



# News & Notes

LIFE, HEALTH & FAMILY

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# Our Lord Knows Injustice

BY LUCAS WOODFORD (an excerpt from Dr. Woodford's letter to the LCMS Minnesota South District)

**F**or anyone who has not truly experienced ... racial inequality — myself included — it can be difficult to grasp the depth of oppression our black brothers and sisters in Christ have felt and endured. That's why right now it's imperative that we listen to the voice of the Lord with one ear and to the voices of those suffering with the other, while always keeping Christ at the center. The links ... that I share below are a starting point to listening to those voices. I've been listening to the voices of our black brothers and sisters across the Synod and invite you to do the same.

As we listen, we remember that our Lord knows what it is to suffer injustice. His blood was shed at the hands of utter injustice to pay for the sins of the world — yours and mine included. He also knows what it is to pray the Psalms while enduring such cruelty (He prayed Psalm 22:1 while on the cross). Crucified, dead and buried, Jesus knows full well the brutality and the horrors of what fallen people can and will do. But when He walked out of the tomb alive on Easter Sunday, He declared sin, evil and injustice do not get the final say.

In the end, cruelty will be vanquished, injustice will be undone, sin will be eradicated, death will be destroyed, and righteousness will prevail for all time. Until then, He has called us to live in His love and forgiveness, share His love and forgiveness, and act in His love and forgiveness.

## Specific ways you can help: Pray, listen, act.

We have been encouraged by the number of congregations who have reached out with the question, "How can we help?"

The Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray Jr., director of LCMS Black Ministry, has asked the church to focus on three things: pray, listen and act.

### 1. Pray

We pray for the grace and peace that surpasses all understanding. We pray for eyes to see the injustice and hurt in our own communities. We pray for the Spirit's guidance in how we can stand in unity with our communities while compassionately proclaiming



*'It's imperative that we listen to the voice of the Lord with one ear and to the voices of those suffering with the other, while always keeping Christ at the center.'*

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting through Christ Jesus. We pray for the Holy Spirit to bring reasonableness, collaboration and kindness to the people of all our communities through the power of God's Word. We pray for Jesus to be in our midst with hope, healing, justice and restoration.

## 2. Listen

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have been given the healing balm of the Gospel. Therefore, it becomes us to listen to all those who have been hurt by inequality and injustice in order to be ready to apply that same healing balm to their broken hearts. Below are some opportunities to listen:

- The Black Clergy Caucus of the LCMS released a statement on the death of George Floyd. [Click here to read it.](#)
- The Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray and the Rev. Dr. Steven Schave discussed confronting social injustice and loving our neighbors during a recent KFUD Coffee Hour. [Click here to listen to the 30-minute segment.](#)

## 3. Act

We serve as Jesus served — with compassion, and to bring the Kingdom of



*'Without question, the blood of Jesus covers each of us.'*

forgiveness, life and salvation into our communities. We act in love and peace, not out of violence or hatred, as we call and work for communities transformed by the Gospel. This means we come alongside our neighbors, offering whatever resources — time, material goods, financial help — we are able and for which there is a need.

This also a time of deep political divides and powerful visceral emotions. Without question, the blood of Jesus covers each of us. Yet our sinful nature remains, and disagreements of one kind or another are inevitable. That is not permission to sin; it is a call to repentance and a change of sinful ways. Satan loves all of the discord and strife happening in our times and will use it to try to divide and conquer. But we stand upon the victory of our resurrected Lord

Jesus Christ. And as the Body of Christ, we are called to bear with one another and love one another, even as we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul and mind.

God grant us all repentant hearts to carry forward in the faith, hope and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. To that end, the psalmist leads us forward once again: "If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope" (Ps. 130:3–5).

*The Rev. Dr. Lucas V. Woodford is president of the Minnesota South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Reprinted with permission of the district. His letter can be found in its entirety at [mndistrict.org](http://mndistrict.org).*

# TODAY'S CONTEXT Regarding Religious Liberty

BY FREDRIC HINZ

**F**or the better part of 30 years, religious liberty has clashed with the pro-abortion, pro-homosexual and LGBT movements. This has become especially intense in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2015 Obergefell ruling ([supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556\\_3204.pdf](http://supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556_3204.pdf)), which changed the definition of marriage, and Monday's [June 23, 2020] Harris Funeral Homes ruling ([adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/10045](http://adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/10045)), which essentially changed the definition of "sex" in federal law. In both cases, a secularist worldview has been accorded a privileged status over against a Scripturally-informed worldview.

Also recently, our emergence from the community lockdowns associated with the

COVID-19 crisis has called attention to the great difference of opinion regarding the place of religious liberty within our society. Some are closely monitoring and guarding our right to a full, responsible religious practice, while others insist on treating churches and religious life in general as "nonessential." And this is despite religion's unique constitutional status and the obvious fact that human beings are by nature oriented to seeking and worshipping God.

*The Rev. Frederic Hinz is an LCMS public policy advocate for both LCMS Minnesota districts. Reprinted with permission from One Voice for Public Policy, June 2020.*



# Harrison Addresses George Floyd, Racism

**LCMS President** Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison offered a Lutheran response to racism, injustice and what God's Word has to say about both and more in a recent statement. "God's Word rejects racism," he noted. "All are equally created by God. All are equally accountable to God. The sins of all are equally atoned for by Christ. All are equally precious to God. Racial animosity is the result of sin and is sin in itself.

Racism is not acceptable in the church. Jesus Himself bids us love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and did so precisely while rejecting racial preference (cf. Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37)."

He also explained that, as Lutherans, "We deplore injustice. We deplore destruction, robbery and doing physical harm to others. That, too, is injustice. We plead to citizens and governments of this nation for

communities beset by poverty, crime and injustice. We plead for rational and unifying policies that will end injustices and address social breakdown, lack of economic access, and other factors that fuel anger, hatred and dissension."

Find Harrison's entire statement at [blogs.lcms.org/2020/statement-on-the-death-of-george-floyd-and-the-ensuing-riots](https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/statement-on-the-death-of-george-floyd-and-the-ensuing-riots)

# Dios es Bueno

POR RAFAEL FLORES

*"Jehová es bueno, fortaleza en el día de la angustia; y conoce a los que en él confían" (Nahúm 1:7).*

**L**as cosas que nos suceden no siempre son buenas; en cambio, Dios es siempre bueno para con sus hijos. Pero ¿qué pasa cuando algo no sucede como queremos? Somos expertos para quejarnos, para criticar, para culpar a otros por nuestras desgracias o malos ratos. Pero créanme que el primer responsable siempre será Dios. La pregunta habitual es: ¿Por qué a mi Dios? ¿Qué estoy pagando? ¿Por qué me estas castigando? Necesitamos detenernos un momento a pensar cuál es la voluntad de Dios.

Las malas situaciones hacen que, en nuestra mente, Dios pase de bueno a malo, de Salvador a castigador. Hacemos de Dios nuestro enemigo o aquel padre que solo quiere castigarnos. Todo esto es parte del pecado original que aún está en nosotros, del cual cada día debemos de arrepentirnos y pedir perdón a Dios por todas las veces que nos quejamos por cosas que no sean de nuestro gusto. Por aquellas cosas que no sabemos si es o no la voluntad de Dios. La realidad es que debemos de confiar en Dios aún más cuando viene el día de la angustia porque el prometió estar con nosotros todos los días hasta el fin del mundo (Mateo 28:20).

Querido cristiano: ten por seguro que Dios conoce todas nuestras necesidades, conoce todas nuestras angustias y está en control de todo, aunque muchas veces no

lo parezca. Y esto es lo que quiere el diablo, el mundo y nuestra carne, que pongamos esto en duda, porque es más fácil culpar a otros, en vez de confiar en el hecho que Dios tiene el control de todas las cosas. Lo que si tenemos seguro es que Dios jamás abandona a aquellos que en él confían, pero su misericordia va más allá, porque como dice su Palabra; Dios hace llover sobre justos e injusto, él mantiene a toda su creación. El Señor es bueno.

Es fácil creer y confiar cuando las cosas vayan bien. Pero, cuando llegue el día de la angustia, el día en que vemos todo gris donde pensamos que no encontramos

salida, necesitamos ver la cruz de nuestro Señor Jesucristo donde el pago el precio para el perdón de los pecados. La verdad es que Dios sí nos conoce y sabe todas las necesidades de nuestro cuerpo y alma. Ya el diablo, el mundo y nuestra carne no se enseñorean sobre nosotros, porque Cristo pagó el precio más alto para que hoy nosotros podamos vivir en paz y en fe con Dios y amor para con nuestro prójimo, por medio de aquel que nos amó sin medida. Que nuestra respuesta a las dificultades sea siempre decir que el Señor es bueno, porque para siempre es su misericordia con todos los que en Él confían. "Y sabemos que a los que aman a Dios, todas las cosas les ayudan a bien, esto es, a los que conforme a su propósito son llamados" (Romanos 8:28).



Que nuestro Salvador nos guarde en medio de la angustia dándonos una fe firme en su Palabra, que es nuestra roca en medio de la tempestad. Amén.

### Oración:

Amado Padre celestial, te damos gracias porque eres nuestra fortaleza en la angustia, nuestro refugio en la tribulación, gracias por enviar a tu hijo para salvarnos y darnos el regalo del perdón de los pecados y la vida eterna; te pedimos que siempre

este con nosotros dándonos la confianza que necesitamos para no alejarnos de tus caminos. Te lo pedimos por medio de Jesucristo, tu Hijo amado. Amén.

*Escrito por Rafael Flores, un estudiante pastoral de la Iglesia Confesional de Chile, estudiando en el Seminario Concordia el Reformador – República Dominicana.*

*Rafael Flores is a seminary student in the Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile and is studying at Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic.*

# In Order to Preserve Life

*Protecting children and abortion-vulnerable women during a pandemic*

BY MEGAN PARADIS AND PETER GREGORY

**D**uring this coronavirus pandemic, daily life around the world has changed drastically in order to preserve life, especially to preserve the lives of the elderly and the most vulnerable. Many of us have willingly restricted our bodily autonomy — the freedom to go where we want, do what we want, wear what we want, even eat what we want — for the sake of others.

Yet there have also been major inconsistencies with how people view life. Considered “essential services” in many states, abortion providers such as Planned Parenthood are using personal protective equipment that could go to hospitals, reaching out for donations of sanitizer and masks, and even receiving small business loans to continue their operations. And just what “essential services” do

they provide during shutdowns and stay-at-home orders? The clinics that have remained open are the ones doing abortions. So much for preserving life, or at least the lives of the littlest and weakest among us.

*(Continued on pg. 5)*



## //// Life Profile ////



### Deaconess serves as new director of LCMS Life Ministry

BY ADRIANE HEINS

**Who:** LCMS Life Ministry has a new director! Deaconess Tiffany Manor has been called to the position in the Synod's Office of National Mission. Uniquely gifted for this role, she's an M.A. graduate from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., and is currently working on her doctorate at Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

**What:** Manor, who has an extensive career in church worker wellness and human care, will draw on her experiences and work with crisis pregnancy centers, disabilities ministries, campus ministries and disaster response in her new position. Her work will intersect with LCMS congregations, church workers, pro-life leaders and other organizations to protect human life and worth.

**Where:** She's the wife of the Rev. Jonathan Manor, who is pastor of Lutheran Church of the Savior, Bedford, Mass., the mother of four children, and grandmother of one.

**Why:** The truth that God is the author of life is always critical, but especially at this unique time, as the world faces fear, uncertainty and concerns regarding both health and human life on a variety of fronts. “While governments, media and many people are professing that we must protect the vulnerable and have upended our society to do so, [many] are excluded from being protected,” she explains. “We have an opportunity to share that all human lives are valuable.”

**How:** Deaconess Manor is eager to get to know the many passionate and engaged people serving in LCMS Life Ministry. Please reach out to her at [LifeMinistry@lcms.org](mailto:LifeMinistry@lcms.org).

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## Support LCMS Life Ministry

Your generous gift to the international and domestic work of LCMS Life Ministry will make a tremendous difference and help to uphold the message of Christ’s mercy to all in body and soul.

Click the Give Now button to support this work.

**GIVE NOW**



(Continued from pg. 4)

As strange and challenging as these times are for all of us, they are especially frightening for a woman dealing with an unexpected pregnancy. Unemployment, an uncertain future and our society’s response to the virus converge at the same time. For abortion-vulnerable women like these, such fear can push them to think abortion is their only option. The abortion rate typically escalates during recessions and economic downturns.

But one thing remains the same: Pregnancy help organizations offer hope for expectant mothers, hesitant fathers and their children. Option Line, run by Heartbeat International, is a hotline that refers women to their local centers. They have seen a 40 percent increase in calls during this pandemic. Some pregnancy help medical clinics have temporarily closed their doors so medical supplies and nurses can be deployed elsewhere to aid in the fight against COVID-19. Others have pivoted to online parenting classes and pre-client appointments. Some have stayed open to meet the physical needs of families. While doctors and nurses are on the front lines for the elderly and vulnerable, the staff of over



*‘As strange and challenging as these times are for all of us, they are especially frightening for a woman dealing with an unexpected pregnancy.’*

2,500 pregnancy help centers worldwide are on the front lines for scared women and their unborn children.

Your local pregnancy help organization needs your prayers, your encouragement and your support as they carry out their work in these times. Many have had to cancel yearly fundraising events. The economic turmoil and uncertainty also make their regular financial support from churches, individuals and businesses less reliable. Let them know that you are thankful for their work by sending a note, making a donation or purchasing needed supplies (some centers have an Amazon gift list). You can find your local pregnancy help organization here: [heartbeatinternational.org/worldwide-directory](http://heartbeatinternational.org/worldwide-directory).

In the midst of so much fear and uncertainty, we have the opportunity to affirm life and hope for others, for we know the One who is Life and Hope — our Lord, Jesus Christ.

*Megan Paradis is executive director of First Concern Pregnancy Resource Center, Marlboro, Mass. The Rev. Peter Gregory is pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Westminster, Mass.*

## /////// Advocacy in the Public Square //////////

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has addressed the church regarding the changing situations as states and communities face reopening. (Go to [vimeo.com/420853730](https://vimeo.com/420853730) to hear his full statement.)

“We are now seeing a different phase in government, and that is resulting in a different response from the church,” Harrison said. The LCMS is working with Alliance Defending Freedom, First Liberty and the Becket Fund to defend religious liberty where needed.

To learn more about the confession of faith in the public square and to take informed action on sanctity of life issues, as well as religious freedom and all the cultural issues that pertain to it, visit [lcms.org/social-issues/free-to-be-faithful](http://lcms.org/social-issues/free-to-be-faithful) and the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty at [LCRLFreedom.org](http://LCRLFreedom.org).

To contact the president and other elected officials, please visit: [usa.gov/elected-officials](http://usa.gov/elected-officials) | [senate.gov/senators/contact](http://senate.gov/senators/contact) | [house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative](http://house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)