
Agapegram

October 2021



ETERNAL SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Being a Covid-Era Christian



Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33 EHV

I recently had an article shared with me entitled: *What the Church Needs to Know about Covid-19* by lawyer Jeff Childers. You can find it on the web with a search for the title. It's long, but if you want to read it, go do so now and see what you think of it before continuing on. Test your ability to weigh it against Scripture and a Christian worldview.

The article starts with lots of statistics and headlines claiming Covid-19 isn't as big of a threat as it is made out to be. Some of his points are reasonable some are debatable, and his article landed before the Delta wave hit hard, but that isn't the main concern. Let's assess the spiritual claims and assertions made.

I'd fill the entire newsletter addressing all he wrote, but let's look at two key themes: 1) The Church has now come under a damaging Spirit of Fear, and, 2) We are now in a war and the church (specifically, pastors) need to get out in the community and fight.

The article's intentions are certainly good. Guarding against fear, real or imagined, is crucial. There is a war going on and battles are raging around us. There is much truth to be found in such claims. It's what isn't said that is my concern.

The article asserts that all the hype, politicization, and drama around covid-19 has brought fear into the church and "[t]his Spirit of Fear has caused a tsunami of worldwide terror" and "is destroying relationships and tearing the Church apart." Again, there is some truth here. The presence of covid-19 and the sensationalism of it have led any number of people, including Christians, into irrational, unhealthy, and unfaithful fear. This is not good. It's also not new. Remember Zika, Ebola, Bird Flu, West Nile, etc.? There is always a dire threat in the news. How about ISIS, Iran, North Korea, China, or Russia. Anthrax in the mail, financial collapse, Y2K, and the list goes on. The media thrives on fear. There's nothing new under the sun.

So, why are we still falling for it? The answer is: because we're fallen human beings. Some live in fear of covid. Others live in fear of government overreach or losing our country. Being overcome by either fear is equally wrong! This isn't new. Fear in the Church wasn't new when Luther reminded believers to "fear, love, and trust in God above all things." If pastors are failing to panic over covid fear-mongering, it's probably because they are methodically doing what they always do: trying to help their congregants overcome the fear that is ever-present in human life. Fear of what a diagnosis might be; fear of the diagnosis that was just given. Fear of losing a loved one; fear of

going forward with a loved one lost. Fear of job problems, financial problems, neighbor problems, marriage problems. Fear for parents, children, spouse, friends, and self. This is what every “Trust in the Lord”, “God’s Got This”, and “Eyes on Jesus” sermon is all about: moving beyond fear to keep your hope in Christ. Anyone who thinks the “Spirit of Fear” is the new kid on the block has only just started paying attention.

So, should we all be out in the streets and showing up at town hall meetings? The specifics will vary, but certainly we should be involved in our communities and government. Every Lutheran pastor worth the name understands and teaches Christians to be involved in both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. We have a God-given responsibility to play our role as citizens. Yet, before we get carried away in leading the charge of civic righteousness and proving all our opponents wrong, let’s not forget what regularly goes *unmentioned* in these discussions.

Where are the teachings of our Lord like turning the other cheek when publicly offended or going the extra mile when a government representative asks you to be inconvenienced by forcing you to do a service for them.? Jesus proposes sacrifice. He doesn’t even ask how just the law is. How do those speak to covid? St. Paul was willing to give up eating meat forever to keep a fellow believer from stumbling (1 Cor. 8:13). And, it was those other believers who were wrong on the issue of meat eating (1 Cor. 8:4; 10:25), yet Paul was willing to go without for their sake despite being in the right. Why are Christians not wrestling with how to apply Paul’s words, “Why not rather be wronged?” (1 Cor. 6:7) as they face the pains of government overreach? What is the intersection of suffering with Christ & taking up one’s cross with how we deal with each other in a covid-era? There aren’t easy answers here, but if we aren’t starting from Christ’s humble example and the Scriptures, we will get this wrong.

We are at war. It’s true. We do need to join the fight. Contrary to a worldly frame of reference, however, the battle isn’t primarily “out there” with politicians & policies, biased reporting & big tech. “For our battle is not against flesh and blood...”. The battle rages in human hearts for the souls of mankind. Focusing primarily on the proxy wars of the world, will never bring lasting change.

Yes, be involved in these issues. Do it for your neighbor’s earthly good. But, as you get involved, do it in a spirit of true Christ-like humility that dies to oneself and has the growth of God’s Kingdom and your neighbor’s salvation as the real concern.

...Learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart... Matthew 11:29 EHV

Pastor David



Deaconess' Musings

Our Anchor for the Soul

Autumn arrives and the world outside soon changes and prepares for wintertime, whether we wish it to or not. And as we move out of summer's long, hot days and into fall's cooler, colorful ones, this time of transition never fails to bring a certain time of contemplation and introspection.

The main thought: change.

It is a word that could invoke many a thought and attitude. It is a thought pattern that frightens the best of us. It is inevitable and something that will touch each one of us – no matter our age or stage of life.

We all experience various changes with our lives, whether it be a new marriage, the arrival of a new child, graduation, job promotions/losses, moving, death of a family member or spouse, death itself, etc... But while all people on Earth experience the very same things, we remain anchored through unpredictable waters.

Our Lord God remains our constant source of life and hope. He is our anchor, in whom we find “strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:18, 19a). No matter the change we will face in this life, God proves a most trustworthy and ever-present companion who is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). And even though for a time, our lives be mired with change, sorrow, distress or tears, we hold an anchored hope in Jesus Christ and lean on His never-failing grace and forgiveness. For through every change and season of our life, we rejoice in the future that has yet to be revealed when all will be made perfect and complete through Christ.

Until that day, we take comfort and rest when we face the multitude of changes in our unchangeable, immovable, ever-present Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



~Deaconess Holly

October 2021 Council Update

The Council Team met on September 14th. Following are some of the latest updates from your Council:

Property:

While Monty Moore (Property Chair) was away in Scotland, the church experienced a major plumbing issue. Our main sewer drain had been crushed and clogged from years of tree roots infiltrating the line. Special thanks to interim Property Lead, John Beattie who assessed and resolved the problem before the next Sunday's service.

Sanctuary Ventilation:

In an effort to improve the quality of our indoor air, a damper device will be added to our sanctuary HVAC system that will allow a measured amount of outdoor air into the sanctuary. In one hour, this device should totally refresh the sanctuary's air with outdoor air. According to the EPA, *"An important approach to lowering the concentrations of indoor air pollutants or contaminants including any viruses that may be in the air is to increase ventilation – the amount of outdoor air coming indoors. Ensuring proper ventilation with outside air can help reduce the concentration of airborne contaminants, including viruses, indoors."*

In His service,
John Cochell



ONLINE GIVING UPDATE: On behalf of the Church, I would like to thank all our members who are giving to Eternal Shepherd online. Approximately 48% of our offering is online and we also have visitors giving online. Online giving has reduced the tabulation workload tremendously. The paperwork associated with the tabulation and posting of offerings has been cut in half over the past year. Giving online can be accomplished through checking account draft or credit card. You can make a one-time donation or set up recurring weekly or monthly donations. Also, the weekly bulletin has a QR code on the back page for use with smart phones. If you are interested in online giving, get in touch with Grover Stewart, at (704) 603-7092 or Scott Kreuger, at (901) 569-9136. *Thank you*

A SPECIAL THANK YOU: Billy and I would like to thank you for your cards, thoughts and prayers during this time of loss in our family. Your love and compassion have helped us through this difficult time and has meant so much to us.

~Thank you, Billy and Celeste Entrekin.

Are You My Neighbor?

It doesn't seem to matter on what side of the political aisle you reside. It doesn't matter where you come down on the pullout from Afghanistan, or the position you have taken regarding Covid vaccinations, the wearing of masks and social distancing. In my lifetime I cannot remember another time when the lack of civility among Americans is more pronounced. Not only have these and other events resulted in sharp polarization within our country but our tolerance for those with opposing views has markedly waned. Vitriol is reaching new highs.

I confess I bear some guilt in this too. How do you expect me to love my neighbor as myself when my neighbor's opinions are so wrong? A recent meme said if Jesus was here today I'm sure He would have the same political views as me. Discussions among family members and friends in an attempt to understand the other side of an argument or position often become heated and in the end do not bear fruit. We have at our fingertips what seems to be an endless amount of information available to us. In this digital information age you would think that two people could examine the same news and information and easily come to similar conclusions. That is not what happens however. Algorithms embedded in our internet engines learn from our choices whether we are liberal leaning or conservative and this affects the type of material that is presented to us. Our source for the news we watch or listen to is too often slanted or distorted in one way or the other causing us to form different opinions based on what source we choose.

What are we to believe? As Christians we adhere to the idea of absolute truth. We find it in God's word and it serves as a guideline for us to make wise choices. Through prayer the Holy Spirit will provide discernment to arrive at the best decisions.

A recent devotion in Portals of Prayer was a good reminder to focus on the things that are above. It is based on Colossians 3. Living in the information age can cause us to focus our attention on the things of the world. It distracts us from the Lord. We must not let the sinful world pull us away from God. Colossians 3:2 reminds us, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things". Put to death, therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, evil desires, and greed which is idolatry (vs 5). Rid yourselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language. (vs 8) Christians have taken off the old self and have put on a new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator (vs 10) We are to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (vs 12)

With this in mind I hope to respond to differences of opinion in a more productive way. May God help us all to be more attentive to those things God would have us focus our attention on. May He grant us discernment to help us be less caught up in the concerns of this world and the distractions that adversely affect our relationship with Jesus.

*Dan Arkfeld
Board of Elders*

LWML Celebration Sunday, Oct. 3rd!

Based on 1 Peter 4:8, the theme for LWML Sunday 2021 is ***“Our Hearts in HIS Hand.”*** LWML Sunday will be celebrated annually in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations. Come and join us on **LWML Sunday - coming up Oct. 3rd**




ESLC will collect special offerings to support more than 28 world & home missions towards their \$2.15M goal.



*We've set up an online offering LWML category to make giving easy Oct. 3rd or checks may be made out to **LWML** - please prayerfully consider how you may be able to support LWML with a special gift to support their missions.*

Eternal Shepherd is a member of the ***LWML Carolinas District*** for SC + NC.

Watch for more information about the work of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, and how all our men, women and youth can become involved in reaching others with the gospel love of our Lord Jesus Christ - see *Deaconess, or Kathy Bergeson, if you have any additional questions...*

	
	<p>The Five Solas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Sola Scriptura</i> (by scripture alone)2. <i>Sola Fide</i> (by faith alone)3. <i>Sola Gratia</i> (by grace alone)4. <i>Solus Christus</i> (Christ alone)5. <i>Soli Deo Gloria</i> (glory to God alone)

Reformation Sunday
Sunday, October 31st
Communion both services

Comfort Dog News



Seth and his team continue our work in the community as God leads and as we are able. Regrettably, some facilities closed for a period due to positive Covid cases. Some facilities are requiring negative Covid tests or proof of vaccination before entering so it does get a bit difficult at times figuring out what we can and cannot do and who can do it. Nevertheless, God always provides us with “work” to do! Lately, we have been called several times to Prisma Health at Oconee Memorial Hospital (OMH) to offer some stress relief to the staff. Sometimes we get called at the last minute for Seth to come as soon as he can. Seth is always ready to go but he does need people to drive him so there is some planning that must take place with the team!

One visit to the hospital comes to mind... we got a call around noon on a Friday from the volunteer coordinator at OMH. *“Could Seth come ASAP to the 6th floor to comfort the nurses and other staff? They just lost one of their own from Covid.”* Thankfully Seth was available and so we off and went to the hospital’s 6th floor. When we arrived, the unit clerk called all the 6th floor staff to the nurse’s station and each one came over to pet Seth. Shortly after, the hospital chaplain and the employee therapist arrived, and they offered words of comfort and support to the hurting staff. There was such emotion in that room that to be honest, I was overcome with tears myself. The look of shock, disbelief and sadness on the faces of these healthcare workers who, having learned just that morning that one of their faithful nurses had died from Covid, was very emotional. We stayed awhile for more opportunities for them to pet Seth before everyone had to get back to work. As we were leaving, we told them we would be willing to come back with Seth anytime if they needed some comfort or love from a gentle dog who is simply “present”, as they grieve and mourn the loss of a beloved co-worker and friend.

Somebody once told me that being part of this ministry will take you places you may never have gone before and experience things you may never have experienced and I can truly say, this is most certainly true! I am thankful to God that He placed this ministry at Eternal Shepherd and that He gave us the opportunity to serve in Him and our neighbors in this amazing way.

To God be All the Glory,
Kyra Carbone, Top Dog

Rocky Road & Pas Bonbon Schools Haiti



Recently an irrigation system was added to water the 1,000 plants we supplied last year. The water is pumped from a nearby river. The work continues on the restrooms building at Rocky Road. Spring water is to be pumped to the boys and girls' restrooms, complete with showers.

The new school year has started and the enrollment is up (again) In fact, this year they added a 6th grade class to Pas Bonbon. The lunches at both schools are provided by ESLC through Trinity HOPE Nashville.

If you have a mission you want Eternal Shepherd to consider, please contact any of the following also serving on the Mission Committee: *Richard Grotheer, Pastor Bill Barthel, Pastor Ray Ramsburg, Milo Bell, Deek Decker, and yes, both Pastor David and Deaconess Holly.* Eternal Shepherd is Blessed to be a Blessing around the world! *Thank you for your support, Lars Helland*

CARD CART NEWS! - If you have a chance, stop by the **Card Ministry Display in the Fellowship Hall.** **New cards have been added** and you might find one that is just perfect for someone you know! There is a wide variety for all kinds of occasions and the price is perfect!!! \$.50 for all cards and \$5.00 for a box of 12 found on the bottom of the cart.



Honduras News

The saying, "No news is good news" may not always hold true. Presently there is "no news" as to Serve Teams, as we know them, with World Gospel Outreach in Honduras. Ministry is being done today with small groups going door to door with food and medicine. Through this much ministry has been accomplished in 2021 with the following results, as reported by CEO Abel Pena:

Medical: 21,483 people received doctor visit (and medication when prescribed)

Food: 12,125 people received supplies for approximately 7 days of food

Salvations: 776 first time commitments / 737 recommitments to Jesus Christ

The goal for the rest of the year is to maximize the reach of the CarePay program which supports this activity. The intent for 2022 is to launch a new CarePay module- Clean Water, in addition to the existing modules.

Our hope is for things to begin to open up in the country to the point of our being able to travel there to serve. The expectations are for smaller teams doing their serving in the streets of Tegucigalpa, much like previous teams did when installing water filters. This may not be the way we are used to doing ministry in Honduras but we are still impacting lives for Christ. We say in the Mission Field, "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape." The more flexible we are the sooner we will be back among the people of Honduras.

If you would like to support the CarePay program please go to www.wgoreach.org and look for the CarePay link.

Dios te bendiga (God Bless You), Pastor Ray



Hospitality Happenings for October

Thank you to those who have signed up for the Sunday school coffee hour in the upcoming weeks. If you would like to serve you may sign up on the wall calendar hanging behind the coffee machine in the Fellowship Hall. ~Sue Williams

Thinking about joining the hospitality board?

Please see myself or Marlene Bell with any questions. ~In His service, Sue Williams



CHURCH VOLUNTEER APPEAL FOR BABYREAD

Volunteers Needed for BabyRead during Pandemic
BabyRead volunteers continue to stay in touch with families by texting, phoning and dropping off books once a month. We need volunteers more than ever to provide our moms and babies with books and moral support. Become a BabyRead volunteer by emailing Caren at babyread@charter.net. To learn more about BabyRead, go to www.babyread.org.



Needs Mentors!

Our mission is to empower children to reach their full God-given potential and to break generational poverty.

Mentors are needed for 3rd-12th graders. Come and share life changing skills with our children!

Visit our website at www.rippleofone.org
For more information, email Ria Dawkins at: ripple.terria@gmail.com



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Habitat For Humanity is in need of volunteers throughout the organization. There are jobs for men and women in all areas. Please consider helping in this worthwhile organization. Find out more about serving with us at <https://www.oconeehabitat.org>.

FOOD BANK NEWS: Please help us in collecting preferred needed canned, or boxed grocery items each month to help restock the Golden Corner Food Pantry's shelves. **October's** preferred product is "**Peanut Butter**" (Please place items in one of the trash cans marked Food Bank down by the Fellowship Hall). ~*Thank you for your generosity and support.*



Scrip Cards are available and make *great gifts* as well as earn money for Eternal Shepherd at the same time. Please note we have Publix gift cards available. For orders please contact **Libby Dunlap** by phone (864) 944-7477 or by email at robertwd@bellsouth.net. After the order is received one of the Scrip ladies will contact you to make arrangements for delivery. Scrip Card Team: *Beckie Rau, Libby Dunlap, Elisabeth Baker & Sue Hauser.* ~Thank you for your support.



ON-LINE GIVING Remember you can give on-line. After establishing an account, if you have the QR App on a device, you can use this method to contribute each Sunday using the QR code printed in the Sunday bulletin or the monthly Agapegram. ~Thank you for your faithful support.



October Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 – Jim Fireovid | 15 - Rev. Ray Ramsburg |
| 2 – Dave Smith | 18 –Ken Schneider |
| David Stupke | 19 – Juanita Dettman |
| 3 – Elisabeth Baker | 20 – Wally Fiebelkorn |
| William Harth | Cas Marszal |
| 4 – Jason Fireovid | Craig Wells |
| 6 – LuWanna Johnson | 24 – Helga Johnston |
| 7 – John Hermann | Kim Wennermark |
| Lisa Wagner | 25 – Bob Morriss |
| Sue Wennermark | Chet Pilcher |
| 9 – Jeep Feldt | 27 – Gabe Sitler |
| Sue Schneider | 29 - Bon Kruse |
| 11 – Gloria Christopherson | |
| 13 - Amy Rebholz | |
| 14 - Evie Cornine | |
| Elaine Grotheer | |



October Anniversaries

- 8 – Larry & Jan Snyder
- 9 – Shannon & Holly Cox
Joshua & Katrina Madden
- 12 – Jim & Carole Bluhm
- 15 – Ted & Sarah Wanthal
- 19 – Jason & Mary Fireovid
- 20 – Milo & Marlene Bell
- 22 – Kerry & Sue Blount



SPECIAL GIFTS/MEMORIALS

In August the following gifts were given:



In loving memory of *Jean Seeley*
the Memorial Fund received a gift of \$1,000.00,
and the Elders Fund received a gift of \$25.00

In honor of *John Beattie* and *Cecil Murray*
the Elders Fund received a gift of \$500.00

Other Gifts:

The Comfort Dog Ministry Fund received a gift of \$20.00,
and a gift of \$250.00 from CCCF Giving Thanks Fund

The Debt Reduction Fund received a gift of \$50.00,
and a gift of \$600.00 from CCCF Giving Thanks Fund

The Disaster Response Team Fund received gifts of \$450.00

The Elders Fund received a gift of \$500.00

The Foothills Care Center Fundraiser received gifts of \$225.00

The General Fund received a gift of \$ 400.00 from Blessings Shared Grant,
and a gift of \$2,000.00 from Fidelity Charitable Grant

The Haiti Missions Fund received gifts of \$1,485.00,
and a gift of \$1,500.00 for Trinity Hope

The Honduras Mission Fund received gifts of \$100.00

The Operation Christmas Child Fund received gifts of \$1,012.56



Little Lambs Tales

"The earth has yielded its harvest; God, our God, blesses us" Psalm 67:7

As we head into the month of October, we are thankful for the cool mornings and the wonders that God reveals to us in the season of autumn.

Yesterday we were able to enjoy a fun-filled day as we celebrated Farm Day! Ms Sara Foster brought her Farm Animals once again and along with her children (Little Lambs Graduates) taught us all about the animals. We got to visit with sheep, goats, chickens and farm dogs! Boy did we learn a lot about these animals and how important they are on the Farm! The children also washed pretend farm animals, made an adorable sheep craft, shucked corn, ate apple pie, and stuffed the scarecrow which is now standing outside of our preschool doors! It was certainly a fun day for all of us!

In October we will have our annual School Picture Day and are once again going back to Little Cane Creek Farms for a Field Trip! This Farm is perfect for our little one's and we are looking forward to spending time there! We will be able to go on a hayride, pick a pumpkin, drink apple cider, see the cows and much more!

We thank you for your continued prayers of protection for all our Little Lambs families and especially for our staff that we can stay healthy and well.

*Thank you and God Bless.
Gina Cote LLPS Director*



Apple Smiles



This recipe is easy to make and is sure to put a smile on anyone's face.

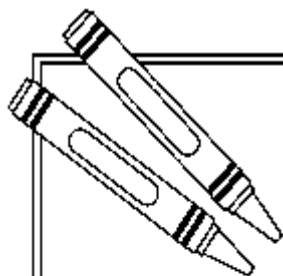
Here is what you need:

- apple (red if possible)
- peanut butter or cream cheese
- miniature white marshmallows
- butter knife



Here is what you do:

1. Cut the apple into wedges.
2. Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on one side of two wedges.
3. On one of the wedges, stick a few marshmallows in a row to look like teeth.
4. Put the other apple wedge on top with the creamy side down.
5. Share them with your friends and family.
6. Smile and enjoy!



Just for **KIDS**

THE POWER TO GIVE

In the New Testament, Jesus emphasizes the importance of giving and doing for others. In the Old Testament, Proverbs 3:27 (NIV) tells us what not to do.

Cross out ALL of the following letters to reveal Proverbs 3:27.

..... **B J K Q X Z**

Write the remaining letters (in order) on the spaces below.

B W J I T J H Q H O B L Z D G B O O K
 D K F Q R O M T B H J O B S Q E W H O
 X B D B E K Q S E Z X R Z V J E Z X I B
 T W K H Q E N I K Q T I Z S I Z N B Y
 J X J O Z U X R P Q O K W J J E B B R T
 O A Q C Z T

"DO NOT _____

_____."

PROVERBS 3:27, NIV

Answer: "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act."

SERVICE TIMES

8:30 a.m. Worship Service
(Communion 2nd & 4th Sundays)

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
& Adult Bible Study

11:00 a.m. Worship Service
(Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays)



THOSE WHO SERVE

Pastor: David Hammer
Deaconess: Holly Lustila
Secretary: Celeste Entrekin
Preschool Director: Gina Cote
Choir Director: Rick Schmidt
Choir Accompanist: Michelle Rowland
Organist: David Phillips

MISSIONARIES

Joanna Johnson, Taiwan
Nate Esala, Lutheran Bible Translators
David & Dr. Arianna Shirk, Kenya
S.E.D. Missionaries to Peru

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