

# E-News from St. Paul's

*Upholding God's Truth and Proclaiming God's Promises*

March 22, 2020

## **This Week in Worship**

For the next two Sundays, March 22 and March 29, our services will be broadcast on Facebook Live at 9:00 a.m. on St. Luke, Oakfield's Facebook Group. To access it live, go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and type "St. Luke's Lutheran Church, School, and Sunday School" in the search bar. Then scroll down the page until you find the video. After the service is completed, we will share the posted video on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/stpaulsbrownsville](http://www.facebook.com/stpaulsbrownsville). We also will try to share the video as soon as it goes live. You should be able to access the video on either page even if you're not a Facebook member.

These two Sundays were originally scheduled to be part of one of the quarterly swaps we've been doing to help both congregations in our partnership for Christian education get to know each other's pastor. This week, Pastor Carter will preach and Pastor Schwartz will lead the service. Next week, Pastor Schwartz will preach and Pastor Carter will lead the service.

This week's service will continue our focus on the theme, "He's that kind of Savior: the kind we needed him to be." This week: He's the kind of Savior who gives his life as a ransom for many. Copies of the worship folder and weekly bulletin will be available on our website, [www.stpaulsbrownsville.org](http://www.stpaulsbrownsville.org). Down the left side of the home page, you'll find a link for "News and Worship Folders." When that page opens up, click on the bulletin or worship folder you'd like to open and a .pdf version will open on your screen. From there you can download or print the document if you'd like.

These links should also take you directly to these pages or documents:

[The News and Worship Folders page](#)

[The worship folder for March 22](#)

[The bulletin for March 22](#)

Please note: there are more than a few members who do not have access to the Internet. Please either help us know who they are or, better yet, please see what you can do to bring them the technology so that they can watch these services. (Please practice appropriate social distancing when you do.)

## **Lent and Holy Week**

Pastor Kiecker from St. John, Lomira is scheduled to be here for this week's midweek Lenten service. We hope that it can work for him to be here Wednesday afternoon so that we can broadcast the service on Facebook Live at 3:30. If that has to change, we may be able to post a video of his

sermon instead. We'll let you know how that's going to work as soon as we know how it's going to work.

We'll also get information out about our plans for Holy Week as soon as we determine the best way to broadcast those very special services.

### **Livestream Issues**

We are fairly certain we know what caused the issues with our Facebook Live broadcasts last Wednesday that resulted in audio that was either very choppy, very speedy, or both. We have already made several contacts to determine the best solution for those issues and hope to have them resolved before Wednesday.

### **Extending Our Network**

We have also made several contacts to find out what we can do to extend our Internet access into the church, so that our broadcasts can take place in the church itself.

### **Video Conferencing**

We have signed up for a website that provides video communication services. Many of our schools are using this same service for their online classes. We're already making plans to use it for Catechism Class and our Council of Elders meetings. We're also looking into the possibility of using it – or something similar to it – for Sunday School and our various Bible Studies. We will also be able to use it for other meetings with members. Please contact me if there's something you'd like to talk to me about using this service instead of over the phone and I'll try to set it up with you.

### **Offerings**

There are actually quite a few options for you to choose from for continuing your regular contributions to St. Paul's. The two best ways for many people would be sending them by mail or using the Bill Pay feature of your online banking. You may also contact our bookkeeper, Amy Thomas, to get the paperwork needed to set up automatic withdrawals from your bank account. We might also be able to set up something with one of the online payment platforms (like PayPal, Venmo, or others) if you would prefer something like that. We might even be able to include links for one or more of those on the church website. We will also place a drop box outside Room 3 (the southeast classroom). This may be the least preferable option, especially for those who are in the higher risk category for the virus, but it will be available for those who have no other option. We would be interested in any suggestions anyone else might have for this.

### **Communication**

We plan to continue to use e-mail, our Facebook page, and our website to post any important announcements or any updates or changes to scheduled events or live-streams. If you aren't receiving our emails, please contact us at [office@stpaulsbrownsville.org](mailto:office@stpaulsbrownsville.org) to get your address added to that list.

And, again, we realize that there are more than a few of our members who do not have email or Internet access. Please help share this information with family members or friends who may not be getting these announcements and updates.

### **What's Next?**

We've been hearing the word "unprecedented" quite often in news reports and press conferences about the effects the COVID-19 virus is having on the people of our world, the governments of our world, and the economies of our world. Every day, we're reminded (and, all too often, need to be reminded) that there's never been a virus like this before and that we've never needed to impose the restrictions on travel or commerce or gatherings that we've needed to impose now. It's all so completely unprecedented. And then, the next day, the news tells us about something else unprecedented that we never would have imagined happening years ago, even weeks ago, or even hours ago. We're all living in constant fear of what's next. Because all we know is that it will probably once again be something we've never thought would happen.

The people of Israel who were living at the time the book of Lamentations was written were experiencing something very similar. They had never before faced an army as strong and cruel as Babylon's. They had never before been taken captive and forced to live in a foreign land. And they certainly were not expecting that God would have to tell them that they would be gone for seventy years. Every day, they would have faced new challenges that made life more difficult than the day before. They, too, would have been living in constant fear of what's next. The writer of Lamentations, probably Jeremiah, recorded for us what it felt like to live in those difficult times:

"I have been deprived of peace;  
I have forgotten what prosperity is.  
So I say, 'My splendor is gone  
and all that I had hoped from the Lord.'  
I remember my affliction and my wandering,  
the bitterness and the gall.  
I well remember them,  
and my soul is downcast within me."  
*(Lamentations 3:17-20 - NIV)*

It is striking to hear what he says next about what's next. He talks about hope. He talks about the Lord's great love and his never-failing compassions and his great faithfulness. And he talks about waiting quietly for the salvation of the Lord. Listen to what he says is true about what's next. And then, like he says, call all these things to mind and hold on to hope he we have in our Lord.

"Yet this I call to mind  
and therefore I have hope:

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him."

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him,  
to the one who seeks him;

it is good to wait quietly  
for the salvation of the Lord."

*(Lamentations 3:21-26 - NIV)*

Go back and read his words again. I did after I typed them. We can call to mind the same things about the Lord. We, too, can remember that the Lord has given us his blessings of hope and peace, enough hope and peace that we can wait quietly to see what's next, because we know that the Lord's love and compassion will be with us, no matter what's next. We can wait. That's a good thing.

May God's Word and promises always give you this hope as we wait for what's next and look forward to the ways we'll be able to serve him and the other people in our world in whatever unprecedented times happen tomorrow.

God be with you all.

Your servant in Christ,

***Pastor Bill Carter***