



HE

MESSENGER

Vermont Lutheran Church's Mission Statement:

Christians Actively Reaching Out Experiencing Christ and Spreading His Word

From the Ecumenical Consultation . . .

The pandemic has challenged churches to continue being the church without gathering in person. We have met that challenge by meeting online, live streaming worship and providing instructions for worship at home. Now churches face another challenge. How will we resume worship gatherings in-person while the pandemic is still with us? This new resource of safe practices for worship during the pandemic has been created by an ecumenical consultation. In addition to representatives from several denominations in the U.S., the consultation team included scientists and medical professionals.

Faithful Basic Practices

Beginning in late winter 2020, our places of gathering for worship temporarily closed their doors for the sake of the common good. But the Church was not closed. The Church is the body of Christ that includes saints throughout all time and space. We are “like living stones” being formed “into a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5) even when we cannot gather in person.

As we begin to resume worship gatherings, our commitments to love, embodiment, sacraments, inclusive hospitality, and beauty are unwavering. The context in which we now express these commitments, however, has changed dramatically. In this new environment, wisdom also calls us to pay attention to the best that medical science (through CDC guidance) can teach us.

And at this moment, medical science calls us to exercise certain limits. We can look at limits in a negative way. Or we can see them as a way to protect us all and as an opportunity for creativity. Respecting the limits necessary for a wholesome life is a central theme of the Old Testament, particularly Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

During the pandemic, public health guidelines ask everyone to:

- Stay home when we are ill or especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more at all times as we enter, worship, and depart.
- Limit the size of gatherings according to guidance provided by denominational, state, or local authorities.
- Use face coverings at all times while in public, except those under 2 years old, those with breathing difficulties, or those who are not able

Inside this issue

Ecumenical Consultation.....	1
News.....	2
Bible Study.....	3-4
Readings/Birthdays.....	5
WELCA, Financials.....	6
Synod News.....	6-8
ELCA, LWR.....	9-11
Prayers, Legacy.....	12

to remove a face covering on their own.

- Reduce exposure time in worship and fellowship gatherings.
- Limit physical touching to what Christian ritual requires, such as the laying on of hands at baptism.
- Avoid practices known to spread the virus more widely, such as congregational or choral singing, unison speaking, speaking loudly, shouting, and playing wind and brass instruments.

As we continue to seek wisdom for how to love our neighbors and promote the well-being of all, it is important to use all of the resources available to us:

- Guidance we find in scripture
- Guidance we learn through our Christian tradition
- Guidance provided by episcopal offices, and
- Guidance issued by the CDC along with federal, state, and local public health authorities.

Vermont Veterans Mission



Cleaning supplies have been donated
to the Veterans from Vermont
Lutheran Church



Daily Discipleship

(A) – Matthew 16:13-20

Tips of Discipleship: *Declare Christ*

Focus Question: *Who do you say Jesus is?*

word of life

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Matthew 16:16 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 16:13-20

People are talking about Jesus and his identity. He has performed miracles, healed the sick, and taught with authority. How could people not be talking about him? Jesus asks the question, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13 NRSV) Jesus began with the assumption people knew he was the Son of Man, but he wanted to know what else was being said about him.

1. *How do the disciples respond to the question of Jesus?*
2. *What might be additional answers to his question?*
3. *Do you think Jesus was primarily concerned with what "others" thought about him? Why or why not?*

This dialogue among Jesus and the disciples seems to be a warm-up for the real question, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15 NRSV) It is one thing to converse about the faith of others; it is something quite different to confess faith in Jesus Christ for oneself.

Peter is the first to speak up as he confesses his faith. "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16 NRSV) *Messiah* is Hebrew for the Greek word "*Christ*". It means "*anointed one*". Yet Peter recognizes that Jesus is not anointed by a human, but by God, one who is living and active in the world.

4. *What do you think of the quick response of Peter?*
5. *What is your overall impression of Peter?*
6. *What do you make of the silence of the other disciples?*

Jesus responds to Peter with a blessing, acknowledging God at work in Peter's life, stirring the right response at a time of testing. Just as Peter proclaimed, "You are the Messiah", so Jesus responds with a parallel phrase "You are Peter." To understand the weight of the statement made by Jesus, a person needs to realize "*Peter*" means "*rock*".

7. *What does it mean to be called "Rock"?*

Jesus intends to build his church based on these words uttered by Peter with the help of God. Biblical scholars have debated the meaning and implications of this well-known confession of Peter. The Roman Catholic Church believes Peter to be the first pope with the church being built upon him as a person. The reformers understood the church is built upon the faith of Peter. Thus congregations can grow wherever faith in Jesus is expressed. Surprisingly, Jesus gives to the church the privilege and responsibility to forgive and not to forgive sins.

8. *When might the church not forgive sins?*
9. *How do you understand Jesus' reference to building the church on a rock?*
10. *What surprises you about this passage?*

Pentecost Bible Study (continued)

word among us

The summer vacation in Oregon was almost over, but the Jones family had not conquered "the Rock". From the first moment the family had seen the boulder outside their hotel window, they were determined to climb it. Yet, it seemed to be an almost impossible feat. Instead, the family would often pause near the boulder and someone would weave a story involving the great adventures of this boulder. There was only one rule to the storytelling – each story had to end by explaining how the boulder ended up behind the hotel.

On the last day of the visit, a work crew started work on the back wing of the hotel. Someone in the family asked to borrow a ladder and several pieces of scaffolding. With no time at all, the family had created a scaffold and climbed the boulder. They had conquered the impossible. Once on top of the boulder, the family danced, laughed, and celebrated life.

1. *Take a moment to remember great rocks in your life. Describe the biggest boulder which you have every seen.*
2. *How do rocks stand the test the time?*

Peter was called "Petros", a word which means "rock". He stood firm in his confession of Jesus as the Messiah, God's anointed. Jesus blessed him in his confession, but acknowledged his words came from God.

3. *Describe faith which is steadfast like a rock.*
4. *Who in your life has faith like a rock?*
5. *What have you learned from people who are steadfast in their faith?*

The text of the well-known hymn "The Church's One Foundation" was written by Samuel J. Stone, a man who lived between 1839-1900. Take a moment to prayerfully read through the first verse:

*The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the word.
From heaven came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for every life he died.*

Hopefully, we have been blessed by others of faith who bear witness to a life built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Let us pray we have served as such a witness to others.

6. *Recall when you have sung that hymn. What images does it spark?*
7. *How are the images associated with "foundation" and "rock" similar or different?*
8. *How have you tried to build your life on the foundation of Jesus Christ?*
9. *What would have to change in your life for you to have faith like a rock?*

Prayer

Rock of Ages, help me to build my life on the rock of Jesus Christ. Amen

Dig Deeper

Romans 12:1-8

last word

Find a rock to stand on or a stone to hold.
Consider what it means to build your life
on the rock of Jesus Christ.



Daily Discipleship

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2008 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.
www.elca.org/evangelizingchurch/dailydiscipleship

(A) Page 2 of 2



This Month's Bible Readings

August 2

Walk by Faith not Sight

2 Corinthians 5:1-21

August 9

Generosity

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

August 16

Lord's Prayer: God's Name Is Holy

Week One

Luke 11:2-4

August 23

Lord's Prayer: Your Kingdom

Come

Week Two

Luke 11:2-4

August 30

Lord's Prayer: Daily Bread

Week Three

Luke 11:2-4

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Bailey	Lynch	August 01
Janet	Castle	August 02
Brady	Hurner	August 04
Hannah	Hurley	August 06
Jonathan James	Schultz	August 07
Randall	Adler	August 08
James	Ludolph	August 08
Owen	Danz	August 13
Klover	Schafer	August 14
Bonnie	Pribbenow-Paddock	August 15
Kathy	Haukoos	August 20
Thomas	Hefty	August 25
Judy	Urness	August 25
Wade	Winchip	August 25
Gary	Olsen	August 30



WELCA News

AUGUST ALTAR DUTY

Klover Schafer & Jane Field



Fall Retreat: A Fall Retreat is in the works at Lutherdale Bible Camp for September 18-19 with overnight and day camp options. See the WELCA website for our synod or the April 2020 Trumpeter, which is



STEWARDSHIP

Managing God's Gifts To Us

Financials: Year to Date July 2020

Operating Contributions: \$ 87,788.58

Total Operating Expenses: \$ 74,739.10

Difference: \$ 13,049.48

Attendance
Matters

On-Line Service Views

July 2020

5th 33

12th 8

19th 18

26th 18

Synod News

2020 Bishop Election



All documents and videos can be found on the synod website.

<https://scsw-elca.org/2020bishopelection/>

Synod News (continued)

SYNOD ASSEMBLY VIDEOCONFERENCE TECHNICAL DETAILS FINALIZED

Thank you for your patience as we worked out the technical details of this year's unprecedented synod assembly to be held via videoconference on Saturday, August 29 from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.

As we communicated earlier this month, our new full videoconference set up replaces our previously described 12-site assembly as the pandemic orders limit us to 10 people per location, making an expected voting population of 400-500 impossible to divide into smaller video locations across the synod.

So, to be very clear, voting members will instead be able to participate from their homes.

If you are a voting member for this year's synod assembly, you will need:

A personal email address that is unique to you alone. Couples who share an email account must set yourselves up with separate email accounts. We recommend Gmail for this easy fix. Every voting member must have their own email address...there are no exceptions to this.

You will also need a computer with a camera, microphone, built in or external speakers and reliable internet.

The synod has contracted for videoconference and voting service with Lumi Global. Lumi Global integrates the Zoom platform that we need to see the assembly with the Lumi voting solution that we need to place our votes. Get used to the words, "Lumi" and "Zoom." You will hear them a lot!

As we also communicated previously, the early bird rate until June 30 was \$25 and now the rate is \$30. While this rate does not cover our cost of \$72 per voting member, we are extending this lower rate as a way of removing financial burden for congregations who might be struggling during this time. If, however, your congregation or you personally are able to give more, you can do so on the registration site in the optional items area, "Donation to Offset Expenses." Donations will be greatly appreciated.

So if you are not yet registered, please register now. **You must be registered by August 14. Because of the way we are managing credentialing for the videoconference and need to provide Lumi with our registration list, there will be no exceptions to this deadline. **You will need to register by midnight on August 14.****

<https://bit.ly/NewSCSWAssembly2020>



**WE ARE
CHURCH
TOGETHER**



**South-Central Synod of
Wisconsin, Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America**



**Sugar Creek Bible Camp's
ANNUAL
QUILT and ANTIQUE
AUCTION**

CRAFT FAIR, 5K TRAIL RUN - FUN WALK

SATURDAY - SEPT 12, 2020

5K TRAIL RUN and FUN WALK: 8:00 a.m.—registration, 9:00—start
COUNTRY STORE: 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
CRAFT FAIR: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
QUILT and ANTIQUE AUCTION: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Beautiful Quilts, Antiques, Sports Memorabilia – Packers, Brewers, etc.,
Crafts, Furniture, Paintings, Gift Baskets & so much more!

Great BBQ pork lunch, homemade pies, potato salad, delicious treats

Country Store will be open with a wide variety of rummage items!

Silent Auction for Gift Themed Baskets until 1pm.

Craft Fair featuring the best of our local Artisans runs throughout the day!

**Come enjoy a beautiful day and help support the
ministries of Sugar Creek Bible Camp!**

Sugar Creek Bible Camp

13141 Sugar Creek Bible Camp Rd. Ferryville, WI 54628

Phone: 608-734-3113 E-mail: camp@sugarcreek.org

www.sugarcreekbiblecamp.org

Please contact the camp if you have quality items to donate or if you have questions.

WEEK THREE:

Hope for justice for all

Kenya



Raised in a Maasai community in Kenya, Evelyne was first exposed to the Women's Literacy Program of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) while attending a seminar on girls' rights. Only 14 years old at the time, she was preparing to start high school, even as her father was arranging for her to marry into a polygamous marriage with a much older man.

Evelyne tried to explain to her father that she wanted to continue her studies, but he refused to listen. With only two days remaining before her wedding, Evelyne reached out to Alice Mwarginga, coordinator of the women's department at KELC. Alice, alongside her church, began working with Evelyne to help her leave her situation and continue her education. With

the help of police, she moved to a nearby community. The marriage was called off, but her father was furious and refused to welcome her back home.

Evelyne was safe, but she needed support to realize her dream of a high school education. Through the Women's Literacy Program, supported by ELCA World Hunger, KELC has been able to provide her with fees and other resources needed to attend secondary school. Evelyne has thrived in her studies, and her teachers praise her hard work and good grades, certain she has a bright future ahead. Eventually, church leaders and community elders worked with Evelyne as she mended her relationship with her father. Seeing what a strong, intelligent woman she had become, he acknowledged that continuing her education had been the right choice for her, and gave her a traditional blessing to encourage her to succeed in school.

"The program has given me a sense of joy and fulfillment that I can give hope to the hopeless girls who are being oppressed," Evelyne said. "It has given me a reason to work hard and improve somebody's life."

Lutheran World Relief News



Eveline Shabani Matondo uses an infrared thermometer as she screens visitors for symptoms of Ebola at an entry of the HEAL Africa Hospital in Goma, a city in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since a deadly outbreak of Ebola in 2018, health authorities in the region have instituted strict measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Besides having their temperature checked, visitors must also rinse their hands in a diluted bleach solution. (Photo by Paul Jeffrey/IMA World Health)

Good news: DRC's largest Ebola outbreak is over. Learn how you helped

Emily Esworthy

Like many other health workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo's eastern region, Eveline Shabani Matondo has spent the better part of two years in crisis mode. She has worked long hours and followed strict preventive measures. She has battled rampant misinformation and risked her own health and safety.

But today, because your love reached neighbors in need, she is celebrating: **the longest and deadliest Ebola outbreak in DRC's history has officially come to an end.**

Overcoming challenges to stop Ebola

After the first case of the outbreak was reported in July 2018, the Ebola virus would continue to infect 3,463 people and cause 2,280 deaths. Many challenges stood in the way of fully containing it: limited health care resources, violence, distrust of aid workers and, recently, a shift of

Lutheran World Relief News (continued)

international focus onto COVID-19.

But you answered the call to love these neighbors during a time of illness, fear and confusion. **Thanks to your generosity, our team could respond quicker, stay longer and reach deeper into communities where other help couldn't go.**

Finally, the World Health Organization officially declared the outbreak over on June 25.

This is how your love joined other help from the U.S. government and others to make a difference for your neighbors in eastern DRC:

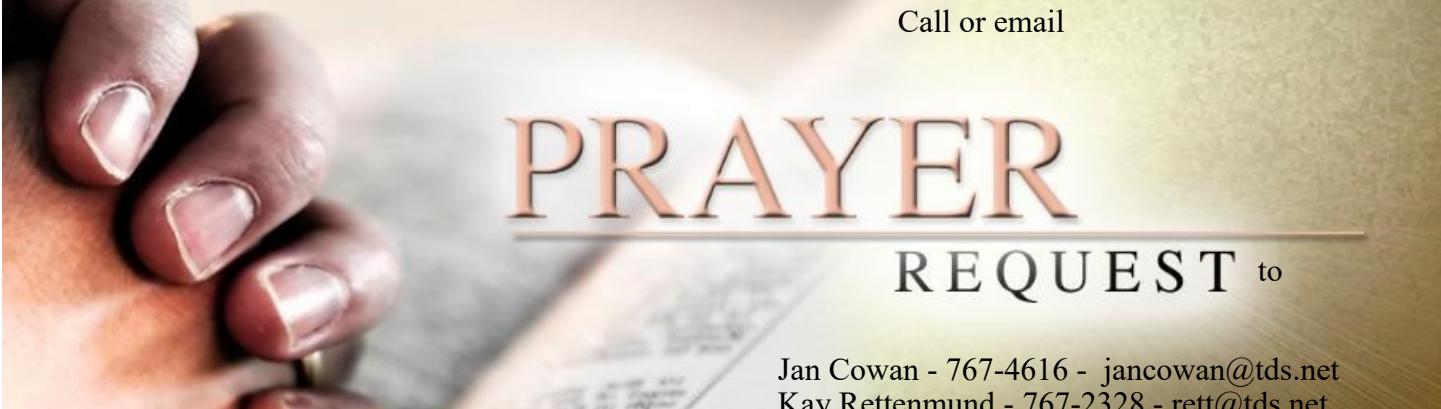
- You helped to train more than 1,200 health workers like Matondo to identify and contain Ebola in her community
- You equipped 85 hospitals and health clinics with critical supplies like protective suits, masks and isolation units
- You empowered more than 1,000 religious leaders to teach their faithful communities how to stay healthy
- You provided clean water and handwashing stations to 164 health clinics to stop the spread
- You sent trusted local health workers door-to-door to visit almost 320,000 families to dispel myths and teach them about the symptoms and treatment of Ebola.

For more on the impact of this work, [read this reflection from Dr. Bill Clemmer](#), who led Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health's response on the ground.

Your love made the difference

Thank you for wrapping your love around these neighbors through your generosity to Lutheran World Relief. As Matondo knows, two years is a long time to overcome the challenges and the setbacks, day after day, to contain a disease like Ebola — but every life saved is worth it.

Thank you for recognizing these families as your neighbors, and for trusting us to carry your love throughout the world — until your love reaches every neighbor.



Call or email

PRAYER REQUEST to

Jan Cowan - 767-4616 - jancowan@tds.net
Kay Rettenmund - 767-2328 - rett@tds.net.

It is our time to build a legacy

Become a member of the Legacy Fund. Members of the Legacy Fund come from all walks of life and are united by a desire to preserve our beautiful Church and Cemetery.

Vermont Lutheran Church owns and maintains a cemetery, historic church building and Gathering Place with a hilltop viewscape. Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given us, including accumulated, inherited and appreciated resources. Therefore, we created the Legacy Fund to encourage, receive and administer these gifts.

Our goal is to generate a Legacy Fund of \$1 Million dollars, or more.

Through receipt of bequests, grants and/or gifts, contributions to the Legacy Fund and investment growth will serve two very important purposes now and into the future:

- To purchase neighboring land for expansion of the cemetery; and/or
- Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and/or building and grounds needs of the Church.

Any legacy member whose contribution totals \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a brass plate on a prominently displayed plaque. Annual meeting reports will include all the names of those individuals who made a contribution of any amount that year.

**September Newsletter
articles are due
21st**

**to Elizabeth Herrling at
vermont_church@tds.net**

Vermont LUTHERAN C Church
9886 Vermont Church Road
Black Earth, WI 53515
Telephone (608) 767-3312

E-mail address: Vermont_Church@tds.net
Website: vermontlutheran.org

Visit Vermont's Website:

www.vermontlutheran.org

Password: God'sWork

**Log on to see all Vermont
news and pictures!**

