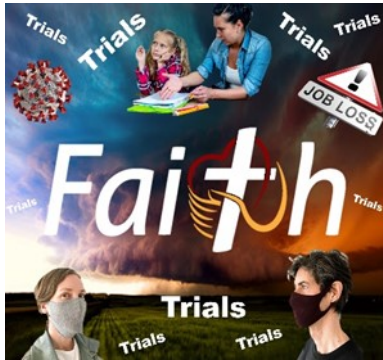


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
753 N. CALUMET AVE.
VALPARAISO, IN 46383

(219) 462-7684

WWW.FAITHVALPO.ORG

Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community



Faith Amid Trials

1 Peter 1:3-7 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ 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.*

Trials are not distinct to this time of COVID-19. We all encounter various trials throughout life. It is no surprise then that this is one of the major topics God speaks to in scripture. So then, what does scripture have to say about faith amid times of trial? This is just one of the questions I hear people asking or more accurately arguing about during this time. Other questions include: Doesn't faith overcome fear? Doesn't faith involve caring for others? Are the problems we are facing man-made? Is God really allowing all this to happen? The simple answer to these questions (taken at face value without additional subtext) is yes!

Without trying to dig too deep into the mind of God, one thing God's Word tells us is that nothing happens without His permission. This includes humanity bearing at least part of the consequences of our actions. When we turned away and brought sin into the world, our holy and perfect God could have chosen to destroy us and start over. Instead, God in his mercy, chose to allow us to face our own man-made problems and cursed consequences, so that with time He might carry out His plan of salvation and restore all those who would turn back to Him.

What is even more amazing is that God does not just allow these consequences to buy time. Rather, He uses these trials to point us back to him, to refine us, and to take action that will result in the praise and glory and honor due His name. We don't need to fear trials, or suffering, or even death, because God is with us and in control. We know the end of the story and that whatever lies before us God is working all things for the good of those who love Him. This is why **James 1:2-4** is able to say, *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

What does this mean for us in our times of trial now? For starters, if we want to get through this in a way that glorifies God, we need to look first to Him. Are you afraid of economic collapse? Look to God. Are you afraid of illness? Look to God. Are you afraid of failing to care for your neighbor? Look to God. Whatever you are looking for, look to God seek His guidance, and have compassion on those who are trying to do the same.

I am aware that there are a lot of different opinions about the severity of this crisis and what to do about it, but that is part of the trial as well. The question then perhaps is not so much how do we get out of this particular mess as quickly as possible, but what is God trying to teach each of us in this moment... compassion, trust, patience? Where is God's Word speaking to your thoughts and actions?

It is interesting to me that no matter how you look at the situation with COVID-19, it has brought a new perspective to many of the things we value, prioritize, trust, and take for granted. The power of modern medicine, our economic system, our busy schedules, freedom to do as we choose, various forms of convenience, and many other things as well, are not what they appeared to be. People find themselves longing for relationships. Parents find themselves confronted by what it truly takes to educate a child. People find themselves in various forms of need. People find their excuses stripped away and are potentially confronted with the real reasons they have or have not been doing certain things, especially in regards to their faith.

If we find ourselves just wanting to go back to the way things were, or violently criticizing others for not focusing on seeking the solution we desire from the medicine, the financial system, government, or other things we trust most, then it might be time for us to pause and ask a few more questions. In addition to putting our faith firmly back in Him, what might God be trying to refine and produce in us during this time? Is He calling us to slow down? To value and invest in those around us in a new way? To reevaluate our priorities and where we are putting so much of our time?

If God uses times like these to shape and refine us do we really want to just go back to the way things were? Do we want tomorrow to be the same as today? What is God teaching and calling us to do in faith today that He wants us to carry into the future? Moreover, what might God be calling Faith Lutheran church to learn and do amid these trails so that we might better care for and witness to our neighbors? I know these are a lot of questions, but I think they are important ones to ask in times of trial. I pray each of us will continually spend time with God, His word, and questions like these so that He might continue to shape and fill each of us with faith amid life's trials.

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....

On behalf of our church community at Faith we thank you in advance for your support in these trying times. Your offerings are going towards our staff's pay, and utilities to keep our building running. The staff is busy in these difficult times keeping our church and services running smoothly. We hope you will continue your offerings and you can do that in one of three ways:

1. Use snail mail and send to Ben Fryman's office: Faith c/o SFT, 825 E. Lincolnway, Valpo, 46383
2. VANCO—this is an on-line way to pay. Go to www.faithvalpo.org and click on the **Donate** tab in the right hand corner.
3. Drop your envelope in the box at the service on Sunday.

Again, we thank you all for continuing your support; we need to work together. Please stay tuned as we plan ways we can help people as we come out of this quarantine. The Board of Directors and Health and Care teams are staying in contact with the congregation and planning for a safe opening when we will be able to worship and praise God together again.

Stay safe and God Bless - Dorothy Kehe and the Board of Directors



DRIVE IN CHURCH SERVICES WILL CONTINUE THROUGH THE END OF MAY

We will continue to hold church services in the parking lot in the rear of the church through the end of May. The service will be broadcast via localized transmitter to the parking lot area only on channel 99.1. The service will also stream live on our webpage: www.faithvalpo.org.

Faith Amid Trials – Interview Series

Be watching our Faith Lutheran Valpo – Facebook page and YouTube Channel, for devotions and a series of interviews with individuals of Faith dealing with COVID-19 from different perspectives including: individuals who have had the illness, a mental health care worker, and more.

Area Food Banks accepting donations include:

Immanuel Lutheran Church:

1700 Monticello Park Dr., Valparaiso, IN 46383

And

Hilltop Food Pantry:

604 Monroe St., Valparaiso, IN 46383



Coming Soon...

Several of you have expressed a strong desire to be able to once again share in the sacrament of communion. While the power of communion does not rest in its frequency, being able to partake in it as regularly as possible is certainly to be desired. Pastor is currently working out the best way to faithfully and safely make the Lord's Supper available to those who would like to participate, given present circumstances. Please watch the Email chain for when and how this will be made available.

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

John 14:6

Does anyone else think that the apostle Thomas has gotten a bad rap? He just happened to be gone on Easter Sunday from the upper room where the disciples were hiding behind locked doors. Jesus makes an appearance to the disciples, but Thomas isn't there. He is honest when he hears the story, "Unless I see the marks of the nails . . . I will not believe." Thomas wants the same experience as the other disciples, and yet his name is forever linked with the word "doubting".

Earlier in the Gospel of John, Thomas again is completely honest. Jesus is talking with the disciples about heaven and how a place is being prepared for them, "And you know the way to the place where I am going." But Thomas blurts out that they don't know where Jesus is going and how can they know the way? And Jesus responds (and I imagine a voice that is gentle and full of love), "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

I love Thomas. I love his honesty. I love his doubts, for he is just like me and I suspect, just like many of you.

When Thomas doesn't get it, when he doesn't understand, he asks. When he doubts, he admits it. He wants proof. When the way and the truth and the life are confusing and unsure, he blurts out his thoughts. He puts everything on the table. He isn't afraid to tell Jesus that he just doesn't get it. And guess what, Jesus doesn't get angry. He understands.

Thomas can teach us about our relationship with Jesus. When we just don't get it; when our faith is shaky and unsure; when we have more questions than answers, Jesus understands. And when we don't get what is going on, ask. Tell Jesus everything, every little thing that is on our mind and our hearts. Don't hold back. Let Jesus truly become our Way and our Truth and our Life.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

John 20:29b



Micah Nord	May 2
Connie Pilz	May 3
Donna Cawby	May 4
John Stingley	May 6
Sherri Nord	May 8
Marc Nicholson	May 8
Marilyn Lindner	May 11
Jon Beagley	May 12
Thomas Nimtz	May 15
Cora Bernard	May 23
August Nord	May 24
Don Ballard	May 24
David Allwardt	May 29

Resources for Faith

As many of you know we have been working hard to provide you with resources to grow in your faith and stay connected to your Faith Family, during this time of COVID-19 and beyond. **Be sure to be watching the following for information regarding Worship, Devotions, ways to support your Faith Family and community, and more!**

FaithValpo.org

Faith Lutheran Valpo - Facebook page

Faith Lutheran Valpo - YouTube Channel

The Faith Lutheran Email Chain

If you have not been receiving emails and would like to contact or have had difficulty accessing any of the above items please contact the church office

Pastor, Small Groups, our Health & Care Teams, and others have also been working hard to stay connected via:

Phone

Zoom

Prayer Chain

If you need pastoral care or would like additional prayer of contact by another church member please call or email Pastor at (219)242-9139 or pastors@faithmemorial.net

**Faith Lutheran
Church**

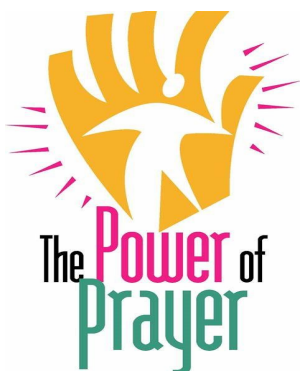
753 N. Calumet Ave.
Valparaiso, IN 46383

Email:
office@faithmemorial.net



**FAITH LUTHERAN
PRAYER CHAIN**

Prayer requests may be
made by contacting
Jan Dixon:
(219) 344-2963 *or*
jdixon7572@gmail.com



FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Drive-in church services at Faith Lutheran will continue through May.
Services begin at 9:00am Sunday morning in the church parking lot (in the back).

Stay in your cars and tune your radio to FM99.1.

Services will also be streamed on our website at www.faitervalpo.org.

PLEASE JOIN US!

Tell everyone who is discouraged,
Be strong and don't be afraid!
God is coming to your rescue..."

Isaiah 35:4

Catholic.org

