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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

WELCOMING All to Jesus Christ
BELIEVING In God's Promises | **SERVING** God and Neighbor
LIVING In God's Grace through Faith



Pastor's Corner

So this newsletter is undeniably late. At first, I blamed Lent—after that, social distancing. Then Easter followed. These last two months have been a blur, to say the least. We kept pushing back the newsletter (I think I kept hoping for better news). It seems odd to send out a newsletter without a monthly calendar. It seems strange— not knowing with certainty when we'll gather again in person. Bethlehem, here's what I'll say for this issue: better days are coming. When we do gather again in person, it'll be a homecoming day. It'll be a long-awaited reunion. Better days are coming, and there is quite a lot to look forward to in that statement. We'll celebrate communion again—in person. We'll sing again, as one body. We'll greet one another again, face to face. These are all things that may once have seemed small— that, by way of today's distance—will never be small again. There will be unexpected gifts in all of this, and even presently, there is a lot to celebrate. Your faithfulness in supporting BLC's livestream services has been a real inspiration. Your giving has continued (and one could argue, those gifts are now more intentional than ever). Your continued ministry to others—in the form of phone calls, greeting cards, parades, food pantry services, and sewn masks—these are the gospel readings of our own time. These are the things that evidence God's continued presence and provision. My friends, hang in there, and thank you for your continued witness. As the summer months meet us, we will continue to adapt and experiment, as the risen Christ goes with us every step of the way. Peace everyone, Pastor Nat.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

411 3rd Avenue | P.O. Box 297
Slater, Iowa 50244-0297
515.228.3933

Nat Bothwell, Pastor

Church Council

Brenda Neville, President

Stacey Cleverly

Mike Helland

Gary Ihle

Ben Johnson

Barb Mallon

Lori McCasland

Rita Thorson

Erica Weeks-Burger

Bill White

Rick Zimmerman



Council Update

From Your BLC Council

What a unique and challenging time.

As the COVID 19 pandemic unfolds, we are all impacted in different ways, but the uncertainty of the current situation is something we all share. I personally drew strength and refuge from the uncertainty by focusing on the certainty that is revealed at Easter. While I have always loved Easter because it coincided with spring (my favorite season) this year, Easter was much more meaningful and offered me the quiet peace I needed during this time of chaos. I hope you were able to find the same “hope” and “peace” in Easter and everything that it symbolizes.

Since early March, we have been focusing on ways to stay connected with the congregation. Our top priority was finding an avenue to offer an ongoing worship experience and from day one, we wanted it to be in real time. The result of that is the livestream services that have been the foundation of our outreach efforts.

Pastor Nat and our computer consultant Mike wasted no time in getting a makeshift studio set up in the sanctuary and on March 18th we had our first “livestream” service through the BLC’s YouTube channel. While many people are praising the amazing technology, while that is somewhat a true statement, the real heroes are Pastor Nat and Mike. Setting up all the components needed for a livestream broadcast while also testing and re-testing sound, lights, placement of microphones and ensuring that the many “moving parts” that go into a live broadcast to achieve an optimal viewing experience is no small feat. But they pulled it off in what seemed like an effortless manner and the result has been incredible.

Every broadcast has more people joining and on Easter Sunday, we had over 150 people signed on...which means that we easily had over 200 people taking part in the service since there is typically more than one person watching the from the same computer. God’s grace and strength is truly alive and well as witnessed in the large numbers of participants and positive comments by the people who have tuned in every Wednesday and Sunday to be part of the worship service. The certainty of these weekly worship experiences has been amazing on so many different levels.

Because of the popularity of the livestream worship services, we felt that it was important to keep that outreach going so we have continued with Wednesday and Sunday worship services throughout the month of April. We are here for the duration of this pandemic and are so grateful that we are able to come together and worship and draw strength from one another through these livestream services.

We know that at some point in time, this pandemic will be over and the normalcy we experienced prior to the pandemic will slowly return. Because of that certainty, we have continued to focus on some priorities such as the renovation of the front steps and entry way of our church home. For the past six months a committee has been working on this important project. After the sale of the parsonage two years ago, it was agreed that the money (\$150,000) would be used on important projects relative to our church home. As the front steps and retaining wall continued to crumble, this became the priority project. After implementing a comprehensive procedure that included design work, bids, reviewing bids, contractor discussions and finally reaching final numbers; the committee submitted a recommendation to the council which was approved

unanimously, and work will begin very soon.

Dave Helland Construction has been awarded the project for the front steps and railing. Dave Helland has ties to Slater and is very excited to get started. The scope of the project will include two new sets of heated steps and new railings. The project will also include a new retaining wall to replace the one that has badly deteriorated as well as some landscaping and exterior lighting. This project is slated to begin as soon as possible and expected to take 6 to 8 weeks.

Another important project that has been taking place at the church is the replacement of all the interior light fixtures. For a couple of years now, light fixtures and lighting has been upgraded to LED lighting as a various light fixtures failed. However, as more and more fixtures started to fail, the council determined it may be of value to get all the fixtures replaced. After reviewing bids, talking to contractors and reaching a final price for the job. Work began a few weeks ago, which was perfect timing since nobody is in the church. The addition of new lighting throughout the church will not only promote some badly needed energy efficiencies, it will also provide some badly needed “brightness” in several important workspaces and in the sanctuary. The funding for this project came from money that has been earmarked in previous campaigns for building improvements, with lighting upgrades being the priority item on that list.

So while things have been dramatically different at BLC (worship format, no banqueting table, no Sunday School, no choir practice) some important priorities relative to our church home have remained on schedule and in the forefront. The church council and committees have still held meetings, they have just been done over the phone rather than in person. Email correspondence has also been more frequent, but many things have been accomplished as we continue to look towards the future with hope, optimism and gratitude. Now more than ever the strength and fortitude of the BLC family has been evident. Everyone has stepped up in many ways to assist and provide leadership. Like you, we too look forward to the day when we are all back together and the way we worship, network, and work together as a congregation is back to normal. In fact, there are probably some things that we can do differently based on what we have learned through all of this. But in the meantime, we hope that you continue to join us weekly through the livestream services and most importantly, continue to keep everyone in your prayers and draw strength from the certainty that is revealed at Easter.

Approved Council Minutes (March 2020)

2020 Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council
Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, March 224, 2020
6:30 pm, conference call
Coronavirus Quarantine

Attending: Brenda Neville, Stacey Cleverly, Mike Helland, Gary Ihle, Ben Johnson, Barb Mallon, Rita Thorson, Erica Weeks Burger, Bill White, Rick Zimmerman, Pastor Nat Bothwell, Lori McCasland

1. Welcome/Opening Prayer
 - Roll Call Question/Reflection
 - What is "one positive" you have seen since the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded in our county/state/community?
2. Minutes Review Approval
 - Motion to approve by Bill White, seconded by Rita Thorson. Motion carried.
3. Monthly Financial Review-Erica Weeks Burger
 - Paid for Church360 yearly fees.
 - Utilities discussed.
 - Continue to be diligent with offering.
 - Have a usage check by the Alliant.
 - Motion to approve by Stacey Cleverly, seconded by Mike Helland. Motion carried.
4. General/Miscellaneous Update
 - A. Lighting - Ben Johnson
 - Alliant's rebates, energy audit will be free. Ben will set up.
 - Quotes from Moody and Kline are coming.
 - Rebates per fixture from Alliant, possibly \$35/light.
 - Information coming by the end of the week.
 - Ben proposes an email vote for council to vote on this.
 - B. R & R 2.0 -Brenda Neville
 - Front steps-Dave Helland is the contractor. He is putting together an email about what he is doing. He will be getting something to Brenda this Friday.
 - Country Landscapes is also putting together an email regarding their work to be done.
 - C. Food Pantry
 - Might be open by appointment only.
 - There may be more food products available for food pantry's from corporations.
 - Patrons are appreciative that it is still open.
 - South Story Bank and Trust sent money the Cambridge, Huxley and Slater food pantry's.
 - D. Worship Services/Live Stream
 - About 70 people logged are subscribers.
 - Ringing of the bell at 9:00 am on Sunday is a great addition.

Wednesday night and Sunday mornings are able to be viewed live.

Pastor Nat is going to ask people in the congregation to record readings for the week and he will put voices together to share during worship. Council will read for April 5th, Palm Sunday.

E. Easter -Drive through Communion/Blessing

Brenda has made a call to let the city of Slater know.

April 12th, still no gatherings for groups larger than 10 at that time.

Drive through communion on the west side and having a couple of stations.

Weather permitting, having a long line would be great!

Sunday school teachers are wanting to do something.

Give communion and Blessing per car.

Could ask William to play and send the music out the window. :)

Offering station could be included.

F. BLC Continuity Plan -Now and in the Future?

Brenda suggested a message from the council to the congregation to remember offerings for the church during this time, even though we are unable to worship in our church. Council discussed email, text or US mail possibilities of getting the word out about giving.

5. Adjournment

Motion to approve by Rita Thorson. Seconded by Erica Weeks Burger. Motion carried.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 21 @ 6:00 PM - church basement or conference call

Thank You Easter Lily Sponsors!

Many of this year's Easter lilies were delivered to our friends at Ballard Creek and the Madrid Home as a way of saying "we are thinking of you" this Easter. Several other lilies continue to be used in BLC's Sunday morning livestream services. Special thanks to all who contributed a lily this year—signs of Easter hope, each one.

Connie & Steve Boyd

Eric & Evan Burger

Andy & Jess Denner

Orin & Norma Erickson

Edward Fulk

Dennis & Jo Ellyn Hokel

Gary & Carla Ihle

Duane Johnson

Jon, Cindy, Ben & Nate Johnson

Kreg & Barb Kahler

Bob & Julie Krause

Barb Mallon

Doug & Sharon Mackey

Rich & Janet Mason

Lori McCasland

Wendell & Marilyn Mortvedt

Brenda & Joe Neville

Marigrace Sievers

Bill & Mary White

Dave & Ann White

Craig & Judy Whitney

Rick & Cindi Zimmerman





Looking Ahead

Bethlehem Live!

BLC is now livestreaming Sunday morning services on its new YouTube channel at 9am. Here you'll find worship services, special music, and other 'life together' moments in a time of social distance. Need help finding BLC's channel? Just visit slaterblc.org, and from there, click the YouTube banner. Be sure to 'subscribe' to BLC's channel — as a subscriber, YouTube will automatically notify you of new content as it's added.

Council Meeting

The next Church Council meeting will be held **Tuesday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m.** (likely by conference call). All council meetings are open to the congregation to attend.

Face Mask Ministry

Barbara Lund, Barb Mallon, and others continue to sew fabric face masks (both for the Madrid Home and general use). An email was sent out by Pastor Nat with the directions in sewing, re: face masks. Many thanks to all who continue to sew masks for those who need them.

Love Thy neighbor Fund

We have received a few special offerings recently that have been designated for BLC's "love your neighbor" fund. These proceeds will be available to help pay utility bills and buy groceries for neighbors in need. If you have been laid off recently and monthly bills are an immediate concern, please let the church office know.

Confirmation

Confirmation has been moved to May 31st as of now. If we are not able to worship as a congregation at that time, the date will be postponed to Reformation Sunday (Oct.). Please pray for our confirmation students as they continue to draft their individual statements of faith.

Devotionals

Christ in Our Home, April - June, is available in the church for you to pick up. If you would like one delivered to you, please let the office know and we can make that happen.

In Our Prayers this Month

- Kim Brakke (Ann White's sister-in-law)
- Mark Eimers
- Justin Forre
- Jeff Hughes (son of Patricia Ihle-Hughes)
- Ron Ihle
- Florence Krause
- Pat Kyle
- Janet Larson
- Ruth Ann Meyers (a friend of Nicki Drobny)
- Millie Nelson
- Phillis Newman
- DiAnn Schroeder (a friend of Abby Wait)
- Jackie Skaar (a friend of Ann White)
- Chuck and Becky Stowe (friends of Gary Ihle)
- Summer Compton Vespestad
- Rob Wright (a friend of Martha Sheldahl)

Join us in remembering these friends in prayer. Cards and notes of encouragement are always welcome too!

We Remember Also

- Ballard Creek**
- Phillis Newman | Elaine Weeks
- Madrid Home**
- Florence Krause | Tony Spence
- Bethany Manor**
- Millie Nelson

Food Pantry Needs

- Soups (the kind you don't have to add water to)
- Jell-O (orange and grape)
- Instant chocolate pudding
- Hamburger Helper
- Tuna Helper
- Cake Mixes
- Shampoo
- Toilet Paper (ha-ha)
- Paper Towels
- Cereal
- Jelly

As you're able – whatever you can spare – consider a donation of food. Contact Craig or Judy Whitney at 228-3076 to arrange for pickup if this is easier.

FOODFACT:



44,171 pounds

of food were distributed in total at Story County food pantries in September of this year.

1.6 million pounds

of food were distributed by the Food Bank of Iowa's Des Moines warehouse in October 2019 alone (a record high).

Source: The United Way of Story County

Slater/Sheldahl Food Pantry Hours

Tuesdays	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
Wednesdays	7 p.m.—9 p.m.

For more information, call 515-228-3076



A Future Full of Hope

Last year, Jaqashia didn't know what to do. She was expecting her first child, and she felt stressed and overwhelmed. She didn't have a job or a home to provide for her new baby.

When she was referred to LSI's Early Childhood Services, she didn't know if the program could help her. But after just two months with her LSI worker, Jaqashia says the services made a life-changing difference.

Her LSI worker, Pam, helped Jaqashia find an apartment. Every week, she visited Jaqashia in her new home to provide helpful parenting tips she could use to raise a happy, healthy baby. With a comfortable home ready for her child, Jaqashia felt confident and empowered to find a job. And Pam was there, ready to encourage her and walk alongside her every step of the way.

Jaqashia is now the proud mother of a baby boy, A'Kani, and she is determined to be the best parent she can be. Pam still stops by for her regular visits but now, Jaqashia feels ready to raise her son in a safe and loving home.

"LSI made a huge difference. They made a big positive change," Jaqashia says. "I feel very confident that I can actually raise my son now, and I have my own place. I'm feeling great."

BLC's regular giving to the SE Iowa Synod & the ELCA supports the mission of LSI and other non-profit missions throughout Iowa and the world.



Big News!

March Birthdays

- 1- Duane o. Johnson
- 4- Susan Skei
- 5- Savannah Moyer
- 7- Dan Eimers
Molly Sheldahl
- 13- Connie Kennedy
Jenny Horness
- 14- Amy Lund
Bob Krause
Macee Whitacre
- 15- Chris Hokel
- 17- Christopher Neville
- 18- Travis Krause
- 19- Brian Ihle
Reese Broer
Sandy Larson
- 20- Craig Whitney
- 22- LuAnn Gibson
Nick Upah
Samantha Douglas
- 23- Laura Smith
Sandy Foster
- 24- Caleb Mackey
- 25- Barb Lund
Mary White
Tony Spence
- 26- Randy Kennedy
- 28- Aubrey Estrem
Erin Beardmore
Joyce Tweedt
- 29- Al Erickson
Brandt Boyd
Joe Gibson
Skip Frohling
Tom Eimers
- 31- Morgan Brown

Anniversaries this Month

- 4- Mike & Julie Helland
- 12- William & Stacey Cleverley
- 21- Monty & Vickie Brown
Wendell & Marilyn Mortvedt
- 24- David & Susan Skei



“So teach us to count our days
that we may gain
a wise heart.”

Psalm 90:12

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Big News!

April Birthdays

- 1- Ashlee Lund
Tabitha Eatock
Wendell Mortvedt
- 3- Jen Dovre
- 6- Ann White
- 7- Cole Krause
Jon Lehms
- 8- Dylan Staples
- 9- David Skei
Joce Plowman
Meghan Meyer
- 10- Angela Kyhl
Elaine Weeks
Jess Denner
- 11- Kathy Cline
- 13- Kylie Murray
Laurie Plowman
- 15- Alison Mackey
Erik Sheldahl
Tracey Ihle
- 16- Addison Gibson
Scott Stocksleger
- 18- Wyatt Johnson
- 19- Erica Weeks-Burger
Josh Neville
Lindsay Allen
- 20- Doug Mackey
Eddy Burt
- 21- Mike Coomes
- 22- Dustin Allen
Monica Bowers
Sam Upah
- 23- Kyle Greenwood
- 24- Avery Gibson
Michael Krause
- 25- Blake Wheeler
- 27- Derek Kahler
Dottie Cline
- 28- Lorry Gross
Sharon Mackey
- 29- Marigrace Sievers
Matthew Seigfried
Nick Helland
- 30- Dick Lehms
Donny White

Anniversaries this Month

- 3- Daniel & Lorry Gross
- 4- Kevin & Sue Burt
- 6- Benjamin & Lauren Pratt
- 8- Jim & Holly Christensen
- 10- Brad & Melody Moyer
- 15- Rick & Cindi Zimmermann
- 16- Ken & Rosalie Lund
- 26- Ron & Kathy Cline
- 30- Carrol & Charlene Michael



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