

## Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church

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



The Nugget E-News

June 15, 2020

## Gold Hill News

## LINKS:

### Message from Pastor Carrels:

Good Siblings in Christ,

*Our faith can move mountains - Matthew 17.20  
When two or more are gathered in my name,  
I am in the midst of them - Matthew 18.20*

Bottom Line Up Front: I have news for you today! We are coming together to worship with each other again! You are invited to Drive-in Service at Gold Hill on Father's Day, June 21st at 9:30 am.

**On the 10th the Council of Gold Hill voted that we will begin to have "Drive-in Service" in our North Parking lot.** This is a moment for rejoicing. There will be prayer, singing, communion, the whole nine, but... We are asking that you come and park your cars, tune the radio to the proper station, and listen and participate in the car. If you walk to church we will ask that you bring lawn chairs if you have them and sit in the marked areas while social distancing. This will seem strange. I acknowledge that, but it will give us a small amount of "normalcy" in these strange times.

With this new way of worshipping we also need to have some rules.

- 1) Please come to church by way of Placer Street ONLY!!! DO NOT come to church by any other road.
- 2) Please stop at the ushers who will provide you with bulletins, communion cups, and direct you to a parking area.
- 3) Please leave windows rolled up if you intend to sing.
- 4) Please turn off your engines to quell ambient noise.
- 5) Please come with an open heart and realize that this will be new for all of us, including me! So, there will be mistakes and time crunches and weirdness and noises we don't expect and who knows what else, but...
- 6) We will be worshipping God in fellowship and sending you out into the world to do God's work with our hands.
- 7) Ushers, please come in at about 8:45 so we can get you masks, gloves, and line out your jobs.

This has the possibility of being an amazing and fun experience for us all. I know it will not be "what we are used to." But God has a way of

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### CHURCH COUNCIL

May 2020

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**Pastor Marlow Carrels**

prodding us where God wants us to be, so let us take this one tiny step out into the world and away from "normal" church and remember that we can worship God anywhere, anytime. Let us remember that our faith can, and does, move mountains and that we can always gather in the name of God.

With thanks and in hopes of shalom,

Pr. C

AKA Pr. Marlow Carrels

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## Montana Synod News

### **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.

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### **Here are some important reminders for you and your congregations:**

**Please remember** you need to be as prepared to close your worship space as you are to open. An example from the Synod: Grace Lutheran in Worland, WY was open for one week before they had to close again as the town became a hotspot for Covid-19 spread.

**As you begin to gather for worship, please take down names of those physically attending for the purpose of trace contacting if needed.**

**The Synod office** is back to regular office hours as of June 1.

***Also as of June 1 staff travel will resume on a very limited basis, for necessary congregational business only. Staff will meet with small groups such as councils, call committees, pastors, or other committees, except in congregational meetings where a Synod staff member must be present. Staff will not be traveling to conduct worship or other congregational events at this time.***

This policy will be revisited at the end of June.

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## Lutheran World Relief Face Mask Challenge

Many people in developing countries don't have the option of social distancing or frequent handwashing to slow the spread of COVID-19. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now says cloth face masks, along with hand washing and social distancing may help reduce transmission.

We need your help to sew cloth face masks to help us reach men, women and children in vulnerable communities.



After all, Lutheran World Relief was founded 75 years ago to help neighbors around the globe who were suffering during World War II. What will be our generation's legacy during this time of crisis?

[Click here](#) for easy to follow mask instructions and find out how to pledge!



## Words from the Bishop: *Agape Love*

So how has the praying gone this week? In last week's newsletter, I called upon you to pray a **500 Mississippi's Prayer** each day asking the Spirit to transform your life, asking God to open your eyes, ears, hearts, bodies, minds, and spirits to the real suffering of our indigenous, brown and black siblings in Christ.

As you read that, you might have asked, "what about my own sufferings? I have sufferings too. Can't I pray for God to relieve those?" Of course, you can. Placing our own sufferings before God is one part of our prayer life. But it is not the only part. **Another part is praying that God will end the sufferings of your neighbor...and a part of that is praying that God will use you and me to do that difficult work.** And in order for God to use you and me to help change the world so that people of color and the poor and the marginalized can live and breathe and seek the fullness of abundant life that God has promised for them too, we pray that the Spirit will transform us to be people of compassion, empathy, and love.

But this isn't just any love we're called to be transformed into living. This is *agape* love. "*Agape* love your neighbor as you *agape* love yourself." Whenever Jesus and Paul talk about loving God and loving neighbor as the core of all the law and prophets, they are talking about *agape* love. In fact, *agape* is actually the Greek word for love used throughout the New Testament. Whenever you see "love" in the NT, think *agape*.

**What is *agape* love?** It is selfless love, lose yourself for others love, stand in suffering with your fellow human beings love, limit my rights and take on the responsibility Christ gives us to lift up the rights of those who suffer love. We as followers of Christ are called to *agape* love our neighbors no matter who they are. And today especially we're called to *agape* love those whose rights aren't being respected, especially those who aren't being treated with justice, especially right now our indigenous, brown and black brothers and sisters. *Agape* love is the core of following Christ and is seen most fully in Jesus Christ who suffered and died selflessly so that the whole world might be saved from our sin and its never-ending consequences.

**This *agape* love stands against the voices in this world who are telling us that selfishness - focusing only on "me and my own" - is a virtue.**

These voices of selfishness tell us that our only responsibility is to care for our own selves and our own lives. Other lives are to come second, if at all, and are there for me to use for my own gain. These voices tell us that life is one big game of King of the Hill for scarce resources and that helping and loving others is a waste of our time unless it serves the self.

But for followers of Christ, selfishness is never a virtue. In Christ we are called to self-less love. As Christians, we cannot follow both the voices of selfishness in our culture and the voice of Jesus Christ calling us to *agape* love at the same time. For these voices are going in opposite directions. As followers of Christ, we listen to Christ's voice and follow him away from the bandits who would tempt us with selfishness and toward the *agape* love of our Good Shepherd (John 10). "And I lay down my life for the sheep," Jesus proclaims in pure, selfless, *agape* love. That is the love we are called to live.

Even for ourselves we practice a self-less self-love that lives in the promise that each and every person is God's beloved, created in God's image. In that knowledge and truth, we care for and love all whom created, redeemed and empowered, other selves and our own, so that we can take this knowledge of God's love of us to heart and turn it around to love our neighbors.

I close today with an old parable. Jesus was giving a woman a tour of heaven and hell so that she could see the difference between the two. First, they went to a room where a large group of people were sitting around a big

table. In the middle of the table sat giant pots of delicious smelling soup. The people around the table had long spoons attached to both of their hands, so long and straight that they couldn't bend them to reach their own mouths. As Jesus and the woman watched, the starving people bickered, yelled and screamed, raged and fought, bashing each other again and again with their spoons, demanding entitlement to get the delicious soup for themselves without caring about anyone else. The suffering, weeping and gnashing of teeth was horrible to watch. "This is hell," Jesus told the woman.

Then Jesus took her to another room. A large group of people were sitting around a big table with big pots of delicious smelling soup down the middle. Each person had long spoons attached to their hands, so long and straight that they couldn't reach their own mouths. But these people were happy, well-nourished, and filled with joy, laughing with each other and singing songs and celebrating life. "This is heaven," Jesus said.

The woman said to Jesus, "I don't understand. Why are the people here so happy while the others were so miserable when everything in both rooms is the same?" And Jesus said, "Ah, that's simple. Here they learned how to feed each other."

That is *agape* love. Blessed week to you all, Bishop Laurie

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## *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.***