

# Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

April 2020 



Greetings in Christ,

Just a month ago none of us could have ever dreamed the situation in which we and our nation, indeed the whole world, now find ourselves. Tumultuous events have swept over us like a flood and suddenly everything has changed.

That's the same scenario behind the story of Jesus calming a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:22-36). The Sea of Galilee is normally a peaceful, placid lake. But, occasionally extremely violent storms erupt, suddenly and without warning.

Modern meteorologists explain it's because the Sea of Galilee itself is below sea level but is surrounded by very high, steep hills. This causes abrupt shifts in temperature which produce a whirlwind effect and sudden, unusually violent storms.

That's often how it happens in our lives. We're sailing smoothly along on the calm sea of life, and suddenly, out of nowhere, there comes into our life a terrible storm: Injury, sickness, death; financial problems, trouble with work or business, job loss; struggles within our marriage or family; accidents, injuries, natural disasters. Of course the mighty storm at present that has unexpectedly struck us all is this terrible, miserable virus outbreak.

Some years ago when a severe storm battered the coast of Bangladesh, the Associated Press quoted one man whose hut was flattened: "It's God's punishment, but for what?" That often is our natural first reaction to trouble and suffering in our lives, to assume that God is punishing us.

The bad news is we do indeed deserve punishment from God because of our sin, as we say in our Liturgy: *"I confess unto you all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment."* But, the Good News is your sins are all forgiven for the sake of Jesus Christ, as the Liturgy continues: *"But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being."* The

Good News is, God's Son, Jesus Christ, took your sins upon Himself and suffered all the punishment for you, in your place.

That is why Paul can say in Romans 8:31, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* God is not punishing you, God is not against you; He forgives you, He loves you; He is *for* you, He is on your side, because Jesus Christ cancelled out all your sins and earned you God's favor.

While it is true that sin is ultimately the root cause of all natural disasters and calamities, because sin spoiled the perfection of creation, it is *not* true that God sends disasters and calamities upon Christians as a punishment for sin.

For those who trust in Jesus Christ, trouble and suffering in your life such as the current pestilence, even death itself if that should befall you or a loved one, is *not ever* a punishment from God, but actually God somehow working all things



This sketch by contemporary artist Ren Elevera beautifully captures the moment that Jesus, walking on the water, rescues Peter from drowning (Matthew 14:22-36).

together for your good. As Paul says in Romans 8:28-39: *“And we know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him. . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* God is not angry with you; He is on your side, and somehow working all things together for your good.

So, why is there suffering in our world? Because of the Fall into sin, our world is not what it should be, not at all what God intended it to be. Sin spoiled the perfection of God’s creation, and the sufferings we face in this world are the residual effect, the lingering result, of the Fall into sin.

As long as we are in this world we still endure the sufferings brought on by the imperfection of our fallen world: sickness, accidents, disasters, violence, crime, discord, strife, all culminating in physical death. Just as it is now normal for our imperfect bodies to sometimes

be sick, to grow old, and to eventually die, so it is normal for our imperfect environment to have disasters and calamities, drought and famine, plagues and pestilence.



*Praying Hands, Albrecht Dürer, 1508*

***Holy and mighty Lord, who hast promised, “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling,” we beseech Thee to hear our cry for those who are suffering and dying under the visitation of disease. Mercifully bless the means which are used to stay the spread of sickness, strengthen those who labor to heal and comfort the afflicted, support those who are in pain and distress, speedily restore those who have been brought low, and unto all who are beyond healing grant Thy heavenly consolation and Thy saving grace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.***

***Prayer in a Time of Pestilence  
The Lutheran Liturgy, 1941***

However, while it is true that sin is ultimately the root cause of all natural disasters and calamities, because sin spoiled the perfection of creation, it is *not* true that God sends disasters and calamities upon Christians as a punishment for sin. Bad things which happen to Christians here on earth are *never* a punishment from God. Psalm 103:10 puts it plainly: *“He does not punish us as our sins deserve, or repay us according to our iniquities.”* That’s because Jesus Christ already paid the punishment your sins deserve, as Isaiah 53:6 proclaims: *“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”*

God is not angry at our world! God is not angry with you! God forgives the sins of the whole world for Jesus’ sake. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:19: *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not counting men’s sins against them.”* You can be certain that your sufferings are *never* targeted punishments from God for particular sins. Rather, your sufferings are the *general* result of the sorry state of our fallen world.

Faith in Christ means the end of eternal suffering, but not necessarily the end of earthly suffering. Revelation 21:4 says that in heaven, *“there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”* But, until then, on the way to eternal life we may still pass through much suffering in this life, as Paul says in Acts 14:22, *“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”*

Psalm 18:6 declares, *“In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. In His temple He heard my voice and listened to my cry for help.”* In all times of trouble such as we are now enduring, turn to the Lord for help and comfort, in prayer, in His Word and Sacraments, and in worship. As Psalm 46 says, *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam . . . . The Lord Almighty is with us.”*

Pastor Kevin Vogts

## Trinity Tribune

*Published Monthly by*

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April, 2020*





## Sermons for April

Sermons by Pastor Vogts are available in both printed and audio form on our website at [www.trinitylcms.org/sermons](http://www.trinitylcms.org/sermons); as podcasts in the iTunes store by searching for "Rev. Kevin Vogts"; and printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are available in the Gathering Room.

April 5 – Palm Sunday  
*"I AM the True Vine"*  
John 15:1-8

April 9 – Maundy Thursday  
*"I AM the Bread of Life"*  
John 6:35

April 10 – Good Friday  
*"I AM the Good Shepherd"*  
John 10:11

April 12 – Easter Sunday  
*"The Meaning of Easter"*  
Psalm 118:24

April 19  
*"Peace Be With You!"*  
John 20:19-31

April 26  
*"Your Faith and Hope Are in God"*  
1 Peter 1:17-25

## Missionaries of the Month



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

April 5  
Michael & Nancy Jane Morizio  
Italy

April 12  
Courtney Zalmanoff  
Dominican Republic

April 19  
Rev. Jerry & Patty Lawson  
Russia

April 26  
Rev. David & Shelee Warner  
Spain

*"Brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it is among you."*  
(2 Thessalonians 3:1)



## April

### BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at [trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com](mailto:trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com).

- April 1 ..... Lori Schlegel
- April 1 ..... Elaine Stewart
- April 3 ..... Brigitte Rodewald
- April 4 ..... Joy Hinds
- April 4 ..... Kristina Jenkins
- April 5 ..... Shamron Ferrell
- April 5 ..... Tyler Hieber
- April 5 ..... Wesley Medlen
- April 5 ..... Joe Mueller
- April 6 ..... Kelsey Debrick
- April 6 ..... Dennis Johns
- April 6 ..... Bill Koelsch
- April 8 ..... Leslie Prothe
- April 8 ..... Ella Durham
- April 9 ..... Emma Haley
- April 10 ..... Karlie McMullin
- April 11 ..... James Fanning
- April 13 ..... Suzanne Peckman
- April 14 ..... Matt Oberheide
- April 14 ..... Venita Prothe
- April 14 ..... Layla Schlegel
- April 14 ..... Dana Simonson
- April 15 ..... Lois Holtz
- April 16 ..... Erika Hall
- April 17 ..... Gavin Kaiser
- April 17 ..... Rev. Kevin Vogts

- April 18 ..... Melissa Richardson
- April 19 ..... Katie Taylor
- April 20 ..... Loren Herrs
- April 21 ..... Ashley Debrick
- April 22 ..... Chloe Maisch
- April 22 ..... Lori Richardson
- April 22 ..... Nicholas Minden
- April 23 ..... Eric Ritch
- April 24 ..... Bridget Medlin
- April 26 ..... John Gerken
- April 26 ..... Austin Reyelts
- April 26 ..... Tyler Reyelts
- April 29 ..... Krista Munzer
- April 29 ..... Abigail Koelsch
- April 29 ..... Erin Meyer
- April 30 ..... Ellen Pinneo
- April 5 ..... George & Pam Holtz (30)
- April 5 ... Burl & Shemene Peckman (34)
- April 11 ..... Mark & Jan Minden (5)
- April 13 ... Alan & Jeanne Hutchison (29)
- April 20 .. Max & Jennifer Boydston (35)
- April 26 ..... Dan & Cathy Hieber (33)
- April 26 ..... Kenny & Vera Kaiser (75)
- April 26 ..... Keith & Laura Prothe (40)
- April 27 ..... Kevin & Marla Prothe (29)
- April 28 ..... Chris & Denna Jones (19)

**Heavenly Father, we cannot fathom the depth of meaning this crisis has for us now. We confess that as a people we have deserved to be visited with a heavy hand. Yet we pray You to hear our prayer for the sake of Your Son, our Lord. Have compassion and mercy. Set aside our guilt and give us new life through the merits of Your Son. Bring relief to all who suffer this day. Ease the anxieties of those who are distressed. Send help to those who are distraught. Release us from this fiery trial, that we may be free to give You thanks and glory for deliverance from the day of trouble. Amen.**

**From the Lutheran Book of Prayer, 1953**

# LIVE STREAM

Because many are unable to attend worship during this time, we are broadcasting our worship services at Trinity, live on the church's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock](http://www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock)) at 10:00am Sundays. Our thanks to Stacy Elkinton, Michelle Haley, Kevin Prothe, and others who are making these livestream broadcasts possible.

Lord willing, we hope to resume regular services on May 3, or sooner if the authorities allow. Interestingly, if the Facebook viewer statistics are accurate, we're getting about our regular "attendance" via livestream.

We are now including the full liturgy and hymns in the bulletin so that those worshipping at home can follow along without the need for a hymnal. The current service bulletin is online at [www.trinitylcms.org/bulletin](http://www.trinitylcms.org/bulletin). Also the printed text of the sermon is available in advance at [www.trinitylcms.org/sermons](http://www.trinitylcms.org/sermons). For your convenience, in preparation for the service you may wish to print out the bulletin and/or text of the message.

In addition to the livestream, the day after each service another video of the entire service, and printed text and audio of the sermon only, are posted on our church's website at [www.trinitylcms.org/sermons](http://www.trinitylcms.org/sermons). Our thanks to Greg Windler for use of his video camera to make these videos.

Another wonderful resource for home worship is videos of Missouri Synod services from "Worship Anew" at [www.worshipanew.org](http://www.worshipanew.org). These broadcasts are led by Missouri Synod pastors and feature familiar hymns and liturgy.

Similar to "Worship Anew" is the program "Main Street Living" at [www.mainstreetliving.com](http://www.mainstreetliving.com), featuring services led by Missouri Synod pastors from South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa.



## ***Next Communion Scheduled for May 3***

The elders and pastor discussed many options and ideas for how to hold Holy Communion during this time, but determined it was logistically problematic to maintain the recommended "social distancing."

Therefore, the next scheduled Holy Communion at Trinity is Sunday, May 3, though that could be cancelled if the "stay home" and "social distancing" orders are still in place at that time. Anyone desiring Holy Communion before then is encouraged to request private Communion from the pastor, who will be happy to arrange that with you.



Due to the requirement at this time to "stay home" and practice "social distancing," all events, meetings, and activities at Trinity, other than livestream broadcasts of our services, have been suspended until further notice. This includes Sunday School, Adult Bible Class, nursing home services, choir, coffee hour after services, and our Worship for Shut-Ins previously planned for April.

Look for announcements for their resumption when the authorities lift the "stay home" order and prohibition on "public gatherings" of more than ten persons.



## ***Pastoral Care During Quarantine***

During this time Pastor Vogts is generally not making visits, so as not to inadvertently carry the virus to anyone. However, *please* notify him if you or a loved one should become ill or hospitalized. Especially in serious cases, he can get special permission as a pastor to visit parishioners and provide spiritual care in a medical facility, while wearing protective gear.

You may contact Pastor Vogts for any reason by telephone at the parsonage (913-849-3711), by email ([pastorvogts@gmail.com](mailto:pastorvogts@gmail.com)), or by text on his cell phone (913-594-9865).

If you have internet access and have not yet "liked" Trinity's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock](http://www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock), doing so is a great way to help stay informed during this time. Information and announcements are generally made through the church's Facebook page, because it is the easiest and most convenient way to contact many members who are already active on Facebook, it gets the word out quickly in a situation that is constantly evolving, and there is no cost to the congregation.

Lord willing, we hope to resume regular activities at Trinity in May, with our first regular service and Holy Communion on May 3, or sooner if the authorities allow. Until then, may God grant you and your loved ones the blessing of good health!

*"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).*