

**St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
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## THE ST. MATTHEW'S MESSENGER SUMMER 2020

### PASTOR'S MESSAGE Reverend Jukka Saarinen

We are living in unusual and trying times. The pandemic COVID-19 is changing the way we live, work and play. As we begin the summer months, and look for ways to relax, it's obvious that everything has changed. Staying socially distant from one another, keeping isolated, hand washing and sanitizing are the new normal.

Even though the church remains empty on Sundays, the voice of the faithful continues to be heard in bringing forth God's steadfast love.

The apostle Paul, while isolated in a Roman prison, wrote to the early Christian communities thereby strengthening their faith. Martin Luther, who was in hiding in the castle of Wartburg Germany, used that time to translate the Bible into German, the language of his people. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a well-known Lutheran theologian, wrote letters during his imprisonment by the Nazi regime in World War II. These letters continue to influence Christianity today.

Today it is encouraging to know that even during our time of self-isolation, the power of prayer and the communication has not stopped. The ongoing efforts to stay in touch with family, neighbours and fellow parishioners has only grown greater. To those who can go out and about, continue to offer your service to seniors and others who may not be able to do so.

At First Lutheran, the church bell continues to be rung on Sunday mornings, not as a call to worship, but as a call to pray. Both organists for First Lutheran and St.

Matthew's continue to play hymns Sunday morning. Let them know what hymn you would like to hear! A video of pastor's sermon is posted on St. Matthew's website each Sunday morning for anyone to access. ([www.stmatthewswelland.com](http://www.stmatthewswelland.com)) On weeks when the pastor is absent, a sermon or message from our synod leaders will be posted instead. All of the above are to remind everyone that your faith community remains healthy and active despite not having Sunday worship.

Both church councils remain in contact to ensure that the church property, finances and caring for all God's people are being looked after. It is pleasing to hear of the ongoing generosity of church members keeping up with regular offerings to the church. Church utility bills and wages still need to be paid, and cannot be ignored due to COVID-19.

Do not hesitate to contact your church council members or myself about any concerns. Whether it be finances or you simply want to talk and pray, we are here for you. Staying in touch will help our faith communities stay strong.

Please be assured that your church has not closed! Your faith community is alive and healthy because of the continued commitment of council members, generous offerings and everyone's efforts to stay in touch with others and pray for one another. Through God's grace we will gather for worship in our houses of worship.

Stay safe, stay isolated, wash hands and enjoy the summer season. Thank you everyone, and God bless you!

"Therefore, ... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith;" Heb. 12:1-2

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"In response to God's love, St. Matthew's is a faith community welcoming all to grow in faith, to worship Christ and to reach out to others."

## UPDATE FROM OUR BISHOP; JUNE 8, 2020

### Bishop Michael Pryce

In the most recent series of meetings that I have convened with the rostered ministers of our synod, we have discussed potential scenarios by which in-person worship might begin in our churches as provincial restrictions begin to be lifted. Many of us, while mourning the absence of in-person worship, have grave concerns about our congregational capacity to ensure a safe and healthy environment in which to gather should current government restrictions be relaxed anytime within the next few months.

Early last week the Anglican House of Bishops in the Province of Ontario decided that their churches will not re-open for in person worship until September 2020 at the earliest, regardless of where the Government of Ontario is with its reopening plan. This decision was made in consultation with public health experts, with the well-being and safety of parishioners and the communities they serve uppermost in their hearts and minds. I have also clearly heard that our pastors and deacons would welcome a directive of this kind. As such, it is my strong recommendation that our synod's congregations not contemplate initiating in-person worship experiences within our church buildings until the beginning of September at the earliest.

I fully recognize that the four provincial jurisdictions that our synod encompasses will each establish different schedules for the easing of restrictions. In addition, it is possible that regional distinctions might be established within individual provinces. Still, I believe that there is great value in all of us anticipating a more distant horizon for potential reopening than we might be hoping for.

For almost three months now we have been physically distancing from one another for the love of our neighbour.

That same motivation needs to be paramount as we plan for the future. I encourage you to use these coming months as an opportunity to plan and put in place comprehensive plans for what in-person worship will look like once we have decided that it is both prudent and safe to physically gather in our church buildings once again. It is my intention to provide our rostered and congregational leaders with resources to help in that process in the coming weeks.

I am also hoping that our rostered leaders will take much needed vacation time over these summer months and be encouraged to do so by their congregational leaders. Our ELCIC Bishops and Assistants to the Bishop are preparing a series of video and text sermons that can be accessed for each Sunday from June 14 through to September 13 to help ease the burden.

I have been profoundly moved and deeply inspired by the faithful witness that our leaders and congregations have provided during these immensely challenging days. You have responded to the pandemic with dexterity, generosity and deep faithfulness. You have made it abundantly clear that although our church buildings are not open for public worship, the church has not closed. In many ways, it has never been more open! The Spirit, whose descent we marked just days ago on the feast of Pentecost, is alive and active and is working among and through us.

May God continue to bless us with abundant gifts of hope, forbearance and patience as we navigate the significant decisions and choices that will need to be made going forward. Peace be with you!

In response to this letter, the Officers of the Eastern Synod have appointed a Task Force on the Resumption of In-Person Worship, with a mandate to develop guidelines for congregations to support both their preparations to re-open for in-person worship and their ability to protect the safety and wellbeing of all those who gather. They are committed to providing a preparatory checklist by July 1, 2020; with a more comprehensive resource available by August 1, 2020. For more details, please visit the ELCIC website. [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca)

## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Sinikka Speck

When our church service was cancelled on March 15, I never dreamt that we would be closed for this length of time. Very naïve of me. I miss you all and am looking forward to seeing you in person, even if from a distance. Worship and fellowship will be very different when we return, following public health and synod guidelines.

Church council has not physically met for a few months. We keep in touch by phone and e-mail. Our plan is to meet before opening to determine our reopening plan.

I want to thank our team of "Shepherding Ladies" who are regularly keeping in touch with our members. It seems that with family and neighbor help, all are managing well. People have found new friends through these phone calls, and it's interesting to learn various ways others are coping.

I especially want to thank all who are involved in preparing and presenting our Sunday messages. Bob is the director, photographer, editor and presenter (on our website.) Pastor presents a message and stands at the church entrance with the cross while Lily plays the organ. The organ recital is available weekly. Favorite hymns may

be forwarded to Lily to play during the summer. Sylvia lends her beautiful voice to sing "O Canada" along with some hymns in harmony with Pastor Jukka.

Please sign up on our website to receive our updates. There is so much information there. Just e-mail Bob or myself and we will include you in the notifications.

All pastors are encouraged by our Bishop to take their vacation respite as always. All our ELCIC bishops and assistants will be providing messages and sermons from June to September that may be used in Pastor's absence.

I also want to thank the members of St. Matthew's for your prayers and financial support. We are coping at present but will continue to need your financial help, especially during this continuing shutdown. The bills don't know that we are closed and payment is requested regardless.

Above all, stay well, stay safe. Continue to pray for each other and reach out to each other.

Peace be with you, Sinikka ([brianspeck@msn.com](mailto:brianspeck@msn.com))

## HOW ARE YOU DOING?

Marilyn Schultz

For me, the negative aspects are loneliness, missing the physical presence, touch and hugs from my immediate family.

However, there are numerous positive things that have happened over the past 3 months, like the generosity and kindness of younger church family members who have stepped in to do shopping for me. They do this willingly and deliver the items with a smile!

As a part of the Shepherding Team who calls some of our church family just to say hello and how are you doing, it has been so rewarding in that I have gotten to know these people better, learn about their families and feel a closeness I never felt before.

The fact that we have phones, computers and ipads certainly helps us to keep in touch with our loved ones as well as our friends. I always say, "It keeps me sane, to be able to talk to people."

## LESSER FESTIVAL DAYS

JUNE 11 – Barnabas, Apostle

JUNE 24 – John the Baptist

JUNE 29 – Peter and Paul, Apostles

JULY 3 – Thomas, Apostle

JULY 22 – Mary Magdalene, Apostle

JULY 25 – James, Apostle

AUGUST 15 – Mary, Mother of Our Lord

AUGUST 24 – Bartholomew, Apostle

# PROPERTY REPORT

## Norm McLeod

- Even when the church is temporarily closed, maintenance of the property must go on. We need volunteer(s) to fix the flowerbed at our church sign.
- The old dishwasher was donated to Habitat For Humanity after trying unsuccessfully to sell it to a number of businesses.
- The water lines to the kitchen taps were repaired by our plumber.
- On a cold Sunday in early March, the Parsonage furnace quit. The 2001 furnace was repaired, checked over and passed inspection. (Taps and furnace repairs \$332.)
- A new lighting system for the stained-glass window above the altar was ordered, but has not been installed because of pandemic closures. (Estimate about \$800 with installation). The same is true for repair to the ceiling fixture in the Fellowship Hall. We hope these can be done soon.
- The lower men's bathroom door lock was repaired.
- March 19<sup>th</sup> the organ was tuned. (approx. \$500) It is in great shape!
- BCM Insurance was approached locally (They insure churches) to see if we could get a better rate on our premium and to have our church and parsonage evaluated. They could not match or do better than the insurance we have with AON. They gave us a statement that the church was well insured, but the parsonage was seriously under-insured. Estimated evaluation for the parsonage was \$562,000. (That figure might apply if rebuilding after a total loss. We could not sell it for that in this neighborhood.)
- Brian, Sinikka and grandson Aiden removed shrubs and a wild apple tree that had come to the end of their usefulness and took them to recycling.
- Arranged for Paramount Painting to strip peeling paint off the remaining exterior walls, repair cracks and frost damage and paint the walls and trim. They did the excellent job on our parking lot wall and the office entrance wall. (approx. \$15000.) Work will begin the week of June 14. This work is essential before the walls deteriorate further.
- Three landscaping contractors were contacted for quotes on protecting the edges of the parking lot. (335 feet) They ranged from over \$5000 and \$3500 to \$868. The edge was finished with compacted crushed stone at \$868 for 15 tons and a stone slinger truck. Thanks to Bob Hansen & Norm McLeod.
- This week our plumber, Paul Gyugyei, replaced a leaking cold-water supply line from the boiler room to the ladies' washroom.
- Many thanks to Jennifer Allcorn who continues to maintain our grounds.
- Also, many thanks to our faithful members who contribute generously both in labour and finances so we can be good stewards of our property.

## OUR SYMPATHIES TO:

**Elaine Taylor and family** at the death of husband and father, **David R. Taylor**, on March 8, 2020, in Camrose AB. David was a former member of St. Matthew's and brother to late Erwin Taylor and Mary Boyak

**Terry and Carol Tufts** at the death of Terry's aunt, **Shirley (Tufts) Demers**, on March 31, 2020.

**Nick Warankie and family** at the death of wife and mother, **Brenda (Smith) Warankie**, on April 20, 2020. Brenda was also a sister to Cathy Terpak.

**Morley and Dianne Yungblut** at the death of Morley's brother, Dennis Yungblut, on April 24, 2020, of natural causes in Toronto ON.

**Sylvia and Jayme Breitenbach and family** at the death of Sylvia's father, **Gunther Madsen**, on May 19, 2020. Gunther was also the loving partner of **Ellen Arnds**.