

Parish Visitor



A Publication of Bethlehem Lutheran Church • Askov, Minnesota

Pastor Cindy Gray has graciously agreed to do a weekly devotional letter for Bethlehem, that will be included with our weekly mailing and updates from the church council. Thank you Pastor Gray for your willingness to bring the Word to us during this difficult and stressful time.

March 22, 2020 The assigned texts are Isaiah 42:14-21, Psalm 142, Ephesians 5:8-14 (read verses 15-20 too) and John 9

Dear Friends at Bethlehem,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

The

Bill Jansen, your congregational president, and I have spoken on the phone about how to be the church in these weeks of "Social Distancing". It is a challenge that none of us has ever had to face before. As a pastor, I never would have thought the time would come when our bishop would strongly suggest that we all stay home from corporate worship – for weeks! We all know that we gain spiritual strength when we gather with others, listen to the Word, pray, sing, and receive Holy Communion—and drink coffee. But in these days, keeping physical distance from each other is the best way we can "love our neighbors as ourselves." And we **can** worship with those who live in our households. If you live alone, you **can** praise God and pray, and even sing!

In today's Psalm, the writer cries out to God with his complaints and troubles, and when he grows depressed ("my spirit is faint"). The news has not reported any cases of Covid-19 in Pine County, so we are not dealing with the virus directly, but we worry about our loved ones in Washington and New York and the many places in between. We watch our retirement funds shrivel and worry that our plans were in vain. We can feel lonely and deprived of our normal interactions and activities. We are feeling what other people have felt throughout time, and God listens to our thoughts and feelings as we pray. We can know that God is listening, and doesn't it help to know that someone else listened to us?

The virus does feel like a persecutor and we may feel we are in a prison, but we don't have to wait to be freed to know that God "will deal bountifully with me." If I am not sick, I have a safe and warm place to stay, and I have enough food – God has dealt bountifully with me. We can give thanks for our other blessings as well—telephones, televisions, radios, and computers that help us stay connected with others. We just have to use them.

God is with us and will bring us though these troubling times, just as he led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and through the desert. Remember that desert journey was without a map, and the people often complained and wandered after other gods, and it took them 40 years, but God kept them fed and gave them water and led their children into the promised land. God will bring his people through this desert as well.

As you wander through these days, remember you are not alone. Make contact with friends by phone, or write letters. Pray for our world, health care workers, decision makers, those now unemployed... Ask God for the strength to do so.

I am closing with the words of Isaiah 43:1-3a, these words comfort me and remind me that I am God's:

'But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel; "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not over whelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.""

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Pastor Cindy Gray

2020 Church Council Members



Bill Jansen



Marilyn Krogh









Chuck

Moon



Andy May



Heidi Moon



COUNCIL MEETING

March 11, 2020 Unapproved Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Jansen, Cheryl Kohner, Andy May, Marilyn Krogh, Chuck Moon, Heidi Moon, and Jo Foss.

Bill called the meeting to order. Members checked in with each other. Bill offered prayer.

APPROVE FEBRUARY 2020 MINUTES: Minutes were reviewed. Motion made by Chuck, second by Bill to accept the minutes as read. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer's report was reviewed.

MINISTRY REPORTS:

- Property—Chuck reported that the parsonage is being monitored. Carpet for the church basement dining area might be installed after May 1st.
- Family Ministry—Jo reported that a time and date for an adult bible study is still being worked on. Shawn is looking at bible study materials for it.
- Music and Worship— Bill reported that pulpit supply is scheduled through the end of April. Larry Anderson is scheduled through Holy week to Easter. Bill is also checking into recorded music should the need

arise.

• Circle of Faith—Jo reported that the meeting on Saturday, March 14th they would be checking out chairs for the church dining area.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Call Process—Bill has contacted area churches to see if there is any interest in partnering with BLC.
- Shut in visitation/communion distribution— Tabled until we are past the coronavirus
- Internet service provider —Heidi reported she has been checking into costs to switch from Frontier to SCI. Motion by Chuck, second by Andy to switch to SCI. Motion carried.
- Model Constitution— Tabled.
- Goal Setting—Table until next regular meeting.
- Basement chair replacement—Jo reported that Circle has found a suitable chair style and what the costs would be for 100 chairs. A fundraiser will be held with letter to go out to congregation in the near future to help purchase the chairs. Motion by Bill, second by Marilyn to modify the letter with approved changes. Motion carried.

New Business:

• Coronavirus information/protocols—Jo discussed with us information about the virus and will be drafting a letter to go out to all congregation members after the special council meeting (Tuesday, March 17th) to further discuss protocols that need to be put in place.

- Church usage request— Margaret Christensen has requested use of the church on June 6th for a piano recital. Motion by Chuck, second by Bill to approve. Motion carried.
- Fellowship area and mini fridge—Heidi reported that food is being left in the fridge and dishes are also being left upstairs in the fellowship area.

Please remember to clean up after your meetings and NO food is to be left in the mini fridge or in the fellowship area.

• Audit—Bill will be checking with Erica Ludwig to set up a date to do our 2019 audit.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Bill will contact Erica Ludwig for 2019 audit.
- Jo will revise the chair letter.
- A special church council meeting is set for Tuesday, March 17th at 6:00 pm to discuss protocols on dealing with the coronavirus.

A motion was made by Chuck, second by Bill to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Our next regular monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, April 8th, 2020 at 6:00 pm

> Respectfully submitted, -Cheryl Kohner Council secretary

April 2020

PANDEMIC HOPE - A FAMILY DEVOTIONAL FOR LIFE DURING COVID-1 9

Most of us have been paying attention to the news as information about COVID-19 changes hour-to-hour. This virus is aggressive. Our government leaders' strong encouragement to social isolation to feels extreme. You know what? As people of faith, those words also describe our hope. Hope that this virus will be halted. Hope that our sense of community with one another will be restored. Hope that God has not left us to fend off this virus alone.

However, we have become focused inward by stockpiling supplies, making lists of all of the TV shows we want to watch and books we want to read, making schedules for our kids so they don't fall behind in their schoolwork, and focusing on how this virus is affecting us, as individuals. But this virus is affecting us, as a global community.

In the waters of baptism, we are claimed as children of God, as part of God's family, which means we don't live in this world separate from one another. Let's adjust our new extended spring break schedules and join together in some time of deepening our faith and listening to how God is calling us to love and serve our neighbor.

There are devotional readings and activities prepared for the next 8 weeks for you to do with those you are isolated alongside. If you live alone, call a friend or journal. We will be using the Faith5 model (right). We will be mailing out the weekly readings, activities, and webpages for the activities.

	<u>WEEK 1</u>				
READING		FAITH PRACTICE			
Dealm 46	MONDAY	Maka Listoping Jaro			
Psalm 46	https://www.firefliesandmudpies.co	Make Listening Jars m/how-to-make-glitter-jars/			
	TUESDAY				
Psalm 100	Learn a new song from the Hymnal Handwashing Hits to sing while you wash your hands (included on next page)				
	WEDNESDAY				
Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18	Tune in to the Cincinnati Zoo Facebook page for the live safari at 3 pm and pray for your favorite animals https://www.facebook.com/cincinnatizoo/				
Psalm 23	https://prayingincolor.com/praying-in-colo	Try praying in color! n-color-praying-in-black-and-white			
	FRIDAY				
Matthew 6:5-15	(Play Prayer Bingo see next page for sample)			
John 1:1-9	SATURDAY				
	http://www.adventure-in-a-box.com/stair	Make "stained glass" ned-glass-heart-suncatcher/			
John 9:1-41	SUNDAY				
	Make Play-Doh http://thebestideasforkids.com/playdough-recipe				



www.faith5.org

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P	Ask God to bless someone from school	Thank God for your friends	Ask God to help those who are sick	Ask God to watch over China	Thank God for your favorite animals	Say, "Sorry," for when you argued	Ask God to watch over Spain		
R	Ask God to bless a teacher	Thank God for your family	Ask God to help those who are homeless	Ask God to watch over South Korea	Thank God for your favorite food	Say, "Sorry," for when you were rude	Ask God to watch over France		
A	Ask God to bless a friend	Thank God for your school	Ask God to help those who don't have enough food	Ask God to watch over Italy	Thank God for your home	Say, "Sorry," for when you told a lie	Ask God to watch over the United Kingdom		
Y	Ask God to bless someone in your family	Thank God for holidays ଫ breaks	Ask God to help those who don't have clean water	Ask God to watch over Iran	Thank God for your clothes	Say, "Sorry," for when you upset someone	Ask God to watch over Germany		
E	Ask God to bless someone famous	Thank God for food	Ask God to help those who are jobless	Ask God to watch over the United States	Thank God for your possessions	Say, "Sorry," for when you made fun of someone	Ask God to watch over Switzerland		
R	Ask God to bless someone who helps you	Thank God for clothes	Ask God to help those who are upset	Ask God to watch over the Japan	Thank God for your favorite place	Say, "Sorry," for when you wasted something	Ask God to watch over everywhere COVID-19 has spread		
Who home units income place solution									



Circle of Faith met March 14, 2020 at 10:00 am with 6 members in attendance.

Tracy called the meeting to order. Jo's devotional was taking a personal Sabbath to help deal with the stressful situations we face on a daily basis.

Minutes from the February meeting were read by Mary. Motion by Jo, 2nd by Shawn to approve. Treasure's report read by Mary, \$58.25 in checking and \$785.53 in savings.

Old business: Shawn is waiting for more info for the Kettle River WELCA conference meeting to be hosted by the Circle on April 4, 2020. It was decided if the conference goes forward we would have all the food commercially prepared.

New business: Community meal on March 25th discussed. At this time Circle decided to have takeout only with delivery to the people on the list. Shawn will prepare a flyer to announce the change. Jo brought up the possibility of having a call group for health and wellness contact for shutins living alone with no family or friends nearby. Discussion on ordering the chairs was held, with Carolyn making the motion, 2nd by Elaine to order the chairs needed and nothing else.

Motion to adjourn was made by Elaine, 2nd by Carolyn, meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Our next meeting is April 11th at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted, -Mary Johnson, Secretary



Ella Ruble—1st Kenny Quigley—2nd Yvette Maloney—4th Jim Overholser—4th Jessica Forsman—16th Jennifer Adamczak—18th Elaine Smith—20th Missy Ecklund 21st Faye Williams—22nd Payton Williams—25th



Dave & Ann Rote—10th Owen & Betty Petersen—11th Gene & Pat Krogh—21st LeRoy & Joyce Larsen—25th David & Brenda Lunde—26th



Please include the following people in your daily prayers:

Millie Sorensen, Jan Ecklund, Lois Sahlen, Dorla Clark, Donna Norgaard, Ann Olson, Ardis Jensen, Jo Jessen, Tony Ecklund, Shirley Lund, Joyce Schaumburg, and their families.

If you would like to add someone to this weekly list, please email the church office



During the past weeks, we've been experiencing an unprecedented and ever-changing event. We've all been asked to adapt on a moments notice, and figure out how to run our daily lives either remotely, or with minimal contact with others. As a church, we are struggling to figure out how to continue our missional goals and meet our budget through this crisis. Our goal is to reach out weekly to our membership with devotionals, and resources that help us stay connected virtually. The church council and parish secretary are working together nearly every day, on ways to "be a church, when we can't go to church". Please remember that Bethlehem still needs your tithes and offerings during this uncertain time. We are setup to accept online giving through our website (<u>http://www.blcaskov.com/</u> <u>online-giving</u>). Simply follow the instructions to make a one-time or ongoing contribution. You can also mail your contribution the old fashioned way (but please, do not send cash through the mail). We greatly appreciate your kindness and willingness to help our church during these unusual times.

Our local food pantries are also in need, and many families are experiencing food instability. Consider giving to the local food shelf (Family Pathways has locations in both Sandstone and Pine City), as their selves are becoming way too empty!

The East Central School Backpack Food Program is continuing to operate, alongside the weekday food delivery to students. Many families rely on these meals over the weekend, when their children aren't in school. This program operates entirely on donations, and could really use our help. Donations may be sent to East Central School Backpack Food Program, 61085 Minnesota 23, Finlayson, MN 55735, attention Cassie Gaede.

Weekly Texts								
March 29 th	5 th Sunday in Lent	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalm 130	Romans 8:6-11	John 11:1-45			
April 5 th	Palm Sunday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalm 31:9-16	Philippians 2:5-11	Matthew 26:14—27:66			
April 9 th	Maundy Thursday	Exodus 12:1-14	Psalm 116:1-2,12-19	1 Corin 11:23-26	John 13:1-7, 31b-35			
April 10 th	Good Friday	Isaiah 52:13—53:12	Psalm 22	Hebrews 10:16-25	John 18:1—19:42			
April 12 th	Easter Sunday	Acts 10:34-43 or	Psalm 118:1-2,14-24	Colossians 3:1-4	Matthew 28:1-10			
April 19 th	2 nd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	Psalm 16	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31			
April 26 th	3 rd Sunday of Easter	*Acts 2:14a, 36-41	Psalm 116:1-4,12-19	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35			

*The first portion of this reading is repeated from previous week



Special Called Church Council Meeting March 17, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Jansen, Marilyn Krogh, Cheryl Kohner, Jo Foss, Chuck Moon, Heidi Moon, and Andy May.

CALL TO ORDER/PRAYER

New Business:

- Church closure— Motion by Chuck, 2nd by Bill to cancel all church activities until further notice. Motion carried.
- Suspension of Services —No services until further notice.
- Church building usage restriction—Restricted until further notice.
- General use—No activities until further notice.
- Cleaning schedule approved to have Diane disinfect each week and keep a log of which areas that have been done.
- Annual Church cleaning—cancelled.
- Counters—Motion by Bill to allow Heidi to count independently while the church is closed, 2nd by Jo. Motion carried.

• Church office hours— Heidi will continue to operate the church office during the hours of 10 am to 3 pm, Monday through Thursday, unless "shelter in place" is required. It was discussed checking with SCI to see if there is a way for Heidi to retrieve church messages from home should this become necessary.

- Financial plan—Tabled.
- Communication plan— Bill discussed a weekly letter to be shared with the congregation to help keep the connection with congregation. Contents/scope— Discussion on what would be in the letter.
- Pastor contract—Motion by Chuck to allow Bill to enter into an agreement with someone from the pulpit supply list to write a weekly devotion, and pay for their time from the pulpit supply; 2nd by Heidi. Motion carried.
- Buddy system—Jo discussed having a call list of those who are living alone and may need someone to check in with them. More discussion on this to follow.

- Help line—Discussed with no decision made at this time.
- Newspaper—Heidi has been in contact with the local papers for announcements regarding cancellations of Sunday services, Lenten soup suppers and services, and community meals.
- Online resources— Discussion on how to communicate updates regarding COVID-19.
- Social Media— Discussion on using social media to get the word out regarding BLC COVID-19 protocols.
- Video streaming— Discussed with no decision made at this time.
- Virtual visitation— Discussed with no decision made at this time.
- Funerals—Tabled until next meeting.
- Basement chair update—the letter will go out to members once we are passed the COVID-19 issues.

ACTION ITEMS:

• Heidi will talk to Diane regarding disinfecting the church.

- Chuck will send a message to Denny regarding property, and will speak with Ovid regarding entrance into the church. He will also take down the two community meal signs.
- Bill will check with pastor Cindy Gray about writing a weekly devotional to be mailed to the congregation.

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 6:00 pm (this will be a teleconference meeting).

> Respectfully submitted, -Cheryl Kohner Council secretary

Please remember during this time of social distancing, we are asking that members with keys do not come in and let themselves into the church. This is to better protect you, our members, and our church staff, who are trying to keep things operating.

In an effort to help everyone stay connected with weekly worship options, the following are links to weekly streaming messages, and other resources, for those who are on-line. If you find a worship streaming option you would like to share, please email the link to the church office. Bishop Thomas Aitken's weekly pastoral message 3/23/20: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fBS2fDmhgk&feature=youtu.be **Resources from the Video:** The Lutheran World Federation, "Being fully the church in times of Coronavirus": https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/being-fully-church-times-coronavirus and Intercessory Prayers: https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-intercessory-prayer-midst-spread-covid-19 Grace & Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Livestreaming—YouTube Channel Pastor Kim Sturtz https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmtJI2DCFK6qilMv00ODnQQ?view_as=subscriber Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Livestreaming (Members Ron & Jo Foss used to be members of this Parish) https://www.tlcmn.com/live.html We are hopeful that we'll continue to be able to bring you weekly postal mailings from the church, but as you know, things are changing daily. Please remember to send your email address to the church office at blcaskov@frontier.com In the event things should change and we aren't able to put out a weekly mailing, we will continue to utilize the church website (www.blcaskov.com) and email list. We currently only have a small number of member emails on file. To be sure updates continue to reach you, please send us your email. The newsletter deadline will currently remain the third Wednesday of the month.

If you would like something included in our <u>weekly</u> mailings, please email the church office by Monday mornings at 10 am Address Service Requested

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Check us out on the web:

www.blcaskov.com Office Phone: 320-838-3191 Email: blcaskov@frontier.com <u>Church Office Hours:</u> Monday thru Thursday 10 am to 3 pm



MISSION STATEMENT

We are a family of Christian believers who: GATHER together in fellowship, GROW spiritually through God's word, prayer, and sacraments, GO into the community reaching out to welcome and serve with compassion in Christ's name.