



The

Parish Visitor

A Publication of Bethlehem Lutheran Church • Askov, Minnesota

| March 2021 | | | | | | |
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Hello, Church!

During this season of Lent, we are focusing on the “Seven Wonders of the Word.” The second “wonder” is a reminder that through the Word made flesh, and the Holy Spirit, God continues to call today. We confess that our God calls us, each of us, “to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.”

Many of you already know that I have been called to new ventures, untrodden paths, and unknown perils. That call has led me to the decision that my time with you at Bethlehem Lutheran Church must end. It has been a privilege to serve you during this period of transition.

I have given notice to the church council that I will be ending my service under the present contract effective March 15, 2021. My last Sunday and last service with you will be on March 7. After attending a virtual conference assembly that afternoon, I will be taking a much needed vacation.

I will be available, as always, through March 15th for pastoral emergencies. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have a need. After that date, the guidelines of the ELCA and the Northeastern Minnesota Synod require that I honor the end of my service to you. Therefore, I will not be available for ongoing pastoral acts beginning March 16. My work with you will be finished and I will not interfere with future leadership.

I will keep Bethlehem Lutheran Church and all of its members in my prayers. This congregation has a wealth of talent and many important ongoing ministries. However, it also has some challenges. The biggest challenge was present long before the COVID shutdowns. Declining and aging membership poses an existential threat. That threat does not need to be terminal. It does need some creative work if long-term survival is expected. Opportunities exist. The means for survival are within reach. As you work together to shape a new and vibrant future, I encourage you to step out in faith and to let the Holy Spirit guide you into your future.

God’s peace and blessings be with you and your ministries.

Larry A. Anderson

Synod Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament (SAM)



March Worship Schedule

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| March 3 rd <i>Lenten Worship</i> | IN PERSON Service Larry Anderson | Soup Supper 6 pm Worship 7 pm |
| March 7 th <i>Sunday Worship</i> | IN PERSON Service Larry Anderson | Worship 10 am |
| March 10 th <i>Lenten Worship</i> | IN PERSON Service Rachel Wickstrom | Worship 7 pm |
| March 14 th <i>Sunday Worship</i> | ON-LINE Cindy Gray | Worship 10 am |
| March 17 th <i>Lenten Worship</i> | IN PERSON Service Rachel Wickstrom | Soup Supper 6 pm Worship 7 pm |
| March 21 st <i>Sunday Worship</i> | ON-LINE Cindy Gray | Worship 10 am |
| March 24 th <i>Lenten Worship</i> | IN PERSON Service Rachel Wickstrom | Worship 7 pm |
| March 28 th <i>Palm Sunday</i> | ON-LINE Cindy Gray | Worship 10 am |

Masks must be worn to attend all in-person worship services

Click or use the text below to watch our on-line and recorded Sunday Worship Services on the BLC YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/qXlcchWMLaCRqg>

IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers

Please include the following people in your daily prayers:

Millie Sorensen, Leroy Larsen, Jan Ecklund, Lois Sahlen, Ann Olson, Jo Jessen, Tony Ecklund, Shirley Lund, Joyce Schaumburg, Chase & Elizabeth Moon (*in the Philippines*) and their families.

If you would like to add someone to this weekly list, please email the church office at blcaskov@gmail.com

2021 Church Council Members



Marilyn Krogh
President



Chuck Moon
Vice Pres.



Cheryl Kohner
Secretary



Bill Jansen
Deacon



Andy May
Deacon



Heidi Moon
Deaconess



Position Vacant



February 10, 2021 Unapproved Minutes

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

CHECK-INS, DEVOTION AND OPENING PRAYER: Larry.

ACCEPT THE JANUARY COUNCIL MINUTES: Motion to accept the minutes by Chuck, 2nd by Bill, motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Reviewed.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Reviewed and discussed new membership. Bill made a motion to receive Bev Oderkirk as a new member during February 28th worship service, 2nd by Marilyn, motion carried.

MINISTRY TEAMS:

- Property—Chuck reported they are purchasing a vacuum and steam cleaner.
- Family Ministry—Bill stated that Bible study is being held on the first and third Wednesdays.
- Music and Worship—Bill reported they met in January and selected music and Larry's plan for Lenten services.
- Circle of Faith—Marilyn reported they will be having indoor dining during the community meal on February 24th. reservations will be required with half hour time slots and Covid safety protocols in place. If someone new comes to the community, please con-

tact Cookie Nielsen regarding a Welcome basket. Bill had asked if a welcome basket has been brought to the new residents who purchased the parsonage.

AD HOC COMMITTEE'S REPORTS:

- Call Committee—Ron is working on preparing a letter to go out to area churches in similar situations as BLC to see if there would be interest in forming a joint Call process.
- SMART Team—Bill reported that the Smart plan was updated in February. The next meeting will be March 1st to review and update the plan again. Bill made a motion to accept the February version of the Smart plan, 2nd by Andy, motion carried. Chuck made a motion to amend the previous motion to allow the Smart team to make a decision regarding indoor worship between March 1st and the March 10th council meeting, 2nd by Bill, motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Church Constitution Changes—1) CR12.05.01 #4 and 5: Discussed video taping from the balcony only (this needs to be changed). It was previously approved by council to allow members only to use the old tables and chairs at no cost. 2) Council term: discussed shortening to 2 year terms. 3) Number of Council Members: Discussed having 5 instead of 7 members. 4) Establishing a Mission Fund C5.05: Discussed wording change to may in place of the word shall.
- Collaboration with other churches—1) Toivola: Current/ongoing. Constitu-

tion 12.04 #h: This encourages us to cooperate with other Lutheran churches, currently we are sharing on-line worship services with Toivola.

- Council seat candidates—discussed and we have **no** volunteers.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Lenten Worship—In person, soup suppers—March 3rd and March 17th are the dates for soup suppers.
- Larry's six month review per contract—Discussed his contract. Marilyn will meet with Larry at church to do his review on February 23rd at 1 pm.
- Changes to proposed 2021 budget due to parsonage sale—Heidi reported there will be changes made to the proposed budget in the areas of electricity, fuel, insurance, water, and sewer. The check for the purchase of the parsonage was deposited on February 2, 2021.

ACTION ITEMS:

- All council members keep looking to find new council member.
- Jo Jessen's 100th birthday is February 16th. Cards are appreciated. Contact Larry or Arla Budd for address to send cards to.
- Larry to make change to proposed Constitution and get it to Heidi to mail out to the congregation before the annual meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Chuck, 2nd by Andy, motion carried. Adjourned with The Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 6:00 pm (in the church).

*Respectfully submitted,
-Cheryl Kohner
Council secretary*

In Loving Memory



Evelyn Birkholm

May 6, 1931—January 26, 2021

A service for Evelyn was held at BLC for her family members.



There will be two Soup Suppers offered this Lenten season.

The first will be held on March 3rd, with the second one scheduled for March 17th. Both will take place at 6 pm in the church basement (Covid safety protocols will be observed) There is a sign-up sheet located on the kiosk.

The regularly scheduled free community meal will be on March 24th from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.



- Mona Pemberton—3rd
- Diane Peterson—3rd
- Gerry Vathne—3rd
- Tony Ecklund—4th
- Ginger Leach—6th
- Jenny Forsman 7th
- Dan Mortensen—7th
- Carolyn Steele—11th
- Tom Baker—12th
- Bob Johnson—13th
- Chase Moon—16th
- Randy Mortensen—18th
- Ann Olson—18th
- Matt Pemberton—19th
- Cheryl Kohner—19th
- Gene Krogh—27th



- Denny & Carol Birkholm—10th
- Tom & Lori Willie—27th



During this difficult time of COVID-19, we need your help to make certain we continue to meet our budgetary needs.

You can make safe and secure one-time or recurring online contributions through our website: www.blcaskov.com/online-giving

Your checks are greatly appreciated too, for those who aren't online
Thank you for your continued support!

Lilies for Decorating our Church on Easter Sunday!

Use this form for ordering your lilies

Please include your payment with your order—thank you!



Donated By: _____

In Memory or Honor Of: _____

Please specify so we know whether this is or isn't a memorial—unspecified orders will "In Honor of"

Make check payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church for \$10.00

Please return to the church with your payment **no later** than Sunday, March 7th



March 7, 2021

Luke 15:1-32

Sunday, March 7, 2021

Read: Luke 15:1-32

Main Idea: Repentance is relational. It is about restoring and repairing a damaged relationship.

Repentance is at the center of today's parables. If we limit interpretation of repentance only to being sorry and asking for forgiveness, then we also limit the power of the story. Repentance here is so much more—it is the return of something lost.

First, the lost things were sheep and coins—valuable, yes, but not as valuable as people. When Jesus dives into a more complex parable, the stakes are far higher. A man's life hangs in the balance. The man did what all people do—he made poor choices that led him down paths he never should have walked. The miracle here is in the moment of awareness, when the man accepted the reality that his choices had led him here, and cultivated a willingness to make it right. Despite his fear, he courageously returned home to beg his father for work alongside his servants.

The father certainly would have been within his rights to shun the son who had brought shame and heartache to the family. But the father represented the abundant and persistent love God has for people, and he welcomed the lost son home with a grand celebration. What the father had lost had been returned to him—not just the man, but the relationship. He could have had the man back and still allowed him only to work as a hired servant. But what the father wanted was a restoration of the relationship—father and son.

The restoration of a loving and trusting relationship is what God desires in God's appeal for repentance. It's not about being sorry—it's about turning back and working to restore the relationship that was damaged. Repentance is relational, and the most important relationship we have to repair is with God.

Pray: Light a candle. Open your devotion with prayer.

Forgiving God, you long for your lost children to return to you. Lead us homeward on the path of repentance, that we might be restored to you and to your community in Christ our Lord. Amen.

Read: Read the key verse from Sunday's reading.

"Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

Reflect: Reflect on the scripture summary.

Through the parable of the lost sheep and coin, and the parable of the lost son, Jesus showed how repentance is about returning what was lost and repairing damaged relationships.

Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household.

What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

How is bad behavior caused by systemic problems? In what ways are they personal?

Tell of a time you lost something valuable. What did you do to recover it?

For the lilies: Have you ever gotten lost? What was it like? How did you get found?

Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God find you when you are lost. Amen.

Do: By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Look for something that you have lost. What is the experience of searching like? What is the experience of finding like? What is the experience of not finding like?

Go Deeper: Visit clergystuff.com/daily-devotions.

Monday: *The Lamb of the Firstborn's Inheritance*, Deuteronomy 21:15-17

Tuesday: *Stoning a Rebellious Son*, Deuteronomy 21:18-21

Wednesday: *Penitent's Pardon*, Psalm 51

Thursday: *A Righteous Heart*, Proverbs 21:1-5

Friday: *The Parable of the Dishonest Manager*, Luke 16:1-13

Saturday: *The Kingdom of God*, Luke 16:14-18