



Fields of Grace Newsletter

<https://fieldsofgracemn.com>

Vol. 9, Issue 1 | Bernadotte, First & Swan Lake Lutheran

June 2020

Joining together in a new way to worship

The coronavirus has changed everything about being and doing church. We grieve not being together; we lament not sharing in Holy Communion; we await the day when we can stand side-by-side again and sing praise to God.

On the other hand, experiences like this are opportunities for creativity and innovation, for mission and outreach. God's Spirit never stops inspiring us to share God's Word. In that Spirit, Fields of Grace is joining a creative collaboration between St. Paul's and Trinity Lutheran in Gaylord (Pastor Scott Richards), and Scandian Grove Lutheran in Norseland (Pastor Shelly Olson).

Starting on Sunday, June 7, at 10:05 am, we are launching Grounded in Grace (working title, subject to change), a hybrid worship experience that will be broadcast on KNUJ AM 860. Pastor Scott, Pastor Shelly, and Pastor Heidi will share preaching responsibilities. They'll always include something for children—maybe even featuring the voices of children—and they'll showcase local musicians.

Not only will this program serve the six ELCA congregations, it will reach the entire KNUJ broadcast region with a word of grace. In addition to the radio, one can listen/watch on each congregation's Facebook page and/or YouTube, or find the broadcast on the KNUJ web page.

Think of it as a hybrid between Lutheran worship, A Prairie Home Companion, a podcast, and a traditional radio broadcast.

So, gather 'round the radio on June 7 for the inaugural broadcast!

Council Meeting Dates

- First Lutheran Council—Mon., June 1, 5:30 p.m., FLC
- Bernadotte Council—Mon., July 20, 6:00 p.m., BLC

We're looking for YOUR database form

Come on FOG members!

PLEASE fill out those data forms we've been asking for and send them to Trish Gieseke at 52000 Fort Road, New Ulm, MN 56073. All FOG members are being asked to complete a form so that our church records can be updated.

Some may be holding on to the forms because they aren't sure of baptism and confirmation dates. Please send the forms with accurate contact information for now, and we'll work on the dates later. The priority now is to get your contact information.

Another copy of the form is attached to this email.

Please remember the church's needs

Although we're not holding services, church expenses do continue. Please remember the church in these times.

Fields of Grace has set up online giving through Tithe.ly. Information on how to donate online was sent by email some time ago.

In addition, donations can be mailed to these addresses:

BLC: Ruth Klossner, 34085 515th Ave., Lafayette, MN 56054

FLC: Jorja Langhoff, P.O. Box 14, Lafayette, MN 56054

SwLk: JoAnn Gieseke, 29540 State Hwy 4, St James MN 56081

FOG Haiti Mission Project: Brad DeBoer, 31706 601st Ave., Winthrop 55396



Fields of Grace 2020 high school graduates

<u>Student</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>College/Major</u>
Kaylyn Broste	Jeremy & Carmen Broste	NUHS	So. Central/Nursing
Ben Radke	Steve Radke & Judy Radke	Nicollet	SDSU/Agriculture

Usual service times at our churches...

FIELDS OF GRACE WORSHIP SERVICES

Swan Lake Lutheran—8:00 a.m.—Communion the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month

First Lutheran—9:30 a.m.—Communion the 1st and 4th Sundays of the month

Bernadotte Lutheran—11:00 a.m.—Communion the 2nd Sunday of the month

Pastor Heidi's reflection

COVID-19 has disrupted life as we have known it. Nations across the world are taking drastic action to dampen its impact, yet many may find these measures mystifying. People of faith were particularly frustrated by the inability to gather for worship, a ritual which, for most, is an “essential service.”

In this brief reflection I want to say to the Fields of Grace community: have patience, our day will come. This is a time when loving thy neighbor might best be practiced at a distance.

There are very few social situations on the planet more conducive to the spread of the virus than churches, and we have evidence now that churches re-opening are seeing incidence of coronavirus and death of parishioners and priests, even while taking precautions. One can make the argument that worship is as essential as other parts of life (businesses, etc.), but there's a big difference: the economy has an economic motivator, a push factor, that churches simply don't have. We are free to wait, and that freedom becomes a Christian moral responsibility to wait.

Churches can offer most if not all of their spiritual resources via alternative media. We have already been utilizing Facebook and YouTube, as well as the phone, snail mail, and email to stay connected. In another section of this newsletter you can read about an exciting experiment we are part of to broadcast weekly worship on KNUJ AM in partnership with Scandian Grove in Norseland and St. Paul's and Trinity in Gaylord.

Some people are not fans of distributed forms of worship. They argue this is “virtual church” and therefore disembodied—but I am suggesting it is simply “differently embodied” and in a way more embodied even than worship in church buildings.

This has become an excellent moment to emphasize the role of the people of God in the world. We have an opportunity to live our faith in the world by being committed to the common good, expressing concern for the

least, focusing on earth care, articulating grief over injustice, making music and joy, maintaining friendships and love, and promoting a vision for a just society for all. These are the things the Lord requires of us, Micah says, and we can each do them in our unique ways while protecting the health of our neighbors. In fact, the message of protecting our neighbor's health by not gathering for worship helps center such a focus on justice.

Re-gathering for worship now when the elderly and the immunocompromised (myself among them) are asked to stay home compounds the pain of isolation. To know others are gathering in person (receiving communion, singing together) divides the church experientially from itself, with one group required to stay home and distant while others gather.

Remember when Bishop Jon said at my installation service that you won't always like what I have to say? This may be one of those times, but I feel strongly that we must continue to explore and experiment with ways to conduct safe forms of social-distanced sacramental life, service, and worship. As long as these conform to the strictest guidelines from the CDC and prioritize health over supposed “religious freedom,” we will, by trial and error, sort out how to conduct life together during the pandemic.

While we may share and must respect the deep desire to congregate and commune in physical proximity, we hold firm that we remain one in the Spirit through prayer, conversation, and creative service opportunities. God's people survived on manna, patience, and trust until they entered the land of milk and honey. Indeed, they grumbled and struggled but they waited until the time came. We now find ourselves in a wilderness of sorts—a pandemic wilderness—and we are called to love God and our neighbor in new ways, through sacrifice and creativity. We seek to protect the vulnerable not only in our congregation but in the larger community.

To contact Pastor Heidi: 507-766-3471 or pastor@fieldsofgracemn.com

The Bernadotte Ice Cream Social has been postponed to mid- to late summer

JUNE 2020 WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

We may or may not hold services, but these are the people who were on the work lists.

First Lutheran Church

Reader: Sandy Hartley

Ushers: 7-Al Hagberg & Marlin Wendorff; 14-Al Pehrson & Steve Langhoff; 21-Todd Nelson & Tom Brethorst; 28: Arden & Marilyn DeBoer

Liturgist: 7 & 21: Jorja Langhoff; 14 & 28-Brad DeBoer

Coffee Servers: 7-Kris Hagberg & Charlene Nelson; 14-Heidi Hutton & Lindsay Benson; 21-Laurie Larson & Charlene Nelson; 28-Amy Davies & Susie Wendorff

Altar: Traci Abrahamson & Cindy Youngblom

Visiting: open

Bernadotte Lutheran

Greeters: Renee Rasmussen & Andrew Rasmussen

Acolyte: Austin Gieseke

Readers: 7-Rosanne Johnson; 14-Sarah Johnson; 21-Shaun Anderson; 28-Joint Service

Ushers: Rosanne Johnson, Kevin Johnson, Bruce White, Romi White, Konnie Bartels

Communion (June 14): S-Rosanne Johnson, C-Tim Anderson, U-Tim Schulz & Ruth Klossner

Coffee Servers: open

Cash Wise brat stand and Homes for Haiti collections

The Homes for Haiti committee has signed up to run the Cash Wise brat stand Saturday and Sunday, August 22-23 and August 29-30. Several volunteers will be needed for each shift (morning and afternoon). More info closer to the date.

Remember those little “grain bins” you got at church

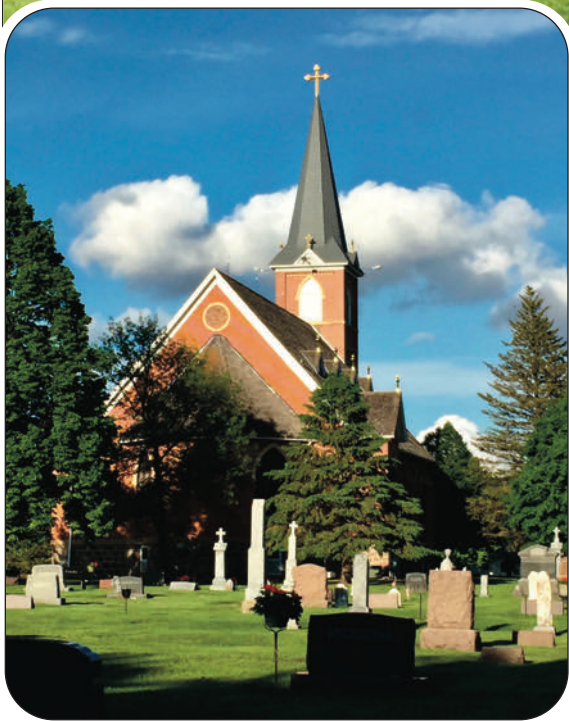
several months ago? They’re to collect donations for Safe-T homes for Haiti. Please continue to put your loose change (or bills) into the bins. The bin bank offerings will be collected by August 1.

A “noisy offering” will also be collected at a church service sometime after we are again able to gather.

Cleaning up at the Bernadotte church park

There’s always work to do. Bruce White and John Nelson were out in the Bernadotte church park last week, trimming volunteer trees out of the hedges and trimming trees. Earlier this spring—the day before Easter—Jerry Oscarson did a lot of work on Clean-up Day. Pastor Heidi has also been busy, cleaning up around the parsonage and church park, including flower and garden beds and planting trees.





Memorial Day weekend at our cemeteries

The sun was shining, a few clouds floated by, the breeze was blowing, and the lilacs smelled so good at Bernadotte the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend.



The skies were overcast Monday afternoon when a number of Lafayette area people gathered at First Lutheran's cemetery for a salute to departed veterans. Organized by Joe Hoffmann of Lafayette, the mini program opened with a prayer, followed by a three-shot cannon salute, and finished with Taps played by Hoffmann.



Harold's mowing crew set up these flags at the Bernadotte cemetery.

