

Cross CURRENTS

DRAWN TO JESUS

February will be the twelfth consecutive month during which our nation will be affected by COVID-19. Twelve months! For a whole year we have had to adjust to new ways of life. These adjustments have stretched people's patience, use of technology, budgets, and so much more. It hasn't always been easy.

Whenever we get pulled in unexpected directions (especially if it's a direction we don't want to go), we also get drawn to things which we find familiar, assuring, or relaxing. Even though COVID-19 took away many creature comforts for a while, there still have been many things to draw our attention away from social distancing, masks, and the like.

So, the twelve month point of COVID-19 life is a good time to reflect on the things we've felt drawn towards. And as it works out, this twelve month point overlaps with the start of the season of Lent. Thus, we have double reason to be reflective. Lent is about examining our sinfulness and sins, letting the Spirit work a change of heart and

mind within us, and following Jesus to his death on the cross.

But what questions should we ask to examine ourselves? Let's start with this one—have the things we've let into our lives the last twelve months drawn us closer to Jesus or farther from him?

Lent culminates with Christ's crucifixion, and Jesus declared, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). The devil, however, wants the opposite to happen. He wants to draw your attention away from Christ crucified. So, he draws your attention to all the opinions about the pandemic. He draws your attention to all the anxiety and anger associated with it. Then, when you're sick of focusing on that, he draws your attention to earthly distractions so that you can forget about the anger and anxiety for a moment. The devil draws our attention back-and-forth from this to that, but never to Christ and him crucified.

Why? Because the devil knows that when you are drawn to Christ, he is

"I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

—John 12:32 (NIV)



driven out. That's because when you are drawn to Christ, you gain eternal life. When you are drawn Christ, you will go to where he is—heaven. When you are drawn to Christ, you have spiritual light which guides your walk through life.

So let us be drawn to Christ this Lent! We will have eight special midweek worship opportunities so that we can be drawn to him through the Word. We will offer Holy Communion in worship five times so that we can be drawn to him through that sacrament. We will continue to offer services and devotions online, Bible study on Sunday, and other study opportunities through the week so that we can be drawn to the light of Jesus' teachings.

All those are offered not to distract us from COVID-19; there are plenty of other things that can do that. They are offered to pull us closer to forgiveness, to eternal life, and to spiritual light. They are offered so that the Spirit can draw us closer to Jesus, our Savior who was crucified for us.

After twelve months of social distancing, getting closer to Jesus sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

In Christ,

Pastor Aaron M. Voss



CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

This fall, years' worth of work will culminate in the publication of a new hymnal. This new hymnal will have the same name as our current hymnal—*Christian Worship*—as it will serve the same purpose—to provide resources to cultivate a rich worship life in churches, schools, and homes.

This new hymnal is designed as a singer's book; efforts were made to make it accessible, functional, and beautiful for worshipers. It contains familiar, time-tested hymns and new favorite hymns. Included in the hymnal will also be orders of service and Psalm settings, like our current hymnal, along with a variety of prayer resources and the Small Catechism.

An entire suite of resources is being published to accompany the hymnal.

One of those resources is the *Psalter*. This book will contain all 150 psalms. For each of those psalms, the text will be printed in its entirety, there will be a prayer based on the psalm and commentary written by Martin

Luther, an explanation of the psalm's use in church history, and, finally, alternate musical settings will be provided. While the *Psalter* will provide rich variety in worship, it is also a tremendous resource for personal devotional use.

Our Worth to Him: Devotions for Christian Worship is written for use in the home. It will contain meditations on specific aspects of our worship services.

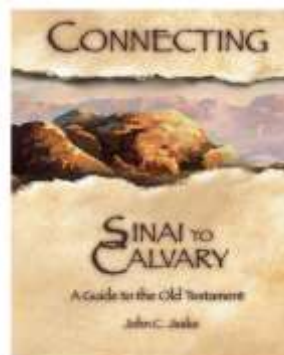
There are several more publications and technology tools that will aid pastors and musicians in planning for worship services.

Much more information about the hymnal and accompanying resources can be found at christianworship.com.

Living Water plans to purchase both the hymnal and the *Psalter* for the pews for use in worship. You will have the opportunity to purchase the new *Christian Worship*, the *Psalter*, and *Our Worth to Him* through church. More information on ordering will be in the weekly announcements.

CONNECTING SINAI TO CALVARY

Ever had questions about the Old Testament? It can be hard to connect the New Testament to Old Testament language, worship life, and prophets. Soon, we'll begin a new Sunday Bible study entitled, "Connecting Sinai to Calvary." This new series is scheduled to start February 14. It will help guide your understanding of the Old Testament and of your gracious God. This series will use a book to guide discussion, so please contact Pastor Voss to secure your copy. Even if you cannot attend Sunday morning Bible class, this is a worthwhile book for your personal library. Each book costs about \$20, but speak to Pastor if cost is an issue.



DATES TO NOTE

Wednesdays, February
17–March 24, 6:30 pm,
Midweek Lent Worship

March 4–Blood Drive

Thursday, April 1–Maundy
Thursday

Friday, April 2–Good
Friday

Sunday, April 4–Easter

*Come, my soul with every care; Jesus loves to answer prayer.
He himself bids you to pray And will never turn away.*

–CW 409 v. 1

PRAYER

Father, hear as we pray:

- For all those who have been affected by COVID-19 over the past twelve months – those who were or are sickened by the virus, those who grieve a COVID-related death, those who suffer mentally or emotionally from lifestyle changes, and those who face financial hardship. Be their gracious provider and comfort them with your promises in Christ.
- For ourselves, that we be patient and loving to all who feel anxious or angry about the past year.
- For those in our congregation who are experiencing health issues, that you be their Great Physician and send your Holy Spirit to be the Comforter in their distress.
- For our spiritual walk this Lent, that through your law you convict us of our sins and through your gospel you comfort us of the forgiveness Christ won. Through Word and Sacrament draw us closer to you.
- For opportunities to share Christ with others so that many more might be drawn closer to him.

We pray these things because we trust in your mercy through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



CONTACT US

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The Hands of the Passion

MIDWEEK LENT WORSHIP

Wednesdays,
February 17, 24
March 3, 10, 17, 24
6:30 pm



6525 Milwaukee Avenue
Wind Lake, WI 53185

livingwaterlutheran.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday - 8:30 & 10:30 am

Monday - 7:00 pm