

## Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church Monday Messenger - March 15, 2021

### ***Pastor's Letter:***

We mark a sober milestone today of one year since we announced ending in-person worship and the pandemic brought other lockdowns and significant restrictions. It has been a long, stressful and sad time. We are tired of isolation and separation. Nerves and feelings are raw. We desperately want to do the things that we used to do to feel more connected and, literally, be more in touch with each other. At the same time, there have also been moments and movements of positivity and blessing. Hope is on the horizon with increasing vaccinations and lowering infection rates.

It is also essential that we continue to be vigilant with CDC recommended precautions and practices. People continue to get seriously sick with this disease, including in our own faith family. And the new variants out there add another layer of risk. I urge everyone to get vaccinated as soon as eligible. If registration or transportation are issues, please call our church office or leaders and we'll do our best to help you out.

We wonder what things will be like for our society and for our church once this pandemic is past. We wonder what we'll go back to and what we'll do in different ways or that we might drop altogether. I hope to have an in-depth discussion with our church leaders about this in the near future. At the same time, it is worth reflecting a moment on what has sustained and strengthened us this past year.

Even though it goes without saying I'm going to say anyway that it's been our reliance on God's strength and His peace that passes all understanding which has most helped us endure and persevere. Alongside that, faithful and dedicated SELC servants have shared that strength with the rest of us and have been the ones who have made it possible for us to even still be active in ministry. We are grateful for members who have especially demonstrated that servant-heartedness. They include:

- Linda Radwick and our Altar Guild who have made sure that everything is ready and "just so" for our worship services, whether for just our leaders livestreaming the service or for the times when we've also had in person worship;
- Administrative Assistant Cindy Allen, who, despite having to quarantine two separate times due to potential COVID-19 exposure in other places, day after day faithfully and efficiently continues to be the face and voice of SELC in our office;
- Our COVID-19 Response Team which has wisely and carefully guided our decisions about how to keep us all as safe as possible;
- Billie Hayes, Beth Dechant, our cantors who, week after week, make sure we have inspiring and quality music. Particular kudos to our renewed bell choir which has been a special and safer musical blessing;
- Shepherd's Fold Child Care staff who have worked hard to make sure community children are cared for;
- Intern Pastor Rova's willingness to serve our community and take the risk of doubling her hours of chaplaincy at the hospital (she's presently the *only* official ministerial presence there), alongside her faithful and patient carrying out of other ministry duties, including leading special adult classes;
- Church Council members who have sought to follow God's will in their decisions regarding ministry priorities and significant property improvements and our new Council members who were willing to step up and take on this responsibility even in the midst of these most challenging times;
- Director of Faith Formation Linda Perry and her team who have so creatively helped us stay connected and growing spiritually through special gifts like the Lenten "drive through" and devotional bags;
- Larry Rewis and CJ Abraham who show up to each and every worship service to make sure that God's Word is shared and enjoyed online by as many people as possible;
- Anna and Carrisa Bratlien for weekly cleaning and sanitizing of church facility.

- Members who are able, willing and patient to join us on Zoom for our Sunday coffees, soup suppers, classes and other events;
- Visitation team members and pastoral staff checking in on our homebound and more vulnerable folks;
- All those in our congregation who have remained faithful in their financial stewardship so that we continue strong in that area;
- And the many others who have quietly worked in the background to make sure our church remains open and vital in its ministry and impact in our community.

We can and should be praising God for the ways in which God’s love and healing power have been so freely shared and supported in all these and other ways. It witnesses to great hope and vision for who and what we will continue to be in all the challenging days ahead. I encourage us to continue to be patient, continue to love one another as best we can, continue to lift all up in prayer, and continue to trust that God will indeed see us through and that the best is always yet to come.

Walking the Way with you,  
Pastor Mark Perry

---

### CREATION CARE MEETING MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup> - ALL INVITED

Formed from our last summer’s book study group and in response to our fall “Season of Creation” sermon series, our new “Creation Care Team” meets on Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm, on Zoom (see invitation below). All interested in doing what we can to preserve and protect God’s precious gift are invited to join us. For more information, contact Christie Brown, team lead, or Pastor Perry.

Topic: Creation Care Team Meeting  
 Time: Mar 16, 2021 06:30 PM Arizona  
 Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/97988292860?pwd=SEhjdWhtWE1mMThxTWWhiSmk5QUJzZz09>  
 Meeting ID: 979 8829 2860 Passcode: 597046  
 One tap mobile +13462487799,,97988292860#,,,,\*597046# US (Houston)

---

### “BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS” MIDWEEK LENTEN SERIES Wednesday’s, March 17 & 24 at 7:00 p.m.

All are invited to join with our SELC family as we journey through Lent to the cross of salvation and the eternal Glory beyond. Online only via Livestream on our website, [www.selcaz.org](http://www.selcaz.org), or on Facebook and Youtube. We’ll start our evenings together with a Zoom soup supper (see link below) at 6:00- 6:45 p.m., then continue with a reflective worship time together at 7:00 p.m.

**Our final week’s theme includes Corporate Confession & Forgiveness of Sins.**

---

### ZOOM SOUP SUPPERS Wednesday’s, March 17 & 24- 6:00 p.m.

Join your SELC family together on Zoom with your soup supper and some wonderful fellowship. For those who cannot participate in the Zoom Soup Supper, we trust they still feel a touch of connection in Christ as we break bread and enjoy our soup at one collective time in each of our homes.

Topic: SELC Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers  
**Time: This is a recurring meeting.** Passcode may be needed.  
 Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/94861459631?pwd=U1BqNlFlSjBjSFJueW9nMnVnVWhTZz09>  
 Meeting ID: 948 6145 9631 Passcode: 460120  
 One tap mobile +13462487799,,94861459631#,,,,\*460120# US (Houston)

---

## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

Maundy Thursday - Thursday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 pm (Online only)

Good Friday - Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 pm (Online only)

Virtual Prayer Vigil - Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8 pm to Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 8 am.

(Watch for more information about sign ups to come.)

Easter Sunday - April 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 am

*(Note: If downward trends of infection rates continue as they have been, it may very well be that we can more safely hold restricted in person worship on Easter Sunday. Our COVID-19 Response Team and Worship & Music Committee will be assessing and making a decision early next week. Watch for more information after that. See [www.covidactnow.org](http://www.covidactnow.org) for daily infection rate updates).*

---

## THRIVENT MEMBERS

If you haven't allocated your 2020 Thrivent choice dollars yet, you have until March 31. It is important to do this during March or the dollars from 2020 will be removed. You may go to Thrivent's website ([Thrivent.com](http://Thrivent.com)) or call Thrivent (800-847-4836) and listen to the prompts.

---

## CHRIST IN OUR HOME DEVOTIONAL

The next quarter (April - June) Christ In Our Home devotional books are available. You can pick them up from the church office. Questions / Information please contact the church office - 459-0444 or [admin@selcaz.org](mailto:admin@selcaz.org).

Lenten Devotions - Along with our Faith5 verse we invite / encourage you to continue to read the Lenten devotional book handed out in the Lenten bags.

# FAITH5

Every Night In Every Home!

Our FAITH5 verse of the week is  
**John 3:16:**

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

*(Post or keep this weekly scripture in a handy place and every morning or evening share the following as a couple, or with family members in the home or even with a dear friend over the phone.)*



Share your highs and lows of the day with one another.



Read the verse of the week and if time permits, the Bible story that pertains to the Scripture of the week.



Talk about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows of the day or how it’s speaking to you.



Pray for one another’s highs and lows and other prayer requests.



Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other’s forehead or the palm of your hands and say something simple such as: “God bless you and keep you in His love and care!” Or feel free to make up your own blessing that incorporates a part of the FAITH5 verse of the week.

**Be creative!  
Stay open to the Holy Spirit!**

## SUNDAY LECTIONARY DAILY READINGS

The readings are chosen so that the days flowing out from Sunday (Mon. - Wed.) reflect upon that Sunday’s readings. The days leading up to Sunday (Thur. - Sat.) prepare for next Sunday readings.

### Monday

Psalm 107:1-16  
Exodus 15:22-27  
Hebrews 3:1-6

### Tuesday

Psalm 107:1-16  
Numbers 20:1-13  
1 Corinthians 10:6-13

### Wednesday

Psalm 107:1-16  
Isaiah 60:15-22  
John 8:12-20

### Thursday

Psalm 51:1-12  
Isaiah 30:15-18  
Hebrews 4:1-13

### Friday

Psalm 51:1-12  
Exodus 30:1-10  
Hebrews 4:14–5:4

### Saturday

Psalm 51:1-12  
Habakkuk 3:2-13  
John 12:1-11

### Sunday

Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16  
Hebrews 5:5-10  
John 12:20-33