

# LIVING WORD

## Weekly Update

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

### Update – May 5, 2020

There are three things in today's update that we want you to be aware of regarding our ministry together at Living Word. First of all, we want to remind you that Thursday is the National Day of Prayer. There are two ways that you can participate in that with us this Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. You can join us online for a Prayer & Praise Service at 6:30PM. You can text in prayer requests or add a prayer request in the chat section of the live-stream and towards the end of the service we'll pray over all the prayer requests that come in during the service. The other way to participate in the National Day of Prayer is to sign up for a 30-minute prayer slot beginning at 12:00AM on Thursday. We hope to have a 24-hour period covered by at least 48 people praying for 30 minutes each! If you want to be one of the folks praying, you can sign up at the following link. <https://signup.com/go/QUwaLwB> We are looking forward to this day of prayer because we know how powerful prayer is and the incredible effect it has on the world! We hope you can join us for prayer and praise.

Secondly, we are watching the stay-at-home orders closely. It appears that things are changing somewhat, and we are continually discussing what these changes mean for Living Word, particularly in terms of its impact on how and when we can worship together again in person. We don't know the Governor's plans, but we are working through every scenario we can imagine and putting various options together for returning to pre-COVID worship and ministry. We know that we will be changed by the recent events in good and hard ways. One positive through it all has been the fact that our church has grown. People are joining us in worship and in Bible Studies from all over the nation and even the world! That is exciting and challenging. The pastors and staff, along with leadership, will consider the best ways to be the church as new orders from the Governor come out. We will make the best decisions that we can considering the recommendations from the CDC, the Minnesota Department of Health and the Governor's orders. We know that many of you are wanting to move past all this and get to a place where we can encourage each other in person. We look forward to that day too. Please know that we are having lots of conversations and considering various creative ways to be church and worship together even as we continue to follow the guidelines that are set out for us.

Finally, the third thing – Greg Pavek's pastoral internship. Greg is at a place in his seminary studies that require him to do a pastoral internship. We have discussed this and its implications for Living Word on several occasions. The biggest impact is how this affects our youth program. Greg has already shared with the youth that he will be stepping down as Youth Minister mid-Summer and focusing his attention on being a full time Intern Pastor at Living Word until year end. At that time Greg will have completed the internship, be close to finishing seminary and ready for a call to pastoral ministry. Greg has been an integral part in building up the youth program to what it is today. God has blessed this ministry and our church through it. We want to ensure that we continue to serve our youth and grow our program. These last months have been difficult for all of us. Our youth have had to endure a TON of changes. They are stressed too, and we want to make sure we continue to meet their needs and address their struggles by ensuring that our program continues. To this end, church council has decided to move forward with hiring a new youth minister. Ideally, they would like to coincide the new hire with Greg's move towards Intern Pastor. Leadership also felt that having a youth minister in place mid-summer would allow that person to connect with kids prior to the school year beginning, thus giving them some time to create relationship and consider the program's direction for the year ahead. We are excited about what God is doing and we are trusting in His provision.

Two questions that might arise – can we do this financially and what will happen to Greg when he is done with seminary? In terms of our finances, after informing the church of our needs people responded in incredible ways. Thank you. Thank you. There will be more communicated regarding our financial health in the days and weeks ahead as we keep you informed on these matters. In terms of what Greg will do after he finishes the Pastoral Internship portion of his schooling is dependent upon where we are at as a church and his sense of call. There is much to be discussed on this topic. The long and the short of it is this – Greg continues to feel called to Living Word and we are looking at our needs, health and pastoral options as we all pray through where God is leading us. We will update the congregation more as we discuss and pray through the various scenarios that may come out of the opportunities that lie ahead. God is faithful. God is good. We are praying, trusting and excited about all that God has in store for Living Word.

## Community

- Gatherings: No small groups, Bible Studies or activities meeting on location at Living Word until further notice.
- Sunday Worship Services at 10:30AM: Sunday Worship Services will continue to be available via live stream at 10:30 AM on our YouTube channel LivingWordMarshallMN. [www.youtube.com/user/LivingWordMarshallMN](http://www.youtube.com/user/LivingWordMarshallMN)
- Sunday Worship Service Replays: Marshall Studio 1 TV (Charter channel 180, Vast channel 17) at 11:00AM Tuesday and 5:00PM Wednesday; Cottonwood Access TV (Charter/Spectrum channel 180) at 7:00 PM Monday
- “2 Minute Faith Break” Videos: Shared most week days via email, Facebook & YouTube.
- Community Life Groups: Active members and active non-members have been assigned to a Community Life Group consisting of about 10 households with one assigned leader. Please let us know if you don't hear from somebody or would like to be added to a group. This will help us all stay connected, check in with every member, receive prayer requests and answer questions.
- Children & Youth: Greg Pavek or Jaci Peterson will be connecting with you each week regarding Bible Education, Ignite and Confirmation via email, text, Zoom, etc. This information has also been added to the Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry areas on the website.
- Young Adult Online Bible Study (hosted by Greg Pavek): Gather online via Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 7:00PM. Please contact Greg if you have questions. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/784884197>.
- **FINAL SESSION THIS WED, 5/6/20 - Wednesday Evening Online Bible Study “Overcoming Anxiety During COVID-19” by Jonathan Pokluda (hosted by Pastor Kelly)**: Gather online via Zoom on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. The study speaks words of comfort and wisdom, to help Christians navigate the areas of life COVID-19 is affecting. During this series you'll be encouraged in how to overcome anxiety in these troubling days and explore ways you can remain faithful to God and to others. Please contact Pastor Kelly with questions. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/2698640500?pwd=SHg1Wm5HRmszSmZEWTVZaVRnUCtadz09> Meeting ID: 269 864 0500, Password: 325350
- Thursday Morning Online Men's Bible Study: Gather online via Zoom on Thursdays at 6:30AM. All men are welcome to join the call to read and study scripture together. Please contact Pastor Dave with questions. Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/2698640500?pwd=SHg1Wm5HRmszSmZEWTVZaVRnUCtadz09> Meeting ID: 269 864 0500, Password: 325350
- LWLC Women's Bible Study – “Philippians”: Began May3rd. Attention ladies! You are invited to be a part of a 40-day online interactive Bible Study via a Facebook group called. As we walk through this unknown time, unable to meet face to face, we can still be a community that learns and grows together. We will walk through the book of Philippians together by taking a close look at Paul's letter and dig deep into scripture, one chapter at a time. When Paul wrote this book, he was in prison (house arrest) and dealing with hardships, just like many of us are dealing with right now, and Paul still found joy, hope, and peace in his circumstances. Join us as we slowly work through each chapter and dissect the scriptures to more fully understand God's Word together. We encourage you to invite the women in your life to join you in this study, too! Please contact Patty Ebnet if you have questions: (507) 829-0815, [pjebnet95@hotmail.com](mailto:pjebnet95@hotmail.com) or join the Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/235732441118878/?ref=share>
- Weekly Updates: We will send updates like this via email each week. Please look for them, read them and share the information with others.
- “Joy in Motion Christian Exercise”: Living Word member, Erin Koch, has posted her exercise videos with scripture meditation and other interesting information on her website [www.joyinmotion.net](http://www.joyinmotion.net)

## Pastoral Care/ Prayer

- If you or somebody you know needs physical, emotional or spiritual support please reach out to us.
- Please reach out to us with prayer requests! We want to pray with and for you. Email or call us or submit a prayer request via the prayer ministry link on our website <https://www.livingwordmarshall.org/prayer-ministry/> .
- “Our Daily Bread” daily devotional booklet - Please let us know if you'd like us to mail one to you.
- RightNow Media & other ministry resources - Now is a great time to spend additional time studying God's Word, watching online Bible studies, etc. Our website has a link to register for a free RNM account and numerous other ministry resources, Bible reading plans, etc. <https://www.livingwordmarshall.org/resources/>
- We invite you to join in a nationwide call to prayer from 8:00-8:01PM daily.

## Encouragement/Devotion – May 5, 2020

## Read: Luke 8: 26-39

It was about this time of year in 2015 when God started moving in both Erika's heart and mine for our call to ministry. We were living in Sioux Falls at the time and started asking the question of what success would look like in our marriage. Both Erika and I had been involved in different types of ministry throughout college and we knew that we were called into ministry in our future, but we were trying to stick to God's timing and not our own. We had been married for 6 months and both knew the time was approaching faster than we had foreseen. I could share many stories of the process of coming to Living Word, but our space on this update doesn't allow. So, I'll make an abrupt jump to the point of the story of our second interview at Living Word. We felt that the first interview went well and part of the second interview was to lead the interview committee in a devotion. The Lord led me to the scripture referenced above. And since that devotion was used during our first transition into Living Word, I thought it would be appropriate to come back to it again for this transition too.

Jesus pulls up on the boat and is greeted by an unpleasant demon possessed man. He heals the man, casts the legion of demons into a herd of pigs and they run off into the sea. The herdsmen ran off to the city to tell what they saw. Then in verse 35 it says; **“<sup>35</sup> Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.”**

The peoples fear caused them to tell Jesus to get back in his boat and leave. I can't help but think of all that they lost out on. Jesus had such great plans for that city. How often have we wished Jesus was physically present with us. How often I've desired to sit down next to Jesus. Yet these people from the city said, “GO!”, and Jesus honored their request. **“<sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasene's<sup>[f]</sup> asked Jesus<sup>[g]</sup> to leave them; for they were seized with great fear.”** Fear was the primary driver of their decision. Now, there is certainly no doubt that being close to Jesus is terrifying at times. I'm sure Jesus has brought us all great comfort at times yet has brought about change in your life that hasn't always been comfortable. God is good, but good and comfortable do not always overlap.

In these uncertain times much has been made about fear. Is fear leading us or is faith? This is hard to discern at times. Having a mixture of common sense and faith is probably where we need to be but most of us jump from one ditch to the other. As the church transitions into having an intern pastor and bringing on a new youth minister, I'm glad that fear isn't the leading motivation. From an outside perspective, it doesn't totally make sense to do this transition now, yet from an internal perspective, it doesn't make sense not to. Fear has never led the decision making of Living Word and I pray that it doesn't lead you in your decision making these days either. A healthy dose of fear is good. God has given us this ability to protect ourselves and those around us. To not throw caution to the wind so that our neighbors are harmed are led into unhealthy doses of fear. We need to use our heads and common sense during this time. We need to respect others and the governing authorities, yet our primary motivation cannot be fear but faith.

This may look different from one person to the next and I encourage you to live out your Christian freedom according to your discernment and the Word of God, but I don't want to miss out on opportunities in front of us because of fear. I don't want to tell Jesus to get back in the boat until we're a little more comfortable and stable. God is faithful, and although this time and this transition may not be comfortable, I know that it will be good because the God that is leading this church and our lives is good.

In Christ ~ Greg Pavek, Youth Minister/Intern Pastor

**How to Reach or Connect with Us** - Please contact staff via email or cell phone listed below:

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LivingWordMarshallMN>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LivingWordMarshall/>

Instagram for Youth Ministry: Ignite56258

*God's Peace ~ Living Word Pastors, Staff & Leadership*