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From the Pastor:

John [the Baptist] said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. (Luke 3:7-8)

I’m certain that John’s message in the passage above from Luke 3 was not universally well received. Those who had established themselves as the religious authorities in Jerusalem did not like to have itinerant preachers like John coming and upsetting the *status quo*. Those religious leaders had become quite comfortable in their situations, and comfortable with their relationship with God because they were, in fact, children of Abraham. But John’s message to them was clear. God doesn’t need the established standards and practices to do what needs to be done. If God wants children of Abraham, he can raise them up from stones.

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Perhaps we should take heart from that. We are living in a time when all the established standards and practices have been upended. For nearly five months now the way we have always done things is not currently viable. In particular we have not been able to gather for worship in our sanctuary since mid-March. Worship has been limited to the internet, for those who have access to it, or television. It just has not felt right. We long to be back together in our building, in our pew, in our chair in the fellowship hall. Then it will feel like worship and Sunday morning again.

However, John the Baptist might very well proclaim to us that God doesn't need sanctuaries and pews and fellowship halls. If that is what was needed, God could raise them from stones. But those are not the things that make up "the church." What makes the church "church" are the people gathered in the name of Christ. And that can happen anywhere – watching a video on Facebook, or a worship service on TV, or over the phone with fellow Christians. That is where the church is – in the people of God.

Maybe that is a positive we can take from this time of pandemic; a reminder that the church exists apart from the building on 31st Avenue. It exists in the people of God, however we may be gathering this day. God can raise up the church through Facebook videos, Zoom meetings, phone calls and televised worship services.

I attended a parking lot service of ordination a few weeks ago in Lockport. The president of the congregation hosting the service was wearing a t-shirt that said, "The Church Has Left the Building." Amen to that. We have been forced from our building for the sake of protecting each other from a virus, but that does not mean the church has ceased to exist. We are still here and we are still the church.

In Christ,

Pastor Knowles

Communion for St. James

On Monday evenings August 3 & 17, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm, Pastor Knowles will be available in the fellowship hall of St. James to offer communion to anyone who would like to receive it. This is not a regular service, but a time for people to come in, spend a few minutes in prayer and reflection, and receive the sacrament. Those who wish to participate may come anytime between 6:30 and 7:30 pm. It is important that those who come follow the guidelines for safety including wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing. A brief devotional liturgy will be available.

School is starting,

PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY!!!



Worship News

Sunday August 2

First Reading

Isaiah 55:1-5

Psalm

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

Second Reading

Romans 9:1-5

Gospel

Matthew 14:13-21

Sunday August 9

First Reading

1 Kings 19:9-18

Psalm

Psalm 85:8-13

Second Reading

Romans 10:5-15

Gospel

Matthew 14:22-33

Sunday August 16

First Reading

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Psalm

Psalm 67

Second Reading

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Gospel

Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

Sunday August 23

First Reading

Isaiah 51:1-6

Psalm

Psalm 138

Second Reading

Romans 12:1-8

Gospel

Matthew 16:13-20

Sunday August 30

First Reading

Jeremiah 15:15-21

Psalm

Psalm 26:1-8

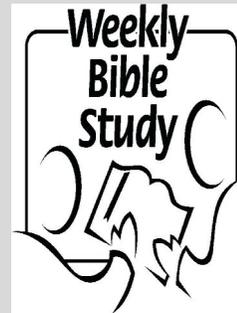
Second Reading

Romans 12:9-21

Gospel

Matthew 16:21-28

We are holding an internet Bible Study (via Zoom) on Tuesday evenings (August 4th, 18th, & 25th), at 6:30 pm. If you would like to join the study, let Pastor know and he will send an invitation to you with the link to join the study. If you need more information, please ask.



August

Birthdays:

<i>Angela Ridolfi</i>	<i>08/02</i>
<i>Louanne Chambers</i>	<i>08/03</i>
<i>Lucas Owens</i>	<i>08/06</i>
<i>Ethan Pressly</i>	<i>08/09</i>
<i>Sandra Ridolfi</i>	<i>08/09</i>
<i>Robert Frank</i>	<i>08/12</i>
<i>Doris Ross</i>	<i>08/12</i>
<i>Jon McGuire</i>	<i>08/14</i>
<i>Tricia Barron</i>	<i>08/15</i>
<i>William Trotter</i>	<i>08/16</i>
<i>Adam Stire</i>	<i>08/16</i>
<i>Jeff Christenson</i>	<i>08/16</i>
<i>Antoinreth Uwimana</i>	<i>08/20</i>
<i>Mark Ridolfi</i>	<i>08/21</i>
<i>Amy Bower</i>	<i>08/21</i>
<i>Samuel Schlouch</i>	<i>08/22</i>
<i>Nancy Wolber</i>	<i>08/23</i>
<i>Lori Carstens</i>	<i>08/23</i>
<i>Butoyi Stire</i>	<i>08/25</i>

<i>Bukuru Stire</i>	<i>08/25</i>
<i>Gracie Ryden</i>	<i>08/25</i>
<i>Josephine Grindle</i>	<i>08/25</i>
<i>Suzanne Christenson</i>	<i>08/25</i>

Anniversaries:

<i>Deb & Michael Nessler</i>	<i>08/07</i>
<i>Linda & Robert Ryden</i>	<i>08/09</i>
<i>Virginia & James Pirsch</i>	<i>08/11</i>
<i>Janice & Douglas Nelson</i>	<i>08/19</i>
<i>Mary & Ward Sundquist</i>	<i>08/27</i>
<i>Donald & Mary Knowles</i>	<i>08/27</i>



July Council Highlights

The July Virtual council meeting was called to order by Pastor, who opened the meeting with prayer. Seven members were present via Zoom. The minutes and treasurers reports were approved.

Doug Nelson. was pleased to report that \$1,425.00 has been sent to the local food pantry so far this year.

Pastor reported that Calvary is planning to have a parking lot outdoor service this coming Sunday, July 19. After some discussion, it was decided that we would talk to Pastor after that, to see how well it had worked, before discussing whether we would like to do something similar. In the case of St. James, pastor wishes to find a way to have members receive communion as his first priority. Council is planning to meet on July 22 to discuss plans further. In new business, it was reported that Bill Hartman has replaced the tattered American flag. A tree limb that fell into the parking lot was cut up and removed by Bill and Jo Kempf. Bethany Weipert has cleaned at church, and discovered that the ceiling of the youth room will need some major repairs. The room will be marked as CLOSED for now.

The RI Junior Board was seeking permission to begin meeting in the downstairs fellowship room beginning in September. The consensus of the Council was that it would be alright for them to meet there, as long as they followed recommended social distancing guidelines. They MAY wish to disinfect the area before using it, to their comfort level. Then the room would not be scheduled for use for 72 hours afterwards in order to allow disinfection by “time”. The mission team announced that materials or cash are being sought in order to put together school kits. Cash may be preferable at this time, but anyone wishing to drop off materials at church should call ahead to check that our secretary would be there to receive them. The Rennekes were thanked for their continued care of the church gardens.

Discussion on proposed changes to the church Constitution is moved to the August council meeting.

Council meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

ST. JAMES COUNCIL – SPECIAL
MEETING ON JULY 22, 2020

Chair Daryl Empen called a special Council meeting to order virtually at 6:35 p.m. on Wednesday, July 22, 2020. Eight members were present. The objectives were to hear Pastor Knowles' report of Calvary Lutheran Church's first experience with a "drive-up" worship service, and to decide whether St. James should try it as well. Pastor Knowles' detailed description of the event indicated that it went quite well. After a long discussion, we decided not to try such a worship service, at least not for now; instead, we will continue having the current on-line services. Those interested in attending Calvary's services are encouraged to do so. However, we did consent to opening up the church to provide Communion on two Monday nights a month, starting on August 3rd. Pastor Knowles stated that he would work out the details and provide more information in the August newsletter. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully,
Luanne Beinke,
Council Secretary



**Thank you for all the cards,
dinner, well wishes, and
prayers during the past month.
It is good to have home care
and just go to the wound
center as we continue healing.
Ruth Anne**



*Enjoy the final
month of Summer*

School Kits

Children here and around the world look forward to the future and returning to school with needed supplies. You may purchase supplies to donate now while there are special back-to-school sales.

However, due to current conditions and to make things easier for those individuals who might have difficulty getting out to purchase these items, monetary donations are welcome. Members of the Missions Team will shop for you!

There will be a collection box located in the entry near the info table. Someone is usually at the church on Thursdays from 9:00am to 2:00pm.

If you would like any additional information, please contact Linda Ryden (309) 781-0167.

Each Lutheran World Relief school kit contains:

- 4—70 sheet spiral bound notebooks Wide or College ruled
- 1—ruler—30 centimeters/12 inches
- 1—hand held pencil sharpener
- 1—pair blunt scissors
- 5—unsharpened pencils
- 5—blue or black ballpoint ink pens (no gel ink)
- 1—box 16 or 24 crayons
- 1—2 1/2 inch eraser



Did you know St. James has a Facebook page?

Check us out and give us a like!

[Facebook.com/saintjamesri/](https://www.facebook.com/saintjamesri/)



If you are not on Facebook you can find photos on our flickr page!

www.stjamesri.org/photo-gallery



St. James a Reconciling In Christ
Congregation

In our awareness that we are all broken people, we rejoice in God's abundant grace. Therefore, we welcome all who are seeking God's love and forgiveness regardless of national origin or ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, abilities, beliefs, political views, financial resources or family status.

There will always be a place for you at St. James.

Adopted on June 11, 2017

For more information check out Reconciling Works at www.reconcilingworks.org



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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE