

Memo

FROM: Kirk Hymes, Executive Director of Finance and Stewardship

RE: A resource letter for congregations created by LCEF East Region Vice Presidents of the English and SELC Districts Pastor David Thiele.

Dear Friends

All of us we are experiencing a pandemic for the first time in our lives. At times we feel overwhelmed and at the same time we know that our HOPE is in Christ alone and His grace for us. The Church has faced plagues and pandemics in the past and history teaches us that the Lord of the church has guided its leaders and followers to be positive witnesses to Christ crucified and risen from the dead for all people.

In the book of Acts is this wonderful section in the second chapter. The day of Pentecost comes to the disciples, Peter preaches to the crowds and three thousand are baptized that day. Then in verses 42 to 47 are these words:

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The response of these new believers is what we have seen over and over again throughout history. The baptized life changes our perspective. **The actions of these new believers caused a sense of favor to permeate throughout the community.** People saw their neighbors acting differently and wondered what had gotten into them. In past pandemics Christians did the same. Today we also have the opportunity.

We are being asked for a time to practice physical distancing from one another but that does not mean we cannot be social. The pandemics of the past did not have the tools we have available to us. I am asking that we all use the gifts the Lord has given to us for such a time as this. The LCMS definition of stewardship is: **“Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God, and God’s family, the church, in managing all of life and life’s resources, for God’s purposes.”**

Here are some things we can do to bring favor to our community and manage life and life’s resources for God’s purposes.

- Make phone calls to church members and neighbors to see how they are doing. Ask if you can pray for them.
- Look for ways to help elderly people. (Using safety precautions of course.)
- Let people know of the Worship and Bibles Studies that are available online through our congregation.

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- Consider reading books to children using facetime or other formats.
- Please pray for the staff of our congregation as we serve our members and community.
- Please continue to support our work with your tithes and offerings.
- If you are unemployed, please let us know so we can reach out to you.
- If you have the means to give an extra gift, we will use it to bring favor to our community.

Please, if you need to talk do not hesitate to call me. I am here for you. If you become ill, please let me know. Let your friends and neighbors know that we are here for them also. Let's not allow fear to dominate our minds and paralyze our hearts. Let's keep living and laughing and serving and enjoying those we love (yes, even if from a necessary distance!). Because the Lord is on the throne, we need not be slaves to fear.
Blessings

Pastor