



THE SERVANT

The monthly newsletter of Servants of Christ Lutheran Church, a congregation of The North American Lutheran Church serving the Cedar Rapids area

Meeting at Robins City Hall Community Room, 265 South Second St., Robins, Iowa 52328
Worship: 9:00 am; Fellowship & Coffee: 10:00;
Bible Class and Sunday School: 10:15
Ron Voss, Pastor

*****August 2020

Dear servant of Christ,



You have probably heard the phrase. Maybe you heard it on the evening news, perhaps shared by a radio commentator. I know I have seen the phrase more than once in newsprint. The phrase? “The new normal.” Covid19 has truly “pulled the rug out from under us” in our communities, our states, our nation, globally. While most long to return to “normal,” in the back (or perhaps front) of our minds we question if that will happen. Some long for the good old days; some hope for changes that result in better days. And some crave a revolution.

Families, businesses, schools, corporations, the medical community, the government have all scrambled to adjust, to side-down. And the Church is not worship was suspended; no meet- for me nothing replaces on-site spired by the creativity of pastors at the energy poured into internet Sunday morning communion ten parishioners at a time, beginning at 8:00 am, with a final service at 4:00 pm: a few letters of the alphabet communing each hour. But my thankfulness for the faithfulness also carries some fear of what our sanctuaries will look like when doors again are fully open. Will members return? Will they have become acclimated to “Sunday off?” Or, as I heard from a friend/member in a former congregation, will the attitude be, “Oh, we plan to still worship but we really like worshipping via *streaming*. We can sit at home in our pajamas and drink coffee while watching the service.” A statement like this leads me to share four important elements of worship that I recently re-read in a book by Stuart & Jill Briscoe. For me, these four suggestions define normal, . . . whether old or new.



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Regard Worship as a **Priority** to be Established. Priority is defined as something that is more important than other things. You have a list of things to do around the house but unclogging the sink is a priority. You have errands to run but the gas gauge is on **E** so filling the tank is top priority. Worship must be a priority in our lives. God commanded it: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Noah got off the ark and the first thing he did was build an altar and worship. Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan into the promised land and immediately built an altar of 12 stones, one for each tribe. Although we are grateful for all the “extras” pastors/leaders have done to provide worship and spiritual nurturing during the pandemic, let us not grow casual in our corporate worship of our God of faithfulness.

Regard Worship as a **Privilege** to be Appreciated. I’m guessing everyone reading this has been sick at some point in their lives. I’m also guessing that when the flu/cold/aches and pains passed, you thought, “I can never take my good health for granted. Being healthy is a privilege.” Worship is a *privilege*, a *gift* from God, a *blessing* to be treasured. Hopefully, the pandemic has reminded us what a privilege it is.

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.”



Regard Worship as a **Pleasure** to be Enjoyed. A favorite hymn of many is “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee.” It’s upbeat, you want to tap your foot, makes you want to sing out (even if you are not a Pavarotti). Worship is to be enjoyed because we give thanks to the God who “so loved the world that He gave us His Son.”

Regard Worship as a **Practice** to be Developed. Have you ever heard an elementary school band play? The only listeners not cringing are the parents; after all, it is their “musicians” on display. But let’s be honest: an elementary school band doesn’t make too many “joyful sounds.” Now, school marching band, and it is a practice. Because of years of de-Same with worship. Dragging morning, half asleep, and playing you into an engaged and joyful



listen to the same group as a high different tune! Why? Because of developing their individual talents. yourself to a pew (chair) on Sunday with your cell phone will not turn worshiper.

Things happen. Things change. Upheaval can bring disaster or renewal. We are uncertain, we are scared. But whatever life brings, we are called to worship: to make it a priority, to cling to it as a privilege, to celebrate its joy. Why? Because whether we return to the old normal or adjust to a new normal, we worship the One who is the eternal normal: Jesus Christ, who “is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)

In His love,
Ron

2020 VISION MISSION CONVOCATION

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NALC will be hosting our first ever Virtual Mission Convocation. Join us online to hear from Bishop Dan Selbo on the 2020 Vision, participate in elections and voting, and hear updates from across the NALC.

Friday, August 7, 6-9 p.m. ET
Saturday, August 8, 2-6 p.m. ET
Cost: \$25 (voting delegates), \$0 (visitors)

It's Not About Me by Max Lucado study continues in August

It's all about being #1, top dog, the best, a winner. In this culture that concept is drummed into our heads almost from birth. Even sports for elementary school children no longer award a trophy to the best team/player. Instead everyone gets a trophy. Everyone is a winner, no matter what their skill. From childhood through our adult lives, we walk around cocooned in the cloak, "It's all about me!"

Best-selling author Max Lucado turns this lie on its head . . . the one that says, "It's all about me." Instead he sets our sights on a greater goal, a goal outside ourselves. A God-centered life works. And it rescues us from a life that doesn't.

Join us on Sundays following worship as we study, grow, and refocus.

I am a
Child
of
God
John 1:12

August Mission Giving

\$500: The
North
American
Lutheran
Church
General
Fund

