



Where the Word of Life gathers,
nurtures, and sends us forth to serve.

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OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

Is Your Marriage Pandemic-Proof?

There was a report on the news the other night about how the divorce rate has spiked in the U.S. during the covid19 pandemic as couples have been stuck at home together for months and months. Even in the best of times, marriage and relationships are hard work. It's normal for two spouses to deal differently with stress, chaos and uncertainty. But the coronavirus has produced a pressure cooker inside homes, straining even strong marriages and breaking apart others.

The combination of stress, unemployment, financial strain, death of a loved one, illness, homeschooling children, mental illness and more have put a significant strain on marriage and family relationships. Recent data showed that 32% of couples admitted that the lockdown has caused irreparable harm to their marriages. The things couples once cherished or found charming have since faded or become an annoyance. Where there was once agreement, now there is discord. Comfort has turned to uncertainty and a house formerly filled with laughter now pulses with tension.

People are drawn to the comfort, support, intimacy, affec-

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A Message From Pastor Michael

Bringing You Up To Date

With the fall, our program's schedule intensifies. As I share this column, may the faithful generosity of our God strengthen us to respond to His love. "Freely you have received; freely give," said our Lord to His first disciples. In spite of the circumstances in which we find ourselves in 2020, we know that God has been generous with us. May our privilege be to respond to His love, and thus pass it on to others.

We rejoice in Pastor Kruger's formal partnership with us. With his induction into service September 13, we now share the ministry much more fully. At the outset, in addition to sharing preaching and worship responsibilities with me, he will be seeking to discover the best ways for us to strengthen our outreach to students at the University of North Georgia and secondly to determine how we might reach out to students in the middle school years for Confirmation instruction. We pray the Lord's blessing on this new partnership, that all of us might grow in our relationship with the Lord.

Born for Blessing is the title of the short term Bible course we are offer-

ing Thursdays, October 15, 22, and 29, at 2 P.M. The course has been developed by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod Foundation. Its purpose is to help us learn the importance of planning one's estate. It will be followed by a special session, Thursday, November 5 also at 2 P.M. with Thrivent representative Pat DeLuca who will help us learn more about the ins and outs of estate planning. His purpose will not be to sell products, but to help us become aware of the laws and options for estate planning. To help us make proper preparations, a sign-up sheet will be posted on the hall bulletin board.

From the Florida-Georgia District, we have received a six month report (February - July) on our support of District and Synod work. We are grateful for all whose contributions have led our tithe to amount to \$6,093 at the half year mark. These gifts support our common work together in our two States and the Bahamas, with a portion being sent to the national body for its ministry.

Your third quarter financial contributions statements will be made avail-

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able to you in early to mid-October. I encourage you to use them to check your gifts, report any discrepancies, and hopefully be encouraged to give thanks to God for what you have been able to do. If you have fallen behind on your commitments, let me encourage you to use the concluding months of the year to catch up.

Our Financial Commitment program for 2021 in support of the Lord's work is planned for the middle of November. May the Lord's grace lead us to respond in keeping with His gifts.

The Land Search Committee continues to do its important work. An extension to the time to do the

"due diligence" has been granted, since the owner had not yet provided all the needed information. Please keep this in your prayers, that the necessary information will be provided soon, that we may make a responsible decision.

A Circuit Forum will be held Sunday, October 11 at 3:30 P.M. to select a new Circuit Visitor, a post currently held by Pastor Zach Hoffman of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gainesville. He has indicated that he does not wish to be re-elected. The new term will start with the District convention next summer. Representing our congregation will be Van Bareither, our head elder, and Pastor Michael.

Community Helping Place needs for its Food Pantry in October include Canned Meat (chicken, tuna, Ravioli, spaghetti and meatballs); Canned Green Beans; Canned Soup, and Jelly. Your donations serve to meet the needs of those in need of our assistance.

With every prayer for our congregation as we seek to go forward as God's grateful people, I am Your partner in Christ,

Gerhard C. Michael, Jr.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Hilda Turnbaugh

Oct. 3

Brynn Foster

Oct. 11

Emory Stephens

Oct. 11

Ron Larson

Oct. 15

Catherine Szilagyi

Oct. 23

Joan Bareither

Oct. 27

Larry Scott

Oct. 27

Please Wear a Face Mask



Help Stop the Spread



Gold Party: This year's party will be done virtually October 2. It is the major fund raiser for the Community Helping Place, as it seeks to provide compassionate care to people in need, including free medical and dental care, food, clothing, emergency assistance, etc. etc. Sponsorship are solicited; they begin at the \$500 level and rise to \$10,000+. Baskets for two are offered at \$150, which includes a variety of goodies and 10 raffle tickets for bidding on items being auctioned off.

Visit the CHP website at www.communityhelpingplace.org to purchase your basket, bid on auction items, and enter the raffle.

The Food Pantry at CHP needs the following items: Canned meat (chicken, tuna, Ravioli, spaghetti & meatballs, etc.), canned green beans, canned soup, and jelly. You can pick up a bag at the front and rear entrance to the church and return your items to the boxes provided. Thank you for your continues support of the families in need in Lumpkin County.

Judy Lewis article, cont'd from pg. 1

tion and validation that marriage can offer. That desire for closeness pulls us together. We want attention from our partners, but we can become allergic to too much of it. And when we get the space we think we want, we can feel unappreciated and look for affection and validation to make us feel connected and secure. It becomes an emotional roller coaster.

So how can we actually strengthen our marriages and other relationships during this pandemic? The truth is, God has given you this special person in your life for just this moment in time. Your spouse is not your enemy, but someone who, just like you, is weak, suffering and prone to struggle under stress. If left unchecked, the marriage can soon become weighed down with anxiety, depression, anger and growing resentment. But it doesn't have to be this way. Here are some things you might find helpful.

- **Value faithfulness above productivity.** It is good to remember that we are not living in normal times. Our daily temptation is to measure the success of our days by what we accomplish. But this time in our life should remind us that bearing fruit is not the same as getting things done. Concentrate on the Fruit of the Spirit (*Gal 5:22*) and being faithful with what God has given us today, not on how many tasks were done or left undone.

- **Entrust yourself to the Lord.** God has you and your family square in the palm of his hand. If he can sustain the sparrow (*Matt 10:25*), command the wind and the waves (*Mark 4:39*) then you can trust Him to be Lord over every detail of the universe. When we place our security and hope in the Lord, we can relate better to one another.
- **Walk on a path of prayer and encouragement.** Prayer is a significant way to grow a stronger, more unified and intimate marriage. How a couple relates to each other makes their prayers either effective and powerful, or ineffective and clogged. God is most attentive when we seek peace and one another's well-being by treating each other with understanding and respect. Our words are powerful in the lives of those around us. They can build up or tear down, bring healing or escalate a fight. Take turns reminding each other of God's faithfulness, steadfastness and goodness. Uplift each other by your love and encouragement. By the grace of God, we will get through this!

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