

# THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church

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Ruth F. Doty, Pastor

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Church Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon  
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.



*The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. – Numbers 6:24-26*

**THE MISSION OF  
NEW JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH:**

*We are a group of people who  
gather together in friendship and love  
to worship God, to spread God's Word,  
and to care for God's people.*



<sup>3</sup>After [Jesus'] suffering he presented himself alive to [his chosen followers] by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' Acts 1:3-5

Friends,

As I write this, all of us have been told to stay at home, to stay at home and wait. It reminds me of Jesus' disciples.

On April 19<sup>th</sup> our lesson from John 20 told us how immediately following the news that Jesus had risen, the disciples gathered – more like huddled – in a room behind locked doors, because they were confused and afraid. They hid, but Jesus intruded into their confusion and fear, reassured them that he had, in fact, risen, and announced “peace.” At the end of May the Easter season culminates with the lessons about Jesus' Ascension followed a week later by that of Pentecost. Before Jesus left them this time, he told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit. That Spirit showed up a week later, coming with a mighty wind and what looked like tongues of fire on top of the heads of the disciples.

We know what a mighty wind sounds like. In the past weeks we have had some terrific windstorms that “pruned” a lot of trees, taking some down that were weak or not firmly anchored and trimming dead branches from those left standing. In addition, life as we knew it seems to have been “blown” away by a new virus.

Like the disciples, we wait behind closed doors. Unlike the disciples, we don't have to wait for the Spirit to come as a mighty wind, for God's Spirit is active among us, burning within us, even now, even in and through people we would least expect.

Even before they were “released” from the order to stay in Jerusalem, the disciples began to adapt to radically changing circumstances. Since Judas was no longer with them, they chose Matthias to complete their circle of 12. (Matthias was a different person from the one we know as Matthew.) Matthias had been accompanying them from the time of Jesus' baptism. Once they received the promised Spirit on Pentecost, discernment of their mission and adaptation began in earnest. The rest of the Book of Acts tells fascinating stories of challenges the believers faced and adaptations they made to respond to a world they now saw with very different eyes.

We, too, are coming to see the world with new eyes. Not only is it changed, but we have been changed as well. What has not changed, though, is Jesus' message of peace, Jesus' promise to be with us and Jesus' charge for us to go into the world and share God's messages of comfort, peace, and God's call for justice, justice for all. Even if confined to your house, you have many opportunities to share these messages with others through word and deed.

We at New Jerusalem are adapting by offering worship through Zoom and by significantly updating our website and Facebook presence. Check them out and tell others about them.

Before ascending to his Father, Jesus raised his hands in blessing. And, in closing, so do I. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. God be with you 'til we meet again.

*Pastor Ruth*

# NEWS & EVENTS

## in New Jerusalem and the Synod

### COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The following items were discussed and decisions made at our council meeting on April 13:

- Denny Beshore, Finance Committee Chairperson, gave an update on the church's finances.
- Worship services for April have been conducted online using Zoom.
- Worship and gatherings at church are postponed until further notice.
- New Jerusalem's website and Facebook page are being updated on a regular basis.
- A Funeral Policy for during the pandemic was discussed and approved council. See the article in the next column.
- Financial options, such as electronic giving and the CARES Act were discussed. See article on the page 3.

**MAY SIGN-UP SHEETS** for flowers, bulletins, etc. There is a current hold on signing up for these items.

**BIBLE STUDY and CONFIRMATION CLASS** are on hold, but we hope to start these again soon via Zoom.

**THREADS FOR OTHERS** – Stay tuned. If you need material to make masks or yarn for cowls and hats for seafarers, let Pastor Ruth know. Supplies are available at church.

**CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS** – Stay tuned.

**MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE** – The deadline for the June 2020 newsletter is **Sunday, May 24**. Please have all articles and announcements to the church office by this date.

**YARD SHARE** – Stay tuned.

**FINANCES** – Since we will not be gathering, but the work of the congregation goes on, please consider sending in your contributions.

Please remember our Local Care Fund handled confidentially by Pastor. Contributions to this can be made through your envelopes. Also, please let us know whether you would donate online or through a mobile app if those were offered.

### FUNERAL POLICY DURING THE PANDEMIC

In the light of the current COVID-19, Pastor Ruth will not be conducting funerals at church or funeral homes. She will preside at graveside services with only family members attending and will ask everyone attending the service to respect social distancing. When the coronavirus situation improves, the family is welcome to schedule a memorial service at which Pastor Ruth will be happy to preside.

Please be assured that Pastor Ruth will be available via phone and electronic means, including email, Facetime and Zoom, to provide pastoral care to the sick, the dying, and family members. Do not hesitate to contact her for these and other needs.

**MOTHER'S DAY BREAKFAST**, is tentatively scheduled for **Sunday, May 12, from 8:30 to 9:15 a.m.** Even if we cannot gather, we will give thanks to God for mothers and other special women in our lives.

### CHURCH MUSIC SUNDAY

Stay "tuned" for whether we will be able to gather physically for worship on **Sunday, May 17**, which was scheduled as Church Music Sunday and dedication of the new handrails on the stairs leading up to the altar. Members of the Worship and Music Committee will continue to discuss how and when we will hold this celebration, since musicians and choir members are not able to rehearse at present.

### SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Because of concerns regarding COVID-19, Synod Assembly 2020 has been postponed to October 22-24. The assembly will be held at the Kalahari Resort, Pocono Manor. Bishop Zeiser will continue to serve until a new bishop is elected. Should it not be possible to elect a bishop in October, the bishop will serve until he retires on December 31. In that case, the ELCA will appoint an interim bishop. More information will be published when it becomes available.



Dear partner in ministry,

Weeks may have passed since you last walked in the doors of your congregation and worshiped, face-to-face, with your community of faith. To be sure, being the body of Christ looks and feels differently than it ever has before.

**Despite all of this, we are called to be church — together.** The ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) looks different now, but it has not stopped. Nor have the needs of our communities and the world. Our church and its leaders continue to minister to its members, to those who are hurting and searching for peace, and to those in need.

The congregations and ministries of this church rely on your weekly offerings and gifts. Without in-person worship services for many weeks or even months, the financial impact could be devastating. **Please continue to give to your congregation and give regularly.**

I know that, for many of us, this is a time of uncertainty and financial hardship. However, for those of you who are in a position to do more, the needs are great.

With congregations and ministries across the country, and a network of companion churches and partners in over 70 countries around the world, we anticipate this crisis will affect us all. Your gifts to the ELCA's [COVID-19 Response Fund](#) will provide funds to the ministries of the ELCA most in need and best positioned to help. This includes our congregations as well as local and churchwide ministries capable of reaching and assisting those in need. **If you are able, please help with a gift today.**

I have been reflecting on the words of Peter: "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10). Now is a time when we need one another. Now is a time to live and act as faithful people of God.

Be of good courage, dear church, and remember that Christ is with us now and always.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*To contribute to the COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND make checks payable to "ELCA" note "COVID-19 Response Fund" on the memo line and send to: **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.** You can also call **800-638-3522** Monday to Friday 9-4 or go to [www.ELCA.org](http://www.ELCA.org) to donate online.*

#### **SEEN ON LOCAL WEBSITES:**

"The church isn't empty. The church has been deployed."

"The church is not a place. The church is people."

"Sometimes miracles are just good people with kind hearts that God has sent to you."

#### **SPAGHETTI SUPPER FUNDS ADAPTED TO STOCK FOOD PANTRY**

The Thrivent Grant money we had not yet spent on supplies for the March Spaghetti Supper (over \$100) were used to purchase supplies for the Brandywine Food Pantry and were supplemented by other contributions from our congregation. Thanks to Thrivent for approving this change.

#### **CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act)**

The CARES Act encourages individuals to contribute to religious and other charitable organizations by creating a new "above the line" deduction (i.e. for taxpayers who take the standard deduction). This deduction will permit them to deduct up to \$300 of annual monetary contributions.

The CARES Act also increases the limitations on deductions for charitable contributions by individuals who itemize, as well as corporations. For individuals, the 50% of adjusted gross income limitation is suspended for cash contributions made in 2020.

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"Where flowers bloom, so does hope."  
—Lady Bird Johnson



## ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

A recent article in the AARP magazine described how isolation is not the same as loneliness. "Loneliness is a feeling of being alone, or not having companionship or a sense of belonging we want or need." Isolation is "the reality of being separated from others, not by choice but by circumstance." The article went on to say that "chronic isolation and loneliness are worse for health than smoking and obesity, especially in people over 50." <sup>1</sup>

Certainly, loneliness is likely to increase when we are less able to interact with others. Maintaining social distancing exacerbates loneliness for many. On the other hand, many people are reaching out to others more often and in ways they've never tried before. In doing so, they are not only counteracting the negative effects of isolation, they are discovering the joy of renewed and new relationships. Many are also forging new relationships, friendships that may well last beyond orders to social distance.

On the evening of the first Easter, when Jesus met his disciples in that locked room, he first announced peace. He said it twice and came back a week later to say it again. On the first night Jesus told his followers that just as the Father had sent him, he was sending them out.

In this Easter season, in this time of pandemic, may each of us discover new joy as we "go out," as we reach out, to "touch" others and dispel loneliness. As we communicate to that other person that he or she is not alone, that he or she has a friend who cares, that he or she belongs to us, may we, too, experience the joy and peace that come with knowing we are belong to Christ and are doing as he asked.

<sup>1</sup>"Isolation is More Than Being Alone" AARP The Magazine, January/February 2020, pp. 76-77.

## THANK YOU NOTES

Dear members of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church, thank you very much for your continued food donations to the Brandywine Food Pantry. It is through the kindness of people like you that we can continue to support the needs of our community. Thank you again! – *Brandywine Food Pantry*

## NOW HERE'S GOOD NEWS: SIGNS THAT GOD'S SPIRIT IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE

### CAFÉ ESPERANZA

In Spanish, the word *Esperanza* means "hope."

For years now, Hope Lutheran Church in Reading has been offering a free meal one evening a week to anyone who wished to come, followed by a worship service for those who wished to stay. Members have also been working to open Café Esperanza, a pay-what-you-can place, where people can gather and eat together and some will learn food service skills that may help them gain employment.

The grand opening of Café Esperanza was scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup>. Before that could happen, our state asked us to social distance because of COVID-19. Knowing that many in the northwest neighborhood of Reading needed food, Café Esperanza and Hope Lutheran Church adapted their plans and became host to the largest pantry in the Helping Harvest (Berks and Schuylkill Counties) system. God's Spirit is using this ministry to bring hope, to bring *esperanza*, to more people than its founders ever imagined.

For more information, see the article in this month's synod mailing. To understand more about how the Café plans to eventually work, go to [www.cafeesperanzardg.org](http://www.cafeesperanzardg.org) and link on the FAQs.

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## OF PATIENCE AND PRUNING

In many parts of America, Mother's Day is the recommended date for planting flowers outdoors. Subjecting blooms to the elements any sooner is risky, though sunny spring days sure make waiting tough. Perhaps that's why poet Mary Sarton calls gardening "an instrument of grace," for it "slows us down and forces patience."

Courage is also required. Gardeners "must be brave enough to cut back the old and sit with bare branches, awaiting new growth," writes Cheryl Richardson (*Waking Up in Winter*). "And we must trust that it will come." When God prunes us, we too must trust that new growth and new life are in store ... and then patiently wait.



## SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL

Seafarers International House (SIH) in lower Manhattan traces its founding back to a mission for Swedish seafarers and immigrants in 1873. Since that time SIH has been walking alongside immigrants and refugees as well as seafarers.

Many of us are aware of some of the ways this ministry seeks to help those who transport goods to and from our country and we have been helping to support their gifts of hats and scarves to keep these brothers warm.

We are also aware of how increased restrictions of seafarers ability to set foot on U.S. soil, and how the ministry adapted by training chaplains who can board the ships and bring comfort as well as gifts. What you might not have realized is how, because of these restrictions, the house that once granted inexpensive and safe overnight accommodations for those who had shore leave was not being used to its full capacity.

As part of its mission to walk with immigrants, in 2008 SIH volunteers and members of partner organizations began visits to detention centers to provide assistance to asylum seekers, giving them hope and getting detainees the proper documentation and legal representation to achieve a favorable outcome for those that fled persecution and violence. In 2019 SIH took on another critical and underserved need: providing free transitional housing and social assistance for those released from detention centers who would otherwise face the risk of becoming homeless or exploited. These people have been granted the legal right to stay in the U.S.

Under normal conditions the SIH allocates 6 of its rooms for asylees, thus assisting 36 new Americans at a time to become contributing members of their communities, often within less than three months. New guests are welcomed by SIH Staff and receive food cards, MetroCards for public transportation, and Asylee Welcome Packs with toiletries and clothing provided for them by congregations and individuals. Over the next weeks, SIH staff help asylees get work permits and drivers licenses, find permanent housing and prepare them for job interviews. Some of those served by SIH return to become mentors to current asylees. Informal meals and meetings help new residents make friends.

While we don't know the details of what is happening at SIH during New York's current response to COVID-19, we are thankful at least some of our brothers and sisters, the newly released asylees, have a safe place to shelter. Once again, God's Spirit is enabling Christ's followers to adapt to changing situations.

## GOATS FOR UGANDA

Many of us make contributions to the ELCA Good Gifts program at Christmas. This year our donations included funds for 2 goats. Some wonder what happens as a result of these donations. A recent Good News newsletter shares one story.

*For Fabius Kyomugisha and her six children, a gift of goats was the start of something big.*

*Participating in the RACOBAAO Livestock Project, a program in Uganda supported by gifts to ELCA*

*World Hunger, she received five goats and agricultural training- gifts and skills she quickly put to use. The goats*



*provided the family with milk to drink and sell, and the local team provided regular support and veterinary services for her to make the most of her farm.*

*Soon her gifts multiplied. Her five goats quickly became 13. She sold five of the offspring in order to repair her home and provide her children with a safe place to live, protected from mosquitoes and thieves. With earnings to invest in the village's savings and loan association, Fabius secured enough funds to pay for her children's school fees and medication.*

*But Fabius has bigger dreams in the works – she will soon have enough goats to buy a solar panel so her kids can read their books at night.*

*“Thank you, RACOBAAO and donors,” Fabius says. “God bless your hands.”*

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If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

– Isaiah 58:10

# IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

## PRAYERS FOR AWARENESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE for Those with Limited Mobility or in Care

**Facilities:** Anna Angstadt, Bertha Bennecoff, Helen Fair, Verna Guinther, Shirley Hertzog, Leon Moyer, and Irene Noll.

## PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND SUPPORT

**Members:** Myles Angstadt, Dallas Bennecoff, Erma Guinther, Virginia Guinther, Amanda Herman, Lucille Jones, Patricia Keck, Penny Keller, Sheila Long, Forrest Merkel, Roy Merkel, Grace Miller, Linda Moyer, Betty Musser, Joanne Pauley, Joyce Rothermel, Dale Schwoyer, Elaine Seip, Gary and Vikie Seyfert, and Dawn Wartzenuft.

**Friends of the congregation:** Gayle Arndt, Carrie Bausch, Adam Bell, Carson Bosma, Bob Bright, Thelma Bright, Mark Derr, Gary DeWees, Randy Dreibelbis, Jennifer Engle, Eric Fox, Mamie Guinther, Shirley Hahn, Nancy Harnish, Corinne Hersh, Johnson-Agiri Family, Sue Kerny, Emily Kershner, Angie Kistler, Kelly Kline, Cayden Kresge, Michelle Kurtz, Anh La, Marie Leibensperger, Catherine Lenio, Ella Loose, Joe M., Doris Meadway, Duane Petersheim, Ruth Ramsey, Rich Reimert, Roger Schollenberger, Patricia Sigfried, Robert Taylor, Leticia Weaver, Terry White, Althea Young, Barry, and Pat.

**OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS:** We pray for: all seeking to respond responsibly to COVID-19, especially healthcare workers; our nation: our president, congress, judicial system, and leaders of our communities; an end to threats between nations; peace in the world; our military personnel serving around the world; areas enduring disaster; and migrants and refugees.

**LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST:** Millie Berger, Sandy Burkart, Don Gajewski, Erma Gajewski, Lorelai Gold, David Jenkins, Janis Kershner, Michelle Meck, Nancy Meck, Tonya Petersheim, Arlene Reider, Leilani Rodriguez, Andrew S., Joshua S., Donna Schwoyer, The Spatz Family, Jack Stoudt, Jacki Wagner, and Leah Wiest.



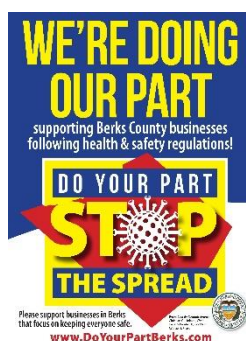
- 2 Derick Wartzenuft
- 4 Dana Wartzenuft
- 7 Erma Gajewski
- 8 David Moyer, Jr.
- 15 Sharon Guinther
- 15 Susan Schlenker
- 22 Daniel Gehman
- 26 Joshua Keck
- 26 Olivia Moyer



- 17 Donald and Erma Gajewski (40 years)
- 20 Blane and Jennifer Musser (20 years)

*If your name or the name of someone you know didn't appear on this list, we apologize and hope you will let us know so we can make the necessary corrections.*

## DO YOUR PART - STOP THE SPREAD



Help us combat the spread of COVID-19 in our communities by displaying a poster in support of businesses who are following the safety recommendations and guidelines to "Stop the Spread." Download these **FREE POSTERS** for your home or business or go to their website at [www.doyourpartberks.com](http://www.doyourpartberks.com) to download the posters and for more information and resources. Display these posters on your front door and in your front window where all people can see it and read it.

The Berks County COVID-19 Help Center is open 7 days a week from 8-5 p.m. and can answer any questions or concerns you may have. Contact 610-320-6150 or [COVID@CountyofBerks.com](mailto:COVID@CountyofBerks.com).



## WILL COVID-19 HELP US BECOME BETTER STEWARDS?

Toilet paper. Seriously. Will we ever take lowly “TP” for granted again?

Toilet paper is just one of the countless everyday blessings that the pain of COVID-19 has taught us to savor – along with worshipping beside loved ones, going to work, getting paid, shopping, going to the movies, and on and on. (What’s on your list?)



Pain teaches us, focuses us, molds us. Pain strips away pretensions and defenses. Pain shows us what’s real, what’s true, what’s valuable. Pain cleanses our spirit and draws us closer to God.

Easter reminds us that our faith journey is all about death and rebirth. Explaining baptism in *The Small Catechism*, Martin Luther taught that baptism’s waters must *daily* drown our old sinful self, so that *daily* we may be born anew. As we walk in God’s sanctifying light, parts of us should be dying *daily* and being reborn.

Pain? It serves as midwife in our death and rebirth.

And COVID-19 has given us pain aplenty, far beyond the shortage of bathroom supplies. Many have lost loved ones, jobs, security, healthcare, homes, retirement, wellbeing and relationships.

Pain will be long with us as we slowly inch back towards normalcy. But “normal” will probably look much different than what we’ve known. A “new normal” is already emerging. Do you sense it? That the pandemic has changed you? Us? Forever?

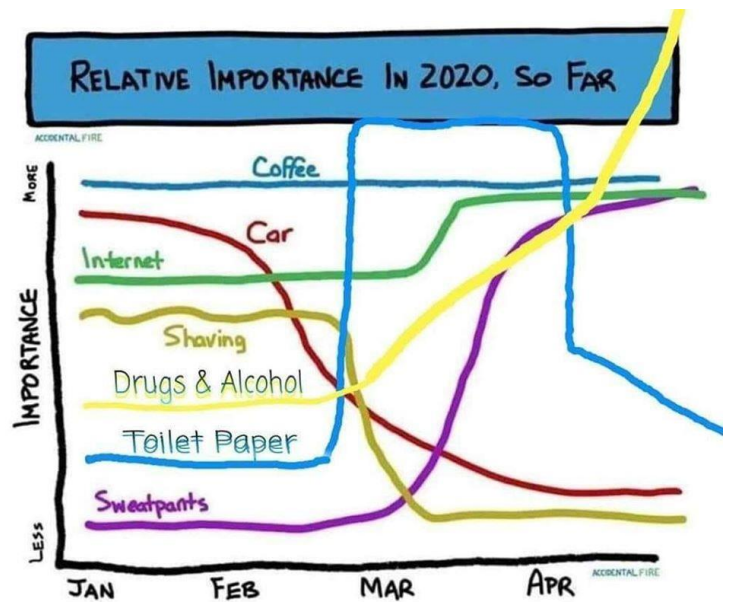
With the Holy Spirit’s help, may COVID-19’s pain prune from our lives what needs to die in order for us to be reborn as God’s people in this “new normal.” May the “new normal” find us better stewards of our lives -- less greedy, less self-focused, less preoccupied with silly things, and more centered in Christ, more loving to our neighbor, more generous, more hopeful and more tolerant.

—Rob Blezard

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## HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED

As seen on Facebook:



## BRANDYWINE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

In the light of concerns about increased food needs in response to COVID-19 and possible challenges of delivering items to the food bank – *please consider a generous monetary donation.* We will keep you posted with info from the food pantry. You can make out a check to “Brandywine Food Pantry,” and mail it to Brandywine Food Pantry, c/o St. Peter’s United Church of Christ, 122 W. Franklin St., Tipton, PA, 19562.

**Donated Items in much need right now:** coffee, hot chocolate, fruit juices, breakfast cereal, pancake syrup and mix, mayonnaise, ketchup, soup of all kinds, spaghetti sauce, beef stew, Chicken-ala-King, canned meat (such as tuna, chicken breast or Spam), Manwich or sloppy joe mix, chili, Chef Boyardee canned items (such as beefaroni, lasagna, etc.), pasta or rice sides, snacks of all kinds (cookies, chips, pretzels, pudding, etc.), shampoo, bar soap, body wash, and laundry detergent.

**Gluten-free and sugar-free food is also greatly appreciated.**

**Please check dates on donated food products.**

During this time, it is best to take physical donations to St. Peter’s during pantry hours or call to arrange a convenient time at 610.682.7633. If you cannot deliver things to St. Peter’s, please call our church office to arrange a time to deliver them to New Jerusalem.



## New Jerusalem Lutheran Church Statement of Accounts

**March 31, 2020**

<u>Asset Accounts</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Memorial	\$ 21,445.56
Thrivent	6,650.75
Checking	7,939.36
Youth	406.38
Fidelity	87,419.60
Cash Reserve	28,351.75
Mission Investment	11,492.41
Local Care	1,881.43

Total **\$ 165,587.24**

Total Balance of Asset Accounts  
from **March 31, 2019** **\$ 203,850.06**

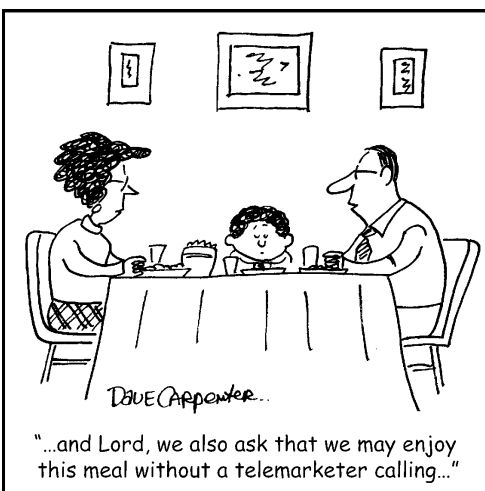
### **March 2020 – ‘Actual’ vs. ‘Required’ Income**

	Income		
	Required	Actual	
<u>Used For:</u>	<u>Per Month</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Operating Expenses	\$ 9,565.00	\$ 3,737.11	\$ (5,827.89)

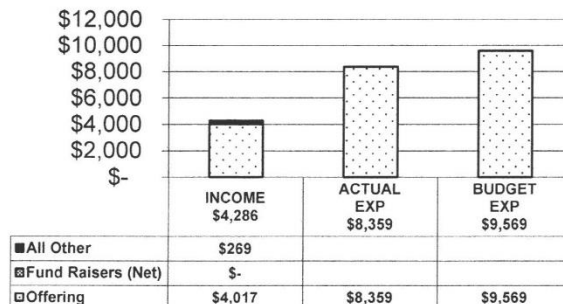
*Income Required per Month — Based on 2020  
Budget Passed by Congregation  
Less Budgeted Benevolence Contribution*

Parking Lot – Funds received to offset expenses  
for Driveway/Parking Lot Repaving

\$ 37,140.00 Total Expenses for Parking Lot Project  
\$ 31,088.52 Funds Received to Offset Expenses



### MARCH 2020 YEAR-TO-DATE INCOME AND EXPENSE



MONTHLY AVERAGE

### CALENDAR YEAR 2020 INFORMATION NORMAL OPERATIONS (DOES NOT INCLUDE MAJOR REPAIRS/PURCHASES)

INCOME & EXPENSE ACTIVITY MARCH 2020 YEAR-TO-DATE		
	Mar Y-T-D	Average Month
<b>Income</b>		
Offering	\$ 12,051	\$ 4,017
Fund Raisers	\$ -	-
Other	\$ 806	269
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 12,857	4,286
<b>Actual Exp</b>	\$ 25,078	8,359
<b>Budget Exp</b>	\$ 28,708	9,569
<b>Shortage *</b>	\$ (15,851)	(5,284)

\*NOTE: Shortage - Total Income to 2020 BUDGET Expense  
Less Benevolence

### A PRAYER FOR MEMORIAL DAY

We remember, O Lord, all those people throughout the years who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country, for liberty, for us. Whenever we breathe the air of freedom or claim the right to justice or enjoy the privilege of worship, fill us with gratitude for those who selflessly gave the last full measure of devotion — their very lives — for our benefit.



May these brave men and women now know the joy of eternity and your presence. And may the families of the fallen receive comfort and peace amid their grief. Help us as we minister to their needs. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **THREE-MONTH WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

*Until further notice, worship will not take place in the church building.  
Watch for information on how to connect via Zoom, phone, and other methods.*

*If you would like to receive a bulletin via mail or email, please let us know – 610.682.6064  
or [njelchurch@windstream.net](mailto:njelchurch@windstream.net). Bulletins are also available on our Website:  
<http://NewJerusalemLutheran.weebly.com>*

### **May**

	3	10:00 AM	Fourth Sunday of Easter (W) – <i>Tentative:</i> Holy Communion
■	10	10:00 AM	Fifth Sunday of Easter (W) <i>Tentative:</i> Mother's Day Breakfast beginning at 8:30 a.m.
	17	10:00 AM	Sixth Sunday of Easter (W)
*	24	10:00 AM	Seventh Sunday of Easter (W)
	31	10:00 AM	Day of Pentecost (R) – <i>Tentative:</i> Holy Communion

### **June**

*	7	10:00 AM	The Holy Trinity (W) – <i>Tentative:</i> Holy Communion
	14	10:00 AM	Second Sunday after Pentecost (G)
■	21	10:00 AM	Third Sunday after Pentecost (G) <i>Tentative:</i> Father's Day Breakfast beginning at 8:30 a.m.
	28	10:00 AM	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (G)

### **July**

	5	10:00 AM	Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (G) – <i>Tentative:</i> Holy Communion
	12	10:00 AM	Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (G)
	19	10:00 AM	Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (G)
	26	10:00 AM	Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (G)

### **TENTATIVE FELLOWSHIP DATES:**

- ( \* ) Fellowship after worship
- ( ■ ) Breakfast before worship





## MAY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS & SPONSORS

DATE	GREETER	READER	FLOWERS	BULLETINS
5/3	TBA	Ken Keck	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>	Phyllis Fenstermacher
5/10	TBA	Ty Rissmiller	Dan and Joanne Pauley	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>
5/17	TBA	Sara Jane Beshore	Susan Schlenker	Susan Schlenker
5/24	TBA	Cindy Rissmiller	Ken Keck	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>
5/31	TBA	Dawn Wengert	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>

**ALTAR GUILD:** *(volunteer needed)*

**CHILDREN'S BULLETINS:** *(sponsor needed)*

**SANCTUARY CANDLE:** *(sponsor needed)*

**COMMUNION BREAD:** 5/3 – *(sponsor needed)*; 5/31 – *(sponsor needed)*

**COMMUNION SET-UP:** 5/3 – *(volunteer needed)*; 5/31 – *(volunteer needed)*

**COUNCILPERSON:** Diane Keller

**COST:** Flowers - \$35.00; Bulletins - \$7.00; Children's Bulletins - \$5.00; Sanctuary Candle - \$15.00



# MAY 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>PLEASE NOTE: All our worship services in our building, activities and events are tentatively on hold.</b></p>					1 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	2
3 Fourth Sunday of Easter ▪ Holy Communion	4 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	5	6 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg. s	7  National Day of Prayer	8 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	9
10 Fifth Sunday of Easter  8:30am-Mother's Day Breakfast (tentative)  <b>Mother's Day</b>	11 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.  7:00pm-Finance Committee Meeting  7:00pm-Council Meeting	12	13 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	14	15 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	16  Armed Forces Day
17 Sixth Sunday of Easter Tentatively: ▪ Church Music Sunday ▪ Dedication of Handrails ▪ Confirmation meeting after worship  <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	18 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	19	20 11:30am-Fellowship Luncheon at Airport Diner (tentative)  12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.  2:30pm-Threads for Others	21  Ascension of Our Lord	22 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	23
24 Seventh Sunday of Easter	25 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	26	27 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	28	29 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	30
31 Day of Pentecost ▪ Holy Communion	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>  <b>Memorial Day</b>					

# SYNOD NEWS

## Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

### Being the Church in a Time of Pandemic

As this article is being written, social distancing and "stay at home" orders in response to the spread of the Coronavirus are preventing our congregations from gathering for face-to-face worship. But in the midst of circumstances that keep people from "going to church," it is heartening to see the ways in which the congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod are focusing on God's call to "be the church," bringing a message of hope to their members and their surrounding communities. Leaders are discovering a number of creative ways in which God's people can still "gather" for worship and conversation - via Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube, email, telephone chains, cars parked at a drive-in movie theater, and other means.

In addition to worship, prayers, and pastoral care for members, congregations are also turning their focus outward to bring tangible expressions of God's presence and love in the midst of extraordinary circumstances to their most vulnerable neighbors. This brief article highlights just two of these outreach ministries, as examples of the kinds of things that are happening in numerous sites across the territory of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

#### The Food Pantry at Holy Trinity, Dingmans Ferry



Every weekday morning, volunteers gather at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in rural Pike County to prepare bags of food for community members who are food insecure. In the past, typically 85 - 95 families would turn to Holy Trinity each month to supplement their nutritional needs. Food Pantry Director, Barbara Hupner, reports that the number of those turning to the pantry has increased due to the Coronavirus pandemic. And the members of Holy Trinity are responding, even as some of the traditional sources of food - such as donations from individuals or local stores - have decreased.

In addition, there are concerns for the safety of both the volunteers who staff the pantry and those who come for food. Barbara reports, "Due to this crisis we have begun a drive-up pantry pick up for our families. Each family receives three bags of non-perishable foods along with a bag of frozen meats, vegetables, butter, fresh fruits and cheese. This has helped us to maintain social distancing as well as keep our volunteers safe."





## The Food Pantry at Hope Lutheran Church and Hope's Table, Reading

Hope Lutheran Church in the northwest section of the City of Reading, and its partner ministry, Hope's Table, together host the largest pantry in the Helping Harvest (Berks and Schuylkill Counties) system. Typically, 200+ families are served in the biweekly distribution. Due to neighbors losing their work - and their income - during the pandemic, at the last pantry more than 350 families came for food.

To counter the empty shelves at local groceries stores, the volunteers at Hope's Pantry are committed to providing more items for those who turn to the pantry, rather than less. In addition to the food they receive from Helping Harvest, the congregation has developed partnerships with other congregations, local restaurants, bakeries, and farmers to provide healthy nutritional options for their



guests. They are also collecting other items, such as toilet paper, cleaning products, and soap that they distribute to families on each Thursday.

Meanwhile, the staff members of Café Esperanza, another ministry birthed by Hope, are offering drive-by or walk-by cooked meals to neighborhood residents two evenings a week - to supplement the prepared food assistance that is available to families through the Reading School system.

Delivery is available for those who can't come to the congregation's parking lot. Advertised only through word of mouth and a sign at the church, the response of the community has been notable - both in terms of the growing numbers of those coming for assistance and the growing numbers of those who want to support the ministry!



These two congregations - in different corners of the synod and in two very different contexts - are endeavoring to "be the church" by seeing the face of Jesus in their most vulnerable neighbors in this unprecedented time and responding in love. We know there are many other congregations conducting similar ministries that are also bringing to life Jesus' parable from Matthew 25:31-46, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you..." Please share your stories of how your congregation has been and is engaging in ministries of care in your communities by sending a brief summary to [info@nepsynod.org](mailto:info@nepsynod.org).

*[This article was written by the Rev. Dr. D. Michael Bennethum, Executive Associate of the Bishop.]*

### COVID-19 Resources

There are many resources for dealing with the challenges arising out of the coronavirus pandemic. The synod website lists many of these for you use on a page that is updated on a regular basis. You can view it at <http://nepsynod.org/virus-resources>. Above all, please have patience in this rapidly evolving situation. No one has all the answers, but everyone can lend a hand.

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