

June 2020 Pastoral Newsletter

*“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that the Lord may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because God cares for you.”- 1 Peter 5:6-7*

Neighbors in a risen Christ,

Grace and peace be with you all in this time of COVID-19 and now a relaxation of the #StayAtHome order from our state government. I pray that you are still being vigilant by staying home when necessary, continue to wash your hands and adhere to physical distancing, and wearing your masks when applicable when you do indeed venture away from where you live.

I have noticed through these relaxed measures that sometimes I am the only one who is wearing a mask in the places I go to purchase food and essentials for my family, but I implore you...please do so until we know more about this virus and how it continues to spread. We are lucky that in and around Sibley County cases of the virus are or have been incredibly low, and I thank God for this. I am especially thankful that in our assisted living and nursing homes where no cases have been detected.

As you may know, I have been prerecording our regular Sunday worship services and posting them on Facebook, YouTube, and our <https://neighborsinchristmn.org> website for your viewing pleasure. I have also been making phone calls, emailing the services and devotions, and texting to check in with congregants from each of the three congregations in our parish. I am also sending personalized cards through the mail to surprise some folks with the weekly scripture readings in case they do not have internet access. I ask you that if you do not have internet access, please call me at (507) 766-5870 so I may add you to the list. I want to be able to get in touch with as many as I possibly can and keep Christ in your hearts and God in your lives.

Anxiety and depression have also spiked in persons who suffer from mental illness. This is one of the reasons I have chosen this scripture reading for the month. When in doubt of what is going on or if you have been feeling down in the dull drums...like me sometimes...“Cast all your anxiety on him because God cares for you.” (v.7) This verse offers me comfort and I hope it does for you too – we need an outlet to give away the negative feelings we may have, and even those feelings of ‘what happens next.’ God is with us always and we are his beloved children. Let us return that love and thanksgiving to the Almighty and free our minds, hearts, and souls with what scares, frightens, or concerns us.

As we enter the season of Pentecost, we leave the 50 days of Easter. In Pentecost, we celebrate the Holy Spirit and the calling God has given us through the one Advocate who helps remind us, teaches us, fills our empty cups, and points us to the example that Jesus gave us – but we do not forget the resurrection of our Lord and how He gave us the greatest commandment to love and serve our neighbors; and to love God with all our hearts, our minds, and our souls. So I offer up this Easter prayer that can fill us and remind us of the season of new life and regrowth. And we pray, Jesus, Lord of the cross, you took on our suffering. God of the resurrection, you bring us to everlasting life. Restore, support, strengthen, and establish us, from suffering to eternal life in and with you. Amen.

Bless you all my beloved and I long to see and hear from you again sooner than later. Peace be with you.

Rev. Erik Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish