

the sower

... christ + charity + community ...



Looking back, now, I guess it began as an attempt at comic relief. Life was quickly closing in on us. We didn't know what would happen next. "Wash your hands," they told us! "Keep your distance. Stay at home!" So, that first Sunday, I said, "Welcome to day one ... in the wilderness!" And every Sunday morning since, I've started out the same way. Last Sunday, we began week thirty! Who'd've thunk?

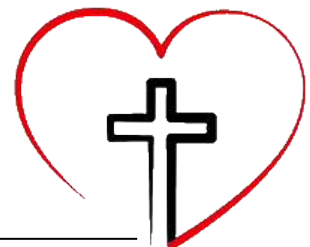
Normally, wilderness refers to the untamed, unsettled places of life. Hostile. Unwelcoming. A place where few go and where fewer remain. A place along the edges. A place beyond. Biblically, though, wilderness is something more. It's the place on the way. The place in between. No longer here; not yet there. But more than that, the wilderness is the place Israel learns to trust! Trust god! Trust each other! In the fear ... in the uncertainty ... in the wilderness, god protects and god provides and god preserves! It's in the wilderness that god leads them to their dreams. Rather, leads their dreams to them!

And that's the perfect description of our time apart. Here! Now! God's calling us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending! God's calling us by paths as yet untrodden! God's calling us through perils unknown! Giving us faith to go out! With good courage! Not knowing where we go! Knowing only that god's hand's leading us! That god's love's supporting us!

It's the dawn of a new day for us! The birth of a new world! This is week thirty in the wilderness! And we – we of all people – have the audacity to call it gospel! We of all people have the nerve to call it grace! To call it love!

i Living, dying, and rising ... TOGETHER!

Bob



WELL, WE MISSED SEPTEMBER ... wish we could say we're beginning a new tradition ... belated newsletters! We're not. But there's a good reason ... Back at the time of the sale of the buildings and grounds to Midland Chin Immanuel Church, we received two invitations. First, we could go on meeting in the fellowship Hall at Midland Chin Immanuel. And second, pastor Bob and Sherice could continue living in the parsonage. Both invitations were for two years, with an option for a third. We agreed. But now, since we're nearing the end of year two, rather than claim the option, we've decided to consider a move.

And the reason for September's "belated" newsletter ... Sherice and pastor Bob already found a place! Cell phones, landline, and emails are all the same. The only thing different is the snail mail address ... It's, now, 1421 Ventura Ave., 79705! South side of Tumbleweed Park, by MARC and the COM. As per its constitutional authority, the congregation Council approved a housing and utility allowance for the final quarter of 2020. But this expenditure won't become "official" until the mission strategy is adopted, at the next annual meeting!



The second piece of the "dance" is a bit more complicated. As a congregation, before we could look for somewhere to go, we had to have some idea as to what, exactly, God's calling us to do! What's the rule of thumb ... form follows function? That, of course, has been our primary effort, ever since signing the papers. Saturday before last, the congregation Council – as well as members of the Council from Christ's Lutheran Church in Odessa – met to nail down a few more of the details. We've, already, identified our core values: **CHRIST + CHARITY + COMMUNITY**. This go-round, we determined six words that describe the vision: **LUTHERAN + REGIONAL + DIVERSE + ACCESSIBLE + UNEXPECTED + SUSTAINABLE**. (Sounds like a sermon series or topic for Advent midweeks) Basically, our emerging ministry appears to be a hybrid – part online and part in-person. That means – as far as facilities go – we can consider two 'centers.' One: an office and studio. And two: a gathering place for in-person events. For the present, neither would have to be "ours." And since Covid-19 isn't going anywhere too soon, we decided our first priority would be the office and studio. We don't need to go into detail, at the moment. But it'd, probably, be good to get together, sometime soon, and discuss the details. Until then, don't hesitate to call pastor Bob or any member of the congregation Council. Here's a list of names and numbers ...

+ the **CONGREGATION COUNCIL** +

samantha schivelbein (210.315-1505)

ken spencer (432.853-6683)

janice taylor (432.661-5920)

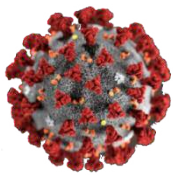
fred behnken (432.212-1496), *treasurer*

jonathan yee (432.352-9387), *secretary*

bob barndt (432.349-7407), *pastor*

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NOW, FIRST THINGS ...



Just got off the phone, a few minutes ago, with a representative from the city of Midland's Health Department. As far as the pandemic goes, Midland has been doing better, however ... we're currently experiencing an "uptick" in cases. When asked what they'd recommend – as far as getting back together "in-person" or continuing "online," – basically, I was told our guess was as good as theirs! I don't know about you, but that didn't encourage me to want to rush getting back together, anytime soon! Needless to say, it's been frustrating. Gloom and doom, one moment ... Sunshine and roses, the next ... So, the congregation Council has decided to take it slow. And, since we're, currently, looking for another place to gather, we thought there was no need to rush. So – for now – we'll keep doing what we've done. Facebook! FacebookLive! Emails! Website! Zoom! And, of course, snailMail! This will, also, give us the opportunity to get more experience with the online part of our ministry! But please, please, please ... if you have any questions, any suggestions, or any comments (both good and bad), let us know! Pastor! Council! Call! Text! Or message on Facebook! And remember ... none of us has ever been through anything like this, before! And none of us has all the answers!

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WORSHIPING IN THE PARK ...

For the past few months, we've, tentatively, been setting aside the fourth Sunday of the month for worship in the park ... since outdoors is one of the lower-risk venues! We were able to do it in June! But unfortunately, haven't been able to get back together, since. July, pastor Bob was out of town. August, the city wasn't taking reservations. September, they were taking reservations, but only for gatherings of ten or less. So, rather than turn anyone away, we just called it off ... again! I'm not sure what the protocols will be, this time. But



we MIGHT – and I repeat MIGHT – do something on Reformation Sunday, October 25th! All we can say is keep your eyes and ears open and we'll let you know!

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NOW, ABOUT THOSE OFFERINGS ... Priorities haven't changed. There are



financial needs all around us. [West Texas Foodbank!](#) [ELCA World Hunger!](#) [ELCA Disaster Response!](#) [ELCA Covid-19 Response Fund!](#) [Lutheran World Relief!](#) And you, probably, know of others! So, if you have to pick and choose where your offerings go, follow your heart!

But if you don't have to pick and choose and are able – financially – to help support the ministry of this particular congregation, as well ... just drop your gift in the mail – to 2705 W Michigan Ave, Midland, TX 79701 – or give us a call and someone will stop by to pick it up ... according to appropriate pandemic protocols, of course! FYI, about GIVE+, the digital giving app we'd been using? Well, it's a little too much for a congregation our size. So, we're no longer using it and are in the process of finding another app ... something a little more user-friendly! So, until we find it, we'll remain – financially speaking – in the 20th century! Any questions, call or text our friendly treasurer Fred Behnken @ 432.212-1496!

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SEVEN MONTHS DOWN, GOD KNOWS HOW MANY TO GO ... You've got the protocols down, by now ... washing hands, keeping six feet apart, wearing masks, crossing fingers, and hoping for the best. Life's kinda fallen into a "new" normal! Church has, too! It's all on the calendar, but here's the "cliff notes" ...

10:30, sunday mornings – worship (Facebook)
sunrise, tuesdays & thursdays – morning blessing (Facebook)
7:00, wednesday evenings – pmStudy (Facebook)



Add midweek devotions, memes, and an assortment of shares throughout the week ... and the gospel's still proclaimed! Even here! Even now! Bulletin inserts, sermons, and devotions are snailMailed, each week, to those who aren't online. If you're not getting your copies, let us know! And of course, there's you! Each of you! All of you! Call each other! Text each other! Email each other! Maybe, even, get together in the park, now and again! Sit! Walk! Enjoy the weather! We might be separate! We might be distanced! But we're never, ever apart! And if you have any ideas or

suggestions as to how we continue being church, don't hesitate to give pastorBob a call or text @ 432.349-7407!

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DEAR CHURCH DISCUSSION GROUP ... has finished up their conversation about *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the United States* by ELCA Pastor Lenny Duncan. A good time – and a challenging one – was had by all! It was our first endeavor entirely on Zoom! And it worked out well. The group'll be taking a few weeks off. But somewhere around Thanksgiving, they're planning on beginning another book – preferably one, also, written by a younger theologian of this church ... like Lenny! We'll let you know the details as they emerge! Until then, any questions, comments, or ideas, PLEASE get in touch with pastorBob. Email: bbarndt@juno.com + call or text: 432.349-7407 + or message on [Facebook!](#)



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THE pmSTUDY'S RECONVENING ... All denominations are not created equal.



They're still church! But they're different. Taking different paths toward different destinations for different reasons. We all read the same book. We all sing the same songs. We speak the same words. But there are times our believing is so different. And that faith has consequences. Consequences for us. But more importantly, consequences for the world around us. So, starting Wednesday evening, October 07 and continuing for the next six Wednesday evenings, we'll spend time together looking at the story of what it is to be a church rooted deeply in the gospel. "Loving in Daily Life!" On FacebookLive! See you then! And again, any questions or comments, talk or text with the pastor ... 432.349-7407! Oh, and remember, if you can't catch it "in real time," it's saved as a video on [our Facebook page](#) and you can watch when it's more convenient!

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ONCE UPON A TIME ... distance was measured in miles. Then, in time. Now ... well, now, there is no distance! When we livestream the amBlessings on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, it's watched by people from across the United States. Last week, Sunday morning's worship – if we can trust Facebook – was, even, shared by someone living in South Africa! How we imagine community is changing! Drastically! Dramatically! So, I wanted to put something in



the newsletter ... for those of you who don't happen to live in Midland ... in Texas ... or even, in the United States ... Wherever you are ... wherever you're from ... join us! Whenever we're online! For worship! For the blessings! The classes! The Book Discussions! We're not there yet, but, maybe, with your help, we can learn how to be a truly "universal" church!

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THE CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETS twice, this month! First, from 10:00am-2:00pm, on Saturday, October 03rd! On the agenda: Next steps in mission! We'll do a potluck lunch, along the way. Then, second, right after worship, Sunday, October 18th, we'll have our usual monthly meeting. The focus will be the annual meeting, at the end of January. Agenda. Nominations. Motions. Mission Strategy (budget). Etc.! Etc.! Etc.! Again, any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact any council member or pastorBob.

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OUR TURN FOR HOSTING FAMILY PROMISE begins with supper, on Sunday, October 18th! Four families! Four adults! Seven kids and a baby! We prepare and provide a supper, each evening, and provide fixin's for breakfast and snacks! If you'd like to help out, text or call pastorBob - 432.349-7407. We'll send out an email, ahead of time, with all the specifics! And thanks for everything!



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IF YOU HADN'T HEARD ... Steve Douglas – son of Max and Marilyn; brother of Michael, Gary, and Lynn; husband of Mary; father of Julie and Jenn – died, Wednesday, September 23rd. Services were held, Saturday, September 24th. Here's a link to his [obituary](#) and to a [video](#) of the service. Rest eternal and light perpetual, brother!

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AND FINALLY, IT'S THAT TIME, AGAIN ... to fall back an hour! Before you go to bed on Saturday, October 31st! Unless, of course, you have technology that does it for you! Enjoy the extra sleep!



**be safe!
take care of each other!
see y'all in november!**



the PROPERs for october

the EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY of PENTECOST, october 04

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

the **READINGS**: Isaiah 5:1-7 + Psalm 80:7-15 + Philippians 3:4b-14 + Matthew 21:33-46

the NINETEENTH SUNDAY of PENTECOST, october 11

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

the **READINGS**: Isaiah 25:1-9 + Psalm 23 + Philippians 4:1-9 + Matthew 22:1-14

the TWENTIETH SUNDAY of PENTECOST, october 18

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.













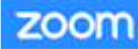


















the **READINGS**: Isaiah 45:1-7 + Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13] + 1st Thessalonians 1:1-10
+ Matthew 22:15-22

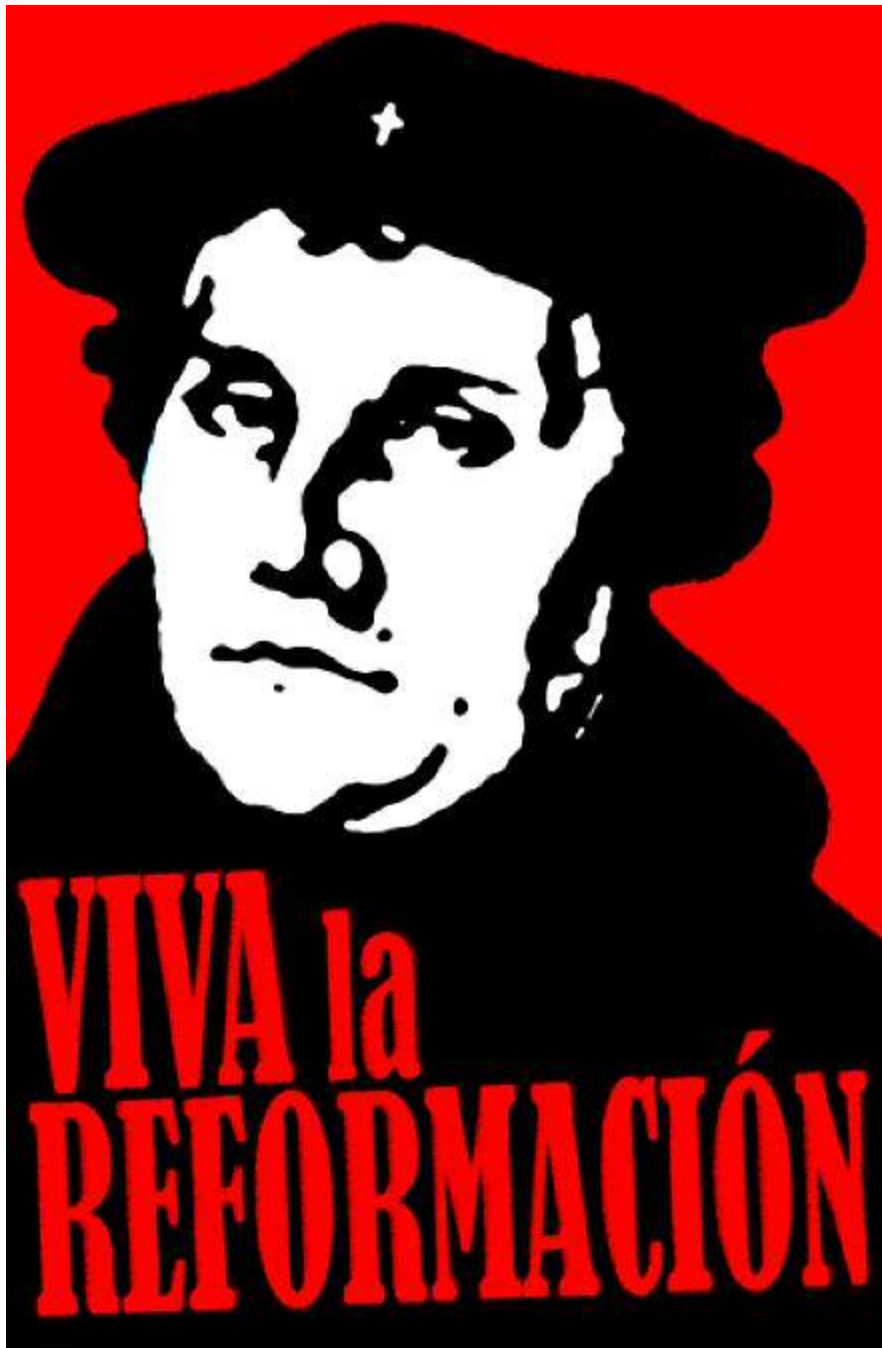
REFORMATION SUNDAY, october 25

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

the **READINGS**: Jeremiah 31:31-34 + Psalm 46 + Romans 3:19-28 + John 8:31-36

octubre 2020

domingo	lunes	martes	miercoles	jueves	viernes	sabado
  4	<i>Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum</i> the word of the lord endures forever			 1  7:42am – amBlessing	2	 10:00am – congregationCouncil
 11 10:30am – worship	5	 6  7:45am – amBlessing 7:00pm – dearChurch	 7 7:00pm – pmStudy	 8  7:47am – amBlessing	9	10
 18 10:30am – worship  12:00pm – council	 <i>misd holiday</i>	 13  7:50am – amBlessing	 14 7:00pm – pmStudy	 15  7:52am – amBlessing	16	17
 10:30am – worship	19	 20  7:55am – amBlessing	 21 7:00pm – pmStudy	 22  7:57am – amBlessing	23	24
25	26	 27  8:01am – amBlessing	 28 7:00pm – pmStudy	 29  8:02am – amBlessing	30	 remember to fall back ...



thesis 62

the true treasure of the church
is the most holy gospel
of the glory and grace of god.



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

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midland lutheran church

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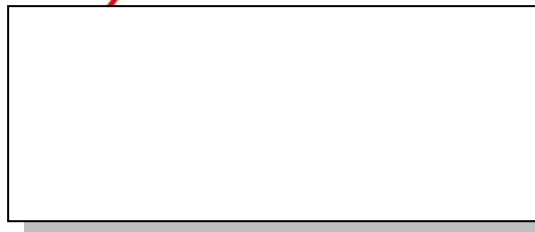
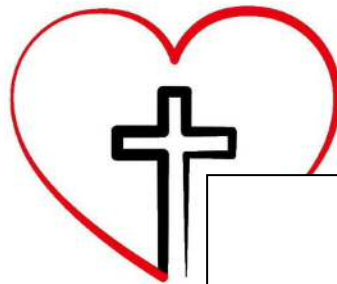
sunday morning schedule: **learning hour @ 9:15 *worship @ 10:30**

office hours: monday-thursday, 9am-noon & by appointment

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midland lutheran church

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october 2020