

Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**Empowered by the Holy Spirit,
United to Serve**

The Nugget E-News

April 6, 2020

Gold Hill News

LINKS:

The President's Message Gold Hill - Doing God's Work, using our Hands

Blessing to each of you, in our family of God, here at Gold Hill Lutheran Church.

This Crisis we are in is very similar to the Spanish Flu Pandemic, between 1918 - 1920.

During that time most places and events were also closed, including the churches here in Butte. Hopefully with people staying at home, we won't have the loss of life that they had then.

I believe that God will bring us through this, and as a church, we'll be stronger for it. As a church family we are reaching out to one another through phone contacts, the internet, and through the mail. If one of us needs help, other members are stepping forward to address that need.

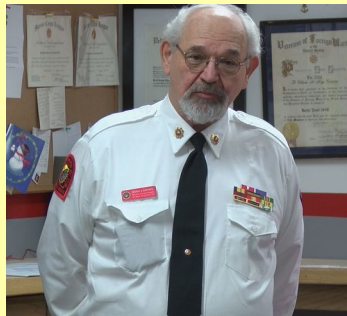
The love of Jesus is alive and well, especially during this Holy Week. We have something now that folks did not have during the Spanish Flu Pandemic of long ago, and that's the ability to communicate, using computers, phones, and the internet.

Pastor Trina, the Church Council, and our Stephen Ministers are all making regular phone calls to keep the congregation connected and to ensure that everyone is okay. So, each phone call is an act of ministry, where we can visit with you and pray with you, if you are comfortable with and feel that need.

Being in contact with each other [through technology] is one of the ways the Lord comforts us in this time of mandated social isolation. I would ask that you receive these calls with open arms and pray for the brother or sister making them.

The other opportunity that we have is to watch televised church services, sermons, bible studies, etc., via our computers and televisions. Annette and I watched a sermon from a pastor in California that Pastor Trina recommended, and a complete church service conducted in Minnesota. We were fed spiritually and felt we had attended church, even though we could not do so in person.

Please look to the Nugget, Gold Hill's weekly e-mail letter, and other church emails for information during this time of social isolation. In God's Hands we will come through this crisis, but it will take time. My prayers are with each of you and I ask that your



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CHURCH COUNCIL 2020

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Team Leader

**Interim Pastor
Trina Johnsten**

prayers be with me and all our congregation at Gold Hill Lutheran Church, our community of Butte, and our suffering world.
May God's face shine upon each of you. Amen.
Mike Lawson, LPA
Gold Hill Lutheran Church
Council President

Montana Synod News



Montana Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Montana Synod is curating information and resources on the Montana Synod Website!

Click [HERE](#) to be taken to the COVID-19 resource page.

There you will find information released by the Synod office, resources, and tools for your congregation.

Update on Synod staff activity:

All Synod Staff travel has been cancelled for the time being.

The Synod Office will be closed to the public starting Monday, March 30th. All Synod staff will be working from home.

If you need to contact the Synod staff, please consider their email or cell phone. That information can be found [HERE](#) on the Synod website.

Words from the Bishop: Staying at Home with God

Dear Fellow Homebodies in Christ,
Yes, we are indeed homebodies right now, ever since Governor Bullock issued the "Stay at Home" directive last Friday. Well, many of us are. Some, those who are essential to the ongoing functioning of our communities, are out doing their work, keeping us safe, caring for our health, providing food on grocery shelves, picking up our trash. Thank you to all those who continue to work and risk your health for our well-being!!



But many of us - at least those of us who have homes -- are staying home as we've been asked and ordered to do. For some this is the most time we've spent in our homes in months, even years. For others staying home with family members we only see occasionally has been an experiment in relationship growth. For those who are introverts, staying home is a dream come true...until it's not anymore. For those who are extroverts, seeing the same walls and people only through a screen is a bit maddening.

One question we might be asking during this stay-at-home time when we're not able to join together in physical, in-person worship is: where is God in all of this? Is God in God's own home safe and sound and watching us from a distance through Zoom or Face-time as we suffer through COVID-19 alone? Or has God left home to somehow punish the group of people we dislike the

most with this awful virus or to punish us for some slight?

The answer to both of those questions is no, absolutely not, no way! The God of steadfast love and endless mercy, the God of forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ does not work that way. God is with us in this time, suffering with and supporting us, loving us in our love for one another and weeping when we don't.

In the Gospel of John, we hear several references to God's home that describe vividly where God is right now. In John 1:14, we hear that the Word - God in Jesus Christ - became flesh and made his home among us. Literally, Jesus pitched his tent in our home. Later, also in John 1:38-39, two disciples ask Jesus where he is staying. And Jesus says "Come and see! Come and see my home, my place, and my way." Also, when Jesus is getting ready to depart, Jesus says, "In my Father's home there are many dwelling places and I am going to prepare a place for you." (Jn 14:2-3) And then, in that upper room where the disciples are staying at home in fear, Jesus breathes the Spirit into us, his followers, again entering our homes to stay. (Jn 20:22)

In these words from Jesus, the Word of God, we see that we are already home with God and God is home with us. God's home is our home and our home is God's home. Because Jesus became incarnate and lived with us, God made us God's own home in this place. Because Jesus breathed the Spirit into us through our Baptism, God made us God's own home in this space. And now Jesus calls us, invites us to dwell with him in his home, following him and his way of "staying at home" by trusting in God (faith) and loving one another in all that we say and do, perhaps even by finding ways to help those who have no physical home. In Christ we are home in God, and God has made a never-ending home in us. Praise be to God!

I would like to close with these home-y words from Henri Nouwen, again from *Following Jesus: Finding our Way Home in Anxious Times* (p. 20-21): "The Lord is my house. The Lord is my hiding place. The Lord is my awning. The Lord is my refuge...my tent, my temple, my dwelling place. The Lord is my home...the place where I want to dwell all the days of my life. God wants to be our room, our house...to be anything that makes us feel at home."

So, stay at home with God these next several weeks until once again we can return in person to our communities and congregations and be at home in Christ together.

May God bless and keep you all in your homes!

Bishop Laurie

Gold Hill Lutheran Church Welcomes You!

Are you looking for a place to connect with a faithful community, grow in faith, and put your talents to work in serving others? Look no further, we welcome you at Gold Hill Lutheran Church! To learn more about the mission and ministry of Gold Hill Lutheran Church, please contact us at 406-723-4242.