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# Resurrection LUTHERAN CHURCH

June 2020

## RETURN FROM EXILE

We are writing to let you know that both the elders and executive council are currently working on plans for returning for worship. As we observe how being separated is so tough on us, Theologian N.T. Wright has a powerful essay on how viewing the church as one in exile right now can be helpful for us. This is what he observes, "Recognize the present moment as a time of exile.

We find ourselves "by the waters of Babylon," thoroughly confused and grieving for the loss of our normal life. 'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?,' as in Psalm 137, translates quite easily into "How can I know the joy of the Eucharist sitting in front of a computer?" Or "How can I celebrate Ascension or Pentecost without being with my brothers and sisters?" The thing is though we can still sing because the Lord is present with us all in our houses and he will regather his people as we have seen him do before!

Furthermore, take some time reading Nehemiah this week and you see a guideline of how the nation of Israel returned from exile and began to rebuild. As you read through it you see it was not a quick and easy process, but rather was done with intentionality and planning. So too, as we regather from exile it will be done with these same qualities.

Please remember that we are trying to think about what is best for our congregation as whole when it comes to safety and care. We all have differing opinions on these things, and that's ok. Please be kind with your words and opinions, remembering to "put the best construction on everything." Amid this though let us pray for our church, and for the larger church around the world, that it would not be divided.

There is a good article we would suggest by Brett McCracken entitled, "Church, Don't Let Coronavirus Divide You" that urges us to sacrifice, have humility, patience, and nuance with one another through this. All of us within the council would ask this as well and that we as a church would be in prayer for unity and wisdom through all the planning. Here are some of the rough plans we are working on.

- We are planning in person again once Phase 2 for worship services is instituted in King County, and we have documented plans on how to safely follow the state guidelines.
- We will go back to having both our 8 am and 10:30 am services, but not have events between services, to promote social distancing and allowing us to clean between services.
- Looking at the CDC and state guidelines we are also going to encourage everyone to wear masks or cloth coverings during service, in fact this is a requirement if we want to sing.
- Tying into this we will most likely be reducing the amount of songs in worship as suggested by the CDC guidelines to help minimize the risk of spreading droplets through the air.
- Additionally, we will be having prepackaged communion of both wine and grape juice to help minimize the risk of spreading illness. The frequency of communion will also be examined as well, with it most likely being every other week.

These issues and more will be explored in greater detail in our leadership meetings in early June and we will keep you updated on what decisions we make. Through it all, please keep us in prayer for wisdom and God's Holy Spirit to fall on us all in this time. Until we meet again exiles, know you are loved and cherished in the Lord!



God's Blessings,  
The Resurrection Executive Council

## LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY JUNE 2020 ARTICLE

The sin of the world is paid for. God's Law has been kept perfectly on our behalf. The prophecies have all been fulfilled. Jesus Christ has finished it all! And that, dear Christians, should fill us with complete confidence in our salvation. Since Jesus has finished all these things in His self-sacrifice, we can be fully certain our sins are forgiven, and we have everlasting life!

St. Paul wrote: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (Rom. 12:1)

We hear the same teaching in I Peter. "As you come to him, a living stone, rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:4-5)

It's the very thing Malachi foretold of the Lord, that He would come and purify His priestly people, that they may offer to Him an offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:3)

So, what does this mean? In view of God's mercies – that is, because Jesus sacrificed Himself to make us pure, giving His entire self into death – Paul said that we are to sacrifice ourselves entirely to God, offering Him our whole lives. For our Savior did not give Himself for us in part. So, we do not give back to Him in part.

We don't offer ourselves to God just on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings, for example. Rather, we give Him our whole selves, all the time. We understand that offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices involves the giving of our time. It requires us to be faithful stewards of the time He has given us. Yes, it means we devote to our Savior all our time. Otherwise we are not sacrificing our whole lives.

You see, God both teaches us, and has graciously qualified us, to present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices – to live as His holy priests, who offer Him acceptable sacrifices through Jesus Christ, all day, every day, in our various callings.

In the passages from Romans and I Peter, we hear several examples of Christian self-sacrifice: serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy, living peaceably with others, submitting to governing authorities and those over us in the workplace, wives submitting to husbands, husbands honoring wives, showing compassion, and suffering patiently in doing good.

In all these things, and in all our other everyday activities, we sacrifice ourselves by using our time, not just for our own benefit, but also and especially for the well-being of others. Work time, school time, exercise time, study time, mealtime, chore time, recreation and relaxation time, even sleep time – it's all God's gift to us to use for purposes that please and honor Him.

This challenges us to think about the way we spend our time, how we utilize our talents, and the way we spend our treasures. Whatever it is I'm doing, am I doing it "for the Lord"? (Col. 3:23) Am I presenting God a living sacrifice? Am I conducting myself as a holy priest, whose sacrifice is acceptable to God?

Because our Lord sacrificed Himself wholly for us, we offer ourselves wholly to Him as living sacrifices. This is following Jesus in self-sacrifice. By His saving mercy, yes, our sacrifice is acceptable to God. For the sake of Jesus' finished work, God is pleased with us.

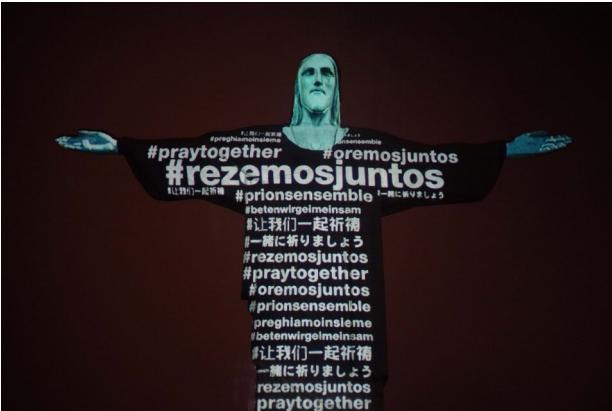


*Stewardship*  
a way of life

## Resurrection Lutheran Church Balance Sheet 04/30/2020

<b>Assets</b>	
Assets	\$189,743.91
Current Assets	\$88,559.78
Checking Account	\$62,707.56
Savings Account	\$21,470.70
Facilities Account	\$3,402.61
PayPal	\$978.91
Investments	\$101,184.13
LCEF Steward Account	\$95,692.33
LCEF Supplemental	\$5,491.70
Schwab Account	\$0.10
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$189,743.91</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
Operating Accounts	\$186,464.29
Operating Accounts	\$186,464.29
General Fund	\$53,241.44
Sinking Funds	\$107,147.82
Local Impact Giving	\$2,547.70
Workers Comp	\$1,790.11
Piano Organ Maint	\$1,777.67
District Conv	\$624.02
Short-Term Maint	\$7,680.79
Landscape	\$872.59
Long-Term Maint	\$36,246.85
Surface Water Mgmt	\$636.82
Property Insurance	\$871.92
Parsonage Maint	\$7,736.02
Emergency Fund	\$46,363.33
Special Funds	\$26,075.03
Congregational Emergency Fund	\$1,818.89
Kitchen Fund	\$8,895.90
Memorial Fund	\$13,446.54
Concordia Publishing	\$(21.28)
Social Action Fund	\$1,934.98
<b>Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$3,279.62</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$189,743.91</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>\$189,743.91</b>

## FORTRESS GOD by Bruce Hillman of 1517.org (1517.org/articles/fortress-god)



God will keep his promises, but how he keeps them is often quite surprising.

Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) As someone who has had a lifelong experience with anxiety, living through its dark rhythms and running from its haunting shadows, Psalm 46 has been a promise of immense comfort. But like many good verses that are often quoted it has descended into a sort of staid cliché, a platitude offered to the disquieted as a sort of prescription for their ailment: "Take this and you'll feel better; come back in see me in a few weeks." Well-intended no doubt, but not very helpful. God's Word must be more than an answer to a question, more than just a fill-in-the-blank. It is a living Word and therefore it must enliven me. The clash of Word and brokenness must result in something more than an answer to a question.

The Psalm begins with a promise: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of sea." That's nice. Really. But as an anxious sufferer I have to admit that even though I understand that God is a place of refuge and strength, I still fear. How can I claim this promise as my own when this promise appears in my experience to be inapplicable?

There are a few ways I can answer. I could be misunderstanding the point of the text, I could qualify the promise (X has to happen before Y takes effect) or I could be "not trusting enough." But all of these are bad answers. The text isn't hard to understand, it plainly says that God is present in our troubles, assisting us and helping us. There is no mention of a cause-and-effect that has to happen to make this true, and to argue that I need to "believe more" makes God's promises conditional upon me. Not only is that ridiculous, but it would mean that God doesn't act unless we do things right. So again, what's going on?

I think this is a common experience for many Christians, that God's promises seem too good to be true or don't seem to be true at all. But can I suggest something? Maybe the problem isn't with God's promises, or with our faith, but with our knowledge. Let me explain.

What does it mean for you that God is your refuge and strength? Chances are you have a rather specific answer to that. For me in my anxiety, God being a "help in trouble" definitively meant God was going to stop my trouble. In other words, I was reading God's promise of help to mean, "God will do specifically X in my life and situation." But that's not what it says. It says God is a refuge, a source of strength and a helper. It does not define how he does these things. Inadvertently, I conditioned God. I insert very specific conditions into God's promises and then get mad when my conditions don't pan out. Maybe God being my refuge is him showing me I have to come to the end of myself? Maybe God being my strength is letting mine fail but seeing him show up? Maybe God's help comes from the grace I experience in weakness? But certainly God's promises are not authenticated by my expectations of fulfillment.

That's the point of the clichéd verse 10, "Be still, and know that I am God." Everyone likes the first part—be still, but they often forget the second, and know. This knowing is really a strong way of saying, "remember!" Remember that the God who gives this promise is the God of the Gospel. Remember that the God of the Gospel is Jesus Christ who gave himself up for you, the God who is for you not against you, the God who sealed his promises in his own sacrificial blood. But also remember that the God who makes these promises is the God of surprises. How often do we see in Scripture Jesus astonishing everyone from the religious elite, the crowds, the disciples and the Romans? Even his silence has a shock effect (Mark 15:5).

God will keep his promises (Deut 7:9) but how he keeps them is often quite surprising (Rom 11:33). The Psalmist wants us to be still so that we can listen to God's promises, so that we can remember that despite our circumstances, despite our negative thoughts, despite our rationalizations, deductions, forecasting and negative thoughts, despite the apparent encroaching reality that says, "I can't handle this and God isn't coming," we are invited into the stillness of God so that we can be fed by the Word of truth.

And that's the gift of faith, it gives us eyes to see beyond our experience, past the ever-threatening-now so that we can grab hold of a greater reality, a reality where God's promises are proved authentic by a Man upon a cross. We might be tempted to accuse God of many things but him not keeping his promises cannot be one of them. The cross simply disqualifies that argument. To live out our faith is simply to live as if God's promises are true (even if we have doubts). Our faith grabs hold of God's Word and finds life there. God is our fortress, a refuge, a very present help. This help is sometimes an insight, a disclosure into truth. I feel forsaken, I feel my sins are too much, I feel rejected, I feel unloved—But the Gospel says this is untrue! The Gospel says that God sees me as he promises.

Friends, take heart. Be still—but also know. Know he is a Fortress-God. He may not act in ways we anticipate or envision. But he will act. He is acting now. Now here's one more promise for you to send you on your way. Go outside and look at the flowers and birds. Remind yourself of what you already know, that the same God who takes care of them, is taking care of you. The same God who took care of sin, can take care of your present evil. And what do the birds and flowers do to deserve such care? Nothing. They are recipients of Divine grace. Sound familiar?



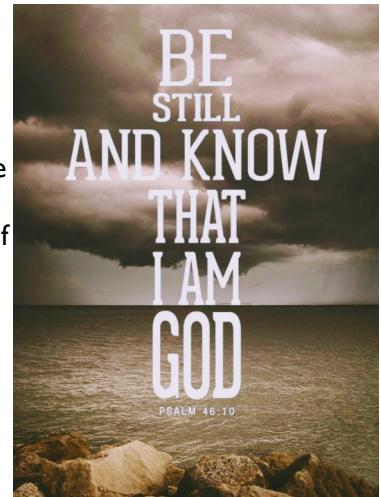
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## RISING FROM THE RESIDUE by Steve Gruenwald

Taking liberties with the words of Oliver Hardy (of Laurel and Hardy), “Well, here’s another nice mess we’ve gotten into.” Granted, this is a huge mess with loved ones sick and dying and others losing their jobs or their businesses, but this isn’t the first mess you or I have ever been in, nor is it the first mess for humankind. We’ve been in messes since the beginning of the world. If you think about it, this mess is simply the latest in a string of messes that began in the Garden of Eden.

Two constants exist among all of these messes. One is a fallen, sinful world susceptible to sickness and death, and the other is our God that has been in the midst of all messes from the very beginning of time. We don’t know why God would allow this — or the many thousands of other messes — to happen, but we do know this: He is with us and he is watching over us. “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” (Deut. 31:8)



Perhaps more than ever we have sought counsel and peace from the one who created all things, who calms storms, who heals, who defeated death, and who gives to us the promise of eternal life with Him. It’s God who forgives us of the times we created our own messes due to our sinful natures. It’s the same God who “works for the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28) before, during and after these messes.

It wasn’t long after our routines and normal way of living were greatly altered that my wife, Bev, started saying, “Hopefully, we will be blessed in this mess.” Once we started to look past the chaos of the mess, we started recognizing the many blessings emerging from it.

One of those blessings was recapturing what is truly valuable in life: it’s not the stuff that we’ve surrounded ourselves with while at home, but valuing what God has known from the beginning — it’s not good to be alone! (Genesis 2:18) We value our relationships. We miss being with other people: our families, our friends, our church family, our co-workers. We value the time we have to be with one another to talk and laugh, to support one another and create memories.

These blessings don’t make the mess disappear, and they certainly won’t prevent other messes from happening, but they can help with our attitude and our gratitude toward our loving God whose grace gives us more than we deserve, and promises to one day take us to a place where we are no longer mired in the mess.