



The Bethesda Beacon

Monthly Newsletter of Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carlton MN
October 2020

GOD SO LOVED
THE WORLD,
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY
BEGOTTEN SON,
THAT WHOSEVER BELIEVETH
IN HIM
SHOULD NOT PERISH,
BUT HAVE EVERLASTING
LIFE.

9:13 AM
JOHN

In This Month's Beacon:

*Pastor Jim's Beacon Article

*Financial Update

*Member News

*Committee Updates

*Faith on the Go!

*And More

Bethesda is resuming in person worship each Sunday at 9 a.m. starting in the month of October. We will continue to have worship online as well.



Dear friends,

Fear seems to be ruling the roost these days. Taking an inventory of personal fears makes for an interesting exercise. If you sign onto the project, be sure to ask yourself where your particular fears seem to originate.

And don't forget to look for patterns to the things that scare you. See if some desire to control events is in any part of the list. Notice those fears that revolve around interpreting people who are unlike you in some way.

Chances are good that our personal fears say more about us than they do about the object to which they are supposed to be directed. In fact, our fears can inform our worldview to the degree that some days we expect danger around every next corner. Often we look in the direction of another person and expect the worst. Is that person an ally or a threat to my understanding of life and my sense of right and wrong.

Fear rapidly becomes contagious. If you want to defeat something in politics these days, just get people good and scared about what certain legislation might do.

Politics is not the only inspirer of fear. If you want to destroy the fullness of life, let almost any fear stiffen the hinges of the door to your heart. It's impossible to be joyful about much of anything if you are afraid. Fear

becomes a tyranny that keeps us from being fully alive. It morphs into a curse that limits wholeness.

No wonder Scriptures spend so much page space distilling two words: Fear Not.

Whether it's the angel calming pregnant Mary or speaking to some terrified shepherds, whether it's Jesus trying to get his followers to let go of prejudice and greed, or whether it's the resurrected Christ trying to get some frightened followers out of lockdown mode, "Fear not. Do not be afraid" are watchwords for faithful living.

A Lutheran Christian response to the stranglehold of fear will always ask us to behold one thing above all else—the gift of faith.

This would not be an intellectual faith in propositions or an academic faith in elegantly worded doctrines, but faith that assures there is enough of God to go around. We get to embody a faith that God knows God's way in and through every situation of our lives.

Fear keeps telling us there is "not enough" to go around. Not enough time, not enough resources, not enough strength, not enough grace, not enough patience and not enough God.

Trusting faith believes in God's sufficiency no matter what. It reminds us that there is indeed enough of God to free us from paralyzing anxiety. Never pretending that all fear will disappear, trusting faith simply lends

us the courage to walk through those fears.

On good days this walk turns into a leap. It's a leap into an unknown future where we are not in control, but always at home—a leap into the lap of a trustworthy God.

So. . .in these days of politics and pandemic. . .stay safe, stay strong, and keep the faith. Our loving God is near!

May His peace and joy be yours!

Pastor Jim
Your friend in Christ,

Bethesda Staff

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2020 Members of Bethesda Church Council

*President – Lynn Beatty

*Vice President –Frank Curtiss

*Secretary - Linda Newlon

*Stacy Colich, Treasurer

Dave Beatty

Deb Davis

Jane Joki

Bethany Leseman

**If you have items that you wish to be addressed by council, contact a member of the Executive Committee, who sets the council agenda. You can keep up to date with church business by viewing the Council Meeting Minutes on the rotating bulletin board or view them on our website.*



Thank you to Mary & George Saarela for organizing highway clean up and thank you to all those who participated!

We are looking for clean old shoelaces, cording, ribbon or anything heavy duty to be used for tying the homeless ditty bags. If you have any of these things that you would like to donate please bring your donation to church or give to Rusty Buscko.

Financial Update			
Year-to-date ending 08/31/2020			
	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under) Budget
Envelope giving	69066.82	66982.00	2084.82
Non-pledged income	10439.57	8033.36	2406.21
TOTAL INCOME	79506.39	75015.36	4491.03
Salaries/Compensation	38865.55	62463.92	(23598.37)
General Office Expenses	6469.30	5876.08	593.22
Utilities	7300.67	6920.64	380.03
Other Expenses	677.55	1218.36	(540.81)
Benevolence Expenses	690.67	669.82	20.85
Evangelism Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property Expenses	1233.26	980.00	253.26
Social Ministry	216.00	233.36	(17.36)
Stewardship Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Worship Expenses	4548.10	1240.00	3308.10
CYFM Expenses	538.40	1570.00	(1031.60)
TOTAL EXPENSES	60539.50	81172.18	(20632.68)
Net Income	18966.89	(6156.82)	25123.71
Non-pledged income includes Loose offering, Special Services, Meatball supper, Sunday School, Interest Income, etc.			
Memorial money is not included in any of the figures above.			



Native American Sunday, October 11, 2020

This year Together Here Ministries is working with people from throughout our synod to pre-record the worship service. Congregations are invited to use the video recording or radio broadcast as their worship service on Native American Sunday,

October 11. For congregations holding in-person worship, the liturgy is available on the webpage (<http://www.nemnsynod.org/native-american-sunday--oct-11-2020.html>).

Native American Sunday in Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, is the second Sunday in October each year. On Native American Sunday in Northeastern Minnesota Synod, we honor the unique and beautiful contributions of our Native American brothers and sisters by lifting up the American Indian/Alaska Native ministries of the ELCA. We are excited to worship with you, united as one synod, on October 11th.

Prayer for the Simple Things

Thank you, God for all your blessings for me and my family, for the strength you give me each day and for all the people around me who make life more meaningful. Amen.

From NEMN Synod Bright Spot

**Would you like to give a
farewell gift?**

Any offerings in Bishop Tom's honor will be split between the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Seminarian Debt Relief Program and the Together Here Ministry.

Please mail your gifts to the
Synod office at:
1105 E. Superior St. Upper Ste.
Duluth, MN, 55802

**Resiliency: Faith Practices
in Tough Times**

Daily Meditations: Hear the
word of God and share in the
Lord's Supper

WHAT? Take a moment and
meditate on God's message
for you. This message might
be a single word, a verse
from scripture, an image of
art or a piece of music. Skim
through your Bible.

*Question: What is God's
word for you in this season of
your life?*

NEW Resiliency Resources

@[www.elca.org/
Resources/Faith-
Practices#Resiliency](http://www.elca.org/Resources/Faith-Practices#Resiliency)

Resiliency includes others,
hope, and meaning! That's
nothing new to God. Jesus
lived it. The Holy Spirit
provides all three on a
continual basis. These new
resources use the Five Gifts
of Discipleship as a
framework to explore
resiliency in these times.

- [Resiliency: Faith Practices in Tough Times](#)
- [Resiliency: Setting Free our Lament](#)
- [Resiliency: Parent's Guide](#)
- [Lament: A Conversation with Brenda Smith](#)

Synod Reflections

Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one

another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... ” - Ephesians 4:29-5:2a

I learned a new word this week while on a Zoom meeting with Region 3 (MN, ND & SD Synods) Assistants to the Bishops. That word is “Zoomgrace.” I am guessing that by this time most of us have used the term “Zoom Fatigue” no matter what your vocation is i.e. student, business person, council member, teacher, pastor, deacon, SAM, medical personnel, patient, IT person, etc. Thank God we have the technology to navigate important gatherings during this time of Covid. However exhausting these zoom meetings can be, how much harder would it be to not be able to see one another, even if virtually or hundreds of miles away!

It is no secret we are living in very tense times. Frustration and anxiety are running on some fairly high levels. The desire to be back the way everything was pre-Covid is a strong desire even though it is unrealistic not just in the present but also for the future. Anytime

there is massive change, turmoil, or tragedies, life as we know it will never be the same. But it can be good again in the future. There is hope.

It is so similar to the death of a loved one which many of us have experienced these past six months. Ways of grieving together have also changed. Grief is a difficult journey to go through. There are no short cuts. There are a few steps forward. A few steps back and so on.

Enter Zoomgrace. Where might we as the Body of Christ model Zoomgrace to one another? The temptation to lash out at someone with our frustrations is just below the surface. Might it actually be grief for the multiple losses that is the real underlying emotion? Grief for our young people with hybrid or distance learning, missing out on “normal” school activities, or couples postponing weddings or baby showers? Grief for our families yearning to hug each other in person rather than across zoom miles when a loved one has died or when someone has received heartbreaking health news or relationship changes? Grief because the one place to normally find comfort and solace, your

particular pew in the sanctuary or having coffee at the social hall table with your friends, is now not safe to do with this virus still roaming around?

Grief at the way our country is fragmented in its political and judicial processes? Grief as we see and hear the literal groaning of creation with widespread and all too frequent fires and hurricanes causing grave consequences? Grief at the loss of employment and steady income? Grief at having to stop, think and grab necessary hand sanitizer bottles and masks before leaving the house? Everything feels so unstable, out of control, walking on shaky ground.

Enter Zoomgrace. We are all in this together even in the midst of differing political opinions. We are all in this together if society is to not just survive, but come through intact enough to someday thrive. This will all take time. It will take wisdom and courage. It will take grace.

Enter God's grace. No matter our age or life experience, we are all students learning to navigate a "new normal" for this time and place. Like grieving a loved one, there are sleepless nights and

worries that creep in. Yet, the promise that *God is with us in the midst of all these changes* (both sorrowful as well as blessings happening, too!) should remind us of our call as God's children, to be bearers of hope. Children and young people are watching adults' reactions. These younger ones have not experienced Great Depression era situations, World Wars, nuclear bombs, Cold War threats, polio and TB outbreaks, the riots of the 1960's with its assassinations of political candidates and faith leaders...but, they are watching whether or not we adults show grace to one another - especially in our congregations here and now.

That Zoomgrace goes both ways as we seek to listen carefully to the fears and concerns of our young people. To date myself, my 9th grade Civics and Health courses included reel to reel black & white films on the necessity of running to a bomb shelter (*which we did not practice but knew it was the hospital 2 blocks away or the public library which was 10 blocks away*) or we were told to hide under your school desk in the event of a nuclear bomb attack. We were naive enough at that time to believe there was a

good chance of making it through alive!

Now, our children, young people and educational staff not only face the additional threat of Covid but also the fear of falling behind when some students do not have access to internet or devices for their studies - all of which is compounded with the addition of active shooter drills.

We, as adults, especially in our faith communities, need to model that non-anxious presence for our young people. This does not mean we do so passively or silently. In our Affirmation of Baptism and Ordination vows, we are called to speak truth, to work for justice, mercy and peace. It is imperative that we share our faith even more clearly and in a loving manner. God has brought us through difficult times before and God can be trusted to bring us through again.

We need to share hope with each other. We need to truly love one another as Jesus has commanded us to do even with people who hold differing opinions from us regarding political parties or whether or not it is safe to re-enter a sanctuary. We need God's grace in order to share God's

grace with one another. Regardless of whether our social interactions happen in-person or via live-stream, pre-recorded or Zoomworld, our children and the world is watching.

It is time to step back. Breathe deeply. Pray constantly. Take in the beauty of creation. Practice gratefulness. Listen to one another respectfully. Honor each other as human beings created in the image of God - just like you and me. Re-set our expectations in this "new norm." Help wherever and however we are able. Be gracious with others and to yourself.

We will get through this. God is faithful. Post-election and Post-covid will require much repair work in our nation, our communities and our congregations. The Church will not be respected as the necessary agents of hope, repair and reconciliation if we are beating each other up over our differences within our faith communities during this tumultuous time. "As there is need may your words give grace." There certainly is a great need for grace in our world. May our words, actions, emails, text messages, Instagrams,

Facebook posts and chat-room comments bring grace to all who hear that they might see the Body of Christ, in-person and on Zoom as agents of hope, justice, healing and reconciliation.

-Deacon Brenda Tibbetts
*From NEMN Synod Online
Reflections*



Our deepest sympathy & prayers to the family of Vi Axtell who passed away on September 7th, 2020. And to the family of John Stumpf who passed away on August 18th. God's promises of resurrection bring comfort and hope in Christ the risen savior.

Member News



Celebrating October Baptismal Birthdays

Brad McKinstry, Noah Olsen, Karen Laine, Wendy Mitchell, Dylan Stradtman, Kristian Herman, Ben Talarico, Marnie Emerson, Robert Emerson, Laraya Kiehl, Larry Beckstrom, Chloe Olesen, Parker Kunze, Cary Martin, Sandy Wallin, David Beatty, Rebecca Feldbrugge, Makayla Stirewalt, Drayden Adams, Joseph Rudolph, Rodney Davis, Mary Marciniak, Katrina Hough, Lori Moench, Steven Anderson, Grayson Coulter, Tatiana Hackensmith, Bruce Bong, Al Holm, Craig Holm, Cheryl Schilla, Carol Foss, Clifford Kloepfer, Julianne Emerson, Elizabeth House & Roxane Schmitz.

Faith on the Go



The set-up is a common one—Someone asks Jesus a question and he tells a story. As usual, the story seems simple, with an easy interpretation, which the chief priests and Pharisees are quick to articulate. The chief priests and Pharisees seem to understand the story from the point of view of the land owner, and they put themselves in that place. Jesus, however, is telling a story where God is the land owner and the priests and Pharisees are the tenants—not such a simple story any more! How should the priests and Pharisees judge themselves? What does Jesus' story say about their authority? What judgments do we make in our lives and who do we judge? Do we, like the priests and Pharisees put ourselves on the moral high ground when we make those judgments?

Do we always belong there?
As you move through the world this week, try to think about your perspective. Why do you see the world the way that you do? What does your perspective hide from your own view?

Pray

Gracious God, you love us even when we do not love each other, you feed us even when we do not share our abundance, you forgive us even when we are unforgiving. We thank you for your blessings, and ask you to teach us to be more like your Son, Jesus. Amen

Connect

Where did you see rejection today?
Where did you see acceptance today?

Bible

Matthew 21:33-46—The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

Day 1

Matthew 21:33-34
Have you ever left something important in the care of another?
What did you leave? How did it go?

Day 2

Matthew 21:35-40

What do you think caused the tenants to act this way? Greed? Power? What would you do if it were your land?

Day 3

Matthew 21:41

When have you been greedy with something that was not yours? What did you do to try to keep it?

Day 4

Matthew 21:42-44

The chief priests and Pharisees understand the story, but they only see it from one angle. What stories have changed for you as your position in life has changed?

Day 5

Matthew 21:45-46

Jesus points out a flaw in the thinking of the priests and Pharisees that they don't want to see. Why would they want to avoid arresting him? What might the crowds think if they did?

Bless

Know that God loves and accepts you

October 2020



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 1pm Jam Group 2pm Children, Youth, Family & Ed. Meeting	2 11am Men's Bible Study	3
4 9am Worship	5	6 9am Making Mats for the Homeless	7 5:45pm 6 th Grade Confirmation Class	8	9 11am Men's Bible Study	10
11 9am Worship	12 Columbus Day Indigenous People's Day	13 9am Making Mats for the Homeless 5:30pm Council Meeting	14 5:45pm 6 th Grade Confirmation Class	15 Beacon Deadline 1pm Jam Group	16 11am Men's Bible Study	17
18 9am Worship	19	20 9am Making Mats for the Homeless	21 5:45pm 6 th Grade Confirmation Class	22	23 11am Men's Bible Study	24
25 9am Worship	26	27 9am Making Mats for the Homeless	28 5:45pm 6 th Grade Confirmation Class	29 1pm Jam Group	30 11am Men's Bible Study	31 Halloween

Bethesda Lutheran Church
204 5th Street
P.O. Box 210
Carlton, MN 55718

Sunday Worship
9:00am
*In House
And Online*
*You can also view the Beacon
on our website at
bethesdacarlton.org or if you
would like to have it mailed or
emailed to you please contact
the office.*

