

"Where the Word of God is preached and people come to know the Lord"

*THE TIDINGS OF PEACE*  
*Peace Lutheran Church*  
*Ashland, Ohio*

**JUNE**  
**2020**

**VOLUME 20 ISSUE 6**

***From Pastor Karen***

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It grieves my spirit deeply that we have been unable to gather together under one roof for worship these past months. I miss seeing you all face to face. I miss hearing our collective voices raised together in prayer and in song. I long for and hope for the day when we can safely do so again.

Nonetheless, we are still very much church together. We chose to close the doors of our building because we are in the midst of a pandemic. No one told us we had to. We made that decision because first and foremost we are called to love one another. As followers of Christ we are charged with caring for and protecting each other, especially the most vulnerable among us. Closing the doors of our building was and continues to be the loving thing to do.

Make no mistake, the church always has been and always will be essential. Just because the doors of our building are closed, does not mean the church is closed. The church has never been a building. The church is all of us. We continue to be the Body of Christ. We continue to worship. We continue to pray and to lift our voices in song. We continue to minister to one another in faith. Our building may be closed, but we continue to be the hands of God in this world.

Peace Lutheran will gather again for worship under one roof when it can be done safely following the recommendations of the CDC, the ELCA, our Synod, and other medical experts. It is important to note that even when it happens, in-person worship will probably look very different for some time. Plans and protocols are currently being explored and discussed, but to quote St. Paul: "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are beneficial. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other" (1 Corinthians 10:23-24). We need to keep our focus not on what we are allowed to do, but on what is beneficial, what builds up, always with our love of neighbor at our core.

I know that it is not easy to be away from each other. It's so hard not to be able to worship together in person. I feel that in my soul. I long to be with you, to look out on your faces on a Sunday morning. Until that time, we will hold on to one another through the strength

of our faith. We will continue to worship on YouTube and Facebook. And though this is far from ideal, we will continue to care for the lost and least in our midst. We, who have been baptized in Christ Jesus, will take up our cross and follow, putting our love of neighbor above our own desires. And we will do all of this in unity through Christ who saves us.

We will open the doors to our building again, and I look forward to that day with longing, with hope, and with great joy. In the meantime, the church does not need to re-open. We have never closed.

In Christ, Pastor Karen

### Financial Assistance During COVID-19

The economic and social impacts of COVID-19 (the corona virus) can be especially hard-hitting for more vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and disabled. Thanks to a generous legacy gift by Henry L. Howard, the Northeastern Ohio Synod is able to assist some of these individuals with small grants from one of two funds: The **Elderly Person's Assistance Fund**, and the **Disabled Children's Assistance Fund**. The funds are designated for emergency monetary help, medical help, food, clothing, or recreation. Applications can be made by individuals, congregations, or other entities; individual applicants **must submit their application through their congregation**. Individuals may request up to \$2,000; congregations and other entities may request up to \$5,000. Detailed guidelines and an application form are available on the synod website on the [Forms and Documents](#) page under the heading "Grant Information." Note that applicants must reside within the Northeastern Ohio Synod territory. Applications should be emailed to the Northeastern Ohio Synod office: [office@neos-elca.org](mailto:office@neos-elca.org).

Please include "Grant Application" on your subject line.

### JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

06/04—Doug & Lisa Bowersock

06/07—Tim & Laura Baker

06/09—Ron & Karla Pagano

06/11—Jerry & Lillian White

06/14—Ben & Jody Bolen

06/22—Ron & Lisa Blackley

06/23—Bob & Jeni Filbrun

06/24—Mark & Roseanne Griffith

06/27—Kim & Jeff Davidson

*Happy Anniversary*

### JUNE BIRTHDAYS

06/01—Remy Backus Krucinski

06/05—Scott Marker

—Emily West

06/10—Isaiah Williams

06/15—Nancy Boyd

06/16—Robert McCrea

—Marjorie Poorman

06/18—Nancy Bahnson

06/26—Lois Pinski



# Class of 2020



Luke Blackley will be attending DePauw University in Greencastle, IN in the fall to study music! He is a four year scholar athlete (3.5 GPA and Varsity Letter) and a three time district qualifier in tennis. He's made honor roll every semester and has received a Fine Arts Diploma. Luke is a two year NHS Member, and served as an officer and section leader in the choir, field commander in the marching for band, and President of Tri-M, (Music honors society). He also served on the board of the Ashland City Schools Foundation, where he is currently supervising a project to create a video for the group.

If you would like to mail Luke a card to congratulate him, his address is 1283 Center Lane Drive, Ashland Ohio 44805.

## *Congratulations*

Paige Swanson is a 2020 graduate of Ashland High School. For four years, Paige defended the net for the Ashland Varsity soccer team. She was a four-year scholar athlete and was the AHS female recipient of the OHSAA Scholar Athlete award. Paige also played snare drum in the marching band, served as percussion section leader her senior year, and participated in the Tri-M Music Honors Society. She was a two year member of the National Honors Society and was elected Vice President her senior year. Paige was selected the 2020 Math Department Scholar, maintained a 4.0 GPA, and will graduate valedictorian with an honors diploma.

In the fall, she will attend Middlebury College to major in biochemistry, while following the pre-med track.

If you would like to mail Paige a card to congratulate her, her address is 1646 Twp. Rd 1323, Ashland Ohio 44805.





## Look for the scars

By [Brian Hiortdahl](#) May 28, 2020

*This is a reprint from the magazine Living Lutheran.*

Where is God in this crisis? Is this punishment? Why does God allow this to happen?

Seventy-five summers ago, locked in his prison cell, German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer lamented: “They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.” Such potent questions resist easy answers, so I

distrust anyone who tries to give any. There is wiser company among those who ask them: Bonhoeffer, long-suffering Job, wailing Rachel, [the psalmist](#), Christ on the cross: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mark 15:34).

Martin Luther wrote about his painful experience of “*Deus Absconditus*,” the hidden God whose absence he sometimes felt acutely. God’s presence and purpose are often shrouded in impenetrable mystery. Indeed, it’s our certainty that gets us into theological trouble. If we are certain that God is all good and powerful, what can we credibly say when tragedy strikes? This conundrum is so common it has a name: theodicy. No human mind has satisfactorily resolved it.

Even if we had an airtight answer, would that comfort a grieving family or help a heroic front-line health care worker?

But theodicy does serve us well by exposing the limitations of our assumptions about God. Like anyone, God has the right to defy our definitions. God won’t be a tidy, consistent micromanager of cosmic happiness just because we expect it (or dream of being that ourselves). Nor is God a punitive judge, though that can be a seductive line of thought. Paul explained to the Romans that the punishment for sin is enduring its natural consequences, not serving some divine sentence. Reality isn’t as clear-cut as we might wish. God is wiser, more powerful and more loving than we are, but that can be awfully difficult for us to trust when God seems hidden and terrible headlines are so visible.

Where, then, should we look for God? Luther points us to the cross. In the weak, suffering, dying Jesus, we see the heart of God most clearly.

### God is with us

On her deathbed as a young adult, Julian of Norwich saw a vision of Jesus in agony on the cross and was overwhelmed with joy. She grasped as never before the depth of God’s love for her in its profound solidarity with her suffering—or it grasped her. God enters, shares and transforms our questions and death rather than magically removing them.

Perhaps this is why, in the Gospel we read each Sunday after Easter, the disciples don’t realize Jesus is speaking to them until they see and touch his wounded hands and side. Transformed by resurrection, Jesus remains hidden until they recognize the evidence of his suffering. Their reports are empty words for Thomas until he, too, sees the scars. Only then does he know who this is: “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:19-29).

Where is God in this crisis? Look for the scars. God stands in line for a ventilator, struggling to breathe. God works behind a makeshift face mask, exposed to death while fighting to save a life. God waits at home from a painful distance, caring for restless children and lifting heavy questions to a silent sky. God takes abuse while restocking toilet paper for less than a living wage. God walks alone, delivering critical supplies. God sleeps on the street, sheltered in place beneath a bridge until the cops come and once again “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). Immanuel. God is with us.

Paul has something to add, reminding the church: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27). Now we are the ones sent, broken, scarred and risen to [bring hope to the world](#).

In 251, a plague ravaged northern Africa. “The question for [Bishop] Cyprian was not why the plague had broken out but how Christians should respond to it,” wrote Alan Kreider in *The Patient Ferment of the Church* (Baker Academic, 2016). Cyprian’s answer was to imitate God by patiently showing mercy to everyone, even nonbelievers. The world learns who God is by watching us.

Our scars might not be physical. They might be punctures in the heart from an eloquent silence shared with someone who has just buried a beloved they can no longer see, a “life hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). They might be the wounds of lonely questions and unanswered prayers. They might be open gashes of exhaustion. Love reaches in multiple directions and cuts in different ways.

Where is God in this crisis? Where do you see love? Look for the scars.