

# From Pastor's Desk

May 2020

Dear “Sheltered at Home” Fellow-Redeemed” of Zion,  
Most of us did not see this coming, did we?! To say that the pandemic is scary is an understatement, isn't it? Now our worries are multiplied a hundred-fold because of the pervasive impact of shutting down much of our society.

How are we to react to this tragedy? What are Christians supposed to learn from this state of affairs? Some folks are saying that we don't deserve this plague. The Egyptians no doubt felt the same, and they had 10 of them to contend with.

Some are saying that this world-wide situation is God's judgment upon the manifold sins of our culture, not just here in the United States, but in most countries around the globe.

Yet, we know from God's Word that if we received what we deserved for our much sinning, we wouldn't have to worry about the plague. We would be dead already.

But God moves us to greater trust in times like these. We confess our sins, receive the blessed assurance that we are forgiven, and then seek to be of service to others, even though it may seem like too little, too late. And we remember that trusting in God's care for His people extends over, above, and beyond the troubles of these days, trusting in His promises for an eternal disease-free future.

Meanwhile, we endure all things with the help of God, trusting that even this evil disease will be resolved for good in due time. So, chin up, Brothers and Sisters! God is still God, and we are the people of His pasture!

Blessings and Good Health to All!

Pastor Quarantine 😊



### Psalm 19:1-14

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of

## Baptism Does It All

Wednesday of Lent 3  
18 March 2020

Baptism is the universal sacrament. It gives entry to the kingdom of Christ. And whom does our Father not want in the kingdom of His Son? Our heavenly Father has placed no barriers of age or status upon the gift of baptism. If age would be a barrier for baptism, what would keep us from applying other barriers to those seeking the gift of baptism? If age puts a limit on baptism, what would keep us from applying other limits? Of course, our Lord does not place limits of age on the sacrament of baptism. He says, "Go, baptize all nations." Who exactly would that command leave out? Who could not be included in the designation "all nations?" Whom has our Lord forbidden us to baptize? If age limits baptism, wouldn't it be conceivable that other barriers, such as social status, just as easily prevent those who are otherwise eligible to be baptized? While it might seem unlikely to us, the early church struggled with precisely these questions.

How easily we humans apply our standards to God, as though He were limited by our conceptions. We may not limit the universal applicability of the sacrament of baptism based on these faulty conceptions. Those in the early

the LORD is sure,  
making wise the simple;  
the precepts of the  
LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart; the  
commandment of the  
LORD is pure,  
enlightening the eyes;  
the fear of the LORD is  
clean, enduring forever;  
the rules of the LORD  
are true, and righteous  
altogether. More to be  
desired are they than  
gold, even much fine  
gold; sweeter also than  
honey and drippings of  
the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is  
your servant warned; in  
keeping them there is  
great reward.

Who can discern his  
errors? Declare me  
innocent from hidden  
faults. Keep back your  
servant also from  
presumptuous sins; let  
them not have dominion  
over me! Then I shall be  
blameless, and innocent  
of great transgression.

Let the words of my  
mouth and the  
meditation of my heart  
be acceptable in your  
sight, O LORD, my rock  
and my redeemer.  
(ESV)

church who treasured the celibate life began to discount the importance of baptism, delaying it because they thought so highly of their own virginity. Gregory Nazianzus will have none of it. He explicitly argued that baptism was applicable in every human situation. This is certainly the teaching of the apostle Paul: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" ([Gal 3:27-28](#)). Perhaps, we could even add here: "neither young nor old." Whether we are young or old, slave or free, male or female, married or single, etc. baptism puts us into Christ. That "putting into" is a permanent resource for our Christian life. If we live in Him, we will live in His way.

Some years ago, I had the pleasure of sharing our holy faith with a Kurdish man who, suspicious of Islam, asked good questions about the faith of Christ. I had such a joy to be able to say that Jesus is our way to the Father. Christianity is not a path, at least not in the way in which a road map charts a path. No, Christianity's way is a person: Christ Himself. Christianity is not a way of living. No, it is a life that is Christ's own life. He is your life and you are hidden in Him ([Col 3:4](#)).

Christianity is not a truth. No, it is the truth in the flesh of God's own Son. The man heard these words with tears in his eyes. "Is this your God?" He said wonderingly. Just recently this man called me to tell me that he had converted to Christianity! He wanted me to know how much he appreciated my witness to the grace and mercy we have in Christ.

Baptism sets us into the one who is the way, the truth, and the life. This is who we are because we are in Him, not because we follow a prescribed pattern of life. Baptism gives us Christ and places us in Him, and provides resources in whatever station of life we may find ourselves; whether we be single, married, young, old, male or female. We are adorned with Christ and His righteousness. We are kept holy in the chastity of marriage. We are maintained in the righteousness of Christ in the single life. Baptism does it all.

Rev. Dr. Scott R.  
Murray  
Memorial Lutheran  
Church



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## Gregory Nazianzus

“Are you single? Be sealed by the purification of baptism. Make this the sharer and companion of your life. Let this direct your life, your words, every member, every movement, every sense. Honor baptism, that it may honor you; that it may give to your head a crown of graces and with a crown of delights shield you.

“Are you bound by wedlock? Be bound also by the seal of baptism. Make it dwell with you as a guardian of your continence, safer than any number of guards or doorkeepers. You not yet wedded to flesh? Do not fear this consecration. You are pure even after marriage. I will take the risk of that. I will join you in wedlock. I will dress the bride. We do not dishonor marriage because we give a higher honor to being single. I will imitate Christ, the pure bridegroom, since He both worked a miracle at a wedding, and He honors wedlock with His presence ([Jn 2:1-11](#)). Only let marriage be pure and unmingled with filthy lusts. This only I ask; receive safety from the gift of baptism and offer the oblation of chastity in its due season, when the fixed time of prayer comes round, and that which is more precious than business. And do this by common consent and approval. For we do not command, we exhort. We would receive something of you for your own profit and the common security of you both ([1Co 7:5](#)).

“In a word, there is no state of life and no occupation for which baptism is not profitable. You who are a free, be curbed by it. You who are a slave be made of equal rank. You who suffer grief, receive comfort. Let those who are glad be disciplined. Let the poor receive riches that cannot



be taken away. Let the rich be made capable of being good stewards of their possessions. Do not play tricks or lay plots against your own salvation. Even if we can delude others, we cannot delude ourselves. For to play against oneself is very dangerous and foolish.”

**Gregory Nazianzus, *Theological Oration*, 40.18**

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**Prayer**

Lord Christ, You have given us an inexhaustible treasure in our baptism because it sets us into Your death and resurrection. Help us to depend on this treasure because it puts us in Your death and resurrection. Amen.

For clement weather, in thanksgiving to the God who sends the rain and the sun

For all those who despise baptism because of its apparent weakness, that the Lord by his word might lead them into the truth

For all who work in the field of medicine, that they might provide cures and vaccines for the coronavirus and that those who care for the stricken would be given health and strength

# May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>26</b></p> <p>Paul and Dawn Zerkel's anniversary</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>27</b></p> <p>Abby Bruce's birthday Aimee Pritchard's birthday Nancie Klein's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>28</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>29</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>30</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Paul Zerkel's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>3</b></p> <p>Don and Cindy Pritchard's anniversary</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>5</b></p> <p>Anna Thompson's birthday Ember Wieland's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>6</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>7</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>8</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>9</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>10</b></p> <p>Dawn Zerkel's birthday Katrina Mahler's baptism Marie Braker's birthday Skylor Bowman's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>11</b></p> <p>Barbara Hand's baptism Grace Bowen's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>12</b></p> <p>Tristen Tewes's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>13</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>14</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>15</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>16</b></p> <p>Lloyd Fraase's baptism</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>17</b></p> <p>Landon Durham's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>18</b></p> <p>Joyce TeRonde's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>19</b></p> <p>Joyce and Lloyd Fraase's anniversary</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>20</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>21</b></p> <p>Sierra Brandt's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>22</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>23</b></p> <p>Glen Brandt's baptism Paul Zerkel's baptism</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>24</b></p> <p>Shannon Sparling's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>25</b></p> <p>Mason Curry's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>26</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>27</b></p> <p>Brooklyn Wieland's birthday Ember Wieland's baptism Stacy Stremsterfer's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>28</b></p> <p>Jeanette Ealey's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>29</b></p> <p>Carol Kiel's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>30</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>31</b></p> <p>Abby Bruce's baptism Anna Bruce's baptism Dawn Zerkel's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Blake Hermes's baptism Cindy Saylor's baptism Sharon Krohe's birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b></p> <p>Raleigh Rennecker's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>3</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>5</b></p> <p>Madison Maro's baptism</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>6</b></p> <p>Elliott Schneider's birthday</p>

