

PASTOR MARTIN ERICSON

THE FIRST WORD

Psalm 46:1–7 (NRSV)

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- ³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- ⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
- ⁶ The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

“These uncertain times” is a phrase I’m growing accustomed to. And yet the psalmist assures us that there are some certain truths that are ours, some sureties we can trust in. God is with us and we are not alone. The God of Jacob is our refuge. These difficult times may not leave us unmarred, but they will pass and we will get through these days together.

Many of you have already found our Facebook Live worship livestreams on Wednesdays (6:30 p.m.) and Sundays (9:30 a.m.). www.facebook.com/ComoParkLutheran As we find our way into this new technology, we are grateful for the support of everyone who makes these efforts possible with gifts of time and energy as well as your financial support.

We presently have volunteers calling our members 65 and older with weekly wellness checks. We’ve moved our E-News to a Friday distribution with home-worship helps for Sundays. Our office hours are reduced to 9:00-2:00 Monday-Friday, with a “Hannah-plus-one” office

staffing, and increased work-from-home workloads for staff when they are not in the office. The telephone devotional line we're trying to implement still has a few glitches, but we hope to have that sorted out soon. Stay tuned for that update.

While we are self-isolating, I'm discovering how much I miss all our daily and weekly interactions, to say nothing of our gathered presence in worship. I look forward to the day when we will worship in full assembly again and our small groups will meet face to face. Until then, we will continue to connect through emails and phone calls and Skype and text messages, Google hangouts and Zoom conferences and facebook pages and facebook groups and online worship and the mail(!) and more.

God is with us, and we are not alone.

Blessings and Peace to all,
Pastor Martin R Ericson

JUSTIN LINDALL

TAKING FAITH HOME

Taking Faith Home – A Beautiful Moment

On a February morning's drive into work, the sun was rising behind me and lit the snow cover fields before me with a glorious iridescent glow. A beautiful moment. I underestimate the power of these moments to refresh and renew. A speaker I recently heard shared that even a breath of intentionality and re-centering can work wonders.

Wouldn't it be nice to capture more of the transformational power of these moments? I am grateful that I have recently been exposed to a wonderful tool for spiritual formation in our family – the Taking Faith Home initiative introduced by David and Gloria Anderson (the green insert in our weekly bulletins). I especially enjoy the concept of "milestone moments" to build structure around sacred moments. These moments had been happening in front of me but have come and gone, enjoyed but not recognized or celebrated.

We live in a world that does not welcome the sacred without intention. I have been wondering what these sacred moments look like and how to respond if I found one. In mid-February, I took my four-year-old daughter to Como Park to go sledding. She wanted to try sledding alone for the first time but the snow was fast and I was nervous. I let her start a third

of the way down her chosen hill, held her sled, and then let go. She was off in a flash! So fast! And she traveled so far! As I prayed for her safety it dawned on me- this is it! This is a milestone moment! Later we thanked God for the fun sledding. We talked about how she is growing up and I encouraged her to trust God for safety in adventures. A beautiful moment.

A week later we celebrated our son's first birthday. This was certainly another milestone and another opportunity to share a sacred moment with our son and family. Extended family gathered and took a moment to listen while I had an opportunity to bless and thank God for him. It was a little different for some of those gathered. My words did not flow perfectly and in the chaos of a cupcake in front of a one year old, there was not a serene sense of awe like when I witnessed the snow over the fields. But the moment now stands marked with a holy memory and an established tradition of blessing. Just a moment – but in my memory – captured, sacred, and beautiful.

TOM FERRY

MUSIC

Long Distance Worship

Christianity is a community faith. We gather each Sunday, and often other times in between, to praise God together, remember our faith stories, encourage each other, and share the Lord's Supper. But did you know that when we gather as the community of Como Park Lutheran, we are also gathering as the whole Christian community throughout time and space? In the Apostle's Creed we say that we believe in "the communion of saints." That is a description of the whole body of Christ; all Christians where ever and whenever they lived. So as we gather on Sunday, as families or as individuals, with a bible, a live stream, or a call to a devotion line, remember that you are part of the whole of Christianity and, despite our social distancing, still in community.

God Bless,

Tom Ferry

Director of Music Ministries

JUA HER

THE LAST WORD

Dear brothers and sisters of Christ's at Como Park Lutheran Church,

There is an exciting and wonderful relationship between each one of you at CPLC. Even so, there is regret and sadness because Christ commands His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20." I'm wondering whether it's something that fills me with joy or something that creates hurtful feelings. I cannot let this slip by without saying something. Sincerely, I want to say dear brothers and sisters of Christ family, this is a real sad month for my family and I at Como Park Lutheran Church because the month of April is the last month of my internship. My family and I have been with you all for a short period. At the beginning of our time with each one of you at CPLC, we were so excited and always smiled but this month our hearts have sunk because it is the last month for us to be with you at CPLC. We don't want to count our time down, but our time must go to an end. However, we are counting our blessings that we have been a discipleship and part of the family of Christ together with CPLC and this world. A word to say "Leaving CPLC is not an easy thing to say to all of you." My family and I are going to leave CPLC by April 30, 2020 but our thoughts, prayers and heart will always be with you all at CPLC because in Christ's name, we are one family.

Your gracious gifts and open your heart to allow us to come to join worship in God and learn from each one of you at CPLC, my family I will never forget. Our thoughts and memories will always remember each one of you. We hope you also think about us as well. Being confident of this, my family believes that He who began good work in us and you all can carry it on to completion until the day we are all together in heaven, singing and praising in front of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Holy Father home. My family and I will miss all of you when the day rolls to May 1, 2020 but we will continue praying in God for all the members of CPLC and this world. We also seek for your prayer for us until we are gathering in Christ's home. God's blessing for all.

GIVING

Giving Report

General Envelope Giving	Actual Giving
Year-to-date this year (through February 2020)	\$57,606.37
Year-to-date last year (through February 2019)	66,115.18
Giving Goal (Budget for 2020) ¹	61,800.00

¹Offerings do not flow evenly throughout the year. Giving goals are based on historical giving pattern analysis.

Local Hunger/Food Shelves	\$722.00
World Hunger	367.00
Lenten Offering	160.00
Lutheran Disaster Response	150.00
Feed My Starving Children	140.00
Lyngblomsten	137.00
Lutheran Social Service	127.00
Como Park Falcon Heights Living At Home Block Nurse Program	75.00
Sunday School Offering	64.10

Benevolences (Given through February 2020)