

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas



*From the
Pastor*



When Bad Things Happen to Forgiven People

"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly."

Philippians 1:12-14

Philippians is actually a letter, sent by the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Philippi while he was in prison awaiting trial, probably at Rome. Ten years before, Paul had done mission work in Philippi and founded the church there (Acts 16:11-40).

Paul's friends at Philippi have heard that he is in prison, and they are concerned, upset, and, most of all, *confused*. Why should such a bad thing be happening to, of all people, the Apostle Paul? Is he not a great man of faith, a true servant of God? Then why is he in prison? *Why is this bad thing happening to him?*

There was a best-selling book a few decades ago that asked that same

question, titled "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." But, the premise of that book is all wrong; we are not good people, we are sinners. As Paul says in Romans 3:10-12: *"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

So, the premise that we are good people, and therefore deserve good things from God, is wrong. What we deserve from God is wrath, punishment, death, and damnation, because of our sins.

But, God in His mercy had pity on us and sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world for our salvation. Paul says in Ephesians 1:7, *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,"* and Peter proclaims in Acts 10:43, *"Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name."*

The bad news is, you are not a good person, you are a sinner. But, the Good News is your sins are all forgiven, on account of Jesus Christ. You may have seen the bumper sticker that puts it this way: *"I'm Not Perfect, Just Forgiven!"*

So, instead of "When Bad Things Happen to Good People," the dilemma we ought to ponder is "When Bad Things Happen to *Forgiven* People." If your sins really are all forgiven, then why do bad things still happen in your life?

Bad Things Are NOT EVER a Divine Punishment for Christians

When something bad happens to us, it seems the first thing that comes to

mind is that three-letter word: "Why?" We live in a world of cause and effect, reward and punishment, and so we wrongly assume that God works in the same way. If good things are happening to us, we think it must be because of good things we have done; but if bad things are happening to us, it must be because of bad things we have done.

And so, with that cause and effect mindset, when bad things happen, there immediately comes to mind that three-letter word: "Why?" What is it I have done in my life, or failed to do, that has caused this punishment to come upon me?

You may have heard me tell about a member of one of my previous congregations, an elderly lady with the typical ailments of old age. But, she always traced all her problems back to something she had done in her life. She concluded that her right hand was arthritic because years ago she had once used it to slap her son. She decided the reason it was getting hard for her to walk was because back in grade school she had pushed down a classmate on the playground, bruising her legs. This poor woman thought that for each and every ailment there must be some related cause, for which God was punishing her.

Paul could have constructed that same kind of cause and effect scenario out of his situation. For, he confesses in Acts 22:4 and 26:10, *"I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison... I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them."* Perhaps Paul was in prison now, facing possible execution, because before he became a Christian he himself had sent many other Christians to prison and death on account of their faith?

You can easily construct those same kind of scenarios from your own past when things go wrong in your life — and that is exactly what the devil wants you to do! The devil doesn't want you to trust that your sins are forgiven; he wants you to think God is angry with you and punishing you.

But Paul says in Romans 8:31, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* God is NOT angry with you; God is NOT punishing you; God is NOT against you; God is FOR you; God is on your side!

Why is God on your side? Isaiah 53:4-6 says of Jesus: *"Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. We observed Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*

God is on your side because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on your behalf. The bad things that happen in your life cannot possibly be a punishment from God because your punishment has all been paid, in full. There is nothing left for you to suffer, because Jesus Christ suffered it all for you. As 1 Peter 2:24 says, *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross."*

Trinity Tribune

Published Monthly by

*Trinity Lutheran Church
34868 Block Road
Paola, Kansas 66071*

*Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
Stacey Elkinton, Church Secretary*

*Church: 913-849-3344
Pastor's Study & Parsonage:
913-849-3711*

Pastor's Cell: 913-594-9865

*trinitylcms.org
facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock
pastorvogts@gmail.com
trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com
July, 2020*

And so, Psalm 103:10 declares, *"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."* What a beautiful reassurance when you fear God is punishing you. The Lord says in Jeremiah 31:34, *"I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* Bad things in your life cannot be God punishing you for your sins, because your sins are completely forgiven and forgotten by the Lord.

God Uses Even What We Consider to Be Bad Things for OUR GOOD and the Fulfillment of HIS PLAN.

Paul knows that the Philippians are concerned, upset and confused about his imprisonment, and so he begins his letter to them with a marvelous reassurance, comforting for them and for us: *"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly"* (Philippians 1:12-14).

Here in Paul's own life is an amazing example of what he writes in Romans 8:28, *"We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him."* Paul had long intended to go to Rome and proclaim the Gospel there, but he didn't plan on being taken to Rome as a prisoner, falsely accused of crimes that could lead to his execution. Surely there must be a better way for Paul to bring the Gospel to Rome than in chains and under indictment!

But, it turned out that Paul's two years of imprisonment gave him a chance to witness to the elite palace guard, and his case became widely publicized throughout Rome. At the end of Philippians, Paul writes, *"All the saints send you greetings, especially those*

who belong to Caesar's household" (Philippians 4:22), and tradition says that Emperor Nero's wife, mother, and children all became Christians through the witnessing of Paul!

So the preacher Paul and this Jesus he proclaimed became the talk of the town, all because of Paul's imprisonment. Paul adds that this positive publicity greatly encouraged the other Christians in Rome to openly witness to their faith. So, here is an example of how God uses even what we would consider to be a bad thing — Paul's imprisonment — for the good and the fulfillment of his plan.

Another example from the Bible is in the book of Genesis. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, certainly a bad thing to have happen. But, Joseph ends up becoming Pharaoh's top assistant, ruler of all Egypt, and years later, when there is a famine, Joseph is able to bring his family to Egypt and save them from starvation, thus preserving the line of the promised Messiah. As Joseph tells his brothers, *"You intended evil against me, but God meant it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives"* (Genesis 50:20).

Perhaps you have seen examples in your own life of how God uses even what we consider at the time to be bad things for our good. In the 1920's there was a young man who put everything he could scrape together into a men's clothing store in downtown Kansas City, across from the old Muehlbach Hotel. His great ambition in life was to make that little store a success. He worked and struggled at it for years, and he was absolutely devastated when his store eventually went bankrupt and all his hopes and dreams were shattered.

After several other not-so-successful ventures, he finally found his calling in politics, first becoming a county judge, and rising steadily through the political ranks. Twenty-five years after he went bankrupt, Harry S. Truman would look down from the Presidential Suite of the Muehlbach Hotel upon the building that once housed his clothing store and remark, *"Going broke back then was the best thing that ever happened to me."*

But unlike Paul, or Joseph, or Harry S. Truman, in this world most of the time we are NOT able to understand how God is using even the bad things in our lives for the good.

In HEAVEN We Will Finally Understand How God Has Worked All Things Together for Our Good.

In this world, the events of our lives are to us like a partially completed jigsaw puzzle. We can sort of see the pattern, we can sort of make out the picture, but we don't yet understand how all the pieces fit together. But in heaven we will finally understand how God has worked all things together for our good. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, *"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully."*

So what should you think "When Bad Things Happen to Forgiven People"? If your sins really are all forgiven, then why do bad things still happen in your life?

- ✘ Bad Things Are *Not Ever* a Divine Punishment for Christians — *"Surely He bore our sins in His body on the cross,"* and therefore, *"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."*
- ✘ God Uses Even What We Consider to Be Bad Things for *Our Good* and the Fulfillment of *His Plan* — As Paul tells the Philippians about his imprisonment, *"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel."* It's an amazing example from Paul's own life of what he says in Romans, *"We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him."*
- ✘ In *Heaven* We Will Finally Understand How God Has Worked All Things Together for Our Good — *"Now I know in part; then I shall know fully."*

There is an adage that says, "Every cloud has a silver lining." But, our hope

as Christians is much more profound and comforting than that! We believe that God is *actively in control*, and God is actually *working all things together* for our good.

There *is* an answer to the question "Why is this happening to me?" It is happening to you for a reason, for a purpose—but *not ever* because God is angry with you or punishing you. In the wisdom of God it is somehow for your good, and the fulfillment of His plan. And so, as Isaiah 12:2 says, *"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust in Him and not be afraid."*

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Please help spread the word about these decisions made by the Church Council. Please understand that in the spirit of James 4:13-17 all of these plans are made "Lord willing" and circumstances could require our plans to change.

- We have resumed worship in our Sanctuary, but with some important changes.
- Many have said they like the 9:00am worship time, so continuing at least for July we will have our service in the Sanctuary at 9:00am (NO service at 10:00am).
- Between the main Sanctuary, Gathering Room, and balcony we believe that we can accommodate about our regular number of worshippers with adequate space to maintain "social distancing."
- Because we realize there are many who do not yet feel comfortable returning to in-person worship, we are also continuing to broadcast into the parking lot the audio of the service while it is being held inside the

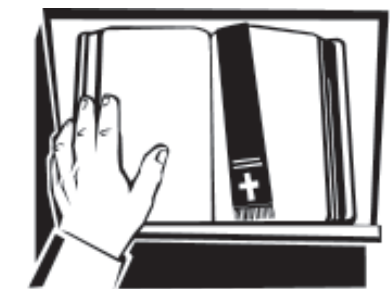
Sanctuary, for as long as there is a demand, so that you may continue worshipping in your vehicle (or lawn chair).

- Because it can get sunny and warm in the parking lot, for the convenience of those worshipping outside we have begun broadcasting the audio of the service on the south side of the church (between the church and cemetery), where you can sit in your lawn chair in the shade.
- We are also going to continue livestreaming all our services on Facebook — "forever and ever Amen!"
- We have resumed our regular summer schedule of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month, and during July there will be an extra service of Holy Communion for Confirmation Sunday on July 19.
- Because of the closeness of the altar area, to allow for "social distancing" Communion is temporarily being distributed in a continuous line, as is common in many churches, rather than kneeling at the altar.
- For the time being we are offering Communion by individual cup only, with both the bread and wine administered in a "contactless" manner.
- Those worshipping in the parking lot or south side of the church who desire Communion are asked to remain in their parked vehicles or lawn chairs at the end of the service and after the closing hymn the pastor and elders will come out to serve you.
- We are suspending Coffee Hour, Sunday School, and Adult Bible Class until August.

Thank you to everyone for your patience and understanding during this difficult time when so many abrupt changes were necessary. If you have any questions or comments about our "Grand Reopening" and resumption of worship in the Sanctuary and Holy Communion, please share them with an elder, Kyle Minden, Ken Debrick, or Kevin Prothe, chairman Greg Windler, or Pastor Vogts.



Our traditional Service in the Shelter House to commemorate Independence Day will be Sunday, July 5, at 9:00am. We are also broadcasting this service to the area surrounding the Shelter House, so that those who prefer may remain in their vehicles or bring a lawn chair. This service will include our usual first Sunday of the month Communion, served in the Shelter House in a continuous manner. There will not be an Independence Day potluck picnic this year.



GUEST PREACHERS

Pastor and Mrs. Vogts' daughter Sarah will be joined in marriage to David Balsters on Saturday, July 11. Pastor Vogts will be conducting the ceremony at the groom's congregation, Christ Lutheran Church, Platte Woods, Missouri. Because they will be staying in that vicinity the entire weekend, Rev. Roger Schepmann will be our substitute minister at Trinity on Sunday, July 12.

Also, the Vogts will be visiting their son, Jacob, in Iowa City, Iowa on Sunday, July 26. Our guest minister for that Sunday will be Rev. Tom Harries.



Sermons for July

Sermons by Pastor Vogts are available in both printed and audio form on our website at 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.

July 5 – Independence Day Service
"Your Calling from God"
 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

July 12
 Rev. Roger Schepmann
 Guest Minister

July 19
"We Do Not Lose Heart"
 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

July 26
 Rev. Tom Harries
 Guest Minister

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.

All of this month's missionaries are featured in an article on page 6 of this newsletter, describing how they are coping and continuing their work despite the coronavirus crisis.

July 5
 Rev. David & Shelee Warner
 Spain

July 12
 Rev. Michael and Jen-Yi Paul
 Taiwan

July 19
 Rev. Carl & Chenhsi Hanson
 South Korea

July 26
 Rev. Adam & Christine Lehman
 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)



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.

- July 1 Emily Wolf
- July 3 Brandy Allen
- July 3 Molly Hermann
- July 3 Karen Windler
- July 5 Joshua Bunch
- July 5 Samantha Prothe
- July 6 Ryan Morton
- July 7 Regan Boyer
- July 7 Shelly D'Amato
- July 7 Kennedy McMullin
- July 7 Tamara Mitchell
- July 10 Wanda Stagg
- July 11 Ken Debrick
- July 11 Darlene Heater
- July 11 Dennis Prothe
- July 12 Joshua Sombke
- July 12 Steve Warner
- July 13 Steve Grother
- July 13 Duane Prothe
- July 13 Don Warring

- July 14 Sheryl Holtz
- July 14 Rayden Berry
- July 15 Karen Kaiser
- July 16 David Johns
- July 16 Debbie Oberheide
- July 16 Brittannie Ritch
- July 17 Ann Davis
- July 18 Keith Prothe
- July 18 Madison Snider
- July 19 Clint Kettler
- July 19 Cathy Tesar
- July 19 Janet England
- July 19 Annabelle Ducey
- July 20 Mallory Tharp
- July 20 Norma Peckman
- July 21 Dan Hieber
- July 21 Chance Mueller
- July 23 Lillian Kettler
- July 23 Taryn Jones
- July 24 Zachary Davis
- July 24 Margo Rodewald
- July 24 Marcie Reyelts
- July 25 Shannon Fanning
- July 26 Stephanie Bivins
- July 27 Matthew Barnett
- July 27 Denna Jones
- July 27 Curtis Kettler
- July 27 Marla Prothe
- July 29 Lonnie England
- July 29 Barbara Herrs
- July 29 Cody Weaver
- July 31 Barbie Dillenbeck
- July 31 Colleen Richardson
- July 1 Dannie & Elaine Stewart (48)
- July 7 ... Andrew & Brianna Chapman (8)
- July 8 Earl & Darleen Medlin (45)
- July 15 Adam & Lorri Jenson (25)
- July 18 Paul & Karen Brack (39)
- July 22 Charles & Kathy Hall (42)
- July 26 John & Kathy Gerken (51)
- July 26 David & Carol Wray (40)
- July 27 .. Phillip & Morgan Richards (18)
- July 29 Chris & Sherri Webb (31)



The quarterly meeting of the Voters Assembly will be held following worship on Sunday, July 26.



Confirmation July 19

There will be an additional service of Holy Communion this month on Sunday, July 19 at 9:00am as the Rite of Confirmation is observed for Molly Lynn Eilts, Emma Anne Haley, and Jai Thom Jenkins.

The confirmands will their receive First Communion kneeling at the altar with their families, after which the rest of the congregation will receive Holy Communion in a continuous line.



2020 Blocktoberfest Cancelled

After much consideration and discussion we have decided to cancel Blocktoberfest for this year. We want to make sure everyone is safe and since we can't predict the future we felt this was the best path.

We appreciate your continuous support over the years and we plan on making Blocktoberfest 2021 the best one yet!



Sunday School Rally Day August 9

Because the public schools are scheduled at this time to resume on August 12, Lord willing we plan to hold Sunday School Rally Day on Sunday, August 9, with an Outdoor Service in the Shelter House and regular Sunday School resuming that Sunday.



"When I Suffer Pains and Losses" New Bible Class Begins August 16

Because many of those who may wish to attend Adult Bible Class will be involved in setting up for the Outdoor Service on Rally Day, Adult Bible Class will resume the following Sunday, August 16, at 9:00am in the Heritage Room.

The topic when we resume will be *When I Suffer Pains and Losses*. Named after a touching hymn by the famous Lutheran hymnwriter Paul Gerhardt—who experienced many extreme pains and losses in his own life—this study will seek God's answers from the Bible to the questions we have about the sufferings and struggles we experience in this world, such as the virus outbreak and its many consequences.



New Portals of Prayer

The new quarterly issue of the devotional booklet *Portals of Prayer* for July thru September is available at the church. It comes in standard size, large print, and a medium “digest” size (same size as *Reader’s Digest*). A great way to keep close to the Lord!



Karen Kay Ohlmeier

Born February 8, 1943

Entered Eternal Rest May 4, 2020

“Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28-29

MISSION NEWS

LCMS Missionaries Continuing Outreach During Coronavirus

As the world grapples with the spread of the coronavirus, billions of people have been impacted in one way or another, including The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s 100-plus missionaries. Here are a few ways they have continued their ministry.



LCMS missionary Rev. Michael Paul teaches catechism class at Qianjia Lutheran Mission Station in Hsinchu, Taiwan. Taiwan is one of the few countries that did not need to lock down in some manner, so worship and classes could continue, though masks are mandatory.

Moving Online in South Korea

International Lutheran Church in Seoul, South Korea, was among the first Lutheran churches to have to adapt. In late February, LCMS missionary Rev. Carl Hanson, pastor of ILC, realized services were going to have to move online. He enlisted his daughters’ help to create a video devotion for Ash Wednesday. By the following Sunday, he had created the first of many prerecorded worship services.

“The response has been overwhelmingly positive,” Hanson said, noting that the online format has enabled the congregation to reconnect with former members who moved away. While they used to have about 100 people in attendance on a Sunday, they now get between 400 and 800 views each week. “As wonderful as all this is” he said, “we still long for and need to see and encourage one another face-to-face.”

Uniting the Scattered in Spain

Spain has been among the hardest-hit countries during the pandemic, and its government declared a nationwide lockdown on March 14. During this time, the Synod’s two missionary pastors to Spain, Revs. David Warner and Adam Lehman, continued their work from their homes in Cartagena and Seville.

“The Lutherans in Spain are spread out, but interestingly that has kind of been a blessing for us during this time of quarantine,” Lehman said. “Because of the spread-out nature of the Lutheran Church in Spain, all of our services were already being streamed via Zoom and Facebook Live even before the

quarantine. This means that we were not ‘starting from zero’ and trying to figure out how to use technology to reach our people.”

Continuing Ministry in Taiwan

Even as many countries implemented strict measures to stop the spread of coronavirus, life in Taiwan continued as normal. “Because of Taiwan’s experience with the SARS virus of 2003, the government, health officials and general public were quite prepared to respond to this pandemic,” said Rev. Michael Paul, an LCMS missionary to Taiwan.

In-person services continued in the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC), the Synod’s partner church on the island, although Paul now wears a mask while distributing communion, during Bible class and while talking to students at the CELC’s seminary. His congregation also has started livestreaming services for those who have been discouraged by their employers from attending public gatherings.

“The biggest challenge has been the difficulty to meet with non-Christian neighbors,” Paul said. “People are less willing to have social interaction with those beyond their family and close friends.”

Paul’s work also includes developing Lutheran resources in Mandarin. During the pandemic, use of these materials has increased, especially in places where worship is restricted or prohibited. “There is a very great need for a stronger Lutheran voice in the Chinese church worldwide,” he said. “The pandemic has helped in a little way to let that voice be heard a little more loudly.”