



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
VIRGINIA, MN
55792
PERMIT NO. 57

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

901 Fourth Street South
Virginia, MN 55792
Phone: 218-741-4961
Fax: 218-741-4962
Email: gelc@gelc.info
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 am to noon

Rev. Amy Janssen
Pastor
Brenda Varani
Parish Secretary

Come and see us on the web!
www.gelc.info

Ways to Worship

In the Sanctuary

The congregation council has voted to begin worship in-person in our sanctuary. Please assess your own health and be prepared to follow the guidelines publicized in the newsletter and bulletin as you consider attending worship indoors. If, at any time, the local schools switch back to online-only instruction, indoor in-person worship will be suspended and only the livestream & TV worship options will continue.

Facebook Livestream

We will continue to livestream our worship on our Facebook page at 9 am on Sundays. The video will be available throughout the rest of the week as well.

Worship through YouTube

Search for "Gethsemane Lutheran Church Worship" playlist – available throughout the week.

Local Public Access TV

Worship is still available on TV, on Channel 5 (Mediacom).

The schedule is:
Mondays – 6:30 pm
Tuesdays – 4:00 pm
Wednesdays – 10:00 am
Fridays – 7:00 pm
Sundays – 8:00 am (one week behind)



Gethsemane Lutheran
Church
Virginia, Minnesota
www.gelc.info

Mission Statement
To draw all people
to Christ,
nurture faith, and
fulfill our calling to serve

Vision for Gethsemane
A vibrant place of
worship, learning and
service, where every
person is passionate
about their belonging and
their ministry

Marks of Discipleship
Pray daily
Study Scriptures diligently
Worship weekly
Encourage Faith in Others
Serve for the sake
of others
Give freely

Inside this issue:

Faith Nurture for Adults	2
Children, Youth and Family Ministry	3
Service in our Congregation	4
Service in Community and World	5
Camp Corner	5
People of Gethsemane	6
Congregational Support	7
Prayer Wall	7
Ways to Worship at Gethsemane	8



Gethsemane Gazette

April, 2021

Volume 43, Issue 4

Join us for April Worship!

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES



Come Worship With Us!

Maunder Thursday

April 1st at 6:30 pm. This will be a time of home blessing and prayer. (live streamed only).

Good Friday

April 2nd at 6:30 pm. Tenebrae (in-person and live streamed).

Easter Sunday - April 4th

6:30 am. Drive-in Sunrise Service in the south parking lot.

9:00 and 11:00 am. Holy Communion** (in person and live streamed).

****Reservations required for Easter Sunday services (due to social distancing precautions). Please call the church office to reserve your seat(s)!****
218-741-4961



Make our "Live-Stream Dream" come true!

The ministry of live-streaming our worship online has been fruitful and helpful to many members and friends of Gethsemane throughout the past year. Because of this, the congregation council has determined that we should continue live-streaming even after we have returned to "normal" worship patterns and that using individual personal devices is not sustainable. Therefore, we are asking for special donations to buy a high-quality video camera and accessories for live-streaming and other recording. **We are hoping to raise \$2500 to be matched by our Mission Endowment Fund.** Please use the designated "Live-Stream Dream" envelopes to give to this specific fund. (Gifts received over and above the \$2500 needed will be designated to the worship budget for future audio/visual funding needs.) If you have questions about the specifics of the equipment proposed, please contact Bill Bauman.

Scripture for April

Apr. 4: Resurrection of Our Lord
Isaiah 25:6-9
Mark 16:1-8

Apr. 11: Second Sunday of Easter
Acts 4:32-35
John 20:19-31

Apr. 18: Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 3:12-19
Luke 24:36b-48

Apr. 25: Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 4:5-12
John 10:11-18

Return to What? Return to Whom?

My youngest niece recently achieved the exciting distinction of becoming a proud, paper permit carrying car driver. It brought back a lot of memories of teaching our own kids to drive; and for sure, many memories of my Dad's driving wisdom as I was learning to drive. He would still ask me 35+ years later if I was *still* driving too fast around county road curves!

One of those pieces of driving wisdom had to do with returning home. Whether it was returning home from a long day at work or a wonderful vacation, he would repeatedly tell us that "The last five miles to a person's home were always the most dangerous and sometimes deadly." Why? Because drivers would get excited about reaching home after having been away for some time. The excited driver would be in a hurry. Little by little that gas pedal was pressed a bit more and the attention span started to wane.

Wise advice not just for driving but also for us as congregational communities of faith.

The vaccine roll-out in many of our 13 counties continues to do its wonderful work in facilitating layers of protection for us against this insidious virus called Covid-19. We are grateful for the work these essential people are providing to our communities. In some ways, it feels like we might actually be nearing five miles from home. We want to put a little more pressure on the gas pedal to open the doors to the way we used to be. We begin to lose focus in the excitement of actually seeing each other. In person! In the same room! Around the familiar communion table! And, oh, the deep longing to belt out those favorite hymns or liturgies. Surely if we can do this, can coffee an' fellowship be far behind?

The last five miles home can often be the most dangerous. And in some cases, the most deadly.

This is our second road trip through Lent. Some congregations have gradually moved in to some form of in-person worship along with hybrid options for parking lot or live stream services. Others are being more cautious due to the age of the congregation and the availability of the vaccine. We are all eager to return to the way things were last March 15 when our road trip was suddenly derailed by a huge detour.

Lent is the time for reflection and self-examination. Questions for our inner being. **Return to what? Return to whom?** The prophet Joel says, "Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. **Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,** and relents from punishing." (Joel 2:12-13) This past year has caused us to be even more than familiar with the weeping and mourning aspect. I'm not so sure about the fasting part. Yet, a very familiar phrase for our Lenten worship services is, "Return to the LORD your God..."

Yes, indeed, return. We can hardly wait. But this detour through Covid-19 has also provided unique opportunities to really take a look at what was before. Not all things i.e. behaviors or the way we have always done things in the church should be returned to. It has taken a cataclysmic shift in our culture to allow for space whereby the Holy Spirit can bring new vision, new dreams, new courage for a new day.

Do we really want to return to the old "who rules the church kitchen" nit-picking? The complaints about youth group leaving a mess or being too noisy? Bickering over contemporary or traditional worship, the color of the carpet, or what brand of coffee to buy for the kitchen?

Do we want to return in an inclusive or exclusive manner, meaning only those old enough or in essential worker roles who have been vaccinated are welcome to return and it's a "too-bad, whatever" attitude toward the younger people who can still be at risk? That category may also include your pastor!

Will the same people remain as perennial power houses calling the shots, making decisions without including the full council, or committees, or even staff? When the day comes that we can fully return, should we "put the pedal to the metal"? Or, is now a good time to slow up just a bit, look around at the needs of others and then imagine God's vision and calling purpose for our communities of faith?

All congregational leadership has been diligently focusing on the "How" portion of returning and rightly so. However, Covid-19 has also provided the unique opportunity for us to ask ourselves the important questions of *why* are we returning, what is *core for faith formation* and what is *adiaphora* (another way of saying traditional "fluff" not essential for salvation.) And yes, while we are indeed excited to be together (even though masked and physically distanced!), we need to remember that the last five miles coming home can often be the most dangerous.

Will our gathering together bring a sense of gratefulness and thanksgiving for Christ having traveled with us through this journey? Will we weep with one another and support one another in their new normals? We will listen to the grief of others and tenderly encourage and nourish our young people who have just gone through their own traumatic experiences without the benefit of the wisdom that comes from age?

Long time favorite traditions have had to change to the digital world. Do those old traditions just get dusted off? Should they? Or, is it time to continue Holy Experiments that enhance worship, faith formation and outreach? How will we tell this story of God's faithfulness, steadfast love experienced during this pandemic?

Prayerful deliberation, listening to the best medical/scientific advice and conversations that include all and not just a few are needed. Courage and common sense, gratitude and grace - all are gifts from God.

Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

NEMN Synod Minister for Leadership Support Deacon Brenda Tibbetts

Prayer Wall

In your daily prayers, pray God's blessings for:

- ◆ Quentin Bloomquist, Marjory Wood, Mary Sterling, Isabella Paulson, Clarence Ivonen, Mark Andres, Alyssa Newman, and Kathy Meyers.

Prayers of peace and comfort for:

- ◆ Family and friends on the death of Chad Sandnas
- ◆ Family and friends on the death of Carol Erickson

QR Code for Giving at Gethsemane:

When you are reading our monthly newsletter or the Sunday morning bulletin, you will see our QR giving code. Simply take out your phone, scan the code, put in your password, select how much you want to give for the month, and press done.



It's as easy as that and takes less than a minute!

Council Highlights

Greetings everyone! At our February council meeting we discussed the activities of the various Ministry Teams, and the plans for the Lenten season and Holy Week were gone over and planned.

Bruce went through finances with us and a plan to raise money for a new camera was approved. As you may have heard, we are hoping to raise enough to purchase the equipment needed to improve our broadcast quality. During the pandemic we have seen the benefit of broadcasting our worship service to those that are unable to attend in person and plan to continue this in the future. The council also discussed upgrading our sign outside the church.

All staff reviews are complete with the executive committee sitting down with Pastor Amy and going through a review with her. I thank all members of the council for their concern, diligence, and service to our congregation.

A blessed Easter to all of you! Bennet

Give+: What is it and how do I use it?

Give Plus is an App that you will be able to access and donate to Gethsemane through a quick, simple, and Secure digital payment channel. If you would like a quick no-hassle method to donate, then this method is for you! With just a few simple steps to set up and in the time it takes for the collection plate to go around, you have made your donation.

First things first - Go to the App Store and download the Give+ app. Once downloaded and opened up, provide your email address, Organization Name (which would be Gethsemane Lutheran Virginia MN), name, etc. You then will provide a password that you will want to remember. You can provide several ways of giving (no account, credit card, debit, etc.)

Once you are set up, it literally takes under a minute to donate. *Password or Fingerprint *Select the frequency you would like and then select the amount. Select "Next" and method of donation. The next window will ask for verification and then ask you to select "Complete Donation". The next window will thank you and provide a confirmation number.

That's all there is to it! Ask me questions!

Sheila Vandervort

March Angels

Hello March Angels and Angel helpers!

Thank you very much for serving for both Sunday services and Lent services too! Even though our serving descriptions have changed a little bit, folks continue to step up and step outside their comfort zone (I'm looking at you, camera folks!) to make sure we can reach the many families who are physically present or spiritually present and watching via the internet.

Thank you to the Confirmation students manning the camera on Wednesdays, and our readers, greeter/ushers, and camera operators on Sundays.

Special thanks to Miia Johnson, Sheila and Deron Davidson, Dana Waldron, Julie Spiering, Mayme Barber, Rico Giorgi, Kaija Suihkonen, Makayla Waldron, Brenna Tiedeman, and Bunny Varani. I appreciate you so much.

Also a shout out to the quiet work of the Alter guild that makes sure we have our communion supplies, and the counters who take care of our weekly gifts with care.

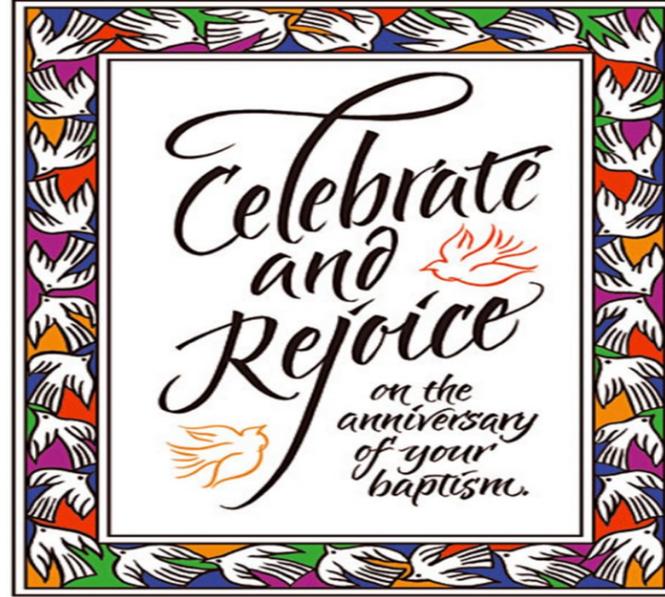
We are the church.

God's Peace,
Karen Roberts, March Angel coordinator.



Blessings to all who have a Birthday this Month:

- 2: Eleanor Anshus
- 3: Halee Zorman
- 4: Dominic Pauling
- 5: Mikaela Christenson, Tomina Koop, Mark Olson
- 6: Matthew Koski
- 7: Kirsti Axelson, Martin Hudson, Sandra Komula, Matthew Reid
- 9: Ronald Lackner
- 10: Nicole Johnson
- 13: Chad Seppala
- 14: Miia Johnson, Madison Walters
- 15: Ken Alaspa, Kristen Aronen
- 16: Benjamin Muck
- 17: Gavin Prosen, Gary Ronkainen, Kristy Suihkonen
- 18: Mark Andres Sr.
- 19: Carter Sandnas
- 20: Brent Marchetti
- 21: Penny Stecker
- 22: Paula Hanson, Sara Madden
- 23: Wayne Kuitunen
- 24: Barbara Johnson
- 25: Susan Kamnikar, Aaron Spiering
- 27: Landen Krause, Winnie Lackner
- 28: Alexxandra Burke, Donna Flannigan
- 29: Parker Breeden, Jillian Ofstad
- 30: Lisa Harvey



Celebrating the Anniversary of your Baptism:

- 4/4: Evie Kinnunen, Kaylynn Childs-Richards, Jillian Zeidler
- 4/6: Jaleen O'Connor
- 4/7: Barry Collins
- 4/9: Benjamin Brunfelt
- 4/10: Murray Anderson, Larry Sandnas, Matt Seppi, Sheila Vandervort
- 4/13: Dale Erickson
- 4/15: Cindy Lustig, Lillian Rosandich, Sydney Spelts
- 4/16: Hannah Davidson-Teff, Jayne Scott
- 3/15: Casandra Isaacson, Cheryl Olson, Emma Rosewall
- 4/17: Debra Dall
- 4/18: Alyvia Fields, Valerie Harvey, Joey Kapella, Abby Laakso, Carolyn Lustig
- 4/19: Gladys Borils, Tyler Norha
- 4/22: Jennifer Hanson, Gabriella Sandnas
- 4/23: Katie Finc
- 4/26: Samantha Church, Sheila Davidson
- 4/27: Aiden Krause, Juliana Pauling, Elijah Wedge
- 4/28: Matthew Mahonen
- 4/29: Myla Meinzer
- 4/??: Michael Burke

****If we have left you out, we need your help to know!
Call the office to update your information****

From the Pastor

Happy Easter, Gethsemane!

As we look ahead with hopefulness and anticipation to warmer months, summer activities, and an eventual end to this time of COVID care, it's appropriate and wise to ask: What are we looking forward to and why?

I know I'm looking forward to joyful reunions with friends and family who live far away, as it becomes safer to travel more; to times of casual conversation and fellowship, getting to know more of the Gethsemane family face-to-face; and to outdoor activities like hiking and boating, enjoying the sunshine and summer thunderstorms, experiencing local festivals and celebrations.

Deacon Brenda Tibbetts' article this month (on the opposite page), reminds us that although we seem to be in the final stretch of our pandemic precautions, we must keep in mind those who are still awaiting their vaccines and those who are still vulnerable to the virus as we begin to make decisions about when and how we resume "regular" activities. She cautions us to be mindful of what we are returning to. What from our past was valuable that we wish to revive and what new ways of worshipping, learning, and relating with one another is the Holy Spirit leading us into in this season of renewal? How will we move forward with joy while honoring and setting aside certain practices and traditions with gratitude?

In this season of Easter, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the newness of life that God gives us through his victory over death. It can be hard to celebrate with joy when we have experienced so acutely the realities of death in the past year. However, we must remember that even as we acknowledge the power that death has over our physical bodies, because of the resurrection we know that death does not get the last word.

Christ came so that we may have life and have it abundantly. We live in the hope and promise of the

resurrection, knowing that God alone has the last word and that in the end death has no power over us.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. ~1 Cor. 15:57-58

Amen.

+Pastor Amy



Faith Builders (Preschool - grade 5)

Virtual Sunday School

Contact the church office if you would like the lessons and activities for Palm Sunday.

Weekly videos are linked on our Facebook page; on YouTube, search for the "Gethsemane Virtual Sunday School" playlist.

Confirmation

Confirmation will resume classes on Wednesday, April 14th from 6:30 – 8:00 pm. We are continuing with The 10 Commandments.

Here is the schedule:

Apr. 14 - Do not commit Adultery

Apr. 21 - Do not Steal

Apr. 28 - Family Faith Night. Topic - TBD. Parents and siblings are encouraged to come!

Weekly Giving

Total Year-to-date giving, through mid-March, has averaged \$3,508 per week. This is just slightly ahead of the approved budget of \$3,423 per week needed to meet expenses. Gethsemane needs your continuing support. All contributions are welcome. Thank you. Stay well.

Library News

Historic Fiction Suggestions for Reading

Arlene Olson suggested some of the following books of historic fiction. You will find these reads on the glass shelves or on the book cart in the library:

Vilhelm Moberg's epic emigrant novels – a four volume saga of Swedish immigrants in North America.

[The Emigrants, Unto a Good Land, The Settlers, and The Last Letter Home](#)

A five book series called The Zion Chronicles. The Zion Covenant Series tells the story of the events and people leading up to the establishment of the Jewish state. [Vienna Prelude, Prague Counterpoint, Munich Signature, Jerusalem Interlude, and Danzig Passage.](#)

The last are two more recent novels: [The Orphan's Tale by Pam Jenoff and The Girl You Left Behind by JoJo Moyes.](#)

WARM YOUR HEART COMMUNITY CLOTHESLINE and FOOD PANTRY

Spring is here, but let's keep contributing to our Community Clothesline.

Do you have extra jackets, shirts, sweatshirts, pants, shoes, T-Shirts, etc....? I'm sure any type of clothing will be helpful.

You can help your neighbors by putting each item in a plastic bag to keep it dry, labeling it (for example, "child hat, size M" or "men's jacket, size XL"), and clip it anywhere on the 'clothesline' [on the fence] on the west side of the church! (Clothespins are on site). The Community Clothesline is accessible at all times (24/7) from both the north and south parking lots.

We also have a Community Food Pantry next to the clothesline for putting nonperishable food items, personal care items, and paper products.

GIVE WHAT YOU CAN ~ TAKE WHAT YOU NEED. Let's do what we can to help our friends and neighbors.

Community Food Pantry

Just a reminder that our new Community Food Pantry box is by our Community Clothesline!

Please come and GIVE WHAT YOU CAN & TAKE WHAT YOU NEED.

Nonperishable Foods: NO GLASS JARS!!

Peanut butter and jelly in plastic

Canned veggies, fruits, soups (only if temp is above 20 degree F!)

Boxed/bagged grains/beans

Rice, cluscou, grains, red beans, white beans

Pasta, dry pasta, bagged pasta meals, mac n' cheese

Pasta sauce in plastic

Cereal or Oatmeal

Snack crackers (peanut butter, cheese, plain saltines, Triscuits, etc.)

Applesauce in plastic

Dried fruits

Granola bars

Baking supplies: flour, sugar, cooking oil

Personal Care Items:

Shampoo/Conditioner

Bar/Hand Soap

Toothpaste/Toothbrush

Moisturizer/Lotion

Pads/Tampons

Diapers/wipes

Deodorant

Chapstick

Handwarmers

Paper Products:

Paper Towels

Toilet Paper

Kleenax



Ask & Receive

Thank you for your continued support of the Ask & Receive program in our church! Some of the requests we have completed are: *Purchasing some Gift Cards, a Monthly Dial a Ride Bus Pass, and Donation of a Twin Bed.*

Do you need someone to fix your kitchen sink? Do you know of a neighbor that might need an extra \$25 to help with their utility bill? Do you have the ability to fix someone's kitchen sink, or provide \$25 to an anonymous person in need? HERE IS A WAY.

Continuing this month, our "Ask & Receive" board is in our entry way. We ask that you take a tag from the board and fill in your request. On the other half of the tag, write your name and telephone number. This portion of the tag will be slipped into our locked box, where someone from our church office or Generosity Team will match your need with someone who has grabbed your tag from the board, and stated "Yes I can help!" It's that easy!

We want to make it easy to ask for and receive the help we all need from one another as neighbors. This is a way we can serve and love on another as Christ loves us. Maybe you have a need, or maybe you know of a neighbor or friend that could use some help! If you can't make it to church, just call our church office at 741-4961. Let's be creative! According to Mark 11:24 - "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."



Camp Corner

Now Hiring For Summer!

Do you know a college-aged young adult pondering their summer plans? Do you live near Camp Hiawatha or Camp Vermilion, and have an interest in kitchen work, maintenance, or lifeguarding? We are hiring and we need your help to connect with the right people! If you or someone you know would make a great summer staff member, now is the time to learn more. Be part of making camp happen this summer!

Check out our website for more information on how to apply. <https://www.vlmcamps.org/summer-employment>

Paddle Building Retreat

April 16-18, 2021 Camp Vermilion

Build your own paddle in one weekend at Camp Vermilion! The weekend includes 4-5 sessions and the materials to craft your paddle, 4 meals in the Dining Hall, and a room in Voyageurs Lodge. The cost is \$250 for one participant to build one paddle. Additional participants working on the same paddle can join for \$50 each. Bring your kids, your friends, or your whole family and make some memories. The retreat starts at 6pm on Friday and runs through noon on Sunday.

Space is limited to 6 paddles and up to 10 people. Covid-19 protocols will be in place. www.VLMcamps.org/paddle-building

Work Days

Camp Hiawatha - May 1, 2021

Camp Vermilion - May 15, 2021

Join other camp supporters for a day of fun and fellowship while we get camps ready for the summer. Registration happens between 8-9:30am and then we jump into projects and cleaning tasks until lunch time at 12:30pm. Projects continue into the afternoon as long as people have the energy.

Lunch and morning snacks are provided. Bring your work gloves and a smile! Visit www.VLMcamps.org/work-days for more information and for site specific projects.

Want to come earlier? Individuals, families, and youth groups are welcome to join us the Friday night before work day happens. Starting at 6:30pm on Friday, we will gather for a light supper, campfire and enjoy an evening at camp. There is no cost provided you and your group stay and work on Saturday. Housing is limited, so be sure to contact us if you are interested in this option.