

LONG LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

COVID-19 EDITION

COUNTRY SPIRE

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We will be streaming and posting things to our Facebook page, so make sure to keep checking that for more information, sermons, daily devotions, and fun things to do with your family during your time at home.

Long Lake Lutheran Church
3921-277th Avenue NW
Isanti, MN 55040

*Whoever dwells in the
shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the
Almighty.*

*I will say of the LORD,
“He is my refuge and
my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”*

*If you say,
“The LORD is my refuge,”
and you make the Most High
your dwelling,
no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near
your tent.*

-Psalm 91:1,2,9,10

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upon recommendations from the CDC and Bishop Svennungsen, Long Lake Lutheran Church will remain closed until the end of April, at which time the Executive Board will assess the COVID-19 situation to decide when we can open up the church and begin to gather together again.

We will be coming up with a plan for Holy Week services that can be done remotely through Facebook and other platforms, please watch for more information about that.

There is much debate among the ELCA community about changing the way we celebrate Holy Communion. While communion is supposed to take place “in community” as Christ’s brothers and sisters, at this time we are unable to gather as we normally would. This has caused an unexpected fast from our Lord’s Supper. Bishop Svennungsen stated that this is not a bad thing to become really, really hungry for the meal. However, it is important to some of us on the other side of the debate that this is the time when we really, really need the holy presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ in the meal. I will continue to monitor the debate and will keep you updated. Our denomination has always been concerned about good order, meaning sacraments are handled in a very particular way, but these are unprecedented times. This calls for some changes in the way we “do” church.

The Hooker family fundraiser has been postponed due to gathering restrictions set out by Federal and State Emergency Guidelines. Since their expenses continue, we invite you to contribute if you are able by sending checks designated to the Benevolence Fund. Renae has been moved to Homestead at Anoka, 3004 4th Av., Room 1110, Anoka, MN, 55303

Continuing to contribute to your church is more important now than ever before. Our mail is being picked up daily so you can still send in your checks. Electronic giving is also an option on our website. There is a button marked “give now.” Go to www.longlakeluth.org to continue your tithes and offerings. Call us if you need any help setting up electronic giving.

“During these times, it is vital to remember that our God is a God of faithfulness and steadfast love. It is vital to remember that we are a community of people committed to stand with those who are suffering. We are a church that faces challenges together; a church that exists for the sake of the world.” Bishop Anne Svennungsen

Prayers from ELW & ELCA

God, our peace and our strength, we pray for our nation and the world as we face new uncertainties around coronavirus. Protect the most vulnerable among us, especially all who are currently sick or in isolation. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to health care workers, especially as their work caring for others puts them at great risk. Guide us as we consider how best to prepare and respond in our families, congregations, workplaces, and communities. Give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gracious God, it is good for us to gather as your beloved in community. We treasure your presence with us in word and meal, song and prayer. Be with us in these days when gathering together as often as we would like is not possible. When we must be apart for reasons of safety, we trust that you surround us with your sheltering wings. Encourage us in connecting as we are able, reaching out to our neighbors in need and being persistent in prayer. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our constant companion.

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of danger and trouble, be to us a sure guardian and rock of defense. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Merciful God, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Increase their trust in your power even to overcome death and pain and crying. May they be thankful for every sign of health you give, and humble before the mystery of your healing grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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A Little Something from Shawna...

Sometimes, words fail me. This affliction seems to strike me at the most inopportune times. I often find myself without the words that seem appropriate during difficult times. When someone shares something with me that is deeply personal, and sometimes painful, I often find myself struggling with emotions so big that I don't know how to put them into words.



Words sometimes fail me in my relationships with those I care about. It takes patience and practice to learn good communication skills that are necessary to maintain all of our relationships.

Prayer is a place where many people struggle with what exactly to say. Prayer, on the most basic level, is the way we communicate with God. There is no right or wrong way to pray. Essentially, whatever words you use are ok. The words are less important than the practice. Saying something is better than saying nothing at all. (This is a good practice in our personal relationships too.)

God does give us an example of a prayer that He asks us to pray. In these anxious times repeating familiar prayers like the Lord's prayer can be comforting and reassuring. I have prayed through the Lord's prayer when I can't sleep, when I am anxious or when I am worried.

Practicing breath prayers can also be a great practice. In a breath prayer you inhale – fill your lungs with breath and then say: “Lord Jesus, Son of God” exhale slowly and fully and as you say “Have Mercy on me, your beloved Child”. Consider breathing through this prayer for five minutes each day as you try calming any anxious thoughts.

Check in on one another, pray for each other. We will get through these days together.

We have been using Facebook to communicate and provide worship and meditations for you. If you don't use social media, please let us know and we will look for other ways to stay in contact with you.

Please let us know if there is anything you need and aren't able to get out to get. We have some volunteers available to help. Bishop Anne said, “please reach out to someone”..... “just remember to stay 6 feet away!”

Our LLC prayer concerns are: Renae Hooker, Dale Lundeen, Dale Strike, Dave Johnson, Claudia Hanson, Diane Englund, Barb Ladd, Grace (Will Remus' sister), Larry Oliver, Jean Hansen's brother Jim. Please remember to pray for all who are afflicted with COVID-19, their families and medical providers. Please let Pastor Sue know if there are other prayer concerns. 218-324-0196, private message me, text me, or send a carrier pigeon or St. Bernard.



PRAYERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

Let us pray:

God of compassion, your Son Jesus Christ, the great physician, made the broken whole and healed the sick. Touch our wounds, relieve our hurts, and restore to us wholeness of life, we pray especially for

Renae Hooker, Dave Johnson, Dale Lundeen, Karen Lundeen, Dale Strike, Jim, Sharon, Claudia, Larry, Diane, Barb, Grace, Jim and those close to our hearts, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all medical professionals, EMTs, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and all people working on the Coronavirus and its effects on our country and our citizens. Keep them well, safe, and strong, and guide us as all we work through these difficult and unknown times. You reminded us many times to “fear not.” Help us to keep that courage that You, Lord, are always near.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



From Pastor's Sue Home Office Desk ...

We as believers in Jesus Christ can approach a very uncertain future with great confidence, hope, peace, and joy because we worship the Almighty God! We face this great crisis together with God's help, power, and guidance, recognizing that through it God will

provide all kinds of wonderful opportunities to worship Him, love and serve one another, and bring the love and good news of Jesus Christ to bear on the lives of people around us who may be living in fear and without hope. We praise God for this incredible opportunity!

My heart tells me this is precisely the time when people need the church to be open to address people's fears and concerns and needs. However, my brain tells me that the loving response is to be civically responsible and support the country-wide efforts to halt the spread as our leaders have requested by closing the building. Please do not enter the building without contacting Pastor Sue. Staff will periodically be checking inside and out, and our local sheriff's department will drive by occasionally. Remember, WE are the church, not the building!

Please continue to share your resources if you are able through electronic giving or mailed checks. If you are in financial distress due to job loss or business losses, please take care of your family finances first. We recognize that some of you may be facing a reduction in hours and income, or other unexpected expenses, so please do not take this as an undue weight to bear or source of guilt.

We are posting videos and other nuggets of wisdom and fun on the LLLC Facebook page. We will be updating our website and will e-mail other important information. Please let us know if you need anything as we have some volunteers standing by who could pick up groceries or prescriptions and deliver them to your door without any physical contact. We also have a few phone volunteers who could check on your well-being if you would like. But, you must let us know how we can help you during this time of isolation.

Our future services including Holy Week will be discussed at an upcoming Executive Council Meeting. We will update you as soon as possible.

Know that Pastor Sue, Shawna, Jen and Krista, and many others are praying for you. The time when we are able to gather together again will be a joyous celebration!

Sisters & Brothers of
Long Lake Lutheran,

I pray that this Spire finds all of you safe and healthy. The Coronavirus has certainly changed our way of life for the time being.

Thankfully, we have many ways to communicate. Whether it is a phone call, email, Facebook, FaceTime, MySpace, video conferencing, or good old-fashioned snail mail, we can reach out and communicate with each other. Talking and listening to what our neighbors are up to, how they're doing, and asking how we can help each other.

Your council understands that this has created a time of uncertainty and anxiety for many, but we urge you to continue to pray and keep your trust in the Lord. Our staff has been working very hard developing ways to continue communicating, worshiping, and giving. Over the past week, LLLC has purchased a seat on Zoom, an online video conferencing service. These types of meetings are very useful and beneficial. I recommend that our teams and groups of the church reach out to learn how to use this service (it is very simple) and continue to meet with each other while we are isolated. Please don't let Satan use this time to separate us from our church. When we are forced to stay away, it makes it easier to drift away. Long Lake needs each and every one of you to return and celebrate Easter when it is safe to do so!

If you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out to Pastor Sue, Shawna, me, or a member of your council.

What a friend we have in Jesus, ALL our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry EVERYTHING to God in prayer.

God's Peace,

Matt

