

Wishing you a
blessed
Easter

April 2020

It is Not Good for Man to Be Alone

St. John Ministries

St. John Church Battle Creek
Ne. 308 S. 2nd St.
Church 402-675-3155 -
School 402-675-3605
Childcare 402-675-4039
Email: stjohnc.net
Facebook: St. John Lutheran

Service times:

Traditional Worship:
Saturday 6:00pm -Sunday 8:00 am
Contemporary Worship:
Sunday 10:30 am
Education Hour, Sunday School:
Sunday 9:15 am

Staff:

Senior Pastor : Rev. B.J. Fouts
Music Director:
Steven Whitney
Business Manager:
Judy Warneke
Secretary: Diane Stoural



Connecting People in the Heart of Jesus



Welcome to April 2020, when we are all isolating together. What a strange phrase, right. Isolating – Together. Since health & government leaders recommended that we limit gatherings to groups of 10 or less, we have entered into an era the church has not experienced in a hundred years. We are not gathering together in the church for worship to receive God’s gifts.

What has changed from the influenza epidemic of 1918-1920 is the technology. Many of us have the opportunity to meet on line through Facebook, YouTube, Zoom, and a host of other digital connection apps. Students in our schools are learning to connect with each other and their teachers electronically. We are learning to connect in worship through electronic means. Unfortunately, even after just one week of digital connection, all of us are yearning for the physical presence of our coworkers, friends, classmates, and fellow congregation members. The words of God from Genesis ring loudly, “It is not good for man to be alone.”

The Creator of the universe, upon seeing his perfect creation, mankind, perfectly created in His image, looked down and said, “It is not good for man to be alone.” Even in Eden, before sin, we needed this connection with another human being. This need for relationship extends beyond the relationship of Adam and Eve, husband and wife. Paul speaks about the mutual encouragement of being WITH the Christians at Rome and many other places. Ultimately the author of Hebrews admonishes us to “not give up meeting together.”

Yet, in spite of these things, that is exactly where we are. Alone. Not WITH anyone else. Not meeting together. This hurts. In one of our digital “shows,” one of our staff members and content creators said something very profound, “We’re all in different seasons (of life), but right now we are in the same season.” We are all in this social distancing, isolation, period of life at the same time. We are isolated, but we are not alone.

God goes with us into this time and through this time. As others have said, we have social distancing, but not spiritual distancing. We continue to pray for each other. We continue to be mutually encouraged by the faith of our fellow believers. We continue to connect with God through His Word & through prayer. It is not good for man to be alone, and we are never alone.
Sanctified to Serve B.J. Fouts

Psalm 139:7-12

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,”
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.



St. John Lutheran Church

308 S 2nd St • PO Box 87 • Battle Creek, NE 68715

402.675.3155

www.stjohnbc.net

B.J. Fouts, Senior Pastor, pastorfouts@stjohnbc.net

Members and friends of St. John Lutheran Church,

March 25, 2020

Greetings in Jesus!

We find ourselves amidst social distancing and the limitations of group gatherings. I pray you and your family are doing well, and that you are taking advantage of this time to strengthen your connection to each other and most importantly, your connection to God. For those who have access to the internet, through Facebook, the church website and YouTube channel, St. John Ministries has been publishing content regularly through the church, school and child care. If you have not yet done so, go to stjohnbc.net/devotion.

For those without internet access, I have encouraged you to view some of the LCMS programs from partners in ministry. Our Savior Lutheran Church at 9am and Christ Lutheran Church at 10:30am on News Channel Nebraska, or the Main Street Living Program on channel 9 out of Sioux City are available. In the April newsletter, several of our staff and volunteers are providing additional Bible Studies, devotions, prayer resources, etc. We encourage you to use these at home during this time as well. If you would like a DVD copy of the worship resources from St. John, please call the church office. A copy can be mailed to you.

Based upon recommendations received, the earliest we will be able to gather for regular worship will now be Easter Sunday, April 12. **All services are canceled for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.** We hope to be able to gather again for Easter, but stay tuned for updates as recommendations continually change. Please be sure, the first Sunday we gather together will be a Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, whenever that may be.

You will find in the April newsletter that **we are offering Holy Communion in limited groups on Maundy Thursday.** Please see the announcement in the newsletter or call the church office with questions. This will be "by appointment" so that we can limit the size of groups and prepare properly for the safety of our members, volunteers and staff.

We continue to pray for you and ask you to continue to pray for us and for each other.

Sanctified to Serve,

Rev. B.J. Fouts

Another way we are staying connected is by the Zoom App. This enables you to connect to Pastor and have a face to face conversation. Below are instructions for using the Zoom App.

How to Use Zoom:

1. Open the Zoom mobile app. If you have not downloaded the Zoom mobile App yet, you can download it from the Google Play Store or the App Store on Apple.
2. Join a meeting
3. Enter the meeting ID number and your display name.

Select if you would like to connect audio and/or video and tap Join Meeting.



Pastor will be available for on-line office hours on Zoom Monday-Thursday 10-11 am and other times by appointment- <https://zoom.us/j/2121907671>

FROGS on Zoom Sunday night 5-6 pm- <https://zoom.us/j/2121907671>

LIGHT on Zoom Sunday night 6-7 pm- <https://zoom.us/j/2121907671>

Join in on the Bible Study of Romans on Zoom– Thursday 7-8:00 pm. <https://zoom.us/j/909742840>

Maundy Thursday Communion (April 9)

Unfortunately, we will not be able to gather for worship until at least Easter. The Board of Elders and Pastor have decided to offer Holy Communion to our congregation in small groups of 10 or less on Maundy Thursday. Communion will be served in the church Sanctuary at the altar. To facilitate this process and adhere to the guidelines for group gatherings, the following procedures will be observed.

Schedule an appointment at this link, Sign Up Genius <https://bit.ly/3dvNjYT> or by calling the church office at 402-675-3155 M-F between 8am & 12pm. Schedule the appointment for everyone in your family who will be communing & any non-communicant members who will be coming with you for a blessing. (Please indicate non-communicants) Remember we are limited to 10 individuals in a group.

Your appointment includes a time and a door to enter. Doors will alternate between the north and south doors on the sides of the church sanctuary. This enables us an ample time to sanitize each space between groups entering and exiting.

If weather cooperates, wait outside of your assigned door. When the previous group clears the worship area and the space is sanitized, the elders will welcome you to enter.

Gather at the altar rail for a brief service of confession and absolution, a brief message and then the service of the Sacrament. Total time shall be around 10 minutes. Then, please exit the same door you entered.

Take your cup and the paper with confession & absolution with you from the worship space.

There will be trash receptacles by each exit, or you may take them home with you to dispose of them there.

When group gathering restrictions are lifted to 50 or more we will return to live worship gatherings at St. John. Until then, our plan will be to offer a day for communion gathering in this method, once every 2 weeks. If we are not back to live worship gatherings, our next communion day will be Thursday, April 23.

Letter from Rev. David Lindenberg: Called Pastor

March 16, 2020

Dear Members of St John Lutheran Church—Battle Creek, NE,

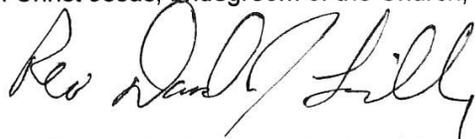
This letter is to inform you that after much prayer and careful deliberation, I have decided to decline the call to serve as your associate pastor.

I am very thankful that you had confidence in my experience and the skills given to me by our gracious and loving Lord to issue me this call. This was a very difficult decision. I felt like it was in many ways a very good fit for me as well. I was very impressed with both the structure of the team ministry at St John as well as the people serving in it. It was a pleasure to meet many of you during our visit last month. Everyone we met made us feel at home and welcome. Thank you Pastor Fouts for taking time out of your very busy schedule to plan a full itinerary and accommodate such a visit.

Ultimately it was a matter of the right call coming at the wrong time, which, as I was reminded by a colleague, is the wrong call, and should be declined. I have always believed this. In addition, there were some issues we struggled with regarding the call documents and compensation. We would have been taking some significant hits salary and benefits wise, including the health insurance, which was a big factor as my wife has type 1 diabetes and her diabetic supplies for her insulin pump are very expensive. We are appreciative of the efforts made by the call committee to update the call documents to better reflect my work experience and training, and the size of your congregation. In the end we still would have had a difficult time financially. As far as the timing of the call, my daughter's schooling being where it is at this time was more of a factor to her and my wife than either of them had previously acknowledged.

I pray God's continued blessings on the call process for St John, its people, and its ministry. And I pray especially for Pastor Fouts, especially during this busy Lenten season. The Lord of the Church hold you, grant you peace and mercy, and lead you by His Holy Spirit as you prepare to issue another call.

In Christ Jesus, bridegroom of the Church,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. David J. Lindenberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. David J. Lindenberg—Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD

cc: Rev Richard Snow (NE Dist Pres), Rev. Chris Asbury (Circuit Visitor-Norfolk Circuit),
Rev. Scott Sailer (SD Dist Pres), Rev. John Fries (Circuit Visitor-Black Hills Circuit)

SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING MINUTES

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor B.J. Fouts, Randy Sunderman, Deborah Sunderman, Leah Sunderman, Preston Sunderman, Gerry Preusker, Randy Kossmann, Rob Finkral, Gretchen Sandall, Dennis Roewert, LaDonna Roewert, Brian Wysocki, Brett Freudenburg, Arlene Zohner, Curt Wragge, Nancy Wragge, Jason Schmidt, Brad Prauner, Patty Prauner, Mike Anderson, Carma Anderson, Joshua Tillman, Sarah Tillman, Larry Moenning, Steven Whitney, Heather Whitney, Nate Benter, Cassie Benter, Cherie Werner, Nick Onnen, Natasha Onnen, Arvid Warneke, Lauren Fruedenberg, Judy Warneke

Pastor Fouts opened the meeting with prayer at 11:58 AM. Randy Sunderman called the meeting to order immediately following. Thirty-four members present, with no one wishing to become voting members.

Due to virus concerns, it was decided that we would vote by voice.

Joe and Sheridan Heins were taken off the candidate list because they asked to be removed.

The interview committee, consisting of Nick Onnen, Larry Moenning, Brett Freudenburg, and Brian Wysocki, commented on all the candidates. They also took questions from the voters.

Motion made by Arlene Zohner and seconded by Nate Benter to call John Baumgartel for our Middle School Math position. Ayes by all members, motion carried.

We had a show of hands for the preferred candidates for the Middle School Science and Preschool positions.

Motion to designate a call for Jerrica Tietz for our Middle School Science position by Deb Sunderman, seconded by Preston Sunderman. Ayes by all members, motion carried.

Motion made to call Claire Fuhler for our Preschool position by Nate Benter, seconded by Wendell Lewis. Ayes by all members, motion carried.

Pastor Fouts announced that Pastor Lindenburg declined his call as Associate Pastor.

Pastor called for everyone to remain calm in response to the ongoing virus concerns.

Motion to adjourn by Steven Whitney, seconded by Dennis Roewert.

We closed with Lord's Prayer at 12:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jason Schmidt

WINGS—Women In Gods Service

Monthly News and Activities



Each month new members to our community are welcomed with a fresh baked loaf of bread and information about St. John Ministries. Our WINGS ladies have been baking the bread and taking turns welcoming families. We are grateful for Kris Smith and Julie Moenning, who have also been very involved in welcoming the new comers.

- Our Christmas Craft Show luncheon donations are being used to provide personalized pens for the attendance books in church, purchase Polka, Big Band, and Lawrence Welk music CD's for the residents at Community Pride Care Center, and give funding for the Battle Creek Lion's Food Pantry.
- We will provide childcare for moms attending the monthly MOPS meetings.
- On February 26th, we hosted a servant event to make sleeping bags for disaster victims. Shirley Staver directed the group of 10 ladies in the sewing and construction of the bags. Sewing machines were set up, as well as a fabric cutting and hand sewing stations. WINGS members involved were Shirley Staver, Carma Anderson, Suzanne Buckendahl, Jan Glandt, Patty Renner, Deborah Sunderman, and Sarah Tillman. Guests who joined us included Janice Hitz, Kay Knapp and Becky Ridder. There was much laughter and joy in gathering together in service.
- March 3rd, St. John hosted the Bloodmobile. We provided sandwiches and bars for the workers and donors.
- March 4th, we served 89 for the Lenten meal. Menu included mexi burgers, potato salad, chips, bars, and drinks.
- A Bake Sale is being planned to help offset the cost of the Portals of Prayer we give to the church and Community Pride Care Center.
- WINGS hosts a weekly Bible Study for women on Wednesdays at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall Classroom. (Currently suspended until the campus reopens.)

Women of all ages are welcome to be a part of WINGS. Our monthly meetings are held the last Thursday of each month at 1:30pm in the Fellowship Hall Classroom. Meetings include devotion and prayer, event planning, games, and time just to visit over coffee and dessert. WINGS is an active member of LWML. Collection boxes for Mites and stamps are located in the back of the Narthex. Both support the missions of LWML.

WINGS (Women in God's Service) exists to honor and worship God, encourage and support women, grow in our faith together as we share the gospel and use the gifts He has given us to serve Him and others.

For more information on LWML's missions and outreach go to lwml.org



Thanks be to God! We are HIS!

We are:

- Held by God's Word**
- Inspired to share HIS Gospel**
- Surrounded by HIS Grace**

1 Virginia Klug	9 Amanda Parent	18 Shane Melcher	25 Judy Warneke
1 Kiarrah Moore-Rath	9 Larry Prauner	19 Seth Bolling	25 Genny Zohner
2 Rexx Uecker	10 Barrett Prauner	19 Beckett Uecker	26 Joshua Schnitzler
2 Austin Hurlburt	10 Chris Cherington	19 Dale Donner	26 Susan Klein
2 Tiffany Pokorny	10 Gladys Juhlin	19 Marcheta Long	26 Sydney Reitz
3 Don Boyer	10 Mary Ellen Swim	19 Colin Weber	27 Jamie Ablor
3 Vicki Flanagan	11 Dora Norris	20 Dylan Volk	28 McKailey Holecek
3 Marci Retzlaff	12 Skye Aldag	20 Lainey Knapp	29 Memphis Parker
3 Amy Walz	12 Deborah Sanders	20 Kanon Warneke	29 Kristen Sindelar
4 Calla Wolf	13 LaDonna Hardee	20 Krista Snodgrass	29 Josh Schick
4 Kitanna Klug	13 Andee Klug	21 Renee McNeal	30 Linda Chapman
4 Kitanna Klug	13 Garrett Koopman	21 Kelli Boyer	30 Barb Preusker
4 Shelley Borchers	13 Gretchen Sandall	21 Olivia Eckert	
4 Carole Nelson	13 Donald Volk	21 Pat French	
4 Mark Schmode	13 Tom Ziehmer	21 Allison Hardee	
4 Righteous Albers	13 Hannah Fouts	21 Dave Meyer	
5 Chad Lenox	14 Matthew Henery	22 Allison Frank	
5 Allen Korth	14 Preston Prauner	22 Drew Lutt	
6 Carol Herbert	14 Sarah Glover	22 Arland Praeuner	
6 Lyle Hofmann	16 Beverly Bayne	23 Tyler Unkel	
7 Makenzi Eckert	16 Boden Obst	24 Bud Klug	
7 Jean Schmeckpeper	17 Laura Long	24 Slate Kraft	
8 Brent Schlote	17 Kim Nelson	24 Kathi Reding	
8 Tristan Bernhardt	17 Taryn O'Banion	24 Kris Smith	
8 Norma Wiedeman	18 Christyan Anderson	24 Caitlyn Zohner	
9 Abby Nelson	18 Roger Borchers	24 Lauren Freudenberg	



Baptisms

Myles Stewart Stueve
Child of
Levi Stueve &
Jaime Finney
was baptized into the
Lord's family on
March 1st
Sponsors are
Lexi Stueve & Ryan Finney



We were
buried there-
fore with him
by baptism
into death, so
that as Christ
was raised
from the dead
by the glory of
the Father, we
too might walk
in newness of
life.

Romans 6:4



Prayer is an act of worship where we bring our petitions before God with our hearts and lips and offer up praise and thanksgiving to Him.

We should ask God for everything that tends to the glory of God and to our own and our neighbor's welfare, both spiritual and bodily blessings.

It would be our privilege to lift you up in prayer. If you have a special need or just would like us to pray for you or a loved one, call or email the church office.

All prayers are confidential. 402-675-3155 or
churchsecretary@stjohnbc.net

FROM THE PRINCIPAL...



I was vacuuming the house getting ready to host a future St. John teacher, Mr. Baumgartel, when my 2-year old approached me. "Help, help." He didn't need my help he wanted **to** help. After the first 3 minutes of having him guide the vacuum as I held it up, I was getting frustrated. I took a breath, reassessed and thought, what's more important, the product or the process? I'll vacuum a few hundred times in my life. My 2-year-old is learning lessons and I'm modeling.

Sure, the product was important. We couldn't have toothpaste, rocks, and mashed up Cheerios on our floor when guests came over. However, I also needed to be patient with my two-year-old and enjoy the process. One way or another, the floor would get cleaned. Why was I in such a hurry? The answer: I valued the product but not the process.

Too often Christians focus too much on the product. We believe in Jesus "so we can go to heaven." Realistically, we need Jesus right now in this life. Furthermore, the people around us need Jesus. As our country and world struggle, they don't just need to know Jesus as their Savior for their eternal salvation, they need to know he is active, present, and relevant in this life. They need to know the comfort he can bring now!

I pray that you would take time to appreciate the processes in life. As you inevitably grow weary of social distancing, and perhaps even self-quarantining, I pray that God would grant you the peace to see he is still at work. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Praise
and give thanks to
the Lord

Growing Together in Christ,
Mr. Onnen



Please help us praise God for Mr. Jon Baumgartel who has accepted the call to St. John Lutheran School as our middle school math teacher for the upcoming year.

St. John will be replacing both Mr. Hardt and Mrs. Wilke as they intend to retire (for real). We're also seeking a middle school teacher to allow the 7th & 8th grades to split. Finally, Miss Kirby, our preschool teacher, has accepted a position closer to her fiancé' and future husband in Genoa, NE.

To date, Mr. Baumgartel is the 2nd new teacher to accept one of these four positions for upcoming year, joining Tia Pawlowski who will focus on 5th & 6th grade language arts. Please continue to pray for the right candidates for our last two positions.

PTL Plant card sale begins March 16th

and continues through May 7 Purchase a gift card to Shamrock Johansen Nursey for \$25 and the PTL receives \$5.00.

St. John Families: If you were not able to get cards prior to school closing or need more, please, contact Erin Wragge at 402-841-9394 or email schoolsecretary@stjohnbc.net.

Unsold cards and money are due back on May 7th. The family that sells the most cards will win the movie prize package worth \$65.00

Proceeds go towards beautification of our campus following the school remodel.



The 4th Grade Field Trip



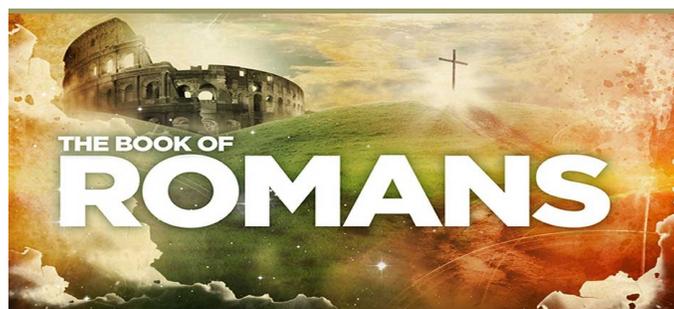
Lighter News: The 4th grade class did get to go to the Lincoln Capitol and Morrill Hall on Thursday, March 5. It was a great day to learn about our state's history! I'm so glad we got to go when we did!

During the restrictions for gathering due to COVID-19 we are providing Bible Studies, Devotions, a prayer calendar and other resources for our members to continue to grow as children of God!

Thank you to the staff and volunteers who contributed additional content for our congregation during this time.

Don't forget to Join Pastor Fouts every Thursday night from 7-8:00 pm for his Bible study on the book of Romans on Zoom.

For instructions on how to join in see page 3 of this newsletter.



10 Plagues of Egypt According to the 4th Grade

Last Monday, March 16, the teachers were told at 1:00 p.m. that we would be dismissing school at 3:20, and would not return for two weeks due to the coronavirus. (Since then, we've been told that school will not resume in our physical building this year) The 4th grade class had been practicing their chapel message titled "Little Pharaoh, Foo Foo" for a couple weeks. We had all the props at school, and with the help of Pastor and Mr. Whitney they recoded the message. It was later shown on Facebook.

While I was very glad they were able to put their hard work into practice, I was probably more amazed by the "timeliness" of the message. When I selected this play a few months ago, I had no clue that the world would be experiencing our own "plague." We don't have frogs, locusts, rivers of blood, or the death of livestock, but we do have a worldwide virus. It has robbed some of us of our jobs, social life, and place of worship.

This is not where the story ends...

The Israelites needed Moses to lead them out of Egypt. He did with God's help. They crossed the Red Sea and were delivered from slavery. We have a better leader than Moses. We have Jesus and His Word to guide us. God is bigger than any plague, and he is bigger than this virus. He conquered sin, death, and the power of the devil so that we can someday enjoy heaven. So, on the days that you feel plagued by the effects of the coronavirus, rely on the track record of your Savior. He was with the Israelites long ago, and he continues to be with us today and always.

BE STILL

Devotion from Ms. Werner

When you are feeling anxious or afraid, take some time to focus on Psalm 46:10.

Say each line slowly emphasizing the highlighted words.

Think about how God might be speaking to your heart.

BE STILL and know that I am God.

Be still and **KNOW** that I am God.

Be still and know that **I** am God.

Be still and know that I am **GOD**.

*Be Still
and know that
I am God*

Psalm 46:10

Prayer Starter: Heavenly Father, please help me to be still. Help me to rest in the fact that you are holding me gently and carefully in your mighty, loving, and gracious hands. Please help me to know, believe, and trust that you will take care of me and provide for me and my family. Please help me to remember that you are truly God. Nothing that happens is a surprise to you. You can see the whole picture and you have a plan. Nothing will be able to separate me from your love (Romans 8:38-39) and you will be able to turn this difficult situation into good for all of us who love you. (Romans 8:28) Lord Jesus, please (*Insert your prayer*)

Thoughts from a Sunflower Seed

Devotion from Ms. Werner

Every one of us goes through times in our lives that are difficult, confusing, and scary. When you are struggling with something you don't like or understand, consider the thoughts of a sunflower seed:

Inside an unopened packet of seeds: **I sure like it here with all of my friends. It's so warm and comfortable. I never have to be alone or afraid. What a great way to live!**



The packet is opened: **Owww! What is the bright light? It's hurting my eyes!**

The seeds are poured out: **Whoa, what is happening? I'm falllllliiiiinnngggg!**

The seed is picked up: **Hey! Not so rough! Why are you taking me away from my friends? Put me back!**

The seed is placed in the ground: **Wait a minute! What are you doing? I don't want to be here. I can't see. I can barely breathe. Why did you put me here? It's dirty. It's cold. It's dark. It's lonely.**

The seed is watered: **Now what? Why the water? I'm going to drown! . . . My shell! It's getting soft! It's going to rot. I'm ruined!**

The roots of the seed start to grow and spread out in the soil: **Ahhh! It's starting to get a little warmer. That feels better. Maybe now I can rest. . . . Wait! What are all those white strings that are spreading out beneath me? They are grabbing on to the earth. They are sucking up all the water. I feel them giving me strength.**

The stem and leaves start to grow: **Hey, look at that! I'm sprouting! It's green. I'm pushing up through the dirt. . . . There's the sun! Boy, that feels good! Reach! Reach! Reach! Wow! I'm growing!**

The plant gets bigger and bigger: **Look how big I am! My stem is wide and strong. My leaves are huge! They help me catch more sunlight. The wind feels a little rough today but I can tell my roots are helping me to stand straight and tall.**

A green flower bud forms: **What's that green thing at the top? It's heavy but all this growing is making me strong enough to hold it up.**

The flower unfolds: **Wow! The big bulb at the top was kind of ugly at first but look at it now. There are beautiful yellow flower petals spreading out and reaching up toward the sun. Amazing!**

Seeds form inside the flower: **Hey, look at all those seeds! I'm full of them. I can share with everyone around. Can you believe it? I was just one tiny seed. Look at me now!**

"But now thus says the Lord, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you

Children and the Coronavirus
Kelsey Schnoor



The news of the coronavirus and COVID-19 is everywhere. It's all over the radio and tv, and adults are taking all kinds of odd precautions from how we go grocery shopping to everyone having to stay home from work and childcare. Even my own children, who are 9 and 12, are feeling the stress and confusion of having to stay home from school for the rest of the school year. Tears have been shed in my house, but we remember Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

We've had lots of conversations about the coronavirus. As scary and confusing as it is for us adults, those same feelings are magnified for our children. Their whole world is upended. I've heard concerns about how to talk to the littlest of them. I've put together a list of suggestions based on all the information out there.

- **Don't be scared to talk about it.** Most, if not all, of our children, have heard about the coronavirus, or they've seen people wearing masks and gloves. Not talking about it can increase fear and worry more. Take the opportunity to give them the facts. As parents, our goal should be to help our children feel informed, which can help them to feel more reassured than anything they're getting from friends and the news.
- **Follow your child's lead.** The greatest advice I've received about my child's very inquisitive questions (long before the coronavirus) was just to answer their questions simply and directly. If they're asking the questions, they're ready for the answers. This is the best way to ensure we're adequately answering their questions in the most developmentally appropriate way. Our goal is to be available to our children while helping to calm those worries.
- **Remain calm and be aware of your own anxieties.** It's hard to reassure children's fears when we're upset and anxious. If you find yourself overwhelmed, take some time to calm and go back once you feel better. The best thing we can do for our children when they are stressed and worried is to be the source of calm in their world.
- **Keep a routine.** Children thrive on routine, and with so much uncertainty, being rooted in predictability will help to calm the nervousness of our children. So much of their world is flipped around. As parents, we do this already during Christmas break or summer vacation. Take care of the basics: regular meal times, naps, and regular bedtimes are key to keeping kids healthy and happy.

Attached are some ideas for family learning activities that you can do in your home from our district office. As always, be sure to follow St. John Ministries Facebook pages. You'll find a chapel and worship services, Man Up Monday for dads, Ladies' Night for moms, daily storytime, and so much more.

Resources: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html>
<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

Early Childhood Ideas During COVID-19

Daily Family Learning Activities

1. Daily play 1 board, card, or dice game.
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Counting
 - ii. Color & Shape Recognition
 - iii. Math
 - iv. Memory
 - v. Small Motor
 - vi. Sharing and Taking Turns.
 - b. Suggestions:
 - i. Candy Land
 - ii. Go Fish
 - iii. UNO
 - iv. Farkle
 - v. Chutes and Ladders
 - vi. Memory
 - vii. Break the Ice
 - viii. Sorry
2. Read at least 3 books a day to your child. If your child is old enough to read themselves, have them read 10-20 minutes a day depending upon their reading level.
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Discover that print and speech are related in a specific way
 - ii. Develop left to right sequencing
 - iii. Discover that reading leads to pleasure
 - iv. Tell stories in sequence
3. Read a Bible Story or Devotion Daily.
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Hear stories about Jesus, their Savior, and Friend
 - ii. Feel secure in Jesus' love
 - iii. Talk to Jesus in prayer
 - iv. Be happy knowing that there is a place for them in heaven because of Jesus' death and resurrection
 - v. Discuss ways to share Jesus' love with others
 - b. Suggested Websites:
 - i. Bible for Children
 - ii. Children's Bible Stories – DLTK-Bible
 - iii. YouTube- The Holy Tales & Beginner Bible
 - iv. Online Bible Stories – Garden of Praise
4. Have an art/craft time each day.
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Improve fine-muscle control
 - ii. Create an expression of self
 - iii. Work with a wide variety of materials
 - iv. Experiment with color, texture, and shape
 - v. Use visual expression as a means of communication

- b. Provide paper, crayons, markers, scissors, playdough, watercolor paints, yarn, glue, stickers, sidewalk chalk, etc.
 - c. Create cards, pictures, or write notes and mail to local nursing homes,
 - 5. Have a quiet time each day for doing one or more of the following:
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Improve large and small muscle control
 - ii. Improve eye-hand coordination
 - iii. Develop visual discrimination skills
 - iv. Practice problem-solving
 - v. Discover basic math concepts
 - vi. Use concrete materials to develop abstract concepts
 - b. Suggested Activities:
 - i. Puzzles
 - ii. Playtime with blocks, dolls, or other favorite toys
 - iii. Practice writing their name, numbers, alphabet, stories
- 6. Cook together
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Explore and experiment
 - ii. Math concepts
 - iii. Develop skills in using the scientific method of problem-solving: observing, predicting, testing predictions and generalizations
 - iv. Read and follow directions
 - v. Observe ingredients change (liquid to solid or solid to liquid)
 - b. Suggestions:
 - i. Mac & Cheese
 - ii. Cookies or brownies
 - iii. Jello or pudding
 - iv. Grilled cheese
 - v. Popsicles
 - vi. Favorite recipes
- 7. Large Motor
 - a. Skills:
 - i. Improve large and small muscle control
 - ii. Improve eye-hand coordination
 - b. Suggestions:
 - i. Play outside
 - ii. Ride a bike
 - iii. Sidewalk chalk
 - iv. Play catch
 - v. Kick a ball
 - vi. Jump rope
 - vii. Play on the swing set
 - viii. Create an obstacle course
 - ix. Fly a kite

Even When I'm Afraid, God Loves Me

by Kelsey Schnoor ~Childcare Director

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them. (1 John 4:16)

Start with a prayer

Dear Jesus, Thank you so much for your unfailing love. Please open our hearts and minds to your Word as we worship you.

Amen

Bible Story - Matthew 8:23-27

Jesus had been busy helping people all day. He climbed into a boat with the disciples, and He fell fast asleep. The disciples talked quietly as the boat started to glide across the sea. All of a sudden, a big storm came upon the sea. There was lightning, thunder, huge waves, and strong winds. The boat rocked so hard that the disciples were scared that the boat would sink. Finally, they woke Jesus.

Jesus immediately got up and told the storm to stop and the water to be calm. He asked the disciples why they had been so afraid. They had forgotten that they didn't need to be scared because Jesus was with them. Sometimes, we can forget that Jesus is always with us, too. His awesome love can calm and comfort us when we are afraid.

Today's story is from The Beginner's Bible. Read "Jesus Calms the Storm," on page 334.

You can also watch the story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYLHqdSO9OY>

Activity

Items needed: Empty water bottle, blue food coloring, cooking oil, paper plate

Help your child to cut out a sailboat shape from the paper plate. Fill the water bottle up halfway with warm water and add 5 drops of blue food coloring. Add some cooking oil and drop in the boat. Tighten the lid or add some hot glue to the rim before placing the cap to keep it secure. Shake the bottle to mix up the parts. Watch as the "storm" is calm by "trusting in Jesus."

Questions to Ask

Why were the disciples so afraid?

Who made the storm to stop and the sea to be calm?

How did He calm the water?

How can Jesus help calm our fears?

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for being the One to calm the storm and the sea. Thank you for comforting me when I'm afraid.

Amen



Bible Study on Prayer

by Pastor B.J. Fouts

What is the reason for prayer? Could it be to change God's mind on a certain matter?

Opening Prayer: Almighty God and everlasting Father, You have commanded us to call on You in our days of trouble and to give You thanks in times of blessings. As we consider prayer, its power and place in our lives help us to trust in You at all times. In the most holy name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

What do we know about God? Cf Romans 8:28.

What divine characteristic do we know to be true from Malachi 3:6? In this way is God different than man?

Consider the following accounts:

What is the issue, who pleads with God, and what is God's response?

- I. Genesis 18:16-33
- II. Exodus 32:1-14
- III. Numbers 20:11-12
- IV. Deuteronomy 3:23-29
- V. Joshua 10:12-13
- VI. 2 Samuel 12:13-18
- VII. 2 Kings 20:1-12
- VIII. John 2:1-5

Can prayer change the mind of the Almighty?

Read Joshua 10:14. What can we learn about God's immutability (unchanging nature)?

Read Number 23:19. What does this teach us about God's immutability?

Prayer is often understood as a conversation with God? We call upon God in every time of trouble, pray, praise and give thanks. What benefit is there in prayer?

Read Deuteronomy 4:7.

Through prayer, access to God through the blood of Jesus, we are close with God. This closeness with God brings us comfort and strength.

Our prayer is always according to God's will, as we pray in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done." What never changes about God is His good and gracious will. Prayer changes us. Luther once said that through prayer God reconciles our will to His.

As Jesus prays in Matthew 26:39, 42, we pray for God's Will to be done, and when our prayer meets God's, "no," faith trusts that God works for good. When our prayer meets God's, "yes," is it that our prayer changed God, or is it that our prayer was in line with God's Will and He was going to do what we prayed for anyway?

Discussion Questions

How does our theology (especially the understanding God's Divine characteristics) affect our understanding of prayer?

How much does our personal "design" for God influence what we think/believe about prayer?

In view of this Bible Study respond to this statement? "We are little-picture people, living under a big-picture God."

Closing Prayer – Create your own prayer, consider this pattern:

C – Confess to God your sin & brokenness.

A – Adore God for his gifts and blessings.

S – Supplication, ask God to supply the needs you have and the needs of others

T – Thank God for hearing your prayer and answering according to His perfect will.

Prayer Calendar

Completed by Jessica Fouts

In this time of social distancing and feeling removed from our church family, use this calendar to stay focused on God's Word for all of us and spend time in prayer for those in our church family. Use the most recent pictorial or annual directory to pray for the people whose last name begins with the letter of the day. Let us start with Matthew with a few days focused on the Easter story!

APRIL 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 Read: Matthew 1 Pray: Last names beginning with A	2 Read: Matthew 2 Pray: Last names beginning with B	3 Read: Matthew 3 Pray: Last names beginning with C	4 Read: Matthew 4 Pray: Last names beginning with D
5 Read: Matthew 5 Pray: Last names beginning with E	6 Read: Matthew 6 Pray: Last names beginning with F	7 Read: Matthew 7 Pray: Last names beginning with G	8 Read: Matthew 8 Pray: Last names beginning with H	9 Read: Matthew 9 Pray: Last names beginning with J	10 Read: Mark 15:1-40 Pray: Last names beginning with K	11 Read: Matthew 10 Pray: Last names beginning with L
12 Read: Mark 16 Pray: Last names beginning with M	13 Read: Matthew 11 Pray: Last names beginning with N	14 Read: Matthew 12 Pray: Last names beginning with O	15 Read: Matthew 13 Pray: Last names beginning with P	16 Read: Matthew 14 Pray: Last names beginning with R	17 Read: Matthew 15 Pray: Last names beginning with S	18 Read: Matthew 16 Pray: Last names beginning with T
19 Read: Matthew 17 Pray: Last names beginning with U	20 Read: Matthew 18 Pray: Last names beginning with V	21 Read: Matthew 19 Pray: Last names beginning with W	22 Read: Matthew 20 Pray: Last names beginning with Y	23 Read: Matthew 21 Pray: Last names beginning with Z	24 Read: Matthew 22 Pray: For Pastor and the ministry of St. John	25 Read: Matthew 23 Pray: For our school and staff, esp. Mr. Onnen
26 Read: Matthew 24 Pray: For our childcare and staff, esp. Kelsey	27 Read: Matthew 25 Pray: For worship and esp. Mr. Whitney	28 Read: Matthew 26 Pray: For fishing and esp. Judy Warneke	29 Read: Matthew 27 Pray: For our lay leaders and the boards	30 Read: Matthew 28 Pray: That we may all be together soon!	1	2



Connecting People in the Heart of Jesus

St . John Lutheran Church

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