

**MONDAY MESSENGER - MAY 18, 2020**  
**SIERRA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE SELC COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM:**

Our church's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is motivated by steadfast love and healthy fear. Actions like voluntarily suspending in-person worship, modified office availability, wearing masks, physically distancing, and following other CDC guidelines are taken because of the love that Jesus models for all of our members and friends, especially those most vulnerable among us. They are also taken out of a healthy respect for the real and even deadly consequences if we don't abide by such measures. While we won't allow ourselves to be consumed by fear or let it be a frantic force driving our decisions and actions, we do let it guide us, just as we let the fear of getting hit by a car steer us away from stepping into the street when there's oncoming traffic.

It's also important to acknowledge the very real challenge of balancing apparent tensions between care and caution. Perhaps this is nowhere more evident than in the national debate between keeping people as safe as possible under lockdown conditions and keeping people from terrible suffering due to job loss, lack of essential resources, and other impacts of the economic devastation of such a lockdown. Our hearts, prayers and help go out to those suffering economically and socially just as much as we pray and offer help for those suffering physically from the virus.

SELC leaders are taking all this into account as we make hard decisions about "next steps" for our worship and ministry together. Frankly, these decisions are made all the more difficult by the mixed messages received from governmental and political leaders. We turn to the best authorities we can find to inform us, both in the health sector and the greater church community. A list of some of those resources are found below.

Based on careful consideration and deliberation over that information, our SELC COVID-19 Response Team, comprised of the Council Executive Committee, nurses, church staff and community leaders met last Thursday and decided that **SELC will continue in the current mode of live-stream worship and limited physical contact ministry. We will function in this creative way of being the Church together while apart until further notice.**

We understand that, for some, this decision appears to be out of step with what is happening in the rest of the state. Governor Ducey let the "stay at home" order expire, allowing access to restaurants, gyms, stores, parks and other activities. We see other churches begin in-person worship. But it's important to remember that the governor also emphasized that we are still in "Phase I" of this pandemic response and that we should continue to follow CDC recommendations in that stage in the pandemic response. This includes people sixty-five years and older and those with underlying health issues staying at home, physical distancing, wearing face masks and avoiding large gatherings (technically, over 10 people).

Our study of available medical research warns that church gatherings pose a particular risk of infection. Singing, for example- especially in a group setting- is considered a potential 'super-spreader' infection event. In-person worship will be quite different from what we were used to. We anticipate the need to establish mandatory protocols, like wearing cloth face coverings (if able) and observing physical distancing, which means significantly limiting how many can be present in the sanctuary.

Our Congregation Council is scheduled to meet this Wednesday, May 20th (by Zoom; and note date change), to receive the full report of the Task Force. The COVID-19 Response Team will continue to monitor ongoing pandemic trends, evaluate our safety measures, and put into place protocols for how we might eventually worship in-person as safely as possible. We will meet on June 4<sup>th</sup> to again consider how and when any next steps might be taken. If you have any questions or concerns about these issues, please contact Congregational President Larry Rewis, ([ljrewis@gmail.com](mailto:ljrewis@gmail.com) or 520-249-2973), or Pastor Mark Perry, ([pastor@selcaz.org](mailto:pastor@selcaz.org) or 520-226-6383).

We appreciate your prayers for wisdom, patience and guidance as we continue to navigate through these choppy and uncharted waters. We know this is hard on all of us. We also trust that God's peace and strength is with us, that, although we do not know what the future holds, we know Who holds the future, and that we will prevail, with God's provision.

Your fellow servant in Christ,  
Pastor Mark Perry

**FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:**

Dr. Michael Osterholm's interview with Minnesota Bishop's office, on church gatherings:  
[www.facebook.com/mplssynod/videos/619998971928161/](https://www.facebook.com/mplssynod/videos/619998971928161/)

Dr. Erin Bromage on protecting the most vulnerable, with stories of how infections spread in church:  
<https://www.erinbromage.com/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them>

Choirs as 'super spreaders':  
<https://elemental.medium.com/why-singers-might-be-covid-19-super-spreaders-57607ed71b9b>

ELCA information: <https://www.elca.org/publichealth>

Grand Canyon Synod info/news: [www.gcsynod.org](http://www.gcsynod.org) (look under "Coronavirus updates")

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**SELCA QUILTERS OFFER COMFORT IN TIMES OF LOSS**

As has been the practice of our Quilting Ministry in the past, so now they have again offered comfort and physical symbols of caring in their donation of home-made quilts to the seven-member Finch family who lost their home and all of their belongings in a recent fire at their residence in Huachuca City. Led by Elaine Grahn and Terry Markstrom, they coordinated the giving of these quilts through the SAHARA charity which has been the channel for donations and other help for this and other families in need. Contact So. Az Humanitarian Aid Resource Alliance (SAHARA), Rick Hackney 520-331-3830, or Jredia Newton, 520-331-2883, for more information on their charitable work.

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**NAVAJO PROJECT EDUCATION MODULES START MAY 24TH**

The first two of four adult education modules for Intern Pastor Paul's Internship Project with the Navajos take place starting Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, at 1 pm. These sessions on "Neighbor Love in a Trauma Informed Approach to Ministry" aim to prepare us for deeper awareness as we take a modified service journey with our Navajo Siblings at House of Prayer Lutheran Church and the Rock Point community served by Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission. You may join this coming Sunday's session *either* by live-stream on our website (the same way Sunday worship is live-streamed), or by Zoom. Send Intern Pastor Paul an email if you're interested in joining by Zoom, [intern@selcaz.org](mailto:intern@selcaz.org).

The session on May 31<sup>st</sup>, also at 1 pm, will be facilitated by one of Intern Pastor Paul's colleagues from seminary. Shaneequa (Isaiah Brokenleg) is a Lakota Episcopalian minister who is currently the staff officer for Racial Reconciliation at Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA.

For more information, contact Intern Pastor Paul at (425) 740-4866.

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**CLIMATE CHANGE BOOK STUDY** begins tomorrow, May 19<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, 7 pm, on Zoom. If you've indicated interest, you'll receive an email invitation today how to join the discussion online. Contact Pastor Perry for questions, [pastor@selcaz.org](mailto:pastor@selcaz.org), or 226-6383.

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# FAITH

Every Night In Every Home!

Our FAITH5 verse of the week is  
**John 14:23:**<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

*(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.

## SUNDAY LECTIONARY DAILY READINGS

The readings are chosen so that the days leading up to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the Sunday readings. The days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect upon the Sunday readings.

### Week around Easter 4

*Monday*

Psalm 93

Genesis 9:8-17

Acts 27:39-44

*Tuesday*

Psalm 93

Deuteronomy 5:22-33

1 Peter 3:8-12

*Wednesday*

Psalm 93

Deuteronomy 31:1-13

John 16:16-24

Week around Easter 7

*Thursday*

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47 or Psalm 93

Ephesians 1:15-23

Luke 24:44-53

*Friday*

Psalm 93

2 Kings 2:1-12

Ephesians 2:1-7

*Saturday*

Psalm 93

2 Kings 2:13-15

John 8:21-30

*Seventh Sunday of Easter*

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11