

SIERRA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH MONDAY MESSENGER - APRIL 19, 2021

WHY AREN'T WE SINGING TOGETHER?

With worshipers joyfully returning to the sanctuary, it is understandable that some people are asking why we still don't allow congregational singing. Believe me, I would LOVE nothing better than to join with you in full-throated praises! It's one of the several things I've missed most during this pandemic. And I acknowledge that some other churches are allowing group singing in their worship services. However, our SELC COVID-19 Response Team diligently follows the most up-to-date recommendations from the CDC and other medical experts which still strongly discourage this practice. That's why we only have soloists lead the songs behind a plexiglass shield. (And how grateful we are to them and to our musicians who have so faithfully blessed us with worship music!).

It may also appear illogical that we can *speak* liturgical responses behind a mask but not *sing* with a mask. Actually, both activities increase risk of aerosol transmission. However, singing much more significantly adds to that risk. It is considered a "super spreader" activity. Our Team believed that speaking with a mask was a more acceptable risk.

My brother, Dr. David Perry, is a Professor of Music at Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina. I have kept in touch with him regarding their singing practices. Here is what he shared in a recent email: "The current research says that singing is about the same as playing instruments in terms of the 'cloud' produced by exhaling. Masks do help reduce the cloud size, but they of course do not completely eliminate aerosol transmission. Physical distancing does help, and it does matter how long you sing in relation to aerosol transmission. Outdoors is much better than indoors. Our choral directors are having students sing with masks with 6-9 feet of social distancing and we had an indoor concert for our chamber groups with about 6 feet of distance or more. We also had an outdoor progressive choir concert with choirs in 3 locations and the audience moved from one location to another."

Our Grand Canyon Synod Bishop, Deborah Hutterer, in another recent email, shared that Dr. Karen Kibler, ASU virologist, recently noted that "singing indoors just isn't safe." And Bishop Hutterer continues to urge all congregations to remain vigilant in observing all recommended protocols, including wearing masks, distancing, etc., also noting that outdoor worship is preferred (which is generally impractical for SELC).

In addition, an April 15th news release from the Cochise County Health and Human Services announced that the U.K. COVID-19 variant, B.1.1.7, has been detected within Cochise County. "It is important to know that this variant strain of SARS CoV-2 is much more transmissible than other variants," says Erik McLaughlin MD, MPH, Medical Director of Cochise Health and Social Services. "Adherence to proper mask usage, physical distancing and handwashing are key tools to prevent disease spread. Further, current vaccines do offer coverage of this variant and it is more important than ever to have vaccine-based community protection with this new variant." The fact that this new variant is now present makes our church's observance of protocols that much more important.

We hope and pray that vigilant observation of mitigation practices and widespread vaccinations will soon make it safer for us to sing together again. In the meantime, as we gather in person, I encourage us all to “sing with all of our heart” while the soloist is singing, offering up our silent praises to God with devotion and sincerity. It’s interesting that, for me at least, over these many months it has been meaningful to “sing” in this way, and I meditate even more on the words as they’re sung.

Another thought occurs to me: During Lent, we observe the liturgical practice of refraining from any songs that include “Alleluia” in them. It is a way in which we kind of “hold back” for a while so that our Easter praises will be that much more joyful. Perhaps we can see this pandemic time as a kind of a “Lenten season” in which we are holding back our singing until that post-pandemic “Easter time” when we let loose with singing as loud and meaningful as we possibly can, made that much more joyful because of this Lenten “fasting” from praise. And, if that’s still not satisfying enough, there is always the option to sing from home as loudly as you want while watching online.

As always, if you have further questions or comments regarding our COVID-19 protocols, please contact me or one of our Team Members, or Council President Jim Cleven. We appreciate your patience, prayers, and support.

Walking the Way with you,
Pastor Mark Perry

FRIENDLY REMINDER: CALL WITH YOUR RSVP FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE BY THURSDAY, 4:00 PM, EACH WEEK.

NORM GRAHN FUNERAL - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21ST, 10:00 AM

Be sure to call to RSVP your attendance *no later than* Tuesday, April 20th, 4 pm, so we can make sure there’s room for all. All COVID-19 protocols continue to be observed, including masks, distancing, temp taking, no hugging or shaking hands. We will set up an “overflow” area in the fellowship hall for watching the worship service livestreamed. We encourage our members to consider going there to allow family and guests to be seated in the sanctuary. The service will also be viewable livestreamed on our website. A graveside committal service with military honors will take place at Veterans Cemetery at 12 Noon. It is open to all.

LANDSCAPING & CREATION CARE UPDATE

Sandy Hall and the Landscaping team are working hard to make our campus more beautiful and environmentally friendly. We thank them and the Creation Care team for preparing the beautiful acacia tree that is being planted in honor of Intern Pastor Annela and Reese’s new baby. We enjoyed a blessing and dedication time for that after worship yesterday. Tomorrow, Tuesday, the Landscaping team will be preparing a gravel pad for the installation of large rain harvesting water tank, to be located in the area alongside the drive through parallel to Lenzner Ave.

The Creation Care Team also invites everyone to join us on Thursday, 10 am to 2 pm, at Veteran’s Park for various “Earth Day” activities. We will also soon be inviting members to donate towards a planting or tree. Watch for more info to come! Contact Sandy Hall for landscaping info or Christie Brown for Creation Care info.

THE COLUMBARIUM TEAM NEEDS YOU!

The Columbarium Committee is currently seeking additional volunteers. We need a few able-bodied people who would be willing to help current team members water the plants in the columbarium (volunteers rotate). The columbarium has been a part of the church for over 20 years, and we hope there are some new faces who might be willing to help out. If interested, please contact Lisa Mitchell at 520-417-0266 / lisa12340@msn.com or Rebecca Dennis at 520-335-8697 / rubygboo@hotmail.com.

CARENET SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY

Celebrate Life with Care Net's 1st Ever Drive 4 Life

It will be May 8, 2021 starting at 10:00 a.m. at Calvary Chapel at 1155 E Wilcox Drive. The drive goes down Fry Blvd and ends at Village Meadows Baptist Church at 1407 El Camino Real. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. or the week before at Care Net, 1197 E Fry Blvd. Forms are in the church office or at Care Net.

This event raises funds to provide a safe place to save unborn children and provide their mothers and fathers with the tools and resources they need to succeed in life and as parents. Please consider making a donation. 100% of the proceeds raised from our Drive for Life will go toward helping and supporting these vulnerable men, women, and babies in our community.

Care Net provides free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds and education on pregnancy and child raising. The parents earn "Mommy dollars" and Daddy dollars by attending the educational classes. These "dollars" can be spent to buy diapers, formula, baby food, baby clothes and some baby furniture.

Join us for a fun parade. Decorate your car. Judging will take place at end of the drive at the Baptist Church. Donations can be made by putting money in an envelope and writing Care Net on it and putting it in the black box next to the church office or giving it to Marilyn Hewitt. If you have questions, give Marilyn a call. 459-4746.

INTERESTED IN AN EVENING BIBLE STUDY?

*Pastor Perry is still welcoming any potential interest in an evening bible study for those who may be interested. Please let him know if you are. Our Wednesday morning study continues **BUT NOT THIS WEEK DUE TO THE GRAHN FUNERAL**. We'll resume again next Wednesday, April 29th, 9 am.*

FAITH5

Every Night In Every Home!

Our FAITH5 verse of the week is

1 John 3:1-2

“¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.”

(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 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 part of the FAITH5 verse.

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 118:1-2, 14-24
Genesis 1:1-19
1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Tuesday

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Genesis 1:20–2:4a
1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Wednesday

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Song of Solomon 3:1-11
Mark 16:1-8

Thursday

Psalm 133
Daniel 1:1-21
Acts 2:42-47

Friday

Psalm 133
Daniel 2:1-23
Acts 4:23-31

Saturday

Psalm 133
Daniel 2:24-49
John 12:44-50

Sunday

Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 133
1 John 1:1–2:2
John 20:19-31