

April 17, 2020

Office of the President
Rev. Timothy Teuscher

Dear Brothers and Fellow Workers in the Gospel,

As we bask in the glow of Easter, it warms my heart to see and hear how you have ‘stepped up to the plate’ in these uncertain, unusual and difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic in order to serve the people entrusted to your care in ways that were never taught us at the seminary or that we ever would have imagined.

While these are trying times to be sure, I believe that they can also be a great blessing to us as pastors and to the members of our congregations – reminding us, to use the words of our risen Lord, “of the one thing necessary” (Luke 10:42) and of what should be our primary concern and task. And no, it’s not matters pertaining to our synod’s organization and structure. It’s not activities and programs going on (or no longer going on) in our congregations. It’s not finances or the lack of them. Rather, it’s the preaching and teaching, the hearing and learning of God’s Word . . . the Holy Scriptures which alone “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15).

I would, in the first place, encourage all of you to thus use this time of self-isolation and physical or social distancing for your own personal reading and hearing and meditating on that Word. Unlike Luther who said, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer”; I must admit that I have often found myself doing the very opposite. A few weeks ago I began using regularly the *Treasury of Daily Prayer* (which includes a Psalm, Scripture Readings, a reading from the Lutheran Confessions, a short Reading from the church fathers, and a prayer) in conjunction with the order of Morning Daily Prayer from LSB. I’ve also begun to re-read the essays and letters of Herman Sasse entitled, rather fittingly, *The Lonely Way*. Whatever format or resources you might use, please do something for the sake of your own spiritual well-being and for the sake of the spiritual welfare of your people.

“Preach the Word in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). So St. Paul admonishes and reminds us pastors as to what our chief and primary duty is to be. While some might think that we are now “out of season” and need to not only come up with newer and different ways and means to do this; but, perhaps, also with a newer and different message (Remember that “the medium is the message” statement by Marshall McLuhan?!); I would beg to differ. After all, is not the Word of God most relevant to and needed by people in this season of Covid-19? For those who use the Three-Year Lectionary Series, the appointed Epistle Readings during this Easter season are all taken from 1 Peter . . . and what a wealth of timely and fitting “in season” words we will hear!

For example: “By God’s power (you) are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:5-7) – Easter 2.

And again: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21) – Easter 4.

And further: “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. . . . For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil. For

Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:15, 17-18) – Easter 6.

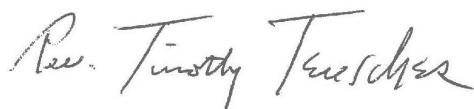
And finally: “Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. . . . For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? . . . Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. . . . “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. . . . And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself, restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever” (1 Peter 4:12-14, 17, 19; 5:6-7, 10-11) – Easter 7.

I would, as such, again commend you for the various ways in which so many of you have strived to share this precious Word of Christ with the members of your flock – live-streaming of services, video recordings of devotions on YouTube, sermons and prayers available for viewing and downloading from your congregation’s website, and the like. LCC has also gathered various resources to assist you. These are posted on our synod’s website and include such things as devotional and congregational resources developed by LCC, along with links to numerous resources available from the LCMS, CPH, and Lutheran Hour Ministries; written sermons from a number of our pastors, along with video services and devotions led by our Missions Executive and myself. These resources are intended to supplement that which you are doing in your congregations, so I do hope you have informed your people of them.

A couple of practical things in this regard. First, if you are tech-challenged . . . as I am, contact one of your brothers who might assist you or ask our Communications Director, Alex Steinke, for help and advice. Our synod’s website has her contact information. Second, there may be some members of your congregation who do not have the internet. Therefore, I would encourage you to share various printed resources with them . . . perhaps leaving them at their front door or mailing them out. And, of course, let’s not forget the telephone. In fact, what an opportunity has been given to pastors at this time to contact every member of their congregation . . . to see how they are managing during this pandemic and what they might need, to pray for them, and to share God’s precious Word with them! If possible, recruit the elders and other members of your congregation to assist you in this endeavor; after all, as St. Paul writes: “God has so composed the body, giving honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 13:24-27).

“Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Timothy Teuscher". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a large, stylized 'T' at the beginning.

Rev. Timothy Teuscher, President
Lutheran Church—Canada

P.S. Yesterday, our President’s Ministry Council (Regional Pastors, Vice-President, and myself) met via a video conference call. One of the items that was brought up had to do with various concerns and issues related to the celebration of Holy Communion during these challenging and difficult times. I intend to address this matter in a letter to all of you next week.