

The . *intercom* In Church and Community



From the Senior Pastor Unfading Peace



In a world under siege by the now ubiquitous COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus) and a divided country deep into another election cycle, what gives you peace?

Maybe you turn to scripture for peace, or to a trusted friend, or to a confessor. Maybe peace comes for you when a coworker steps up and says, “I’ve got this.” Maybe you are

most at rest when you are hiking through the woods listening to the chorus of sounds that this season of spring presents. Maybe you find peace when you run counter-cultural and set healthy personal boundaries by fasting from social media or limiting when you will read and respond to email or by silencing the notifications on your various newsfeeds.

Maybe you have no idea what peace is.

It is probably no surprise to anyone that peace can be elusive, if not altogether out of reach. The twists and turns of daily life often create turmoil, trouble, stress, and a busyness that feels all consuming.

Nevertheless, our faith, rooted in the miracle of Easter—the empty tomb!—offers peace to all who believe. It is certainly true that Jesus spoke of peace during his ministry, especially when he was instructing his disciples on how to bless those communities to whom they ministered, but Jesus didn’t actually say “Peace be

with you” until after his resurrection. He didn’t actually confer his peace on anyone until after he had been raised from the dead.

In other words, peace comes to us as a resurrection experience. It is part of the new life Jesus ushers in as the one whom the grave could not hold.

Because this is true, throughout the Easter season at Our Savior’s, we will be uniting under the theme Unfading Peace. True, the realities of COVID-19 quarantines and social-distancing recommendations prevent us from assembling in person, but the OSL community can and will come together via television broadcast and Facebook live-streaming. So join your OSL family for not only the familiar journey through the dramatic events of Holy Week (April 5 through 11) but also for Easter Sunday (April 12), and the weekends that follow that make up this season that proclaims a peace the world cannot give. In worship, united with your fellow siblings in Christ, you may just find a lasting peace that will feed your soul and empower you for daily living.

In Christ’s love,

Pr. Randy Gehring

Love in Action: Campus Cupboard by Pr. Justin Kosec

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47)

At a conference this summer, sitting in creaky chairs under the nave of Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, I found myself struggling to define a neighbor.

I was talking with Jetty Duffy-Matzner, a member of our Love in Action Core Ministry Team, at the World Hunger Leadership Gathering. We were trying to consider how to serve neighbors to Our Savior's. We were considering the cluster of houses around us; the Hezekiah House project that offers affordable housing with properties owned by Our Savior's; and who, exactly, calls OSL "their" church.

Then, we began to wonder: Was there a way we could serve our neighbors at Augustana

University? After all, those students *are* our neighbors, right?

Late last year, Jetty invited Augustana administrators for a conversation around food security on campus. We expected little response. But at that first meeting, we found ourselves pulling chairs up to the conference table to accommodate administrators, staff, and students. Afterward, I think Jetty and I wondered what we had unleashed.

Together, we hatched a simple plan: to provide care packages for students over Christmas break, when food service shuts down.

We shared this plan with our generous congregation, and the response was over-

whelming. Money and food poured in; cans and bags of food piled up behind the front desk in the office. We couldn't keep up with your generosity. Your response pushed us to dream bigger: Could we open a food shelf for college students to serve them throughout the academic year?

We had the staff support at Augustana;



Campus Cupboard shelves are full and waiting out COVID-19.



Core Ministry Teams

Our Savior's conducts ministry via five staff-led Core Ministry Teams: **Caring Ministries**, (Pr. Tim Lemme); **Faith Formation**, (Pr. Sami Johnson); **Discipleship**, (Pr. Justin Kosec); **Worship and Arts**, (Gene LeVasseur); and **Love in Action**, (Pr. Justin Kosec).

and, thanks to you, we had the food. One question remained: Would this ministry have anyone to serve? After we announced our intention to open a food shelf, I received this question many times. Do Augustana students really need extra food? Are there really that many “poor” students on campus? Are we solving a problem that doesn’t exist?

Our partners on campus, however, gave us every reason to continue. From student leaders to the International Programs Office to Campus Ministry, we repeatedly heard their desire for a ministry like this. They offered volunteers to fill the slots. They gave suggestions for things we should stock, like personal care items. It felt like God was giving us every excuse to step forward.

We launched the Campus Cupboard on March 4, just in time for Augustana spring break. We had no students that first day. But then a small trickle of visitors each day after. Their stories immediately left a mark on our hearts.

One student had recently arrived from Nigeria. He couldn’t find salt in the grocery store, but we never thought to stock *salt*. Our Food Coordinator Debbie gave me a canister from our kitchen. Another student took soap and shampoo; another, a comb. Almost everyone took pasta, ramen, or mac and cheese (college!). Our first visitor told

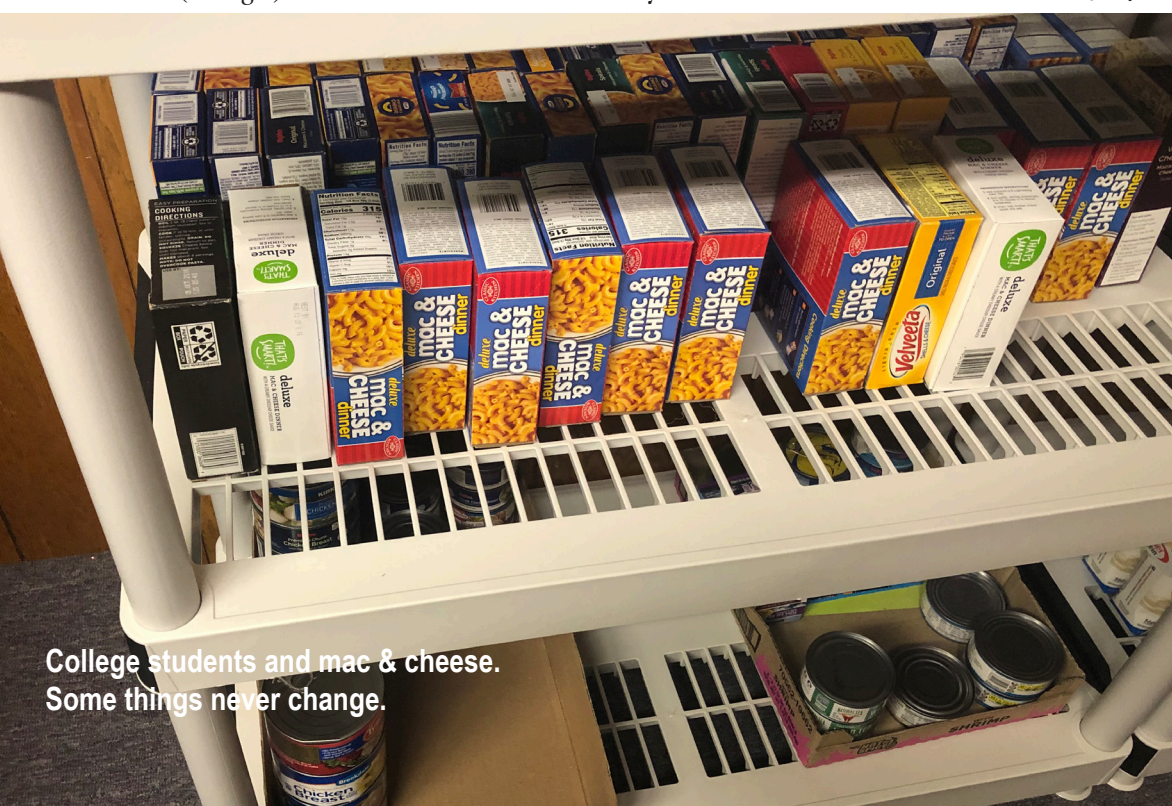
me, “My friend and I were talking about break, and she said, ‘I don’t think I’ll have enough money to buy food.’” We sent her back with extra.

So in only a few short days, the students showed us how much *they* needed this ministry.

And then Coronavirus hit South Dakota. Overnight—it was literally overnight, remember?—schools were closed and large gatherings suspended. On March 15, our first Sunday of suspended in-person worship services at OSL, I prepared to preach in an empty sanctuary. Meanwhile, I saw Jetty Duffy-Matzner and Michelle Harvey, Director of Student Engagement at Augustana, hauling out bags of food to be distributed on-campus during the Coronavirus closures. In the hour after that, five more students showed up to the Campus Cupboard in search of food.

Overnight, Augie spring break had gone from one week to *four*. If students couldn’t afford to buy food over a one-week break, what would they do for *four weeks*? Where could they go?

As it happened, months ago, God had begun to answer that question: They could go to the Campus Cupboard at Our Savior’s. ♦



College students and mac & cheese. Some things never change.



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Sunday Morning

Festive Worship – 8:45 and 11:00 A.M., Sanctuary

Celebrate Worship – 8:45 and 11:00 A.M., Celebrate Center

Television and Internet

Celebrate: 9:00 A.M., KTTW (cable channel 9; channel 7.1)

Festive: 1:00 P.M., KSCB (cable channel 30; channel 53)

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