

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
LCMS

CONTENTMENT



JUNE 2020 PUBLICATION
VOLUME 13 ISSUE 6

Redeemer *Reflection* Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

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REDEEMER REFLECTION

From the Interim Vacancy Pastor's Desk

*"You who have no
money, come, buy, and
eat...Give ear and come
to Me; hear Me, that
your soul may live!"*

Isaiah 55:1, 3

Dear Family in Christ,

Hopefully, COVID-19 is waning, quarantines gradually will be lifted, folks will be able to get back to work and school, along with visits with family and friends. Maybe, just maybe, we'll be able to start to get back to our lives in a much more "normal" way – at least we hope so!



What a joy for a moment, to put the hard news of pandemics aside, and focus on the true blessings our awesome God continues to bestow upon



us! Look around! Spring has arrived in full bloom at last! Buds are exploding on the tree branches, the ground has thawed out at last, and there's freshness in the air (despite the virus) that's been missing for months. "Bargain Hunters" are probably getting excited, because even though a little later than usual, the Garage and

Rummage Sale Season most likely is close at hand.

Speaking of bargains, did you know that the Christian church offers the greatest "bargain" of all? It offers the forgiveness of sins, through our Lord Jesus Christ. It offers security – the assurance that God will take care of us! It offers strength for every trial and trouble that comes our way. It offers hope, during every dark cloud and storm. It offers eternal rest with Christ, in our heavenly home. He certainly has given us those things and more these past several weeks as our lives have been turned upside-down. And ALL OF THIS IS FREE! SUCH A DEAL! Seriously, all that Christ has to offer, costs us nothing, for He bought it for us by His death on the cross and glorious resurrection!

You know, when we consider Jesus' deep and abiding love for us, the tremendous price He paid for our lives,

and the life of His church, it should inspire us to cherish the times we come together as His family in worship. I know we have all quickly grown to appreciate the fellowship and support worship “up front and personal” provides – sadly, it’s something we all too often take for granted! And if we really know a “bargain” when we see it, when we are able to return to our pews and our forever family here at Redeemer, we will want to be faithful in our attendance to hear the word of life and receive our Lord’s precious supper often. Remember, God’s Word teaches us in Psalm 84: *“Blessed are those who dwell in Your House, O Lord, for they are forever praising you!”* Oh, how we have missed being together in person, gathered around His word and sacraments.

But even through it all, our awesome God has shown us that the church is not just four walls around and a roof over us – God is present with us ALWAYS, despite all the obstacles Satan throws at us. His strong Word will always scatter the darkness and gloriously speak to our hearts and very souls. What gifts of contentment and hope our loving God continually bestows on us throughout all the “ups and downs” of life.

May our prayer for this beautiful month of June be:
 “Dear Savior, I can never repay You for Your awesome love and mercy. Help me to express my gratitude and praise by gathering around Your mighty word regularly, wherever and however it is offered, for it’s there where I may continually give You praise and thanks, along with all whom we are privileged to call brother and sister.

Have a blessed, Spirit-guided month with the Lord.

Peace and love in Christ, our Risen Lord and Savior!

Pastor Bassett

THE SPRING OF OUR DISCONTENT

by Monica VanDerWeide

Years from now, when we look back on this time, we will likely label the spring of 2020 as the spring of our discontent (to paraphrase Shakespeare). Perhaps we may have to extend that description to include the summer of our discontent, and maybe even the year of our discontent. Judging by the protests in recent weeks at state capitols across the nation, ours is a country of discontent.

Contrast our current corona-weary climate with what the apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:11-12: *“...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation....”*



Wow! Paul’s words exude contentment and a “*peace that passes all understanding*” (verse 7). In fact, the entire fourth chapter of Philippians seems tailor-made for our current circumstances, for a people yearning for

comfort and understanding amidst an invisible foe. So what is Paul's secret to contentment? *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God"* (verse 6). A paragraph later, he writes one of the most beloved verses in all of Scripture and my personal battle cry: *"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."*

Yes, it's hard to be content when we're so limited in what we can do and where we can go. It's hard to be content when an atmosphere of fear pervades so much of what we hear on the news. But in those moments of fear and frustration, heed Paul's advice: pray! Pray for patience in this trial. Pray for the God of miracles to bring an end to this pestilence. Pray fervently and receive the peace that passes all understanding, so that we can move from discontent to contentment.

YOUTH GATHERINGS CANCELLED



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It is with great sadness that we share this news with you today regarding this summer's Senior High Gathering. We received word that because of current and possible future COVID-19 restrictions, Mission Point Resort has cancelled the Senior High Gathering that was to take place June 28-July 1, 2020, on Mackinac Island.

The Michigan District Senior High Gathering committee worked very hard through numerous phone calls with Mission Point and others to find dates to be able to postpone the Gathering until next summer, but that has proved impossible. At this time, we are working with Mission Point to secure dates for the summer of 2023.

We also want you all to know that all money (deposits, etc.) will be reimbursed to each congregation by way of a check written out to that congregation (even if it had previously been paid on a credit card).

Perhaps a good way to close this announcement is with President Maier's comments: "I too am very disappointed that the Senior High Youth Gathering will not be taking place this summer. But I pray that we—TOGETHER, as the body of Christ during this COVID-19 continued crisis—would encourage one another to believe and trust this paraphrase of Hebrews 6:18-19 (from which the Gathering's theme came): *'Because of Who God is and the power of His promises in His Holy Word we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in the hope set before us; for this hope we have is an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast.'* God's love is perfect, Jesus is our Anchor, and the Holy Spirit remains our wind. The Triune God is still in control and is causing all things to work together for good. I can't wait to see how He does it again."

Indeed, we all hope, believe and are waiting to see.

Anchored in Hope of our Lord and Savior, **The Senior High Gathering Committee:** Chuck Anderson, Kristin Hardy, Stephanie Rummel, Pastor Jim Bruner, Jennifer Rossi, Mary Koboldt, Blake Wright.

~ The Jr. High Youth Gathering on June 5-7, 2020, in Frankenmuth has also been cancelled.



FROST BACKPACK NEWS

On Monday, March 16, the Backpack Program at Frost Elementary came to an abrupt end as Governor Whitmer announced the closure of all state schools. Subsequently, by mid-April, it was decided to donate the remaining food in our pantry to the Jackson Public School system for distribution to families-in-need through its food pickup service. This donation was greatly appreciated by JPS.

The backpacks were last filled on March 12. At that point, a total of 913 bags were filled; an average of 48 bags/week. By comparison, through this same time last year, 740 bags were filled for an average of 41 bags/week.

Although unknown at this time, it seems possible that schools will reopen to some degree this fall. The backpack team stands ready to once again distribute these much needed bags at Frost when the "go ahead" clearance is given.

As always, we pray that our Father in Heaven will continue to bless this community service by fully providing all



the necessary resources of funding, food and volunteers. To Him be all honor and glory.



JUNE

Glen Speed	06/01
Connor Mogle	06/02
Kris Nowak	06/02
Adam Zeidan	06/05
Jacob Hankerd	06/07
Heidi Gannon	06/07
Elmer Mueller	06/10
Rev. Bill Roper	06/10
Robert Kellogg	06/11
Jeff Baird	06/13
Donna Smith	06/13
Peggy Bennitt	06/15
Jim Moore	06/17
Brandon Ellison	06/19
Roberta Kellogg	06/20
Maria Boyle	06/21
Brianna Fall	06/22
Debbie Mumford	06/24
Mardi Bartlett	06/25
Tony Mogle	06/25
Wanda Williams	06/25
Cynthia Ott	06/28
Levi Bahr	06/30
Carol Roper	06/30
Phyllis Tschabrun	06/30

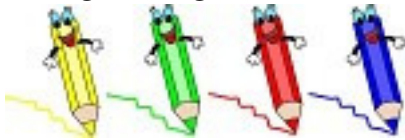
Listen and weigh advice. Pray, listen with the heart and soul, then move in the direction that the Spirit leads.

FAMILY FAITH LIFE

by Kimber Walsh, Director of Family Life Education, CFLE, Redeemer Lutheran Church

You Get What You Get

“You get what you get and you’re thankful for it.” If you haven’t heard this expression, you haven’t spent time around a group of small children all vying for their favorite color of something; making their case for why it is



certainly their turn for the token yellow one because “she always gets the yellow one” and food tastes gross on anything but your favorite color.

Contentment is a characteristic we try to foster from a young age. We make up sayings like the above to repeat and we lead them in practicing opportunities to be content with what they have. But the problem is, we’re kind of rotten at it ourselves. Not only do we whine and complain about what we have, but we also spend a fair amount of energy and resources trying to keep up with the proverbial Joneses all because we are anything but content.

Contentment issues have everything to do with our hearts. Most often, they are ninth and tenth commandment issues of coveting. Sometimes coveting stuff but more often relationships, accomplishments, status, character, reputation, or gifting. Contentment is fostered through gratitude and a perspective check.

Psalm 23:1 says “*the LORD is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.*” If we keep that perspective in our focus, God can work.

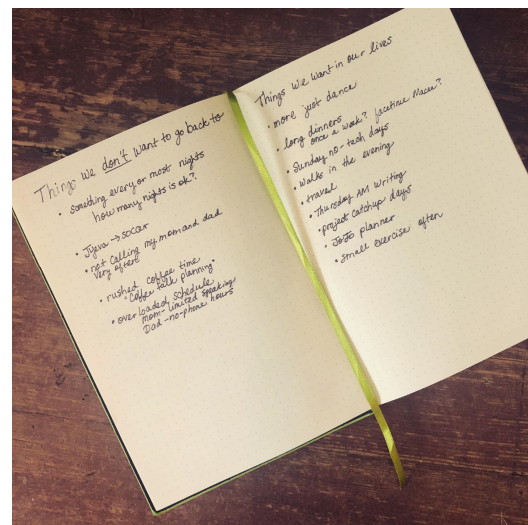
God, change my view to change my heart, seeing that with you I have all I really need. Amen.



This time of *stay home, stay safe* has been so unexpected. It’s a mixed bag of joy and sorrow; leisure and stress. Deaconess and author Heidi Goehmann shared this recently:

There are things that are really hard right now and things that bring me so much joy. What if we intentionally sat and considered what we have loved about our lives over the last few weeks and what we’ve learned can go?

What would you put on your “Things We Don’t Want to Return To” list? Or what do you want to make sure is in your life after this experience?



It would be fitting for each of us to make two lists, prayerfully. Both from

the lessons learned during this season. This is how God is intersecting our lives right now; this is how we have the opportunity to listen to Him and use our pandemic time for our good and His glory.

*Photo and idea shared with permission from Heidi Goehmann.

Due to frequently changing health notifications and guidelines, there is no printed calendar this month. Please see our website at redeemerjackson.org for online services and resources, and updates on upcoming activities and services as they become available. Stay safe in our Lord's hands. May He continue to bless us all!

CONTAGIOUS LOVE

Retrieved from: <https://faithit.com/man-is-crying>, An encounter at a gas station written by Nicole Marie Heintz and shared by *Love What Matters* reveals the very depths of God's compassion and His contagious love.

...I was just on my way to work and I had to stop for gas so I allowed myself some extra time to get to work. When I pulled up to the pump I shut my car off and saw this middle-aged man crying [as he looked] at the gas pump. I began to wonder what happened with this man and as I got out of my car and looked at him, my heart felt like it stopped.

In Apple Valley, Minnesota, it is 10 degrees and freezing cold with the wind. This man was wearing flip flops with socks covered in holes. I look at his car and see his wife in the front seat

covering her face in her hands and the two teenage girls both cuddling under a blanket in the back seat.

I didn't even think and I went up to the man and said "Sir, is something the matter?" He looked at me and I could tell he was on the verge of giving up; he didn't even try to conceal his tears when he said, "I can't even provide for my family."

Without even thinking, I put my card in his machine and told him Jesus Christ the Son of God died to provide for you. Fill up.

Something, something came alive in him. He was in shock and it was like he forgot how to pump gas.

In that same moment his wife got out of the car and asked her husband what was going on. He told her I just paid for their gas and she started to cry. She came around the corner to shake my hand and I saw her pants were dirty and torn. I asked her to come to my car.

...I [needed to] get rid of a lot of stuff. All of that stuff that I had yet to give away was sitting in the back seat of the car and in the trunk. I opened up my car and told the lady to take what she wanted.

This lady RAN back to her car. I was so afraid I had just embarrassed her but a moment later she and her two girls were digging through those clothes, layering my sweatshirts and shirts and sweat pants over the worn-out clothes they had been wearing.

Soon the father had finished pumping the gas and came over. This attracted a little crowd at the gas station. And some older man gave the family a gift card, and another middle-aged man gave away



his jacket to the father. Never in my life did I think I would see this kind of thing happen at a gas station with a handful of complete strangers.

But it gives me hope. That the love of God can be so contagious. That we are not alone in being the change we want to see in the world. That God's love is greater than anything and we get to be a part of that love changing lives. And HE always provides!

CONTENTMENT

by Peggy Bennitt



"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely, or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where one can be quiet; alone with the heavens, nature, and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be."

Anne Frank wrote this in the diary she kept when her family was hiding from the Nazis in the Netherlands in WWII. She was 13 when she first began writing about the everyday thoughts and realities of the war and the Nazi persecution of the Jewish people. Her diary was later saved by a friend who discovered it after the family was found in its hidden rooms, and arrested.

Amazingly, her description quoted at the beginning of this article has always sounded like contentment to me. Peace

and serenity seem to permeate the quote, and I find myself thinking of our present situation, with self-isolation and safe-



distancing, as similar in some aspects. We are not in a holocaust per se, but we are held captive by a very eminent and tangible danger to our health, well-being, and possibly to our very lives. Can we identify with this young Jewish girl and possibly find contentment in our own uncertain circumstances?

Monica, in her article on page 2, talks about the *Spring of Our Discontent*, and I identify with that on one level. But on another tier altogether, I find myself content in this isolation. Yikes! I can hardly believe I wrote that... but it is true.

I am blessedly NOT having to work from home and homeschool little ones at the same time. We are retired. We have a set-income that is adequate for our needs, and we are relatively healthy. So, contentment is being able *not* to worry about the basic necessities of life, which we have largely taken for granted for years. Our family is healthy and so far, our adult children are all able to work in "essential jobs" or work from home, and homeschool their children through this pandemic. We are blessed, and I find a great deal of contentment in that.

That does not mean life is perfect. But it does mean that, except for a few instances, we have enough to do, enough to eat, enough to entertain us, and opportunities to help provide for others

in small ways. There is a certain contentment in that.

May God continue to afford us all occasions to serve others in those small, but essential situations that can and will surprise us around each new corner we turn. A package of Lysol wipes, a bottle of soap, or a washable face mask may make a huge difference in someone's life.

"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily."

Sally Koch



CORONAVIRUS DIARY

#7: Finding Our Way

by Kristin Rathje, one of our guest writers, shares selections /or excerpts from her Blog, *Next Chapter*; used with permission.
<https://kristinsnextchapter.com/author/krathje66/>

When I wrote my first "Coronavirus Diary" on March 30, I could not have guessed that I would be writing a weekly series that seems to have no end. Could any of us have predicted that we would be working from home, wearing masks to the store, and zooming with our family and friends for most of the spring?

We've been quarantining at home for going on eight weeks now! You might think that the time has dragged on, but my husband and I keep looking at each other and saying, "Is it Friday again already?"

Our days look mostly the same — wake up, morning routine, work, cook, walk, eat, TV, sleep, repeat...

We worry. We agonize. We pray. Then we go to bed and get up the next day to do it again.

We don't set long-term goals. We don't make plans. We don't go anywhere. Yet the time seems to be flying.

Even still, a lot can happen in the space of a week. A polar vortex can blow through...A video of a shooting death of a man in broad daylight can circulate so widely and stir up so much outrage that a father and son who've been sitting freely at home for most of two months are arrested to the sounds of virtual cheering.

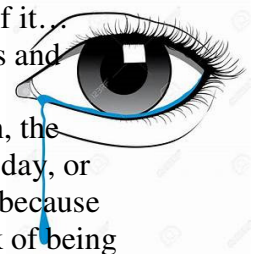
Thousands can protest nation-wide shutdowns. Thousands can be newly diagnosed. Thousands can recover. Thousands can die.

And we're feeling it — all of it...

We're raw — falling to tears and sobbing about the deaths, the uncertainty, the financial strain, the endless monotony of day after day, or the full sink of dishes. We cry because we're tired, because we're sick of being home, or simply because we ran out of Cheerios.

We're angry — demanding that governments open up, complaining about the "idiots" who keep congregating without wearing masks, and insisting that the person next to us would just stop chewing so loudly.

We're doing our best...



Sometimes we can't be bothered — we just don't have the strength, the wherewithal, the awareness to reach out, to notice, to connect with each other, to wash our hair, or to change out of pajamas.

Yet somehow we're figuring it out — doing our best — finding our way. We're finding our way by seeing the devastation and reeling from it, because that's what you do when you are devastated —you might find yourself reeling...

We're finding our way by talking it through. When we talk on the phone,



meet together on video chat, or sit next to each other in the evenings, we're sharing the bits of news from the day, we're asking hard questions, we're telling each other that it's hard to get out of bed, that we haven't changed out of yoga pants since March, that we cancelled our vacation plans...

We're finding our way by reaching out. We call our parents who are weathering this "storm." We touch base with our siblings more than we used to. We check in with friends and call our kids, listening to words, to tones, and to things left unsaid...

And in the midst of all this finding our way, doing our best, and carrying on, we get tired and overwhelmed; we start to lose hope. We cry out.

Will it ever end? How long, O Lord, will you forget us forever?



Forget you? How could I? See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.

You did? You did!

We're engraved on the palm of Your hand. You'll never leave us nor forsake us. You are making all things new, from before the world began. You are.

Ok. We hear you. We do.

We'll keep listening for your voice as we find our way.



Jesus Brings Us the Gift of Contentment Through His Word!

Receive the hope-filled promises from our Lord, recorded in Holy Scripture:

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 1:20-22, 36:11

Proverbs 16:8-9

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 6:25

Luke 12:15, 22b-23

John 14:8

Romans 12:16

2 Corinthians 12:10

Philippians 4:11-12

1 Timothy 6:6-8

Hebrews 13:5

“I am content! My Jesus ever lives...the chains that hold my body, sever; then my soul shall rejoice forever!”

(LSB Hymn #468)

WHAT MATTERS

There are two questions I have found through the years that are related by the words in the questions and how the questions are answered. The two questions? “What’s the Matter?” and “What Matters?”

I am sure you can see the relationship. While the answers will differ depending on who is asked, the questions clearly point in two different directions. The first question assumes discord of some type. Either I am out of sorts because of a relationship problem, or I lack something or some piece in a situation puzzle that is not currently ideal. Hence, something is the matter. The other question points to priority, need vs. want, or necessity. And the elements in the second answer may or may not have real relationship to how the first question might be answered by anyone who is breathing.

We all have things go wrong. And very often the “wrong” is a result of not being clear-headed about what in life really matters. In these abnormal days, need is perhaps more clearly defined when relationships are hampered, and access to things seem a bit interrupted, (although the near miraculous supply lines of Amazon and others seems to keep nearly everything but toilet paper in near supply).



It is also very easy, especially for a very self-centered and want-driven culture like that of our country, to somehow have the historical myopia that says, “Nobody has had it quite as tough as we do now.” Not true. Not true by a long, long way. But things and relationships are challenged, and about that there can be no doubt either.

One of the most beautiful elements of coming to the Bible as one who believes in its inspiration, is seeing how those depicted there handle life. The people in its pages, and thus in world history, are not plastic, scrubbed, and taken from shelves just to illustrate a point or to tell a story. They are real. They feel. They lack. They rejoice and yes, they get sick and die.

King David, perhaps one of the three most prominent men in the Old Testament, is responsible for giving us many of the wondrous poems we call the Psalms. And perhaps the most loved of all is Psalm 23. Let’s look for just a moment at its earth-shattering beginning. No lines in the entirety of sacred writ are more familiar. “The LORD is my shepherd. I shall not want.” Not to come

to too quick of a conclusion, but these two statements answer the entire issues raised in this article. The author of the psalm focuses first on the “who” of what matters.



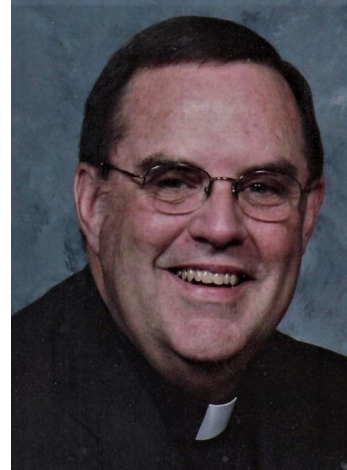
Did you realize that question is answered by the existence and possession of a Person? King David announces, with what I have always assumed is joy, that He knows God and knows Him well enough to call Him Shepherd. David might say in conversation, “Oh yes, I know the true God and He cares so marvelously for me.” Both previous questions answered in such a grand yet succinct way. God is David’s “Possession” and because of that, David realizes that nothing else is needed. Nothing is “the matter.” For David—and in a wondrous way because of Christ, for us as well: “What’s the matter?” comes the question. “Why nothing. Nothing at all.” “So...What matters?”

The King replies, “God. I know God and He knows and cares for me.” So simple. Just think what momentous issues in the lives of any and all of the billions of the world’s inhabitants could be solved asking the questions above and answering the way King David’s inspired statements may be answered by ANY believer. Well, you say, life and its myriad dilemmas are not that easily

solved. To which I answer, “Yes. Yes, actually they are.”

God’s Peace to you all.

MEET OUR Interim Vacancy Pastor



Reverend Carl W. Bassett

Pastor Carl Bassett was born on April 7, 1947, in Reading, Massachusetts. He spent his growing-up years in the Orlando, Florida, area. He married his high school sweetheart, Lisa Kendrick, on October 9, 1970. The Lord has blessed them with three daughters and two grandchildren. He has degrees from the University of South Florida, Tampa, conferred in 1974 (B.S. Medical Technology, B.A. Chemistry, B.A. Religious Studies) and a graduate degree from Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, conferred in 1987 (Master of Divinity and Certificate of Ordination).

Pastor Bassett has been an ordained pastor in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod since 1987 and has served parishes in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan for over 33 years, most recently serving as senior pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Niles,

Michigan, from 2002 through 2015. He retired on January 1, 2016, but has remained very active in pastoral ministry, serving many congregations as Vacancy and Supply Pastor, as well as being Synodically trained as an Intentional Interim Pastor in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

As an Interim Vacancy Pastor, he served Salem Lutheran Church, Coloma, Michigan, from January 1 through August 1, 2017, and currently, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Jackson, Michigan, since May 1, 2020. He has assisted several other churches in various ministerial capacities as well.

Prior to ordination, he served as a Staff Medical Bacteriologist and Clinical Medical Technologist at Tampa General Hospital and the VA Hospital, Tampa, Florida (1974-1978) and Director of Clinical and Anatomical Pathology Laboratories at Medical Center Hospital, Largo, Florida (1978 – 1983). He proudly served in the United States Navy from 1967-1971 (including two twelve-month combat tours in Vietnam, trained in Air Strike Planning/Special Operations/Naval Intelligence). In addition, he served as a Contract Chaplain for the Veterans Administration in Chicago from 1998 to 2013.

Pastor Bassett has been in Law Enforcement/Fire Service Chaplaincy for over 30 years, having served the Wood Dale, Illinois, Police and Fire Departments (1990-2002), and the FBI since 1993. He was accepted into the Chaplain's Corps of the Michigan State Police and commissioned as a Captain, in May 2016. He is an active member of the International Conference of Police Chaplains, has Basic and Advanced certification in Crisis Management from the International Critical Incident Stress

Foundation, and the FBI, and has actively served as Senior Special Agent Chaplain on the Bureau's Crisis Response Teams since 1996.

He was privileged to serve and assist the first responders at Ground Zero at



the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon shortly after September 11, 2001 (September 14-28, 2001), and has been regularly called to respond and serve at many other traumatic events on local, state, national, and international levels.

Pastor Bassett and his wife have made their “retirement home” in Niles, Michigan.

Editor's Note: As we look forward to coming together again in corporate worship, let's keep Pastor Bassett in our daily prayers as he joins our church family during an especially challenging time of ministry.

May God bless him as he helps us, and our leadership, address the new, and often perplexing, needs for the weeks ahead as we prepare to re-enter our church home amidst the trials of self-distancing and new health requirements, with careful attention to pandemic control and health regulations and guidelines. Redeemer Lutheran Church Family welcomes Pastor Carl Bassett and his family to the fellowship we have here in Christ our Lord.