



Grace to you all, and peace!

A lifetime ago, in February, many of us entered Lent prepared to give up something, like chocolate, or to take on something, perhaps a prayer practice, out of desire to grow closer to God. And then March happened, COVID-19 happened. I can't even remember what my Lenten discipline *was* anymore, let alone whether I stuck with it until Easter. But what about today's discipline?

Every week, I share my deepest desires for you, including that you will "Find God in everyone and in every thing." What would it mean for us to find God even in COVID-19? Including the people who are frustrating us by wearing or not wearing a mask. Including the disruptions and disappointments? More than weeks of Lent, can we live these months as a spiritual discipline?

I only recently came to this place of understanding, and I admit, I'm only beginning to grasp the potential. But whether I recognized it or not, coronavirus has changed my relationship with God. It has helped me in some ways to draw closer to God, even as it has revealed places where I need and want further growth.

For example, I've had a spiritual practice for nearly thirty years that I've learned to – had to – change. Since 1993 it has been: Monday – read the next Sunday's scripture lessons. Thursday – first sermon draft. Sunday – preach. Rinse and repeat, for nearly half of my life. Until March.

It isn't simply that I've learned to re-adjust my calendar to make sure recordings and bulletins are available on time. It means I've had to let go of the comfort of that routine. To rely on God to have a sermon ready by Wednesday. To trust God that I'll know that sermon enough after a few hours and not a few days. To surrender that it is not my well-formed words but God's Holy Spirit who will share God's truth. As some people can tell you, I didn't come to these realizations easily or willingly.

A big part of it is that I have no choice. Five weeks into Lent, I can get chocolate if I want or put a devotional away. But COVID-19 is the spiritual cauldron that we can't escape even if we want to.

On one hand that is oppressive. Believe me, I understand. On the other hand, however, that I can't escape when I want means I have to sit with this. I have to. I have no choice.

Moment by moment we are changed, like water dripping on hard stone and over millennium shaping rock. But like it or not, coronavirus is an unrelenting wave, pounding that same hard rock into sand. We may not like ocean waves or their powers of erosion. They may scare us. But we can't stop them.

Such is the spiritual discipline set before us. We can resist. We can protest. But we will still be changed. Can we find God in all things? Even *this* thing? May it be so.

God is all in all,

A Response to Requests to Return to Indoor Worship

by Pastor Steve Shussett

Recently, a few people have asked me about our plans on having worship in the sanctuary. The short answer is, we don't have any plans, because (1) the situation changes from day to day, and (2) state guidelines have frequently changed toward being more restrictive, not less. Churches may not be bound to those legally, as we are considered essential services, but we are bound morally to protect everyone as much as we can.

Council has been working under a set of understandings established early in the pandemic, essentially having only one or two people indoors at any one time, and making larger groups meet outside. Difficult decisions have been made on that basis, such as canceling M.A.D. Camp. Some big events, like the yard sale, have found ways to continue. Others have found alternatives.

I know this has been hard, but today's conditions are really not different from the outset of the pandemic. The only thing that is really different is our level of frustration. That is understandable. But the virus that has taken the lives of so many, and threatened the lives of so many more, has not diminished. Decisions that were made in good faith in March, when things were terrible, remain sound in August when, if anything, many things have gotten worse.

That doesn't mean we won't revisit those decisions as the situation changes and our understandings improve. Theologians and pastors are exploring with how Communion might be safely and faithfully offered, not only to those who can attend church, but the many who are unable or unwilling to put themselves or loved ones at risk. Meanwhile, recorded worship reaches many of those at-risk, as well as some who have never worshipped with us before, and outdoor worship – in the shade – has been meaningful for quite a few.

As I said, so far I have only been approached by a few people, but if you are someone who feels similarly, please let me or a Council member know. There is nothing wrong, and everything human, about wanting to gather in a place that means so much. That desire has been heard. Just please understand that your safety, and those whom you love, are of the utmost importance to us.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! . . .

. . . **to everyone** for faithfully supporting the congregational budget during this time of turmoil. Your offering is ahead of last year and we are only \$10,000 short of our budget. We have obviously saved money by not being indoors and again your faithful giving has helped immensely. Peace to you all, Finance Committee.

. . . **from Mrs. Reeves**—Thank you for thinking of me with your church’s “Freezer Ministry.” I especially want to sincerely send thanks to all involved in generously giving their time and delicious food to people such as me. God bless you all and I am sending sincere thanks to all involved.

Congratulations to Curtis Prince, Sr., on the birth of his 4th grand baby born on May 28!



Saturday, August 8th, Youth Yard Sale

The Youth will be holding the yard sale on the church grounds on Saturday, August 8th, beginning at 8:00 AM. Come on out and support the youth! There’s lots of items for sale!!!

BLOOD DRIVE

Saturday, August 15 Schwarzwald Blood Drive

The Miller-Keystone Bloodmobile will be at Schwarzwald Lutheran on Saturday, August 15,

from 9:00-4:00

Please consider donating much needed blood by signing up today at:

https://donor.giveapint.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/81749

WALK-IN WEDNESDAYS RESUME AUGUST 12

Join us for Walk-in Wednesdays 11am-12pm! Come on in and chat with anyone who decides to drop by! Join by Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83716527099> or call +1 929 205 6099. See you there!

**Thank you for your generosity in continuing to
contribute financially to SLC, as you are able.**

Through Paypal, go to SchwarzwaldOffering@gmail.com,
using the "Friends and Family" setting.

You can also set up Billpay, use the mail,
or drop your envelope in the church's mail slot.

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Do you have skills, experience, or interest in Audio-Visual technology?
Schwarzwald wants you! Call us at 610-779-3480
to help us move into a new era in SLC worship.

Please help our children! Do you have a favorite Bible story? Record yourself reading it and email the video to Crystal Jordan, Director of Christian Education. You could use a picture book or a children's Bible. She will develop virtual lesson activities based on the Bible Story you chose. Our children will love meeting members of our congregation while learning new Bible stories at the same time. Crystal can be reached at 610-451-2983 or clw1481@aol.com.

EXETER CARES website has been established, at www.exetercares.net If you need help, or if you can give help (including donations), go here!

Go to YouTube's "Schwarzwald Lutheran Church" channel or our Facebook page
or our website: schwarzwaldlutheran.org. Bulletins can be found there
for **OUTDOOR** worship and **RECORDED** worship,
and hymns for the recorded worship.

*(Please note: bulletin emails and Facebook postings may be sent anytime
between Friday and Sunday)*



PRAYER GROUP

The Prayer Group meets via telephone every other Tuesday at 6:00 PM.

The August dates are the 11th and 25th.

Please contact Joanne Rutherford for additional information.

610-406-9355 or jmr14290@gmail.com

Outdoor Worship

Weather permitting and no new COVID-19 impositions

Please note the following:

First and foremost, if you are not feeling well or have reason to think you have been recently exposed to the coronavirus, please don't come. And if you don't feel safe or you are at a high risk, don't come. Worshiper safety is our highest priority.

- Ushers and markers will indicate where to park and sit.
- Bring your own lawn chair(s).
- Six feet will separate family units.
- Wear a mask. A limited supply is available if you forget one. Masks may be removed once you are seated.
- There will not be any congregational singing.
- Please no lingering before or after worship. We want you to stay safe.
- An accessible Port-a-Potty will be onsite.
- Bulletins will be sent on Friday for you to print. No paper copies will be available at the service. Please note "recorded" and "outdoor" bulletins.
- If you want to save a stamp, you can drop off your offering envelope at the service.
- You will still be able to watch recorded worship services!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



- 1 Lynn Gibson
- 2 Sally Sassaman, Charles Lutz
- 4 Brody Oswald
- 5 Laura Ellis
- 6 Joshua Cupitt
- 7 Sarah Eveland, Betty Neiman, Shane Moyer
- 8 Jeffrey Hoover, Alexis Jeschonnek, Kyle Morganti
- 9 Elle Burkert, Harrison Brumbaugh
- 10 Diane Hafer
- 13 Deborah Patton, Kyra Hoerr
- 14 Kelly Billinger, Gregg Sweigert, Cameron Kline, Carol Pomian
- 15 Judy McLain, Connor Strain, Sam Ramos
- 17 Susan Hinkley, Erin Staub, Alynne Rahn, Nicholas Staub, Robert Schmehl,
Russell Smith
- 18 Alexandra Shaner
- 20 Clayton Snyder, Jason Boone, Rochelle Chelius
- 23 Emma Dickerson, Lori Seidel, Alice Specht
- 24 Lynne Toaldo, Bobby Zerwick
- 25 Justin Cataldi, Haylee Notario
- 26 Devon Messner
- 27 Doreen Myers
- 28 Marie Rutherford
- 29 Colette Jordan
- 31 Thomas Babb, Kaiden Killoran, Peyton McLean, Trevor Seidel,
Franklin Paradiso

If your birthday is in August and is not listed here, please call the church office, 610-779-3480, with your full birth date M/D/Y.

Church Council Highlights: (June)



Treasurer's Report / Sue Bryant, Treasurer

Offering in May was low for a 5-week month. However, we're not far off for year-to-date actual vs. budget. Much of that has to do with the reduction in expenses such as snow plowing, reduction in heating and electricity, etc.

Old Business

Outdoor service (weather permitting) -

- The service will be shorter.
- There will be instrumentalists.
- If you are not feeling well or may have been recently exposed to the coronavirus, please don't come.
- If you don't feel safe or you are at a high risk, don't come. Worshiper safety is our highest priority.
- Ushers and markers will indicate where to park and sit.
- Bring your own chair(s).
- Bring your own umbrella or personal pop-up tent for sun protection.
- Six feet will separate family units.
- Wear a mask. A limited supply will be available.
- There will not be any congregational singing.
- No lingering before or after worship.
- An accessible Port-a-Potty will be onsite.
- No paper copies onsite. Bulletins and hymns will be available on Email and Facebook by Sunday morning.
- To save postage, you can drop off your offering envelope at the service.
- You will still be able to watch recorded worship services.

New Business

There will be no July council meeting. The next regular meeting will be August 12.

Published monthly by



Schwarzwald LUTHERAN CHURCH

Serving and Loving Christ Since 1737

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Join our family, share God's love.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pulpit and Pew

AUGUST 2020