three Sundays at 2:30 p.m. for anyone interested in learning how to run the church equipment.

The Council discussed how to conduct the Annual Meeting with Covid restrictions. No meal will be served. But the meeting will be done as usual after church with masks and social distancing. A zoom meeting may also be offered. A sign up will be required for the zoom meeting

Jo gave a reminder for year-end reports to be given to Pauline.

Snow removal was discussed. LaVerne and Ron Haden will take care of getting an ad into paper.

January 6th the Advent decorations will be taken down.

An offering box will be put in the back of the church for members to put donations into.

Motion by Brian Lantz, second by Jeff Ellerbrock to adjourn meeting. Motion passed.



Thank You

This year we received poinsettias from:

Dar and Denise Lake in memory of Laverne and Marge Dettmann, Miriah Murphy and Marc and Laurie Dettmann

Jeff and Jo Ellerbrock and **Jon, Angie, Baylee and Peyton** in memory of Jaylin Ellerbrock and LaVern and Beulah Segebarth.

Edna and Dyle Rockafellow in memory of Ed and Nelma Rix, Jr., Valerie Rockafellow, and David Purdie

and from **Darwin Matter** and the **Arndt family** in memory of all.

Thank you for their beauty that graced our chancel this Advent/Christmas season.



Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1) **Shirley Sage**, Emma Warne
- 4) Nancy Aden, Samuel Ramsey
- 6) **W. LeRoy Johnson**
- 7) **John H. Everts**
- 9) Angela Anderson, Jan Frederick,
Braden Scharn, Dierdre Schultz
- 10) Marilyn Dettmann, Owen Scharn,
Katelynn Macrunnel, PeterLam Wei
- 11) Justin Smith
- 12) **Esther Dettmann**, Gregga Schuetz
- 13) **Stephen Kral**, Tyler Scharn,
Theresa Schultz
- 14) Micah Lantz, Steven Schultz,
Abigail Worley
- 15) Donna Bounds, Kaylynn Kruckenberg,
Kylin Kruckenberg
- 16) Kathy Kuehl, Tina Rix
- 17) Keaton Hammen, Hank Segebarth
- 18) Maddux Diersen, Grace Henkelman,
Tyler Riley, Brad Williams
- 19) Bradlee Aden, Candace Booth
- 20) Colleen Arndt, Rodney Grodahl,
Mark Harms, Shelby Pudenz
- 22) Tiffany Evans, Jay Vreeland
- 23) Darrell Ross
- 24) Patricia Johnson, Michelle Talbott
- 25) Larry Pierce
- 26) Samuel Musselman
- 27) Myla Albright, Trinity Diersen
- 29) Jess Hout, Brenna Lantz, **Dale Scharn**
- 30) Jessica Meyer, Cory Walker



- Jan 10, 1976 David & Diana Diersen
 Jan 12, 2005 Nathan & Michele Hauptert
 Jan 16, 1971 **Dennis & Patricia Johnson**
 Jan 27, 2014 Rob & Melanie Fry

Happy Anniversary!



Sunday School perfect attendance for the month of November 2020:

- * **Nursery & Pre-Kindergarten**—Teddy Albright, Cannon Albright, Jack Bartels, Adelaide Worley
- ☆ **Kindergarten & Grade 1**—Myla Albright, Elin Albright, Lily Bartels & Johnny Worley
- ☆ **Grades 2 & 3**—Sawyer Riley, Lille Greene, Chase Hejtmanek & Dillan Graeve
- ☆ **Grade 4 & 5**—Aidan Albright, Cooper Nattress & Benjamin Worley
- ☆ **Grade 6**—Kelsey Hejtmanek & Kellen Meyer
- ☆ **Confirmation Class** (Grades 7 & 8)—Derek Greene, Charlie Nattress & Jayci Graeve
- ☆ **Grades 9, 10, 11 & 12**—No one

Class winners for best attendance were Nursery & Pre-Kindergarten taught by Alison Greene and Kari Musselman and Kindergarten & 1st Grade taught by Kari Lantz.



Annual Committee Reports are due as soon as possible—**absolute deadline is January 6, 2021**. The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be held Sunday, January 31, 2021 following the 10 a.m. worship service (approximately 11:00 a.m.).

ANNUAL
MEETING

January 31, 2021



Daniel Kennebeck Jr., age 40, of Sac City, IA, passed away on Wednesday, November 25, 2020, at his home. Daniel Dennis Kennebeck Jr. was born on March 10, 1980, to parents Daniel and Debra (Wernimont) Kennebeck in Omaha, NE. He grew up in Lytton, IA where he graduated with the class of 1999, from Rockwell-City-Lytton High School. He was a member of the Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church in Lytton, IA. Daniel enjoyed going fishing and playing cards, especially cribbage. He will be missed by those who knew and loved him.

Those left to cherish his memory include his parents Dan and Deb Kennebeck of Lytton, IA; brother Donovan (Rosa) Kennebeck of Lytton, IA; sister Dana (Allen) Jeannoutot of Bloomfield, NE; grandparents JoAnn Wernimont of Carroll, IA and Dennis Kennebeck of Storm Lake, IA; nieces and nephews: Lexi Hall, Aubrey Jeannoutot, Cora Devitt, Casey Jeannoutot, Brock Jeannoutot,

Pierce Jeannoutot, Dallas Kennebeck, Jay Jeannoutot and Mila Kennebeck.

Daniel was preceded in death by his grandparents Gerald Wernimont Sr. and Judy Kennebeck and uncles Gerald (Jay) Wernimont Jr. and Joe Kennebeck.



Our sympathy to the family of Becky Diersen, sister-in-law of **Karen Cerra, Bruce Diersen & Dave Diersen**, died Saturday, Dec 5th.

Sympathy to the family of Julius Diersen, cousin of **Karen Cerra, Bruce Diersen & Dave Diersen**, died recently.

Sympathy to the family of Daniel Smith, brother of **Carol Meyer**, died Saturday, Dec 5th

Sympathy to the family of Carinne Meyer, granddaughter of **Harlan Meyer**, died Tuesday, Dec 8th.



Lutheran Services in Iowa

January 2021, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

Raising Our Voice for Iowa Children and Families

Families struggling without access to mental healthcare.
Human services providers overworked and underpaid.
Former refugees and immigrants striving to build new lives.

These are all issues faced by Iowans. Help us ensure their voices are heard at the Iowa State Capitol.

This legislative session may look different from past years. But now more than ever, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) will be advocating for our community members who are so often overlooked in our society.

You can join us in this important work. Visit LSIowa.org/advocacy and sign up for our Advocacy Alerts. Learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices. If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.



Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.



Compassion During Crisis

Across the state, LSI team members work with families at risk of child abuse or neglect, connecting them to the tools and resources they need to keep their children in their homes whenever safely possible.

One of the critical programs available to parents is the Strengthening Families program. The program typically provides 14 weeks of in-person parent group work, family activities, and a family meal to enhance child development, help parents create their own support network, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse or neglect.

When COVID-19 created challenges to this in-person model, LSI did not give up on the families who relied on this important service. Instead, LSI's Behavioral Health Intervention Services team has gone virtual.

Maria, a program supervisor with LSI, has been leading a virtual version of the program this year, where families join a Zoom meeting and use "breakout rooms" for individual sessions. Meals are purchased from Hy-Vee and delivered the night of the session, so families are still able to celebrate their tradition of eating together each week.

This year has created several challenges for all of us, but LSI continues to answer the call and provide the high-quality care and services Iowa children and families deserve.

