



Our Mission

Growing, Serving, Sharing Christ

Saint Philip Lutheran

Church and School

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The Pastor's Page

Pastor Tom Engel

Resilience

I would like to start with the ending of last Sunday's message. The conclusion went something like this: "Since we are living by the grace and power of God in Christ, we can boldly say, 'Go ahead world and keep changing, for I will not fear because I have faith.'"

To sum up that Sunday's message, "Things are Always Changing," I tried to show how the world and our lives have always experienced all kinds of changes. As we are facing this pandemic now, we can also know that this is not the world's first time, even in modern days, that it has experienced a virus that has swept the globe.



Somehow in my history classes, I had missed the pandemic of 1918 that has recently come up in the news as a way to compare to what is happening now. To catch up on it, I've googled it, and I saw how crushing it was to lives with one third of the population of the world getting the virus and over 50 million deaths.

Just in the past one hundred years we have had world wars, a severe depression, terrorist attacks, mass shootings, and natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes. When I was a pastor in Louisville, I was also teaching a dual credit college course at a high school in a nearby farming town. A tornado had whipped through that town and leveled that high school. Fortunately, no students were harmed, and after a few weeks, we were able to continue the class in a warehouse that a local company donated to the school. I remember the resilience of that small community and how they worked to get their lives back to



"normal" as quickly as they could.

Reading through history books and recalling the memories of our lives, we know that life has times of celebrations and times of sorrows.

The ups can get pretty high as life does have some awesome times, but we also have losses that can cause much sadness. With the highs and lows, I think we can say that our days mostly run routinely, or to say, life is basically "normal."



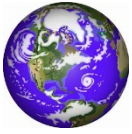
As I look back at last week's message about the pandemic, I remember stating that I did not want to minimize the harm that this virus is having on us. Looking at how this time is straining us, we can also see that we have been through difficult times before, so it stands to reason that we can get through this one.

I have always had trouble with the statement that someone might say when he or she sees someone else who is going through a problem. "You know, there are people in the world who are far worst off than you. So stop your complaining."

Well, it is true that problems can be worse, but if I stub my toe in the middle of the night to get a drink of water, my throbbing toe can keep me up for the rest of the night. I know there are people who have deeper problems than my sore toe, but whatever we are dealing with at a certain time is what captures our attention.



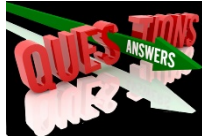
All these new changes with some that are becoming tough challenges are what concern us right now. It may seem that we have a cause for complaining. No doubt that we have a lot of red flags that are raising. But if we get stuck on a path of our grievances, they usually make way for pointing to blame, and just finding fault with others will not lead us to any good solutions. In saying that about our concerns and how we approach them, I do want to be sure that we do not dismiss our concerns, worries, and fears.



It's natural to have concerns about this hard time that is going over all the world. We are needing to leave our "regular" lives. My planner was filled with all kinds of activities, and it made me sad to cross off all those things that I was looking forward to. With no doubt, we are feeling stress and have anxious thoughts as we do not know what the future holds for us in the coming days, weeks, and maybe even months. This uncertainty about when a turning point will happen is unsettling.

But it's at this same time of heavy concerns for our health and financial situations that we do move forward trying to stay safe and also keep the "business" of our lives going. We have a dilemma approaching us as we face the time to go out of our homes again to our jobs and schools and also having to know that we need to be aware of protecting our health for the sake of ourselves and others.

I want this to be over and done with, and I am sure I can say that we all want this to end. At this time, I do feel a turning point is due. We want a honest answer to the big question, "When is this going to be over?" But we have to admit that the honest answer is, "No one really knows." A bell will not be ringing that sounds for an "all clear" for us to go back to our old schedules. Uncertainty is not a good feeling. We want answers, but the answer that we get, "Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst," is far from the specific answer that we are looking for.



This answer does not bring too much comfort, but it is a real answer. At any time in our world and lives, even in good times, we never really know what the next moment is bringing to us. Although when it comes to the uncertainties of the coming times, we do not want to be "Debbie Downers" and keep talking about how bad things are and how everything can get potentially worse.

In a way, I do spend some time thinking about how bad things can get. Preparing for the worst is a good strategy, so we are making plans with a "heads-up" attitude. Looking at all that can go wrong is not fatalistic thinking. When we project what the best to worst outcomes can be, we are possibly preparing for all to turn out well on the first try.

Life has many turning points. We graduate from school and start a job. At the birth of a baby, we look forward to becoming a parent and starting a new family. And there are losses like when loved ones die, and we find ourselves missing them deeply. Knowing that life is always changing in so many ways, we can also believe that we can keep moving forward despite what comes our way.

Although life has many turning points, we do not have any breaking points. In so many ways, we are hurt, but we can always be strong if we live by faith in God's promises. In all that God has for us, we can know that we are well and all will be well.

St Paul says in 2 Corinthians, chapter four, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."



St Paul goes on to say, "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

The apostle knew suffering like when he survived a shipwreck and went through persecution with beatings and imprisonment, so in comparison as a person who knew danger in many ways, he might call this time of a pandemic a "light momentary affliction." I have a little bit of a problem with calling these days a "light momentary affliction." I am more with David, a king with enemies on all sides of him, when he says that he was "walking in the valley of the shadow of death."

St. Paul is seeing this temporary earthly life from the big picture of all eternity. All the suffering that we have experienced in this life is close to nothing. From St. Paul's perspective, he knew that an eternal heavenly home of complete peace and joy was waiting for him. David looked around him and saw a lot of danger, but he also said that he would "fear no evil."



The prophet Ezekiel lived in a time when God's people were exiled, and they longed to return to their own land. To give them hope, God gave Ezekiel a vision of a valley of dry bones. Ezekiel witnessed how God brought these bones to life. Not to miss all that the God has for us in Ezekiel's vision, but for us today in our valley of dry bones, God is giving us great hope in His promise of new life.

Bones that have been left to rot in the sun are deadlier than dead if that is possible. The last thing we think about when looking at these dried up bones is hope for them to return to life. But giving life to these bones is what God does. God raises these bones and puts muscle, tendons, and flesh on these bones, but most importantly,

God breathes into these bodies. This breath is not just oxygen to give life to a functional human being, but He breathes His breath that gives life to a spiritual life.



This spiritual life gives a life in the grace and power of God the Father. At creation, everything was made by the breath of God's mouth. When God made the first human out of dust, He breathed

His breath into the man. God breathed out His Spirit at Pentecost that gave faith to thousands of new believers. In our baptism, God breathed His Spirit into us when the water was poured on us with the words, "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." And all of Scripture is God breathed and is useful for all things, especially now, as it is time more than ever to read and turn the pages of our Bible to get us through this time.

God wants to give His breathe of life to you as only He can do. I am not sure that I am at the point of feeling the despair of dry bones that have no chance of coming back to life. As I sit in the safety of my home, I am doing okay. Of course, I do know that the threats of this virus is having a big effect on the world. My prayer is that people will know that God is still breathing His breath on the world as He did when the world was first created.

God is breathing His breath in us that gave life to Jesus as he walked out of the grave. On the cross where Jesus suffered and died for the sins of the world, he gave up his last breath. But we know that Jesus did not stay dead. Jesus came alive with a new breath of life, a breath that gives life now and forever.



To the people in Ezekiel's day, this vision was to give hope as God made dry bones live again. By a sort of spiritual reasoning, they could know that if God can give life to old dry bones, He can give new life to anything, even as they sat in exile and the thought of returning to their own land was hopeless.

We sit in our situations in life and may think things are hopeless. But we literally have God's breath of life that brought Jesus back from the dead. When Jesus went to the cross, he went to fight sin, Satan, and eternal death. On the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished," and he breathed his last breath. A person might think that Jesus lost the battle against all that wants to harm us, but Jesus did not stay dead. He rose on the third day with a new breath that gives life now and forever in all that his victory has for us.

During Jesus' ministry when the disciples were learning about Jesus as the Son of God, they did not do so well at times at understanding just what Jesus could do. When they were on the lake and a storm came up, they

panicked and woke up Jesus to calm the storm. Jesus did calm the storm but only because of their little faith. Peter wanted to walk on water, and he did have a good start, but when he saw the winds and waves, he started to sink, and Jesus had to pick him up. Looking out at the crowd that was following him, Jesus had compassion on them and wanted to feed them. The disciples thought they did not have any food to feed such a crowd, but Jesus took over and more than enough food was available to feed the people.

After Jesus' death, the disciple hid out in the upper room in fear of the Jews. Jesus came to them and said, "Do not be afraid." He showed them his scarred hands and feet where the nails held him to the cross. Their fears calmed down, and they believed that their Lord and Savior was indeed standing before them.



The world needs help now in this pandemic. On our own, the truth is that we cannot do all that is needed. In this truth, we need first to admit that we are helpless against this virus. What a sad truth it is that we might think that we can overcome this virus on our own.

From a Lenten perspective, we go to the cross with Jesus and see him die for us, and then, we also go to an empty tomb and see Jesus alive and well. God raised Jesus from the dead with His breath of life, and God is raising us today with this same very breath of the resurrection. This truth is how we move now and every moment of our lives in all situations.

The storm is around us, but we know that whether the water is calming or if it rages for sometime, we can get through it. At this time when we see shortages of things that we need, we give our needs to Jesus, and he will take care of them as sees as we need them. As we saw how the disciples had fear and doubt cloud their faith, we see how Jesus came to them and had them see that they can believe. After Jesus' ascension. they did see clearly as they went out in the world to start the early church among threats of persecution.

We can see clearly now as we go out into this world at the time of this pandemic. In Psalm 26, the psalmist wants a genuine faith, and in order to know if he has a real faith, he knows it must be tested. The psalmist says, "Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind." Imagine asking God the maker of heaven and earth who can send down hail the size of softballs down on us at any moment to test us.

This psalmist knew that his faith in God made him resilient. He knew that on his own that he had nothing, but by the faith that God had given him, he knew he could fight every fight by faith. The key about resilience is knowing that you cannot go through something alone.

This psalmist knows that his faith is given and supported by God. People of faith are like first responders. The people on the front lines are called to go and do dangerous work. But they go into danger well-trained and equipped with all they need to do their work. Although Christians leave themselves opened to help others, like Jesus did when he walked in crowds and healed people of all kinds of diseases, we also know that we go and do what is needed by the same care that God gave Jesus as he walked this earth.



With so many uncertainties that give way to so many questions, we can ask ourselves this questions, “Can we be so bold to face these days with resilience?” We can answer, “Yes, indeed we can!”

Our answer is bold because we have God’s breath of life breathed into us, and Jesus’ willingness to give us all that he won for us by his death and resurrection.

We face this time and any time that comes our way by the grace and power of God that leads, guides, and protects us from all harm and danger. Let us breathe in deeply now of what God has for us in Christ, so we keep moving forward without any fear and by just believing.



A Message from the President

Greetings Everyone!

I would have never thought I would see such things as what we are experiencing with the COVID-19 outbreak. This virus is right out of a science fiction novel, but sadly, it is a reality. As we shelter-at-home, I pray for everyone that you remain SAFE. I also pray for all the healthcare workers, first responders, and everyone that is affected by having their places of employment shut down being deemed as non-essential. Unfortunately, this has included my business, and I am broken-hearted that I had no choice but to layoff all my employees. I know there are several other business owners in the same

position, and I am sure they are equally saddened. I continue to pray that this crisis will pass in a short time and I know that God will watch over us. Take comfort in Psalms 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God.”



I want to thank all the people that continue to work during this crisis and bring necessary services to us all. Grocery store workers, gas station attendants, sanitation workers, just to name a few, thank you to all of you. If you do go out for whatever reason, be sure to thank these people personally. I want to encourage all of you to look how you can help your neighbors, and care for those that are the most susceptible. Be safe in these uncharted times.

A result of the shelter-in-home mandate has been the closing of the elementary school during the outbreak. I want to congratulate our teachers for not missing a beat by transitioning to E-learning and keeping the education process going for all their students. Even I am learning a few things as I watch and listen to Mrs. Tennis email, Zoom, Flipgrid and Facebook every day to some extent with either staff or students. It is great that the school families are staying connected via this technology. Thank you to our dedicated teachers and staff for your continued efforts.



Another big change we will have to become accustomed to for the foreseeable future is the transitioning of our worship services to a totally electronic service. While this has been available for some time, and we have had our share of problems transitioning to Facebook Live, I encourage everyone to either log in via Facebook or click the Facebook link on our St. Philip website and watch the service at the normal worship times or view after. I want to give a BIG thank you to Pastor for being at church all by himself (and C.C. sometimes), as he continues to bring us the Word. Again, we pray that this crisis will end and we can all be together again, physically in worship.

I want to encourage everyone to continue to support St. Philip with your offerings. The virus does not care who you are, or what you do in life. It takes no notice to time or season. We still have to keep things going regardless. Insurance must be kept in place, whether we are using our facility or not. We have had very little offerings come in the last two weeks, and it has forced me to move money from our reserves to our regular account to pay bills that are now due or will become due in April. Please send your offerings to St. Philip via the regular mail for the time being, as Pastor is collecting the mail daily. I am making arrangements to have the offerings

collected, documented, and deposited. We are also investigating the possibility for you to give electronically, and more will come on this as information is gathered.

I want to share what I know concerning the sale of the unused Early Childhood Center and adjacent parking lot. While we have made progress to close this sale, we are currently at a standstill due to the shelter-at-home order. Prior to the closing, we are required to have a public meeting to inform the community of what is taking place and how the property will be redeveloped. The purpose is to allow the community for input and questions. This meeting is to be organized by the Alderman and the developer. Unfortunately, before this could be scheduled, the order for no public assembly was issued. So, I would say that we would be looking for the closing now to take place sometime in June. I will keep everyone informed as to further progress as I know more.

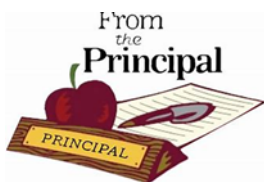


With sadness, I have to comment that this past week, Pastor's brother, passed away from a long battle with cancer. Please pray for Pastor and his family in this time. Also, recently long time St.

Philip member, Maude Westergren, passed away. Our thoughts and prayers also go out to her family. Again, with the virus outbreak, traditional services and ways that we would remember and mourn our loved ones is affected. Pray for all those who have lost loved ones.

Finally, I just encourage you all to continue to pray for one another and St. Philip. These times will come to a close and life will return to normal. As to what the new normal will be, who knows, but one thing remains constant. God is always with us!

Yours in Christ,
Brian Tennis / Chairman



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – April 2020 **St. Philip Lutheran School + Chicago, Illinois**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Live Joy:fully, our theme for the school year, is based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. These verses serve as a



powerful reminder, especially in this unprecedented time of COVID-19. When one reads these verses one might think the following: What is there to rejoice about? It is a very scary time where we have to shelter-in-place. How many more people will get sick? Will my family become ill? Pray without ceasing. One might pray for things to return to normal, now! However, we know that it is in God's time and His will be done. Lastly, what is there to give thanks about, some might question. Yes, this is a very difficult situation, but we must remember that God's got this and we can be thankful that He walks beside us every day. We are not in this alone and we need to reach out to Him at anytime!



We rejoice, pray and give thanks because we know that God is faithful. He does what is best. He sent Jesus, in our stead, to suffer, die, and rise again on the third day. This next

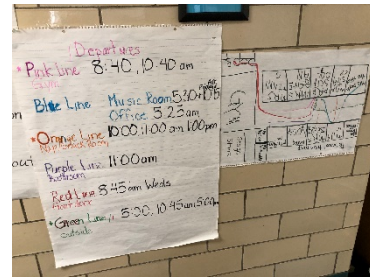
week we celebrate Holy Week. It won't be the traditional way we've celebrated in the past at school with a Palm Sunday parade and chapel on Maundy Thursday or in our worship services. We will not have a physical presence in church for Maundy Thursday and the celebration of the Lord's Supper and then stripping of the altar. We will not be in church on Good Friday to hear the last words of Christ on the cross and see the candles extinguished as each word is read. We then wait for the loud sound to signify Christ's death and the tomb slamming shut. We will not be in church on Easter, many of us wearing new Easter clothes, to celebrate Christ's glorious triumph from the dead. Although we will not be there together in the physical presence, we still celebrate together in spirit during this Holy Week as we watch the services via Facebook Live.

E-Learning is the New Norm

Who knew that when the last Echo article was sent, that a month from then, our world would change drastically and we now must shelter-in-place? Students were studying in school, sporting events were taking place, and we were making plans for future events such as the Rainbow Fish musical and our auction. Since then, everything seems to have come to a halt, except for the learning. Teachers quickly changed their ways of teaching in person to an on-line approach. Our way of delivering instruction to our students has changed dramatically in a short time, but one thing has remained. We are still delivering instruction with our students daily. I am very grateful to the staff who fully embraced this new situation in order to continue to teach their students. Zoom, Google hangouts, Flipgrid, Storyboard that and Screencastify are just some of the tools teachers use to reach their students. In addition to the teachers, I am grateful to the families who are now juggling more duties than before including helping their child(ren) learn at home. Thank you to the students who are responsibly completing their assignments. We are in this together, working for the good of our students.

Band Solo Fest Recap:

On Saturday, March 7, our school was filled with music, as St. Philip hosted the Solo Fest for schools who use Music Education Services for their band program. Our six band students performed solos. Four received gold medals, and two received silver. Congratulations to these students! In addition, a few of our students served as “door watchers” during the event. Thank you to Mrs. Schau, who accompanied our soloists. We also thank our families who served concessions during the fest.



Boots ‘n Bling Auction

Our auction scheduled for March 21, has been tentatively rescheduled to May 2 at the Lido. As we know now, the shelter-in-place remains through April 30. The committee has worked tirelessly to put this event together. We have many wonderful items up for bids! We anxiously await the safe time to hold the auction. Continue to watch our website and Facebook page for updates.



In closing, St. Philip remains committed to our mission of Growing, Serving, Sharing Christ. I thank and pray for your continued support of our programs at St. Philip. May you Live Joy:fully knowing that you are wrapped in God’s love and grace, especially in these unnerving times.

In Christ,

Donna Tennis

Principal

All Aboard!



Before our school became empty due to COVID-19, our preschoolers transformed the hallway floors into train tracks. The students’ love of trains turned into a unit of study. Students were designing their own train cars out of cardboard boxes. They created a map of the school and a departure schedule. Finally, they laid the tracks using scooters and different colored masking tape. Make sure you take the right color line to get to your destination!



We always enjoy hearing what our St. Philip graduates have been doing.

Recently, we received word that Cassie Amundson has made the Dean’s List 4 out of her last five trimesters. Cassie, a sophomore at DePaul University, is pursuing a

management degree. We are blessed to have Cassie continue to share her beautiful voice during worship on occasion.

Congratulations to Cassie on her achievement! Keep up the great work.

If you have news to share about a St. Philip alum, please pass it on to Mrs. Tennis (dtennis@stphiliplutheran.com). We would love to include the information in upcoming Echo articles.



Girl Scouts
By Gigi Hansen

Cookies Cookies Cookies

Up until the abrupt end of cookie season due to the virus, my incredible girls sold over 2800 boxes!!! Huge thanks to those who supported them, parents, cookie moms, and all who purchased.

Girl Scouts are still here to support our girls and their families through this crisis. Look for pictures of our virtual meetings and cooking sessions that will roll out this week!



Thank You

to my seniors and ambassadors who held a dinner party to thank significant people who had positively affected their lives!! Please look for pictures from our dinner party on March 6th 2020.



The Lydia Guild
By Barb Uber

We are looking forward to our Ladies' Night Out on Tuesday, May 10th! The time and place is TBD.



April Birthdays

- 3 – Nancy Deogracia
Michael Rattinger
- 4 – Samantha Sebeck
Donna Tennis
- 5 – Elise Ericksen
- 8 – Erik Wickland
- 10 – Cassandra Amundson
- 17 – Joshua Iverson

- 18 – John Roberts
- 19 – Ingrid Rodriguez
- 20 – Ashley Alonso
Philip J Larson
- 22 – Cathleen Krakowka
Kaitlin Paker
Glenn Sugiyama
- 24 – Brian Carlson
Linda Iverson
- 26 – Robert Rados
- 28 – Lothar Klein
- 30 – Shirley Johnson
Samantha Wartan



A TALE TO REMIND YOU OF A PERSON'S TRUE WORTH.....

One morning, Mr. Johnson entered the classroom where he teaches, holding a \$100 note. After a few moments, when the students finally quieted down, he raised his hand that was holding the note up and asked his students: “Who wants this bill?”



Of course, all of the children raised their hands, each hoping to be the lucky winner.



Next, Mr. Johnson threw the note on the floor, stepped on it, then picked it up and scrunched it into a dirty little ball. A few seconds later he cleared his throat and asked: “And now, who still wants the bill?”. All of the students laughed, as they were surprised by the teacher’s behavior, but all of them still raised their hands.

Mr. Johnson then asked the class: “And what did you learn from this?”

None of the students answered, as they didn’t understand what it is that they were supposed to learn.

Mr. Johnson stood in the middle of the class, holding the wrinkled note and said: “You, my dear pupils, are like this \$100 bill. Sometimes people will hurt you, step on you, crush you and mock you. You must remember then that each of you has value, each of you is special and unique, and just like this bill didn’t change its value when I folded it or stepped on it, no one else can lower your value either.