



# ***THE PILGRIMAGE***

The newsletter of Pilgrim Lutheran Church (LCMS), Broadway at Florey, Kilgore, Texas

April 2020

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*We glorify God by receiving the forgiveness of sins by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and sharing that salvation through word and deed with those in our midst, in our community, and throughout the world.*

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## **Are you prepared to die?**

Are you prepared to die? I do not ask that question for exactly the same purpose that an infamous evangelism method asked a similar question, nor do I ask the question to add to the coronavirus hysteria that is seizing the world. I ask the question simply and straightforwardly for each of us to seriously consider whether or not at any given moment we are prepared to die.

Now, you and I can be prepared to die in the sense of having a will, a burial plot or mausoleum space, and arrangements made with a funeral home, perhaps even prepaid. And, we can be prepared to die in the sense of having our funeral preferences on file with our congregation (not many of us have done that at Pilgrim, despite worksheets to do so having been available for years). But, I am talking about learning through God's Word and Sacraments both how to live and how to die.

To be sure, the threat of COVID-19 has raised the issue of being prepared to die, especially for those who are at greater risk of dying from the virus or its related complications because of underlying health conditions. Yet, when I looked at the World Health Organization's statistics last, less than five percent of the confirmed coronavirus cases were deadly, which mortality rate is far less than the 30-50% mortality rate the plague is estimated to have had at its time in the population of Europe as a whole. The WHO's coronavirus worldwide death toll of 23,335 at this writing would put the virus at only 32<sup>nd</sup> on one list of top causes of death worldwide that I looked at (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation for 2017).

Sin brought death into the world, and, so sin is the ultimate cause of death. Unless Jesus returns first, all of us will die physically in this lifetime, from one immediate cause or another. In that sense, life is a terminal disease, and nothing we can do can prevent its termination. Those people whom Jesus miraculously cured and even those He brought back to life still eventually died. But, thanks be to God, Who gives us the ultimate victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ, His death on the cross in our place, for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead that we celebrate with Easter this month (1 Corinthians 15:57).

*Article continues on following page.*

Because death in this lifetime is but the gate to life immortal (*Lutheran Service Book* 490:5), we do not—or at least we do not *need to* and so *should not*—fear it. Forgiven, we are ready for it. Temporal death as the entrance into eternal life is God’s delivering us from evil, for which we pray in the Seventh Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, His, when our last our comes, giving us a blessed death and graciously taking us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in Heaven.

With that right view of temporal death, we avoid the extremes of both our not making any use of modern medical science (like the Christian Scientists who will not get blood transfusions) and our making too much use of it (like pagans who are so afraid to die that they will pursue extreme—what used to be called “heroic”—measures, untested or unproven measures, at great length and any cost). In the case of the coronavirus, we take reasonable precautions (certainly washing our hands and perhaps avoiding those who are known to be sick, especially if we are at greater risk and have no vocation that requires us to be in contact with them), but we do not go to extremes (certainly not giving up hearing God’s Word and receiving His Sacraments, even if the government wrongly might make our hearing and receiving them more difficult or tell us to give up doing so, and perhaps not avoiding those not known to be sick, especially not if our vocations require contact).

Based solidly on Holy Scripture, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther at the time of the plague, with its much higher death rate, continued daily services in Wittenberg and called for everyone to hear preaching, to go to private confession for the sake of individual absolution, and to receive the Sacrament of the Altar at least once a month if not every week. Christ’s Body and Blood are, as the Church has long called them, our food for the way through this life, the medicine of immortality.

Coronavirus-caused prospects of mandatory do-no-resuscitate orders for certain categories of people and of people’s dying in facilities that are keeping them from family and pastoral care are indeed frightening, but even then we are not lost or alone. God is still with us and taking us to Himself. With repentance and faith, we receive God’s forgiveness through His means of grace, we are reconciled with our fellow human beings, and, we commit ourselves to God—so we are prepared to die! In our baptisms God has already buried us with Christ so that we might walk in newness of life and be united with Him in a resurrection like His (Romans 6:1-14; confer Colossians 2:6-15). May He grant it in His time and way!

*His and your servant,  
Pastor Galler*

DAILY BIBLE READING	
1	Isaiah 25:1-9
	Romans 1-3
2	Ps. 114
	Romans 4-6
3	Ps. 115
	Romans 7-9
4	Ps. 116
	Romans 10-13
5	Ps. 117
	Romans 14-16
6	Ps. 118
	1 Cor. 1-3
7	Ps. 119:1-8
	1 Cor. 4-6
8	Ps. 119:9-16
	1 Cor. 7-9
9	Ps. 119:17-24
	1 Cor. 10-11
10	Ps. 119:25-32
	1 Cor. 12-14
11	Ps. 119:33-40
	1 Cor. 15-16
12	Ps. 119:41-48
	2 Cor. 1-4
13	Ps. 119:49-56
	2 Cor. 5-7
14	Ps. 119:57-64
	2 Cor. 8-10
15	Ps. 119:65-72
	2 Cor. 11-13
16	Ps. 119:73-80
	Galatians 1-3
17	Ps. 119:81-88
	Galatians 4-6
18	Ps. 119:89-96
	Ephesians 1-3
19	Ps. 119:97-104
	Ephesians 4-6
20	Ps. 119:105-112
	Philippians 1-2
21	Ps. 119:113-120
	Philippians 3-4
22	Ps. 119:121-128
	Colossians 1-2
23	Ps. 119:129-136
	Colossians 3-4
24	Ps. 119:137-144
	1 Thessalonians 1-3
25	Ps. 119:145-152
	1 Thessalonians 4-5
26	Ps. 119:153-160
	2 Thessalonians 1-3
27	Ps. 119:161-168
	1 Timothy 1-3
28	Ps. 119:169-176
	1 Timothy 4-6
29	Ps. 120
	2 Timothy 1-2
30	Isaiah 25:1-9
	2 Timothy 3-4

## APRIL 2020



**Texas District Church Extension Fund**  
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Investment	Fixed Rate <sup>2</sup>		Floating Rate <sup>2</sup>	
	Rate	APY	Rate	APY
One Year Note <sup>1</sup>	2.125%	2.14%	1.500%	1.51%
Three Year Note <sup>1</sup>	2.250%	2.27%	1.375%	1.38%
Five Year Note <sup>1</sup>	2.500%	2.52%	1.375%	1.38%
Flex Savings			1.000%	1.00%
Rainy Day Fund**			1.250%	1.26%
<small>**Amounts over \$10,000 receive the Flex Savings rate</small>				

Accounts For Congregations			
Congregation Savings		1.250%	1.26%
Building Fund Savings		2.500%	2.53%

All individual Texas District CEF investments (FLEX, fixed and floating rate notes) may be included in a person's IRA portfolio, through our custodian GoldStar Trust Company. [www.texascef.org/ira.html](http://www.texascef.org/ira.html) (1) Subject to penalty for early withdrawal. (2) Rates subject to change. Rates reviewed monthly. Texas District Church Extension Fund is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, CEF investments are not SIPC or FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This does not constitute an offer to sell or a request to buy. The offer is made solely by CEF's Offering Circular.



# APRIL 2020

Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
 www.pilgrimlc.org  
 903-984-4333

Pastor's Regular Study Hours  
 Tuesday 5:00–8:00 PM  
 Wednesday–Friday 9:00 AM–Noon  
 Saturday Noon–3:00 PM

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Elder on Duty: Jeromy McMurray</b> <b>(Back-up: Carl Gardner)</b>			<b>1</b>  7:00 PM Midweek Lenten Vespers	<b>2</b>  (No Plano Study Group this month)	<b>3</b>  Tiffani Erickson (B) M/M Gualtieri (A)	<b>4</b>  (No single "Work Day" but posted list of tasks for people to do on their own schedules.)
<b>5</b> PALM/PASSION SUNDAY (V) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service Youth Catechesis	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>  (No Rotary Board or Mary/Martha Meetings this month but maybe May 5)	<b>8</b>  M/M Treadway (A)	<b>9</b> MAUNDY (HOLY) THURSDAY (W)  7:00 PM Divine Service	<b>10</b> GOOD FRIDAY  7:00 PM Divine Service	<b>11</b>  Reports for Council Packet due to Holly tomorrow
<b>12</b> RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD (W) 7:00 AM "Son-rise" Matins Service (?) 8:00 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Egg Hunt 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  6:00 PM Elders' Meeting	<b>15</b>  7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	<b>16</b>  (No Circuit #14 Meeting this month; next meeting May 14)	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  8:00 AM-12:30 PM Blood Drive (an essential service)
<b>19</b> SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (W) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service Council Meeting	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>  Noon Rotary Mtg.(?)  7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	<b>23</b>  M/M Navaille (A)	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>  (All Willows Services suspended until further notice)
<b>26</b> THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (W) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service Youth Catechesis	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>  Noon Rotary Mtg.(?)  7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	<b>30</b>		

"Hail thee, festival day! Blest day to be hallowed forever; Day when our Lord was raised, Breaking the kingdom of death."  
*(Lutheran Service Book 489:Easter Refrain)*

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**The Pilgrimage** is a monthly newsletter for the members and friends of



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