



CELC Newsletter

Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Church Website: www.celcstanley.com

Pastor's Message

From within the Cleft



Brothers and sisters, I write to you today from the same place where all of you are—*within the Cleft of the Rock*. I mean by this of course, within Jesus Christ. However, my usage today has a double meaning. What I also mean by this is: *From within this state of intentional social distancing which we are being implored to observe*. Because it certainly seems like I'm kind of living down in or under a rock in some respects.

I have to admit that at the Frye household we are going a bit stir-crazy. Elicia and I have had to figure out very quickly how to become school teachers to our children—and admittedly we still have a lot of room to grow in this area. All of this while Elicia is on the front lines of the

coronavirus battle. In fact, as I'm writing this, she is assigned to a Covid-19 positive patient at CaroMont Regional and Gaston County has just issued a stay at home order. At our house we have developed a rather strict routine that we've been adhering to when she gets home from the hospital. Jokingly, she sent me a meme (to the right) the other day that made me laugh. It's not quite as bad as the picture suggests at our house, but we've nonetheless had to change our normal way of doing things. All of us have to sacrifice. Shopping for food is different. Maybe we find ourselves wanting to hold our breath more than we ever have before. Maybe we're looking at people who utter just the slightest of coughs with intense suspicion and possibly a little bit of scorn. For me personally, I've had to try to become comfortable preaching sermons with no one present and in my cold, dark basement! Furthermore, it's been hard not being able to visit our dear brother Bill the whole time he has been in the hospital. This has very much hurt his Pastor's heart. It is a strange and dark time hiding away within the cleft of self-distancing.

waiting on your nurse wife to get home after work



So we look around and we find ourselves in a time of fasting. We are fasting from our normal way of life and routine. Maybe Lent is after all the best time for this to be happening. Lent is a sort of interruption of the normal ebb and flow of our day-to-day lives. In that interruption, Lent calls us to slow down, step back, and examine ourselves. This sort of contemplation invites many questions. One of those questions might be, "What is it that I'm focusing on in my life more than God, my Savior? And honestly I must admit that I have been guilty of focusing entirely too much on the coronavirus pandemic. You may say, "Well Pastor it's hard

not to, it's a pandemic after all, and it's the subject of every headline and news report." While I know that this is true, I also know **WHAT**, at the end of it, coronavirus is—It's a servant and herald of a kingdom to which I, as a son of God, do not belong. Coronavirus is of the flailing and mortally-wounded Kingdom of Death that my Lord has conquered. That I would let the kingdom of death steal so much of my time and occupy so many of my thoughts throughout the day only exposes me as the brother of the man who brought his son to be healed by Jesus and cried out, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief".

Therefore, I invite you to enter into the "cleft of isolation" with me in a way that is quite different than the rest of the world. (An example of how the world is dealing with worldwide pandemic may be found [here](#). If the link doesn't come through, just do a web search of "Gal Gadot sings "Imagine".) Smiling, she sings Lennon's godless-Communist first line, "Imagine there's no heaven..." –a thoughtless, uncaring thing to sing to a people whose loved-ones are dying all over the world. This is however, the way of the world; of death. In fact, Lennon's song, "Imagine" might as well be the theme song of the Kingdom of Death. But we have not so learned Christ. And so I invite you to enter with me into an intensified dwelling on God's Word which is and delivers Life.

Though things have changed for us for the time being, we nonetheless have the opportunity to view this as a time to grow in the Lord and a deepening of our relationship with him. Our time of the isolating-fast within the cleft always leads us to these things. So maybe try this: Each time you wash your hands, instead of letting your thoughts drift to fears of what's to come, rather pray the Our Father. Try this: Soap your hands and lather. When you get to "Forgive us our trespasses" plunge your hands under the water and rinse away the dirt and germs. When you do that remember your Baptism and remember that your Father has washed you and made you pure and spotless in the blood of the Lamb. Renew your prayer life. Sing your favorite hymns to God. Also, though nowhere is accepting visitors right now, write a card or give a phone call to a brother or sister who might be alone or who you know might be affected more severely by this social distancing.

In short, our social distancing (my above second meaning of being "in the cleft") must be tempered by our first reality of being in the Cleft of the Rock who is Jesus. In Jesus, we can use this time of fasting to grow and then finally to emerge on the other side with a new, more sanctified perspective.

I mentioned earlier that I've not quite gotten used to preaching a sermon in my basement—I'm not sure I ever will. While this is a step (or two!) out of the ordinary for me, I realized something yesterday as I was recording the Midweek sermon on Deliver us from evil— This has become part of the Lenten discipline of fasting for me right now. Then I looked up at the basement wall on the far side of the room and realized anew that one entire side of the basement wall is one solid enormous rock. My house is literally built on a rock! And so am I. And so are you.

May your distancing (and now in the course of my writing of this letter, "stay at home order") drive you deeper in to the Cleft of the Rock who is Jesus.

Your brother, Pastor Frye+

Prayer Requests:

Reminder: People's names will be rotated off of the Prayer List upon request or after 30 days. If you know of someone who needs to remain on the prayer list for longer than 30 days, and have their permission to do so, please let the church office know.

Immediate Care Concerns: Bill, Hawley, Hubert Abernathy, Michael Benedict, Teresa Davis
Please pray for the Nation and the people diagnosed with the coronavirus.

Home-bound Members: Gaynelle Moore

Members in Nursing Homes: Christine Wallace is at Stanley Total Living Ctr., Ruth Cloninger is at Carillon in Lincolnton, Neal Ritchie is at Stanley Total Living Ctr. (123)

Friends and Relatives:

Diana Kingsley	Ray McNeely	Trudy Dixon	Sidney Mitchell	Harry Murphy
Rick Martin	Wanda Murphy	Luther Murphy	Everett Lineberger	Barbara Rhyne
E.C. Clippard	Donnie Miskelly	Miles Cooper	Jim Bumgardner	Jaime Cope
Michael Arim	Bill Rhyne Family			

April's Birthday's

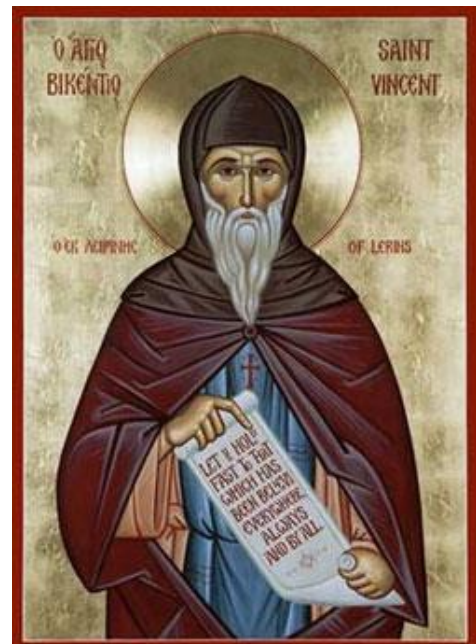
6 Connie Dixon	27 Whitney Clark
12 Bud Abernathy	27 Nicholas Price
17 Gabe Price	29 Sherry Helms

April Anniversary's

6 Maurice & Martha Jean McIntosh
26 Neal & Pat Ritchie

Baptism Anniversary

1 Rick Chapman	11 Susan Hawkins
1 David Lewis	13 Rene' Clippard
4 Judy Abernathy	14 Lisa Cloninger
4 David Clark	14 Martha Jean McIntosh
10 Donnie Clippard	20 Eleanor Abernathy
10 Larry Cloninger	28 Steve Hawley
11 Doug Hawkins	29 Sherry Helms



Has anyone seen St. Vincent???

St. Vincent of Lerins has long been a frequent and welcomed guest at Pastor's Wednesday Night Bible Studies in the Martin Luther Room. Four weeks ago he decided to up and wander. If you see him, please show him the way back to the M.L. Room or bring him to the Church.

A Message from the Church Council President

I wanted to inform you of the status of the church services as well as answer a few questions that have arose during the past few weeks. As you all know, when we decided to suspend services two weeks ago, we had hoped to return to regular services in just a few weeks, but it now appears that will not be possible. Due to the current health care concerns from the coronavirus and the updated executive order issued by Governor Cooper that begins this Monday, March 30th, we will not be able to return to church until the first weekend in May. If all goes as planned, and there are no more extensions from the Governor's office, our first regular service will be Sunday, May 3rd. If anything changes with that date, we will make you aware of it.

With that in mind, several members have asked how they may continue to make their weekly tithes and offerings to the church. It is especially important that we continue in our giving during this time, because while we may not be at church, our expenses do unfortunately continue. What we ask is that members mail their contributions to the church. Members may either mail in their regular weekly offering envelopes or chose to send one payment for the entire month, whichever is easier for them. We will set up a schedule where the Trustees will come in weekly and complete the financial paperwork and make the bank deposits. The church office will be open regular hours but we are asking members to call if they need something so we can limit the amount of face to face personal contact staff and members will need to have. We will keep you informed on any future updates or changes.

Blessings ahead,

Jay Human

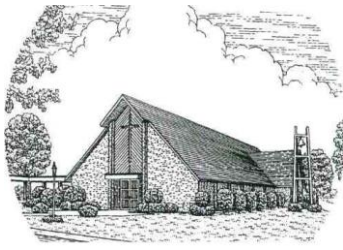
Council President

Christ's Lutheran Church

April 2020

Sunday	Mon	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5 Palm Sunday	6	7	8	9 Maundy Thursday	10 Good Friday	11
12 Easter	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

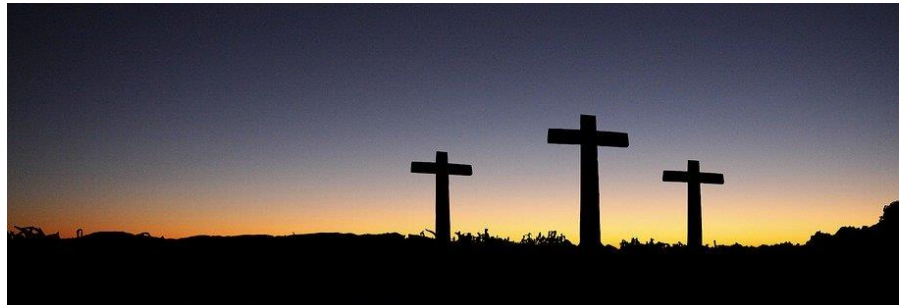
If you need anything please call the church between 8am-12:30pm,
Monday - Friday.



Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church

203 S. Main St. Stanley, NC 28164

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Pastor: Rev. Wesley R. Frye, STS
Administrative Assistant: Julie Bodenheimer
Facilities: Rick Chapman

Schedule:

Sunday

9:30 am Sunday School
10:30 am Worship Service

Wednesday

5:30pm Bible Study
7:00pm Choir Practice

Church Office Hours:

Monday—Friday 8:00 am until 12:30 pm