



***A family of God sharing Jesus
and serving Him faithfully***

The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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Our Mission Statement

As members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church who have been granted eternal life through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we worship Him as our Lord and seek to further His work of salvation through word and sacrament ministry in our community and world toward the goal of creating and strengthening personal faith in Him.

The Pastor's Page

Greetings in Christ Jesus our Lord!

What now? Pastor Augustine has accepted the call to serve the Lord in Minnesota and has moved. What happens next?

I am glad to assist you in the midst of a vacancy, to help provide spiritual care, to lead services and to proclaim God's Word. I function as a pastor in your midst, but I am not really your pastor. It isn't that I don't enjoy working with you, but it isn't the same as having a pastor of your own.

So what is next? That's a very good question. At the Church Council meeting and at the Quarterly Voter's Meeting on July 19th, some of the possibilities for calling a pastor will be discussed. Whatever the possibilities, calling your own pastor isn't likely to happen quickly. There will be several steps involved along the way.

The Circuit Visitor, Pastor Mark Lovett of Concordia, Hoisington will be helping out the congregation with the call process. This is part of the responsibilities of the visitor, to guide the congregation through the hoops and ensure that the steps are fulfilled. Everyone's goal is that Bethlehem has a pastor as soon as possible. Having a pastor to call your own, to speak the Word of God to you, to administer the sacraments to you, to lead you in prayer and praise, to teach the

Word of God, these are all things best done by a pastor whom you call yours.

With the demands of a schedule, I am not able to be at every meeting. While I want to be able to visit with everyone, being here in Sylvan one day a week makes that difficult. Some of that work will fall on the shoulders of the congregation. Some of those tasks that you might have relied upon a pastor to do will now have to be done by someone within the congregation. This is partially why having a pastor of your own is so important.

If there is something critical that does happen, please feel free to give me a call. I will arrange to address the concerns as best as I can. If you need to visit, you are certainly welcome to drop by on a Tuesday. But life doesn't always wait until Sunday mornings and Tuesdays. If something happens in between, please call and I will do what I can.

Please keep your congregation in your prayers as you gather to consider what happens next. I also ask that you keep Zion, Downs and myself in your prayers as we continue to work together.

In Christ,

Jon Bonine, Pastor of Zion,
Downs.

July Stewardship Newsletter Article

"Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means" (Luke 8:1-3).

There were many who provided out of their means for our Lord's work of proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God while He was on earth. Think about that for a moment. These pious women gave to God in the flesh for God the Father's work of bringing the good news of God's kingdom. Their generosity, which was moved by the generosity of God Himself to them in the healing of their infirmities and evil spirits, was employed so that others could benefit as they had. The means they provided was put into God's service to feed and clothe and provide shelter as Jesus and the twelve travelled preaching, teaching, and healing.

That's amazing. These women were widows who had been oppressed by demons. They were forgotten, thought of as nobodies. The world didn't think much of them, or perhaps that they were just in the way. Regardless of what the world thought, God forgets no one. No one is a burden to Him. He cares for the widow and the fatherless. He puts the solitary into a home. And more than that, He brings them the good news of the kingdom and lets them be a part of building it by their giving of what He has provided them. He presses their gifts into His service to His glory. And they are not forgotten. They are inscribed in the Holy Scriptures as a monument of what giving from out of their means does. It helped to turn the world upside down, which happens to be right-side up, reconciliation and healing through what Jesus accomplished on the cross. (Acts 17:6).

This is what your giving to the church does also. It provides the ministers of the Gospel food and clothes, house and home, all that they need for this body and life so that they may preach and teach, and bring the healing of the Gospel of Jesus's death and resurrection to those who need it, those who are homebound and infirm, those who are sick and suffering, those who are bedeviled by evil spirits, depressed, and plagued by guilt and shame. Your gifts are put to use for God's work on earth to bring the good news of His kingdom which has no end.

Who wouldn't want to be part of that? And you are! Thanks be to God. And it does not go unnoticed. Your pastor gives thanks for it and prays for you. And so does your Lord. And the angels rejoice over one sinner who repents and believes. You help to make that happen. You do it because someone else has made it happen for you.

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BOCL

BOCL met on Tue. June 2, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.. Members present were Warren Meitler, Barb Meitler, Gary Frederking, Tara Kubick, Kylie Erlich, Tyler Gier, Dell Gier, Brock Mueller, Marcy Hurlbut, & vacancy Pastor Bonine. Pastor opened with a prayer. Minutes were read & approved.

Gary F moved that Marcy H will order the wiring for the video taping of the service, the funds will come out of the BOCL budget, Barb M seconded, motion passed.

Dell reported on a new program put out by Thrivent. The new program is called Community Team Action. How this works is an individual thrivent member can apply for \$250 to go towards the improvements of church and community by means of a fundraiser. For community day water will be supplied and handed out during turtle races.

Cleanup day was a success. We had 22 volunteers, and did 12 locations. Another one will be planned for this fall.

Tyler G presented a sample of what will be printed on the new t-shirts, Kylie will check on different prices, the color maroon, the official color of our Missouri Synod was chosen. It was also suggested that the BLTeens sell them as a fundraiser. Brock M put this forth as a motion, Warren M seconded, motion passed.

Next meeting is set for July 7, at 8:00 p.m. Guest greeter for July will be Gary Frederking.

Pastor closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted Brock L Mueller



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
VBS
July 13-17
6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Light suppers will be served

BETHLEHEM LWML MEETING - - JUNE 3, 2015

The Bethlehem LWML group met on Wednesday evening, June 3rd, for their bi-monthly meeting. Opening devotions were given by Cheryl Gier. Justine Dohl presented the short topic on "Tough Stuff", from articles taken from the LWML Summer Quarterly. Many of the words were taken from the book of Ecclesiastes, from the Bible.

The meeting was called to order by President Coleen. Roll call was answered by 10 members. The secretary minutes and treasurer's reports from the April meeting were approved as read. Ramie, the treasurer, reported a balance of \$3082.97, with \$1283.74 designated for the cookbook fund, \$1365.07 designated for the funeral luncheon fund, and \$434.16 for the general Home Fund. Correspondence and thank-you's were read. We had another letter & thank you from Travis Ferguson, our adopted Seminarian. He got married to Amy on Saturday, June 6th, and he received his vicarage assignment to Cape Girardeau, Mo., starting in July.

There were no committee reports, except for the flower committee. Flowers for church in June will be Lorelei Dohl & Sophia Schofield - they will also water all the plants in the Parish Hall. Flowers for church in July will be Cheryl Gier and Barb Meitler.

OLD BUSINESS:

Travis Ferguson, our adopted Seminarian, has been sent a cookbook for his May birthday, and a card & money gift for his June wedding.

The big Mite Box will be put out in back of church the 1st Sunday of every month starting now in June. So if you miss meetings bring your 'mites' along and add them to the big box. The children who have the children's' mite boxes can also bring their offerings & place them in the big Mite Box - all goes for 'Mites for Missions'.

The Spring Rally at Hays was reported on by several members who attended. Pastor Rohrberg was the speaker for the day.

The flower planter by the South door of church was discussed. Lukas Sebesta still plans on repairing it as an Eagle Scout project, possibly next spring/summer.

NEW BUSINESS:

The National LWML Convention will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, starting June 25th. Members attending from Bethlehem will be Coleen Ancell and Shelly Keller, with Emilie Wacker going as the delegate from the Lincoln Zone. There will be ingathering's for several projects - if you have some to

donate, talk to one of the members going. We will also send along (3) \$25 offerings and \$10 for each of the 3 going, to use for their "Walk for Mites".

Vacation Bible School will again be held from July 13-17, starting at 6:00 p.m. & a light supper. We donated \$100 for VBS.

The Bazaar will be Saturday, October 3rd. Lois Gier has again donated a beautiful quilt for the drawing. There will again be a Garage Sale on the slab north of the Parish Hall that day starting in the morning, with those proceeds going to the church Home Fund. So start going through your 'stuff' and bring them to the Garage Sale. We will again need help to run that sale.

We discussed the condition of many of the pew pads in the Sanctuary. We will do some research on this and report to the next meeting.

The LWML will have a Fall Event possibly in September, with Ramie as the chairman. She is contacting her mother, Connie Graves, to see if she will show us how she makes so many 'pillowcase dresses' for little girls, which get sent to Orphan Grain Train or Operation Christmas Child. We will also remember Connie & her husband with a monetary gift for their 50th wedding anniversary, coming up soon. Connie started making these dresses in 2012 after we had Pastor John Reeh/Orphan Grain Train tell us about them at our Spring Rally that year, which now turns out to be her passion.

Since Pastor Augustine is no longer here, the July Bible Study will be presented by Emilie, as our Lincoln Zone Delegate, reporting on the National LWML Convention in Des Moines. It will be held on Wednesday, July 1st, in the Parish Hall.

The outside landscaping: watering for June 7 - 20 will be done by Lorelei, June 21 - July 4th will be Annie Dohl, July 5 - 18 will be Emilie Wacker, and July 19 - August 1 will be Shirley Krueger.

The meeting was adjourned. Cheryl closed the evening with leading The Lords' Prayer. Delicious refreshments were served by the hostess, Eunice Thaumert.

Respectfully Submitted, Lois Walter, LWML Secretary

LWML Flower Committee
July
Barbara Meitler Cheryl Gier
August
Coleen Ancell, Justine Dohl

Kansas District Convention Report

It was a blessing to attend the convention, but that is not to say everything was enjoyable. It is a blessing to be among fellow believers and to enjoy such things as a divine service. But it is a convention and as such its purpose is to take care of business which can be tedious, time consuming, and sometimes frustrating, although necessary. Some of the items of business were necessary to keep the Kansas District in harmony with changes that may have been made at the Synod level. There were several issues that were dealt with, but I will highlight three items which I believe will be of the most interest to us: Elections, Circuit Alignment and Synod President Matthew Harrison’s Report.

For elections, Rev. Peter Lange was elected District President and Rev. Mark Lovett, (Concordia, Hoisington) is our new circuit visitor.

In order for a circuit to have representation at Synod it must meet the following requirements: 1500-10,000 members per circuit and 7-10 churches per circuit. In 2013 Synod gave circuits 14 and 15 an exemption because they did not have sufficient communicant membership. It was decided it would be best to get rid of circuit 14 and place the churches into neighboring circuits to sure up the membership of those circuits. Circuit 13 lost Plainville, Natoma, and Hays to circuit 15, but gained Holyrood, Hoisington, Claflin, Great Bend, and Larned from the old circuit 14. The result of eliminating circuit 14 is that the Kansas District has lost two delegates to Synod.

President Harrison touched on a number of things. The Synod is in great shape financially with much money in its coffers. President Harrison alluded to forming a credit union and using the collected fees to support missions. President Harrison also reminded us that Jesus Christ is in control of His Church as we look at what is happening here in the United States and abroad. Here in the U.S. he reminded us of the declining growth numbers and the numerous obstacles we face. These are causes for concern, but remember who is in control of the church. There is no magic bullet but we are called to do many things: be faithful to Scripture, use publications like “A Simple Way To Pray”, bear witness to Christ and those in need. Although things look grim in this country there is much to rejoice about in other parts of the world. Lutheran Churches in the southern hemisphere, formally supported by the ELCA and the Church of Sweden have approached the LCMS for help and partnership. They are not all asking for money, but what they do want is the association with the LCMS. Why? They are seeking a confessionally

faithful church body able to have a global footprint. Another item of encouragement is a church in Berlin, Germany which has 800 Muslim converts.

There is much that goes on in three days at the Kansas District Convention. These are the highlights. I thank you for sending me. –Trey Watson

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Baptismal Birthdays in July

God’s blessings to you for all His gifts of grace that you have received, and we pray for many more blessings for Jesus’ sake!



Thelma Blase
Blake Chegwidden
Erwin Heine
Wyatt Heine
Dale Krueger
Susan Kurz-Sebesta

Connie Meitler
Peggy Meyer
Sophia Schofield
Eli Schultz
Isaac Schultz
Shirley Small

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Acolyte Schedule

July-August

July 5 Grace Chegwidden
12* Rachel Sebesta
19 Marshall Hurlbut
26* Mekelle Hurlbut

August 2 Grace Chegwidden
9* Rachel Sebesta
16 Marshall Hurlbut
23* Mekelle Hurlbut
30 Grace Chegwidden

* Communion service

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**A Message from
Synodical President Matthew Harrison
concerning the recent Supreme Court ruling**

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress (Psalm 46:1–7).*

A one-person majority of the U.S. Supreme Court got it wrong – again. Some 40 years ago, a similarly activist court legalized the killing of children in the womb. That decision has to date left a wake of some 55 million Americans dead. Today, the Court has imposed same-sex marriage upon the whole nation in a similar fashion. Five justices cannot determine natural or divine law. Now shall come the time of testing for Christians faithful to the Scriptures and the divine institution of marriage (Matthew 19:3–6), and indeed, a time of testing much more intense than what followed *Roe v. Wade*.

Like *Roe v. Wade*, this decision will be followed by a rash of lawsuits. Through coercive litigation, governments and popular culture continue to make the central post-modern value of sexual freedom override “the free exercise of religion” enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

The ramifications of this decision are seismic. Proponents will seek to drive Christians and Christian institutions out of education at all levels; they will press laws to force faithful Christian institutions and individuals to violate consciences in work practices and myriad other ways. We will have much more to say about this.

During some of the darkest days of Germany, a faithful Lutheran presciently described how governments lose their claim to legitimate authority according to Romans 13.

“The Caesar cult in its manifold forms, the deification of the state, is one great form of the defection from the [true] idea of the state. There are also other possibilities of such defection. The government can forget and

neglect its tasks. When it no longer distinguishes between right and wrong, when its courts are no longer governed by the strict desire for justice, but by special interests, when government no longer has the courage to exercise its law, fails to exercise its duties, undermines its own legal order, when it weakens through its family law parental authority and the estate of marriage, then it ceases to be governing authority.

Raising such a question can lead to heavy conflicts of conscience. But it is fundamentally conceivable, and it has time and again become reality in history, that a governing authority has ceased to be governing authority. In such a case there may indeed exist a submission to a superior power. But the duty of obedience against this power no longer exists. [Hermann Sasse, “What Is the State?”(1932)]

As faithful Christians, we shall continue to be obedient to just laws. We affirm the human rights of all individuals and the inherent and equal value of all people. We respect the divinely given dignity of all people, no matter their sexual preference. We recognize that, under the exacting and demanding laws of God, we are indeed sinners in thought, word and deed, just as are all (Romans 3:9ff.). We confess that the “blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all our sins” (1 John 1:7). We confess that God’s divine law of marriage and the entire Ten Commandments apply to all, and that so also the life-giving sacrifice of Christ on the cross is for all. It is a “righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (Romans 3:22).

However, even as we struggle as a church to come to a unified response to this blatant rejection of the entire history of humankind and its practice of marriage, “We shall obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29). Christians will now begin to learn what it means to be in a state of solemn conscientious objection against the state. We will resist its imposition of falsehood upon us, even as we continue to reach out to those who continue to be harmed by the ethic of radical sexual freedom, detached from God’s blessing of marriage. And we will stand shoulder to shoulder with Christians, churches and people of good will who are resolute on this issue.

God help us. Amen.

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison

Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

July 7 – Elders Meeting

July 7 – Church Council meeting

July 13-17 – Vacation Bible School

July 14-28 Pastor Bonine on Vacation

July 19 – Quarterly Voters meeting

July 22-25 – Lincoln County Fair / Peach Cobbler stand (Thursday & Friday)

July 28-31 – BLTeens attending Higher Things youth conference

Our Weekly Worship schedule:

11:30 a.m. – Sunday School and BLTeens Bible study (school)

11:30 a.m. – Adult Bible study (Parish hall)

10:30 a.m. – Worship Service (Holy Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays and some festivals)

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